

Intergenerational Contact of Young Married Women in Korea with Parents and with Parents-in-law*

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Focusing on the factors related to the amount of contact between young married women and their noncoresident parents and their noncoresident parents-in-law, the study hypothesized two scenarios : (1) filial piety scenario which predicts that the contact with one set of parents is not affected by accessibility of other set of parents, and (2) competition scenario which predicts that ease of contact with one set of parents inhibits contact with other set of parents. These scenarios were tested against the data from National Fertility and Family Health Survey in 1994. The regression analysis of intergenerational visits appeared to support the competition scenario : The parents-in-law and the parents seem to be in competition for visits by young married women - distance from the parents from one side has a parallel relationship to more frequent visits with the other set of parents. This is a much more equal footing for both sides of the family than attention to filial piety would predict, although the level of support from the young generation may keep declining.

Keywords: intergenerational relations, family, Asia

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I. INTRODUCTION

The proportion of the elderly living with their children in East Asia has declined rapidly (c.f. Hermalin, 1997; Kim, 1998). This change has led to increasing attention on the amount and causes of intergenerational contact across household boundaries (i.e. Bian, Logan & Bian, 1998; Bumpass, 1994; Hermalin, Ofstedal, & Lee, 1992; Kim & Choe, 1992; Lee, Parish & Willis, 1994; Martin & Tsuya, 1994; Roan, Hermalin & Ofstedal, 1996; Weinstein, Sun, Chang & Freedman, 1994). In this study, we focus on the factors related to the frequency of contact between young married women and their noncoresident parents and between young married women and their noncoresident parents-in-law in Korea. We are particularly interested in whether and how the distance from one set of parents would be related to the contact with other set of parents.

In East Asia, which follows the patrilineal and patrilocal family system, the norm is that the wife's allegiance shifts from her parents to her parents-in-law at the time of her marriage. This has traditionally been expressed as coresidence with the husband's parents. It has also implied little contact between the wife and her own parents after her marriage. If the norm of filial piety, mandating respect to the husband's parents, were followed in a noncoresident situation, we would expect substantial contact with the husband's noncoresident parents but little contact with the parents.

Research in this region has been suggesting some weakening of considerations based on filial piety. Martin (1990) has argued that contact with the wife's natal family has increased in East Asia. In Japan, Martin and Tsuya (1994) found that married women see their noncoresident parents almost as frequently as married men see theirs and that married women call their parents more often than their husbands call their parents. Bian, Logan and Bian (1998) report that in urban China, married women

and their parents are in contact as frequently as married women are with their parents-in-law. In addition, Anderson et al. (1998) report that young wives in Beijing, China visit their parents almost as frequently as they visit their husband's parents. These findings reveal that, although the level of attention to the husband's parents remains high, married daughters and their parents have been maintaining substantial ties.

II. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

In this study, we propose two scenarios relating the amount of contact between young married women and one set of parents to the distance from other set of parents. The first one, which we call the filial piety scenario, is based on the norm of traditional filial piety in the setting of strong patrilineal and patrilocal family system. This scenario posits that, the physical separation from one set of parents would not affect the contact with other set of parents. The second one, which we call the competition scenario, posits that if the parents and parents-in-law are competing for the attention of the young married women, and if consideration is given to both sets of parents, then the distance from one set of parents would result in more contact with other set of parents.

For an empirical test of these scenarios, we formulated models that consider other factors affecting the amount of intergenerational contact. The models we are using and the expected relationships under the two scenarios are presented in Figure 1. A plus sign (+) in Figure 1 indicates a predicted positive relationship, a minus sign (-) indicates a predicted negative relationship, and a zero (0) predicts no significant relationship. A question mark (?) is indicated for the factors that may be related to the intergenerational contact but are beyond the main concern of the present study.¹⁾

1) The models aim to examine whether and how the contact with one set of parents is affected by the ease of contact or accessibility of the other set of parents, after controlling all other factors shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Summary of Expected Relationships Between Distance from One Set of Parents and Frequency of Contact with Other Set of Parents

