

## **Intergenerational Comparisons of Fathering Practices and Attitudes: A Cross-cultural study**

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### **Abstract**

Eighty grandfathers and fathers from United States and Korea were interviewed for this study. To identify similarities and differences between grandfathers and their grown sons' child rearing practices and attitudes, four dimensions of fathering behaviors were coded from the Sears Interview Schedule (Sears, Maccoby, & Levin, 1957): nurturance, aggression, parental rules, and discipline. American grandfather-father pairs and Korean grandfather-father pairs revealed similar results. In permissiveness regarding child aggression toward others and in strictness with parental rules, fathers reported behavior similar to their fathers. In father's nurturance, fathers from both countries showed more enlightened and affectionate behavior than their own fathers. In severity of discipline, American grandfathers reported more severe discipline than their sons did. The findings of this study are discussed in light of modeling theory, compensatory hypothesis, and cohort hypothesis.

While fathers have been viewed primarily as breadwinners in the past, today many fathers assume an increasing role in the caregiving and socialization of young children. Given the strong evidence of connection between paternal behavior and childhood outcomes, researchers have begun to investigate the antecedents and consequences of differing degrees and types of fathering behavior (Lamb, 1981; Parke, 1996).

Many studies have been concerned with the level of

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involvement of fathers. In light of the limited amount of time fathers spend with their children, a father's effects on child development may be realized not as a result of the amount of interaction but as a result of the specific quality of his contribution to the child's development (Lewis, Feiring, & Weinraub, 1981). Further, parenting styles have often been studied to determine whether different styles foster particular traits in the offspring. The question of how parenting styles are learned is also important to examine, particularly as most fathers are not formally taught parenting.

It is often suggested that most people learn to parent because of how they were parented. How do men's own childhood experiences influence their fathering behavior? The purpose of this study was to assess intergenerational continuities and discontinuities on a number of parenting measures among fathers and grandfathers in the United States and Korea. Studying intergenerational similarities and differences in parenting can reveal to what degree adults parent the way their own parents did, and to what degree they parent differently. Cross-cultural studies can reveal how rapidly or slowly cultural attitudes toward fathering change in a country rapidly moving toward technological sophistication (Korea in the present study), in contrast with a country (in this study the USA) which is already technologically advanced.

In the literature review, we have used modeling hypothesis, compensatory hypothesis, and cohort explanation to explain intergenerational continuities and discontinuities of fathering.

## ***LITERATURE REVIEW***

### ***Grandfathers' Parenting Practices and Attitudes***

Belsky (1984) suggested that the developmental history of parents affected the personality of parents and the parents' personality then in turn influenced their parenting styles and goals. Recently, studies focus upon the transmission of supportive parenting in addition to harsh parenting. Simons, Berman, Conger, and Chao (1993) studied intergenerational transmission of parenting and possible mediating factors. Parenting experienced as a child was indirectly related to the current parenting of mothers and fathers through its association with their parenting beliefs, emotional well being, and satisfaction with their child. But after controlling for