

# Grandparents, Adolescents, and Parents

## Intergenerational Relations of Taiwanese Youth

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This article examines intergenerational relations from the perspective of Taiwanese youth. Specifically, the major focus is on how the relations between second and third generations may be affected by prior family experiences between first, second, and third generations. Possible effects of the three-generation living arrangement on intergenerational relations are also explored. Panel data of 2,500 seventh graders in 2000 in northern Taiwan show that half of teenagers were raised in coresidence living arrangement with grandparents. Results confirm that relations between grandparents and parents and between grandparents and grandchildren do affect parent-teenager relations. Notably, more so than coresidence, the early family experience of being cared for by paternal grandparents produces significant positive effects on adolescent-father relations and negative adolescent-father relations if cared for by maternal grandparents. It is suggested that the impact of earlier family process on subsequent family relations is worth further investigation.

**Keywords:** *intergenerational relations; coresidence; child care arrangement; emotional closeness; filial values*

### The Research Background

The traditional Chinese family has been characterized by a strong patrilineal heritage and the veneration of age (Hsu, 1948; Yang, 1945)<sup>1</sup>. For all

classes, Confucian ethics places heavy emphasis on filial piety and the proper order by generation and age in the family socialization process (Blitsten, 1963; Yang, 1967). Chinese parents have been major agents who transmit family values to children, but other adults—especially grandparents and kin—also have authority in socializing the child (C.-L. Chu, 1974). It is well documented that the multigenerational patrilocal household has been a cultural ideal shared by gentry and peasant alike (Freedman, 1970; S.-C. Lee, 1953; Queen & Habenstein, 1967). Research from Taiwan also shows that in history and in contemporary society, this familistic residence pattern is actualized whenever the family situation permits (K.-J. Chen, Tu, & Lin, 1989; Lai & Chen, 1980; Wolf, 1982; Yi, 1985). Hence, the average Taiwanese child should have a relatively high likelihood of exposure to intergenerational family experiences. The possible impact from having higher contact with grandparents on the subsequent generational relations is an interesting subject of investigation. This is what we intend to explore in this article.

The objectives of this article are twofold. First, an attempt is made to explore possible effects of early family experience on present relations between generations. Early family experience includes coresidence and child care between first and third generations and is presumed to affect the present generational relations. Second, a special effort is made to specify the effects of grandparent–parent (G1–G2) and grandparent–adolescent (G1–G3) generations on the relationship quality of the second–third (G2–G3) generations.

## **The Intergenerational Relation in Taiwan**

The official statistics and island-wide surveys agree that since the 1970s, one third of Taiwanese households fall into the stem or extended family type, and the proportion has been stabilizing (Yi & Chang, 1996). The complex family structure with mostly paternal three generations provides an unusual environment for children's socialization. Specifically, grandparents have more opportunities to be involved in the process. Previous reports indicate that not only intergenerational relations are affected in the three-generational households but marital relations are constrained in this familial context as well (Li, 1998).

### **A Brief Summary of Relevant Studies**

Most relevant studies of intergenerational relations in Taiwan concern the exchanges among adult children and elderly parents. Parental support has been explored in various family structures (Chang, 1994), from support atti-

tudes and actual support patterns (Yi & Chen, 1998) and from the perspective of adult children (Hsieh, 2000). These reports show that parents, more than their adult children, favor independent living. Adult children, instead, express views in accordance with the traditional norm of parental care, regarding the preferred coresidence and financial support patterns. Intergenerational support among Taiwanese families has also been examined by focusing on the gender differences (Y.-J. Lee, Parish, & Willis, 1994; I.-F. Lin et al., 2003). Results are consistent in that sons rather than daughters are more likely to assume major care responsibility for elderly parents, whereas daughters may perform the substitute role. The latest effort on this topic attempts to develop a differential association model (labeled the *convoy model*) and finds that intergenerational exchanges at home expand according to the patrilineal kin networks (C.-N. Chen, 2003). Other related researches include using the solidarity model developed by Bengtson (J.-P. Lin, 1996) or analyzing the meaning of exchange for elderly women (Hu & Chou, 1996) or for handicapped elderly (S.-C. Wu & Lin, 1999). In sum, both large-scale quantitative data and qualitative analysis (i.e., in-depth interviews or focus group studies) generate similar results: Parental support by adult children in Taiwan is intact as a typical normative obligation with clear patrilineal advantage (Yi, 1999).