	Expected Sign of Relationship	
	Scenario 1 Filial Piety	Scenario 2 Competition
Panel 1: Contact with parents		
<u>Factors Considered</u>		
IV: Distance from parents-in-law	0	+
MCV: Distance from parents	-	-
OCV: Women's sociodemographic characteristics	?	?
OCV: Parents' sociodemographic characteristics	?	?
Panel 2: Contact with parents-in-law		
<u>Factors Considered</u>		
IV: Distance from parents	0	+
MCV: Distance from parents-in-law	-	-
OCV: Women's sociodemographic characteristics	?	?
OCV: Parents-in-law's sociodemographic characteristics	?	?

Note: IV-Independent variable; MCV-Main control variable; OCV-Other control variables

In the model of contact between young married women and parents, as shown in the first panel of Table 1, we focus on the effect of the distance from parents-in-law. The distance from parents is considered as a main control variable since the shorter the distance between young married women and their parents, the more frequently they will visit each other.²⁾ The socioeconomic characteristics of the married women and the socioeconomic characteristics of their parents are also included as other control variables. These variables, roughly representing attitudes and needs

2) The direction of its causality is unclear. The married young women may visit the parents frequently because they live only a short distance away, or they may live close to their parents in order to make visiting easy.

of each generation, may affect the amount of intergenerational contact (i.e. Martin and Tsuya, 1994).

Since our main interest lies in the contact with one set of parents given the ease of the other set of parents, we will not discuss in detail the expected effects of the individual variables. Nonetheless, there are two sociodemographic variables that have drawn our special attention: having child under age 6 and having a job. The effect of having a job could be mixed. On the one hand, being occupied with her own home, a woman with a job may have not enough time to visit her parents. On the other hand, she can ask her parents for help. She may be even likely to ask for help if she has a preschool child, who requires more attention than an older child. Thus, the interaction of these two variables is included in the models.

For the analysis of contact between young married woman and parents-in-law, we built a parallel model as shown in the second panel of Table 1. In this model, the distance from parents is the independent variable, and the distance from parents-in-law is a control variable. The same set of variables for socioeconomic characteristics of the women are included as other control variables, but the survival status and age of parents in the model of contact with parents are replaced into those of parents-in-law in this model.

III. METHODS

1. Data

We used data from the "1994 National Fertility and Family Health Survey," conducted by the Korea Institute for Health and Social Affairs (henceforth, KIHASA). The respondents in that survey were 6,551 married women, who were aged 15-44 at the time of the survey. The respondents

were selected through stratified multistage random sampling. Overall, 6,060 interviews were completed, constituting a response rate of 92.5%. We have obtained a 70% random sample of the completed interviews from KIHASA. While the main purpose of the survey is to explore issues related to fertility behavior, it also contains information on the attitudes and practices regarding intergenerational relations. For both the woman's parents and parents-in-law, we have information on whether they were alive, where and with whom they lived and the frequency of contact.

For our analysis, we selected women aged 20-35 who had been married for at least one year at the time of survey. We excluded those who had been married less than one year, because the measures of intergenerational contact were not asked for them. The restriction to ages 20-35 minimizes variations in the life course stages of both elderly parents and married women. It has been well documented that the content and flow of intergenerational exchange depends on the life course stage of both generations (i.e. Kim, 1998). Moreover, the 20-35 age group has a greater probability of having parents alive than older ages. We also eliminated cases with incomplete data on the variables of interest in this study.

