Mothers’ IT Use in Three-Generational Communications and its Impact on Support from their Parents

Kaoru OKAZE, Ph.D. (Ochanomizu University, oka@ocha.ac.jp) & Nan LIU, Ph.D. (Yamagata University, liunan6864@yahoo.co.jp)

Abstract

The main findings of the study are summarized as follows: (1) Mothers’ longer usage of IT is related to more frequent communication about childcare with their parents via IT (2) Mothers’ IT communication with their parents/parents-in-law facilitate support from their parents/parents-in-law.

Objectives & Background

Objectives:
- How mothers’ IT use for intergenerational communication affect receiving support from their parents/parents-in-law
- How mothers’ and their families’ characteristics influence intergenerational communication via IT

Background:
- Over 50% of adult children living apart from their parents use IT to contact their parents and one-third of them to send digital pictures to their parents (NIT Communications, 2012)

Method & Sample characteristics

- Web questionnaires conducted in 2016 and 2017
- Sample: Mothers with preschoolers, where both grandmother and grandmother-in-law are alive
- Japan: Less work hours, Korea: High educational level, the U.S.: High educational level & Young, Sweden: Long work hours & use nursing service

Results

Results-1: Receiving Support

From parents

- Distance from grandchild/parents
- Educational years
- Work hours
- Age of youngest child
- Number of children
- Using number of children
- Using services
- Age of youngest child

From parents-in-law

- Distance from grandchild/parents
- Educational years
- Work hours
- Age of youngest child
- Number of children
- Using number of children
- Using services
- Age of youngest child

Results-2: IT communication about childcare

With parents

- Distance from grandchild/parents
- Educational years
- Work hours
- Age of youngest child
- Number of children
- Using number of children
- Using services
- Age of youngest child

With parents-in-law

- Distance from grandchild/parents
- Educational years
- Work hours
- Age of youngest child
- Number of children
- Using number of children
- Using services
- Age of youngest child

Results-3: Path Analysis (multi-group structural equation modeling)

Japan: Less support from parents/parents-in-law, Less IT communication with parents/parents-in-law

Korea & U.S.: Frequent support from parents/parents-in-law, Over 10% of mothers communicate daily with parents via IT

Findings & Conclusion

Similarities
- IT communication with parents/parents-in-law ⇒ (+) receiving support from parents/parents-in-law
- Mothers’ usage of IT ⇒ (+) IT communication about childcare with their parents.

Differences
- Japan, Korea, & U.S.: Mothers long working hours ⇒ (+) IT communication with parents/parents-in-law
- Japan, Korea, & Sweden: Age of youngest child ⇒ (-) IT communication with parents/parents-in-law

Conclusion
- The effect of IT use on intergenerational exchanges has been shown
- Governments’ childcare policies effect intergenerational IT communication
- IT communication is becoming similar to face-to-face communication