

Child Care by Grandmothers: Work and Care Reconciliation

By Chih-Yao Lee

Abstract

Background and purpose

In Taiwan around 30% of preschool children are cared by parents and another 30% use childcare services (provided primarily by the private sector). The rest of preschool children are cared by grandparents, including many grandmothers who are still in working age. These working-age grandmothers are thus juggling between care and work; although a government subsidy (60% of salary for up to six months) was launched for workers taking parental leave to care for children under three since 2009. This study aims to explore how these grandmothers reconcile paid work with care for grandchildren.

Method

This study employed in-depth interviews and thematic analysis for data collection and analysis. Twenty grandmothers aged under 65 were interviewed between January and December of 2016 in Taiwan.

Findings

Grandmothers have a positive perspective on remaining in the workplace, including four working values, such as achieving self-accomplishment, self-empowerment, emotional compensation, and economic supplement. It has improved their social relations and has given them a feeling of being valued.

The interviews brought out the grandchild care by the grandmothers is related to three generations, which has benefits to the overall development of grandmothers themselves, their children, and their grandchildren.

This study shows that grandmothers give positive feedback both on their paid work and grandchild care. Therefore, they choose to remain their paid work and the grandchild care at the same time.

The strategies that the grandmothers used in reconciling paid work and childcare included: retirement, change the paid work temporarily, retain the paid work without pay, watch the grandchildren's status via monitor, coordinate with the family to schedule the duty shift, go home to check irregularly, ask other relatives to help, taking the grandchildren to the workplace, and apply the childcare resource.

Implications

There will be an indirect impact on the working grandmothers if they take care of the grandchildren and work at the same time; therefore, a friendly childcare system will support not only their parents to work and childcare, but also the grandmothers at their working age to remain in the labour market.

A friendly workplace to the middle-aged and elderly women is a must, and issues to be further discussed by related departments so that the women will choose to remain in the labour market.

Keywords: Grandmother, childcare, family care, work and care reconciliation, gender, care policy

Introduction

According to its traditional culture, the Taiwanese society regards care for young children and older family members as family's responsibility, which mostly falls on women. The double Liability of women, who juggling between care and paid work, usually reduces their opportunity to participate in labour market. When women need to take care of their children and take employment at the same time, they usually have to take turn with their spouses to look after the children. In addition, the grandparents will have to render their assistance under such circumstances. In fact, grandmothers often become the major substitute to childcare when parents are at work (Liao, 2008; Wang, Wang, 2014). While grandparents take care of their grandchildren may increase the labor participate rate of married women (Chow, 2002), would it also cause the middle-aged women to leave their paid work earlier than expected?

According to "2013 Report on Women's Marriage, Fertility and Employment" investigated by Directorate General of Budget, Accounting and Statistics, Executive Yuan, R.O.C.(Taiwan), there are 37.08% of the children under the age of 3, and 13.47% of the children at the age between 3 to 6 are taken care of by their grandparents. It shows that grandparents are the major manpower to offer the informal childcare, and the grandmothers are the main carers. (Wang & Wang, 2014)

Gray (2005) indicated that the grandparents would help taking care of their grandchildren, in order to let their daughters continue their paid work. TobíoSoler (2012) compared the extent of childcare support provided by family member to among Spain, France and Norway, and found the correlation between grandparents' looking after the grandchildren and their daughters' employment. In Spain, it is essential that the grandmothers assist in taking care of their grandchildren for the working mothers. Meyer's (2014) study on American grandmother indicates their

struggle between their paid work and the grandchild care with limited resources.

According to these studies, we can find that the childcare for the children under the age of 6, does not only directly affect their mothers' employment, but also affect their working-age grandmothers'(under the age of 65) taking part in labour market due to the grandchild care. The grandmothers at work are economically independent, before taking care of their grandchildren. But, if they leave their employment to take care of their grandchildren, they might lose their income. In fact, these grandmothers may lose their rights to work when they leave the labour market. As far as Taiwan is concerned, does the childcare issue affect not only their mothers' integration with labour market, but also affect the labor participation and right to work for those middle-aged grandmothers?