From the sample of women aged 20-35 who had been married for at least one year, we obtained two subsets. The first set, which is used for the analysis of contact between the woman and her noncoresident parents, is composed of women who were not coresident with their parents and for whom at least one parent was alive ($n=1802$). The second set, which is used for the analysis of contact between the woman and her noncoresident parents-in-law, consists of women who were not coresident with their parents-in-law but for whom at least one of their parents-in-law was alive ($n=1435$). The difference in sample sizes mainly reflects the typically younger age of wives than husbands and thus the fact that more wives than husbands have surviving parents. It also reflects the fact that more wives are coresident with their parents-

in-law than with their parents.³⁾

2. Variables

Table 1 presents the definitions and means of variables employed in the empirical analysis. The first column gives a brief definition of each variable. Additional explanations of the variables will be provided below. The second column shows the distribution of the samples for the pair of the women and noncoresident parents and the third column, for the pair of the women and their noncoresident parents-in-law.

1) Measures of Frequency of Intergenerational Contact

The frequency of intergenerational contact is measured by the frequency of visits, which is examined regardless of whether the woman traveled to the residence of the members of the older generation, whether the older generation traveled to the residence of the woman, or whether they met in some third location. The respondents were asked to report the average number of visits per year between the woman and her noncoresident parents. The same set of questions was repeated for her noncoresident parents-in-law. We converted the annual average number of visits between generations to a monthly average for the convenience of discussion. As shown in Table 1, the average number of visits between the woman and her noncoresident parents

3) We should note that although this analysis is focused on contact with noncoresident parents and parents-in-law, and although the level of coresidence has declined in Korea, coresidence with the husband's parents remains much more common than coresidence with the wife's parents. In the analysis of contact with the wife's noncoresident parents, 15% of the wives are coresident with the husband's parents, while in the analysis of contact with non-coresident husband's parents, only 1% of the wives are coresident with their parents

Table 1. Characteristics of the Samples Used for the Analysis of Contact with Noncoresident Parents and Contact with Noncoresident Parents-in-law

	Women with Noncoresident P	Women with Noncoresident PIL
<i>sample size</i>	1,802	1,435
average number of visits between W and P per month	2.6	—
average number of visits between W and PIL per month	—	3.2
<u>Distance from PIL</u>		
% W living with PIL	15.4	n.a.
% W whose PIL living in same subdistrict	10.5	13.9
% W whose PIL living in same city/province	23.8	32.4
% W whose PIL living in different city/province/abroad	39.7	53.7
% W whose PIL dead	10.6	n.a.
<u>Distance from P</u>		
% W living with P	n.a.	1.3
% W whose P living in same subdistrict	10.6	10.2
% W whose P living in same city/province	32.1	28.6
% W whose P living in different city/province/abroad	57.3	53.9
% W whose P dead	n.a.	6.0
% W living in urban areas	73.0	77.4
<u>W's Education</u>		
% W with an education of less than senior high	22.0	20.8
% W with an education of senior high	57.0	55.7
% W with an education of college and above	20.9	23.5
average age of W in years	30.0	30.1
average length of marriage in years	6.3	6.3
% W having a job	35.4	33.7
% W having at least one child age under 6	77.1	77.9
average age of P (age of older P if both are alive)	61.5	—
% W's father only alive	5.3	—
% W's mother only alive	32.2	—
% W's both P alive	62.5	—
average age of PIL (age of older PIL if both are alive)	—	64.2
% FIL only alive	—	4.7
% MIL only alive	—	33.9
% both PIL alive	—	61.3

Notes : W-young married woman; P-Parents; PIL-Parents-in-law; FIL-Father-in-law;
MIL-Mother-in-law

is 2.6 times per month, while the average number of visits between the woman and her noncoresident parents-in-law is 3.2 times per month.⁴⁾

2) Measures of Distance between Generations

For the analysis of contact between the woman and her noncoresident parents, the distance from the parents-in-law is the independent variable. This distance measure include both geographical distance from her parents-in-law and survival status of the parents-in-law. It is measured to be closest if the woman lives with the parents-in-law and to be most distant if the parents-in-law are dead. The distance from parents in this analysis is the key control variable. The distributions of these two variables are shown in the second column of Table 1.