Why is it important to explore the issue of grandmothers taking care of grandchildren, while maintain their paid work, in terms of social policy? Because the promotion of women' s employment is the primary policy in the developed countries, and it benefits economic development and gender equality. For example, The European 2020 Strategy issued in 2010, the European Union declared that the employment rate of male and female should reach the goal of 75% (European Commission, 2010) in the next 10 years. However, in 2015, the female labor participation rate of the age 15 to 64 was 56.9% in Taiwan (Directorate General of Budget, Accounting and Statistics, Executive Yuan, R.O.C.(Taiwan), 2017), which still are almost 20% less than European 2020 Strategy. The reason of the difference may be caused by women's family care responsibility, which inhibits them from participating in the labour market (Chou et al., 2014). The promotion of women's employment is also an important issue of the Taiwan feminists movement, who also promotes the legislation of caring-relevant policies. The main purpose of legislation of Gender Equality Law is to encourage women to participate in the labour market (Wang, Wang, 2014), which also includes the participation in the labor market of the middle-aged women, as well as the working-aged grandmothers.

Nowadays in Taiwan, around 40% of the youngest children under age of 3 are taken care of by their grandparents, especially their grandmothers (Wang & Wang, 2014). When the working-aged (under 65 years old) grandmothers become the

informal carers, will this childcare responsibility affect their involvement in labour market? In order to raise women's labor participation among middle aged women and protect this group of women's right to work, it is an important issue to know how these grandmothers reconcile between grandchildren care and paid work.

The research questions are: How do these grandmothers identify their paid work? How do these grandmothers discern their caregiving to grandchildren while the parents in work? How do these grandmothers reconcile paid work with care for grandchildren?

Methods

The in-depth interviews were conducted among 20 grandmothers of working age between January and December of 2015 in Taiwan.

Participants

20 grandmothers who invited through purposive sampling and snowball sampling to share their experiences regarding reconciliation between paid work and care-giving (Table 1).

Each participant completed a semi-structured interview. In total, 18 of 20 grandmothers who participated in our interviews were involved in full-time or part-time paid work, and 2 of these working grandmothers were quitting paid work when their interview was conducted.

In-depth interviews

An open-ended questionnaire was developed to investigate the following areas: characteristics of current and previous paid work; conditions of care-giving; how the grandmothers balanced work and care; how support from the family, friends, neighbours, colleagues and employers helped in combining work and care; and how formal services supported coping with the two roles. Data of the grandmothers' and their grandchildren's characteristics were also collected (Table 1). The interviews were undertaken by the researcher of this study, and their duration ranged from 60 to 90 minutes. Each interview was held on a one-to-one basis and took place in the participant's home. The interviews were in Mandarin, and were tape-recorded and later transcribed. A copy of the typed transcripts was mailed to the participant and a phone call were followed to each participant to check for errors or misunderstandings. Except for making some changes to the characteristic data related to the participants

and their families, the grandmothers agreed with the typed transcripts. Before the interview, informed consent was obtained from each participant.

Data analysis

The transcripts were analysed using thematic analysis. To explore these 20 working grandmothers' specific experiences of combining paid work and care-giving, the analysis focused on how their social networking and connections or care strategies helped them to combine paid work and care-giving. The transcripts were analysed by the researcher, who first noted significant words, phrases or paragraphs and then identified similarities/differences across different interviews; this allowed emerging themes to be pinpointed. Such preliminary themes were then compared across the interviews and predominant themes were extracted. This resulted in a condensed list of themes, which was then grouped into closely related themes under appropriate headings. Examples of the categories developed included 'negotiation with the family', 'taking the grandchild to workplace', 'using childcare services and unpaid childcare leave', etc. The condensed list of themes was then coded with relevant headings as presented in the results section such as 'work and care reconciliation (Grandmother care strategies) (Box 1).

Table 1 Characteristics of the participants

| Grandmother | | | | | | | Grandchild |
|-------------|------|-----|------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------|-----|------------|
| | Name | Age | Assist son or daughter | Occupation | Paid work types | Age | |
| 1 | Chun | 60+ | Son | Administration staff | Full-time | 1 | |
| 2 | Xia | 60+ | Son | Teacher | Full-time | 1 | |
| 3 | Qiu | 55+ | Son | Nurse | Full-time | 5 | |
| 4 | Dong | 50+ | Son | Sales | Full-time | 3&1 | |
| 5 | Mei | 60+ | daughter | Administration staff | Full-time | 2 | |
| 6 | Lan | 50+ | daughter | Administration staff | Full-time | 5&4 | |
| 7 | Zhu | 55+ | Son | Resident Care Attendant | Full-time | 3 | |
| 8 | Ju | 60+ | Son | Resident Care Attendant | Part-time | 4 | |
| 9 | Jia | 55+ | Son | Resident Care Attendant | Part-time | 3 | |
| 10 | Xi | 55+ | daughter | Resident Care Attendant | Part-time | 4&2 | |
| 11 | Nan | 50+ | daughter | Resident Care Attendant | Part-time | 5 | |
| 12 | Bei | 55+ | daughter | Sales | Part-time | 1 | |
| 13 | Shi | 55+ | daughter | Sales | Full-time | 1 | |
| 14 | Ci | 60+ | daughter | Administration staff | Full-time | 3&1 | |
| 15 | Yi | 55+ | daughter | Teacher | Full-time | 5&5 | |
| 16 | Fu | 55+ | daughter | Babysitter | Full-time | 4 | |
| 17 | Wen | 55+ | daughter | Accountant | Part-time | 3&1 | |

| | | | | | |
|----|------|--------------|----------------------|-----------|---|
| 18 | Xin | 55+ daughter | Restaurant waiter | Part-time | 1 |
| 19 | Diao | 60+ daughter | Administration staff | Full-time | 2 |
| 20 | Long | 60+ Son | Administration staff | Full-time | 2 |

Box 1 Main themes and sub-themes from the analysis of the interviews on work - care reconciliation of Childcare by Grandmothers (of working age)

| | |
|-----------|--|
| A. | Grandmother identification of paid work |
| Sub-theme | 1. Self-accomplishment |
| Sub-theme | 2. Self-empowerment |
| Sub-theme | 3. Emotional compensation |
| Sub-theme | 4. Economic supplement |
| Sub-theme | 5. Disadvantage in labour market |
| B. | Grandmother discern caregiving to grandchildren |
| Sub-theme | 1. Own responsibility |
| Sub-theme | 2. Advantage to their children |
| Sub-theme | 3. Quality of the grandchildren care |
| C. | work and care reconciliation (Grandmother care strategies) |
| Sub-theme | 1. Retirement |
| Sub-theme | 2. Change the paid work temporarily |
| Sub-theme | 3. Retain the paid work without pay |
| Sub-theme | 4. Go back home for grandchild care irregularly |
| Sub-theme | 5. Taking the grandchildren to the workplace |
| Sub-theme | 6. Coordinate with the family to schedule the duty shift |
| Sub-theme | 7. Watch the grandchild's movement via the monitor |
| Sub-theme | 8. Apply the childcare resources |

Findings

"I told my daughter that I could only sacrifice and quit my paid work in order to take care of these two grandchildren, but I really love that paid work. I've cried for three days..." (Yi)

Grandmother paid work

According to the grandmothers' more than 10 years working experiences, I found that

the grandmothers regard their paid work positively, and they also love and value their paid work, which includes self-accomplishment, self-empowerment, emotional compensation, and economic supplement. Work brought confidence and economically independence to the grandmothers. It also broadens their social network and takes them out of the house, and therefore, they remain in the labour market.

Grandmothers' viewpoints toward paid work

1. Self-accomplishment

Grandmothers set goals of their career and achieve them step by step. The grandmother Xia who held an educational institution, hopes to keep on teaching more students and enrich them.

"It is a kind of enthusiasm to know more students and be more active. You feel happy about yourself. We have to pass forward our skills." (Xia)

The re-employment grandmother said that salary is not her main concern, but she goes back to work to catch-up with the society.

"I want to be independent economically. I was panic to be dissociated from the society and to be alone at home after retiring. I went back to work when I was around 40 somethings, and I didn't care much about the pay." (Qiu)

The grandmothers fulfil themselves with their professional role in labour market, and they are satisfied with the reward and work hard to get a promotion.

"Work brings confidence to oneself, it shows that we are able to earn our own money." (Shi)

"The economic status must be better when you have a paid work, and everyone wants to have the chance to get a promotion." (Diao)

2. Self-empowerment

Grandmothers would like to dress up when working, have their own social networks, learn new stuff at any time, and catch-up with the social vibe. They think it activates them to maintain a young heart and attractive appearance.

"You will have goals if you have a paid work. Besides, we girls like to dress up to walk out. Working will force you to keep on moving." (Yi)

“Some of my employers care about my physical condition, and ask me not to be too tired. We become like sisters and families, and I believe this is the best reward.” (Ju)

3. Emotional compensation

Some grandmothers were too busy to take good care of their old parents when they were young, and thus they choose to work at the nursing homes in memory of their parents.