For the analysis of contact between the woman and her noncoresident parents-in-law, the distance from the parents is the independent variable. This analysis includes cases in which the woman was coresident with her parents, but as shown in the third column of Table 1 these cases were very rare (1.3%). Thus, in the multivariate analysis, we merged the category of "coresiding with the parents" with the category of "living in same subdistrict of city of province". In this analysis, the distance from parents-in-law is the key control variable.

3) Other Sociodemographic Variables of Woman and of the Parental Generation

The sociodemographic characteristics of the married woman in the analysis both of contact with noncoresident parents and of contact with noncoresident parents-in-law include whether she lives in an urban area, her age, education, length of marriage in years, whether she has a job, whether she

4) The magnitude of the difference in contact with each set of parents is worth noting. Women visit their parents-in-law about one more time ever two months than they visit their own parents.

has at least one child under age 6, and interaction of the last two variables. The distribution of these variables is quite similar for the samples both for the pair of the woman and noncoresident parents and the sample for the pair of the woman and noncoresident parents-in-law. In both samples, about three-quarters of the women live in urban areas. More than 55% have attended senior high school and more than 20% have attended college. On average, the women are 30 years old and have been married 6.3 years. About one third of the women have a job. More than 77% have a child under age 6.

The sociodemographic characteristics of the parents in the analysis of contact with noncoresident parents are parent's age (in the case in which both parents are alive, the age of the older one) and survival status of the parents by gender. Similarly, in the analysis of contact with noncoresident parents-in-law included are the age of parents-in-law and their survival status by gender. The average age of noncoresident parents is 61.5 years, while the average age of noncoresident parents-in-law is 64.2 years, which is 2.7 years older than the average age of parents.

IV. MULTIVARIATE ANALYSIS

For the multivariate analysis, we conducted OLS regression model separately for the contact with parents and the contact with parents-in-law.

1. Frequency of Visits between Young Married Women and Noncoresident Parents

The sample for the analysis of contact between the woman and her noncoresident parents is 1802 women aged 20-35 who have been married at least a year who do not coreside with their parents. Table 2 presents the

Table 2. Unstandardized Regression Coefficients from OLS Regression Analysis of the Frequency of Monthly Visits between Young Married Woman and Her Noncoresident Parents (n=1,802)

Variables	VISIT
(Constant)	<u>13.901</u> <.001
<u>Distance from Parents (reference=living in same subdistrict)</u>	
Parents in same city/district	<u>-8.474</u> <.001
Parents in different city/province	<u>-11.117</u> <.001
<u>Characteristics of the Woman</u>	
Woman lives in urban areas	<u>1.425</u> <.001
Woman's age	<u>-0.012</u> 0.827
Woman's education (reference=less than Senior High)	
Woman with Senior High Education	<u>0.174</u> 0.591
Woman with College+ Education	<u>0.936</u> 0.027
Woman's marriage length in years	<u>-0.094</u> 0.085
Woman has a job	<u>-0.495</u> 0.321
W has any child under age 6	<u>-0.854</u> 0.038
Interaction of having a job and any child under age 6	<u>1.565</u> 0.007
<u>Characteristics of Parents</u>	
Survival status of parents (reference=both parents alive).	
Mother only alive	<u>0.105</u> 0.693
Father only alive	<u>-0.566</u> 0.297
Age of parent (older parent)	<u>-0.043</u> 0.027
<u>Distance from Parents-in-law (reference=coresidence)</u>	
Parent-in-law in same subdistrict	<u>-0.432</u> 0.364
Parents-in-law in same city/province	<u>0.354</u> 0.373
Parents-in-law in different city/province	<u>0.973</u> 0.009
Parents-in-law dead	<u>1.006</u> 0.037
R-Square	0.325
F-Statistics	50.49
Degree of Freedom	17, 1784
P	<.001

Notes: P values appear below coefficients. Coefficients with $p < .05$ are underlined.

unstandardized regression coefficients and standard errors from OLS regression models based on this sample.

As expected, the key control variable, distance from parents has a significant negative effect - the farther the parents live, the less frequently the woman visits them. The sociodemographic characteristics of the women and their parents influence the frequency of contact. Women in urban areas visit their parents more often than women in rural areas. Women with a college education visit their parents more often than women with less than a senior high school education. Women with a child age under 6 visit their parents less frequently than women without a child age under 6. However, when the woman with a child under 6 has a job, she visits her parents much more frequently. Such result suggests that, given the double burden of childrearing and worker, young married women may seek for help from their elderly parents. The age of parents shows a negative relationship with the frequency of visits between the woman and her parents.

There is a significant effect of the distance from parents-in-law on the frequency of visits between the woman and her parents. Compared to the women coresiding with parents-in-law, those who live in a different city or province from their parents-in-law or whose parents-in-law are dead visit their own parents almost one more time per month. This result is consistent with the competition scenario.

2. Frequency of Visits between Young Married Women and Noncoresident Parents-in-law.

The results of the analysis of contact between the young married woman and her noncoresident parents-in-law appear in Table 3. The sample is 1435 young married women aged 20-35 who have been married at least a year

Table 3. Unstandardized Regression Coefficients from OLS Regression Analysis of the Frequency of Monthly Visits between Young Married Woman and Her Noncoresident Parents-in-law (n=1,435)

Variables	VISIT
(Constant)	13.415 <u><.001</u>
<u>Distance from Parents-in-law (reference=living in same subdistrict)</u>	
Parents-in-law in same city/district	-9.285 <u><.001</u>
Parents-in-law in different city/province	-11.388 <u><.001</u>
<u>Characteristics of the Woman</u>	
Woman lives in urban areas	0.258 0.448
Woman's age	-0.079 0.207
Woman's education (reference=less than Senior High)	
Woman with Senior High Education	-0.363 0.319
Woman with College+ Education	0.205 0.655
Woman's marriage length in years	-0.024 0.706
Woman has a job	0.242 0.671
W has any child under age 6	-0.212 0.643
Interaction of having a job and any child under age 6	1.201 0.068
<u>Characteristics of Parents-in-law</u>	
Survival status of parents-in-law (reference=both parents-in-law alive).	
Mother-in-law only alive	-0.169 0.556
Father-in-law only alive	-0.856 0.183
Age of parents-in-law (older parent-in-law)	-0.011 0.588
<u>Distance from Parents (reference=coresidence+subdistrict)</u>	
Parents in same city/province	2.196 <u><.001</u>
Parents in different city/province	2.325 <u><.001</u>
Parents dead	2.260 <u><.001</u>
R-Square	0.372
F-Statistics	52.56
Degree of Freedom	16, 1418
P	<u><.001</u>

Notes: P values appear below coefficients. Coefficients with $p < .05$ are underlined.

and whose parents-in-law do not live with them.⁵⁾

As expected, the control variable, distance to parents-in-law has a significant negative effect - the farther away the parents-in-law live, the less frequently, the woman visits them. Together with the earlier finding on the association between the distance from parents and frequency of visit, this finding shows that physical proximity is an important factor related to the amount of intergenerational contact with the either set of parents. With respect to other control variables, no sociodemographic characteristics of the woman or of her parents-in-law are statistically significant for the frequency of visits. This finding is quite contrasting with the patterns found in the previous model where many of socioeconomic characteristics of the woman and of her parents are associated with the contact between them. The absence of statistical significance of the woman and her parents-in-law may imply that visits between the women and their parents-in-law are largely the consequence of strong norms, to which young couple adheres regardless of their individual characteristics.

More interestingly, the distance from the parents has a significant effect on visits with the parents in-law: in general, the more distant from the parents, the more frequent are visits with the parents-in-law. Combined with the finding that visits between the woman and her parents are less frequent when the parents-in-law live close to the women, this finding suggests that the parents-in-law and the parents may be competing and alternative parties with whom the young married women visit, and, thus, supports the competition scenario.