“Taking care of the elderlies is like taking care of my own parents. I’ve lost my dad, and I didn’t take good care of him...”(Jia)

“I feel that it is a kind of happiness. My dad passed away when he was 88 years old. When I’m working in the nursing home, it’s just like I’m keeping company with my own parents.” (Qiu)

4. Economic supplement

Most of the grandmothers think that they could keep on working to support the family living expenses since their children already work so hard. They also believe that they can earn some allowance for themselves. It is not the salary that they care for, but to devote themselves to the family and to feel comfortable.

“I want to do more while I still can, and not to give too much economic pressure on my children. They are all working under the system of paid work responsibility, and usually get off work at around 11 PM or 12 AM.” (Ju)

“Just to have enough to eat and live. Without my salary, the living expense is way too high. You need to buy a house and pay the mortgage. The kids have to go to school, but the salary now is really not enough to live.” (Xi)

Disadvantage in labour market

Under the competition in the workplace and the industry change, the biggest challenge to the grandmothers is the decline of the middle-aged and the elderly workers due to the lack of learning capability and the physical strength. Even if they are willing to be re-employed, they often cannot find paid work unless they have specialties, such as nursing or teaching. Some grandmothers could only choose the labor-intensive paid work with low salary because of their age and the workplace exclusion.

“I found that you cannot find a proper paid work when you are 40 somethings. In the past, those who are over the age of 50 may find some low-end paid work, but now it’s really hard to find a good one.” (Wen)

Due to the industrial transformation, the middle-aged and elderly women may not be popular in the workplace, if they do not improve themselves professionally.

“The mass communication industry is not a favorable environment because it is reducing manpower itself. They don’t want people at our age to go back.”

(Long)

The grandmothers start to feel that the health degeneration will influence the working performance when she is over 50 years old. Even they are willing to work, their physical strength cannot afford it.

“The environment now is not that you will make money when you want to. We are almost 60 years old, the physical strength decreases, too. Sometimes we really want to do something, but just don’t have the energy to.” (Xi)

The grandmothers have strived and insisted in the workplace for so many years, and they think highly of self-value. As Maslow’s demand theory, they dedicate their specialties to the society and have a benign social network. When the grandmothers come to their middle age, they face the challenge of the workplace environment change. Their age, physical strength, and learning ability is on the decline relatively, the suitable paid work are decreasing, which also affect the middle-aged and elderly grandmothers’ paid work arrangement and career plan.

Caregiving to grandchildren

The grandchild care by the grandmothers is related to three generations, which has benefits to the overall development of grandmothers themselves, their children, and their grandchildren.

1. Advantage for the grandmothers-taking-care-of-grandchildren

Grandmothers believe that taking care of their grandchildren is an expression of love and also their responsibility. Through taking care of the grandchildren, the grandmothers can ensure their safety and also enjoy the happiness to keep company with them.

“Grandchildren are also my flesh and blood. Other grandmothers will not cherish my grandchildren. So, who is the best option, except me?”(Yi)

“It is really tiring and stressful to take care of them all day long. It’s different from taking care of my own children, but it’s with joy and pain.” (Diao)

2. Advantage to their children

Grandmothers would agree to look after their grandchildren are in the hope that it will lessen their children’ s financial burden through this non-material assistance and maintain the active balance of their couple relationship.

“I want to help my son because I’m afraid that raising a child is too costly to have a bad effect on their couple relationship.” (Zhu)

“They now have the dual income. They will lose one pay, if they take care of the kids on their own. They can have good performance in the workplace when I look after their children.” (Wen)

3. Quality of the grandchildren care

A good family education basis will be built by grandmothers’ example and precept through grandmothers’ care, which will also cultivate the affection between grandmothers and grandchildren. The grandchildren will also remember that their grandmothers cared for them and kept them company in their safe and happy childhood.

“I am satisfied to raise them up. I tell my daughter very often that I hope your children will not forget me in the future.” (Yi)

“It is better to take care of them on my own, to give them better education and to correct their bad habits. It is really something that money cannot buy. (Lan)

After taking care of the grandchildren, grandmothers feel that their relationship with children becomes closer, such as the increasing meeting frequency, in-depth conversation, interaction, and so forth. They believe it’ s a good way to invest on the family affection.

“My son thinks that by doing so, he can come home to see mom and dad and get together every day. It is tiresome to raise the grandchildren on my own. But, it also is an investment, it is a different feeling.” (Xia)

The grandmothers believe that taking care of the grandchildren has a positive influence on the three generations. It can close their relationship, assure their children while at work, reduce the expenses on childcare, and cultivate a close relationship between grandparents and grandchildren. They also expect that they may set a good example for the grandchildren of their behavior and perspective on life.

Work and care reconciliation

This study shows that grandmothers give positive feedback both on their paid work and grandchild care. Therefore, they choose to remain their paid work and the grandchild care at the same time. There are caring strategies developed, such as to coordinate the grandchild care with the family, take them to the workplace, and apply the childcare service; a few of them will retain the paid work without pay, or change the paid work temporarily to take care of their grandchildren at home(Figure 1).

1. Retirement

Considering the length of service has complied with legal retirement regulation, the grandmothers retire to care for the grandchildren and eliminate their children' s burden of work and care.

“I was as an editor, and I retired to assist my son and his wife.” (Long)

“I take care of my grandchild right after the retirement, and I hope my daughter may rest assured at work and have better physical strength.” (Diao)

2. Change the paid work temporarily

Fu first struggled that if she should stop the babysitting paid work for fear that her daughter could not understand. Considering the family relationship, she chose to stop the paid work and look after her own grandchild.

“The child I babysat was one year old. But, I don't want my daughter thought that I take care of other people's kid, not theirs. So, I stop the paid work and care for my own grandson.” (Fu)

3. Retain the paid work without pay

Yi' s supervisor opposed her stop teaching math and takes care of her grandson, and he believes it' s a waste of talent. Yi insisted in retaining the paid work without pay, for she believes that there is no return for her grandson' s growth.

“My students’ parents asked me why I waste my talent like this. I said that there is only one childhood for my grandson, and I don’t want to hesitate about teaching or my grandson care” (Yi).

4. Go back home for grandchild care irregularly

When there is other family help with the grandchild care, the grandmothers could go home to look after the grandchild at the spare time of her part-time paid work.

“My husband helps to take care of the grandchild in the daytime, and I could go home when I have spare time, which is why I chose this paid work.” (Zhu)

5. Taking the grandchildren to the workplace

When there is no one to babysit the grandchildren, and the grandmother cannot take a day off, they would choose to take the grandchildren to the workplace instead. They knew it is not correct and cannot affect their paid work. If the grandmother runs her own business, she will take the grandchild to the store as long as there is no influence to her business.

“I cannot reveal it to the company. I will discuss it with my employer if I really had to, but not with the unfamiliar one. So, I take her there in the nighttime usually.” (Zhu)

6. Coordinate with the family to schedule the duty shift

The grandmothers and their children check on their shifts with each other in order to take care of the paid work and the grandchildren at the same time.

“My daughter will check on our time and then schedule her paid work. It becomes that we schedule our paid work based on each other’s shifts.” (Bei)

7. Watch the grandchild’s movement via the monitor

A grandmother runs their own factory, and they watch the grandson’s status by the monitor at work so that she can keep company with the baby if need be. It is a very special way to care.

“My husband secured my grandson safely in the room, so I’ll go upstairs to check on him if there is any sound from the monitor. I’ll also watch the monitor while I’m cooking at noon, and when our dog barks, I knew my grandson is up.” (Dong)

8. Apply the childcare resources

If the grandmothers regard the paid work as the first priority, before taking care of the grandchildren, they tend to hope their children to take the parental leave and look after the children on their own.

“My daughter-in-law took care of the child on her own for one and a half year (applied for parental leave). The babysitter will be the last option, but I’ m afraid that there will be illegal babysitters, too.” (Lan)

Grandmothers think that the public daycare facilities are not enough, and it turns out that they have to purchase the childcare service in the market. Since the public/private kindergarten fees will increase the financial burden, they will have to defer the preschool education so that the grandmothers will spend more time on the grandchild care.

“The public kindergartens offer daycare, but there were one to two hundred kids waiting, we had no option but to choose the private kindergarten. Of course, there is a big difference in the tuition.” (Zhu)

There are many aspects to consider and evaluate when choosing a babysitter, including safety, education quality, caring quality, caring fee, and the caregiver’s characteristic. They are very complicated, which is why the babysitter is the last and the least option for the grandchild care.

“There are so many unqualified babysitters on the news, so we will try our best to take care of the grandchild by ourselves.” (Lan)

9. Ask for help from the relatives

There will be times in need, the relatives living nearby will be asked for a temporary and prompt help.