5) As in Table 2, the unstandardized regression coefficients and stand errors from OLS regression model based on this sample are presented in Table 3.

V. CONCLUSIONS

On the basis of two scenarios concerning the factors related to the intergeneration contact of young married women, we examined whether and how the geographical distance from one set of parents is related to the visit with other set of parents. The analysis revealed that, even after controlling many other factors, living close to one set of parents is related to less frequent visits with the other set of parents. The findings were symmetric with respect to both the young married women's parents and their parents-in-law. This is consistent with the competition scenario.

The finding that access to the parents of young married women influences the frequency of visits with their parents-in-law suggests that traditional norms of filial piety emphasizing allegiance of the married women to their parents-in-law have weakened. This means that at least to some extent the married women may respond to the needs of their own parents, rather than concentrating all of their attention and resources for their parents-in-law.⁶⁾ However, more equal support for both sets of parents does not necessarily mean more comprehensive or intensive support from younger generation. Given that coresidence with elderly parents are declining and women's labor force participation are increasing, the willingness and ability of young generation to support either set of parents may indeed weaken. Thus, the role of social welfare for the elderly should not be underestimated.

There are some limitations in our study. First, we could not determine which generation provides or receives help since we did not have the

6) Such interpretation is also supported by the attitudinal changes of Koreans regarding who should be responsible for supporting the elderly. According to the National Social Statistics Survey, the proportion of those aged 15 and over who emphasize that sons and daughters support their parents together increased from 6.4% in 1979 to 46.2% in 1991 (National Statistical Office, 1992).

information on the distribution of contacts between a married woman and the older generation according to the reasons for the contact. More information about the content of intergenerational contact would be useful in understanding the nature and meaning of interactions. Second, we could not consider the birth order and sibling composition of young married women and their husbands since such information was unavailable in our data set. In Korea, the patterns of intergenerational contact may differ by such characteristics of the married women and their husbands. For instance, it would be reasonable to expect that the eldest son and his wife may have more contact with the husband's parents. Third, we could include few aspects of the status of parental generation due to the limited information in our data set. The intergenerational contact occurs by either or both generations, but we have focused more heavily on younger generation.

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한국 기혼여성과 시부모 및 친정부모간의 접촉

김정석 · 바브라 앤더슨 · 존 로마니

이 연구는 젊은 기혼여성과 이들과 별거하고 있는 시부모 및 친정부모간의 접촉정도와 그에 영향을 미치는 요인들을 살펴보고 있는데, 그 초점을 시부모와의 근접성이 친정부모와의 접촉에 어떤 영향을 미칠 것인지, 그리고 역으로 친정부모와의 근접성이 시부모와의 접촉에 어떤 영향을 미칠 것인지에 두면서 두 가지의 시나리오를 설정하고 있다. 우선, 전통적 효 규범에 따른 시나리오에 의하면, 친정부모와의 지리적 근접성이 시부모와의 접촉빈도에 영향을 미치지 못할 것으로 또한 시부모와의 근접성은 친정부모와의 접촉빈도와 관계가 없을 것이라 예상된다. 다음으로, 경쟁적 시나리오에 의하면, 시부모인지 친정부모인지에 관계없이 어느 한쪽의 부모와 근접할수록 다른 쪽의 부모와의 접촉은 적을 것이라 예상된다. 1994년도에 실시된 <한국 출산력 및 국민건강조사> 자료를 이용해 세대간의 상호방문빈도에 관해 회귀분석을 실시해 본 결과, 경쟁적 시나리오를 지지하고 있는 것으로 나타났다. 이러한 방문빈도분석의 결과는 시부모에 대한 기혼여성의 관심과 헌신을 규정해온 전통적인 가족규범이 약화되어지면서, 친정부모와 시부모가 좀 더 동등한 입장에 가까워지고 있음을 시사한다고 볼 수 있다.

핵심단어: 세대관계, 가족규범, 아시아