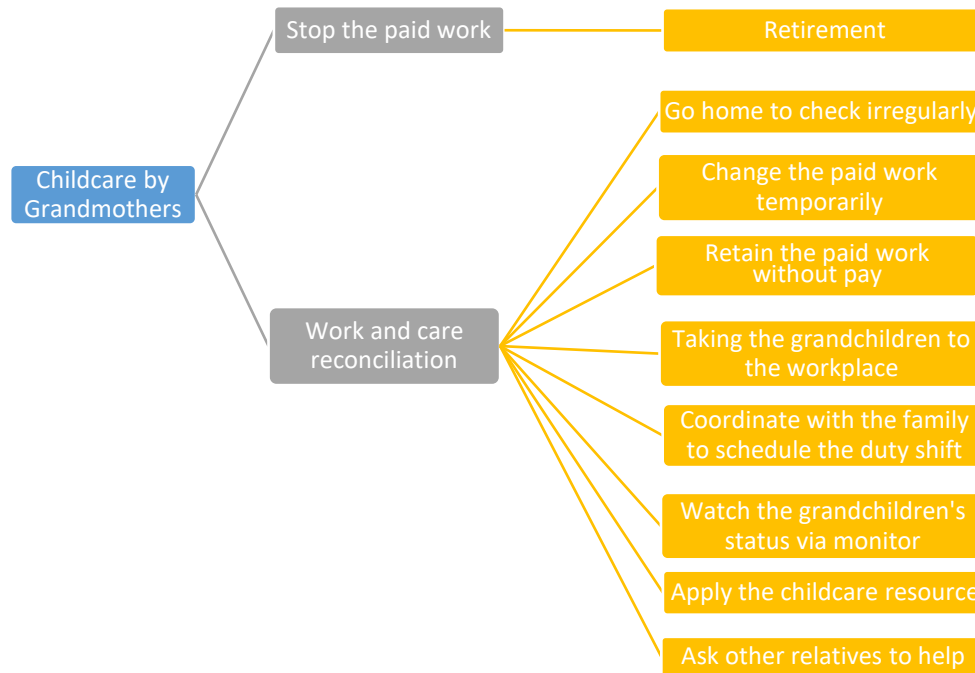
“Sometimes my daughter is at home on Sunday; if not, I will leave my grandchild to their uncle. I am off duty at 2 PM.” (Jia)

“The great-grandmother is more than 70 years old, and sometime she will help. When the grandson is in a fever, the kindergarten will inform us. My mother will go check on him first, and then we will ask for leave and take him to the doctor.” (Xi)

In this study, most of the grandmothers and their children will take 3 years old of the grandchildren as a cutoff point to arrange the childcare. When the grandchildren are under the age of 3, they will be taken care of by the grandmothers and the families

collaboratively; when the grandchildren are over the age of 3 and have simple expression ability, they will apply the daycare resources and send to the kindergarten for learning.

Figure 1 Grandmothers' caring strategy



Grandmothers have multiple caring strategies based on their paid work characteristics. Grandmothers believe that the grandchild care is relatively short (0-6 years old of their grandchildren) period of time, compare with their career (grandmothers could work till 65 years old). Most of the grandmothers choose to stay in the labour market, working and taking care of their grandchildren at the same time. It shows that the grandmothers have a great passion for their paid work.

Discussion

1. Applying for the parental leave is beneficial to the grandmothers to work and care for the grandchildren at the same time

This research indicates that grandmothers would hope their children to apply for the parental leave to take care of the child in person, and the grandmothers will assist them without giving up on and changing their paid work.

2. Grandmothers with paid work could be the full-time carers to the grandchildren

Meyer (2014) believes that the grandmothers with paid work will not be full-time carers to the grandchildren due to their long working hours; while Gray (2005) believes that the grandmothers dedicate less to grandchild care than the grandmothers without paid work. The above-mentioned scholars didn't define "full-time caregiver" to the grandchildren though; the researchers of this study support the grandmothers with paid work to be full-time carers. Take the grandmothers who run their own business (factory, bike shop) as an example, they could bring the grandchildren to the workplace when working, or to install a monitor in the grandchildren's room to watch their movement. In so doing, it is feasible for the grandmothers to work and be the full-time grandchildren carers. However, it may depend on different national conditions.

3. The grandmothers taking care of their grandchildren can not only assist their daughters but also their sons in maintaining their paid work in the workplace. Most studies indicate that the grandmothers help to take care of the grandchildren in order for their daughters to continue their paid work. (Lee & Bauer, 2010; Glaser et al., 2010; Tobío Soler, 2012) This study interviewed 20 grandmothers and found that, without selecting certain interviewees, the number of the grandchild care requests from their sons and daughters are almost the same. This shows that the grandmothers not only worry about their daughters not going back to the workplace due to the childcare, but also their sons affecting their income or being laid off due to the parental leave. This is what the previous studies didn't discover.

4. Grandchild care by grandmothers will not affect their paid work income Meyer's (2014) study showed that the grandmothers may make some adjustment to their paid work, and earn less, as well as sacrifice their annual leave or pension due to the grandchild care. This research found that there is no change to the grandmothers on taking the annual leave, adjusting working hours, paid work function, and total shifts, and it also has little influence on their salary and pension. This is a breakthrough, comparing to the previous studies. This study also discovered that the grandmothers with part-time paid work didn't reduce or change their workload because they don't regard themselves as the main carers.

Conclusion

This research is to study the viewpoints and the caring strategies of the grandmothers at their working age and with paid work about the grandchild care and their paid work.

(1) Viewpoints toward paid work

Grandmothers have a positive perspective on remaining in the workplace, including four working values, such as achieving self-accomplishment, self-empowerment, emotional compensation, and economic supplement. If there are options, grandmothers are willing to stay in the workplace. However, the grandmothers self-evaluate their increasing age and health degeneration; there are also workplace competition and industry change, which will cause negative influence to the grandmothers to stay in the workplace.

(2) Viewpoint toward grandchild care

When the working children face their preschool children caring needs, such as the caring safety consideration, caring fee, or not applicable to the childcare service provided by government or market, they all will turn to the grandmothers for help. The grandmothers think that to take care of their grandchildren have benefits for all three generations. From the self-interest point of view, grandmothers play a good role and are responsible; from the altruism point of view, they hope to maintain good marriage for their children, to assure them at work, and to reduce the childcare expense. In the meantime, the grandmothers hope that their grandchildren can keep them in mind when they grow up. Therefore, the grandchild care has benefit for the grandchildren's education quality and enhances the cultivation of the affection among the three generations.

(3) Strategies to take both the paid work and the grandchild care into account

Eventually, grandmothers analyzed that there are gains both for working and the grandchild care, they tend to stay in the workplace and to look after their grandchildren at the same time.

There are 9 strategies for the grandmothers to take both paid work and the grandchild care into account, and they are grandmothers as main carers, and grandmothers as collaborating carers. The 3 strategies for the grandmothers to be the main carers are:

retire, change the paid work temporarily, and retain the paid work without pay. The 6 strategies for the grandmothers to be the collaborating carers are: assist in watching the grandchildren's movement by a monitor, coordinate with the family to schedule the duty shift, go home to check and care irregularly, ask relatives for help temporarily, take them to the workplace, and apply the children's childcare resources.

Implications

1. Friendly childcare system: prevalent, affordable price, and high-quality daycare service

There will be an indirect impact on the working grandmothers if they take care of the grandchildren and work at the same time; therefore, a friendly childcare system will support not only their parents to work and childcare, but also the grandmothers at their working age to remain in the labour market.

The study indicates that a friendly childcare system providing prevalent, affordable price and high-quality public daycare is the best choice for the working women. In order to increase the parents and grandmothers' reliance and incentive to all the daycare services, the affordable prices must be set, the childcare supervisory measures for the current legal babysitters, daycare centers, and kindergartens shall be enhanced, and the caring safety shall be improved.

The researchers suggested that we learn from Sweden about the parental leave for the parents and the grandparents. The two-year parental leave in Taiwan should be applied separately till their children are 8 years old. In addition, in order for the parents or the grandparents to take care of the children/grandchildren temporarily, the family care leave should be extended as well.

2. To promote the middle-aged and elderly employment

The study shows that the grandmothers' quitting their paid work doesn't mean that they don't want to be employed; but, it is the age-unfriendly labour market that caused the grandmothers believe that it will be tough for them to find a paid work at their age. When the middle-aged and elderly women face the conflict to take care of their grandchildren and their paid work, only if a friendly childcare system can be

established, a friendly labour market to the middle-aged and elderly women is a must, and said issues to be further discussed by related departments so that the women will choose to remain in the labour market.

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