Another line of study has recently emerged and has largely focused on the intergenerational exchanges between parents and their teenage children. The family value transmission between two generations has been ascertained, and unlike the West, the transmission is shown to be affected more by contextual factors rather than structural factors (Yi, Chang, & Chang, 2004). Parenting practice, especially harsh parenting within different family structures, is shown to account for adolescent behavior problems and poor mental health (Lei & Wu, 2004; C.-I. Wu, 2000; C.-I. Wu & Kao, 1997; C.-I. Wu & Lei, 2003). These efforts to target the possible intergenerational transmission should be differentiated from the dominant social psychological-oriented comparison between parent-child interaction or exchanges and its possible effect on adolescent behaviors (Jou & Wu, 2001; M.-Y. Wu, 1998). Nevertheless, it is evident that delinquent behavior appears to be the crucial concern in most sociological studies of teenagers and their family relations (Chang, 2001; Y.-W. Chen, 1999; Hou, 2001). For social psychologists, parenting has also been a factor affecting parent-child relations (C. R. Chu, 1989; Kao & Lu, 2001; Lo, 2000; Yeh, 1995). However, it should be pointed out that most studies analyzing parent-teenager relations in Taiwan seem to follow the Western theoretical framework and thus do not take into account the complex family context in Taiwan.

There has been a serious lack of studies in Taiwan of young adults leaving the parental home. The only article on this subject deals with the elderly who live apart from children (C.-N. Chen, 1996), not addressing the common

issue of young adults leaving the parental home. Property inheritance has also caught some attention. Paternal lineage advantages are usually assumed, and variations from the expected patterns become a pertinent research question.

Beyond the two generations of adult children and elderly parents, a typical intergenerational research topic such as grandparenthood has received broad attention. However, most reports are from the social problem perspective, especially in conjunction with the issue of parenting the grandchildren (or a direct translation—the missing middle-parent generation in the socialization process; L.-H. Chen, Ong, Hsu, & Lin, 2000; C.-L. Chu, 1983; Hsiao, 1999; C.-J. Wu & Chang, 2003). Although it is often accepted as a compromise in the family strategy when facing the conflict between the economic need of the family and the work demand on parents, missing-generational parenting is still considered an undesirable practice in Taiwan. Here, we need to turn to the related subject of child care arrangement.

### **The Grandparent's Role in Child Care**

Since the mid-1980s, child care by nonparents, especially young children being cared for by grandparents, other kin, or by babysitters for 24 hours, became a salient social issue and has drawn great attention in Taiwan (Feng, 1995; Yi, 1994). A report from 1986 points out that for married working mothers in Taipei, Taiwan, as high of a percentage as 27% had others care for their children less than 3 years old during workdays (Yi, 1987). For preschoolers island wide, regardless of parents' working status, 13.8% had grandparents as major child care providers in 1992. The percentage rises to 34% for children living in complex family structures; and among them, if both parents are working, grandparents become the most important child care provider (54.4%; Directorate-General of Budget, Accounting and Statistics, 1993). It is clear that grandparents assume a significant supplementary role in child care arrangements in Taiwan.

In general, this unconventional child care arrangement pattern is attributed to the massive rural-urban migration and the drastic increase of female employment outside of the home (Feng, 1995; Yi, 1994). Various work-related demands or conditions are found to significantly affect the length of child care time among working mothers with young children in Taipei (Yi, 1987). The lack of adequate public child care facilities, the concern for economic costs, compounded with the number of preschool children lead to a dependence on grandparents as the preferred substitute for child care. Nevertheless, potential conflict from the generational gap in child care practice is often reported (Chia & Chen, 1999; Hsiao, 1999), and the highest satisfaction in child care outcome remains from the parent's own involvement. Having a substantial proportion

of children being raised in the multigenerational familial context, along with a strong endorsement of age reverence as the socialization norm, it is expected that Taiwanese adolescents will reveal different attitudes and emotional attachment toward parents and grandparents in the intergenerational interaction.

In other words, it is assumed that early exposure to coresidence experiences with grandparents and grandparents' care may produce significant effects on the later development of the grandparent-grandchild relationship, which in turn may affect the contemporary parent-child relationship.

### **The Generational Focus of Studies in the West**

For the past few decades, the study of intergenerational relations in the West has been focused on the interaction between adult children and their elderly parents. This focus has coincided with the increasing size of the elderly population. Parental support and leaving the parental home among young adults appear to dominate the literature (Aldous, 1987; Goldscheider & Goldscheider, 1993; Hogan, Eggebeen, & Clogg, 1993; Lye, 1996; Rossi & Rossi, 1990; Spitze & Logan, 1990; Umberson, 1992; Walker & Pratt, 1991; Ward & Spitze, 1996; White, 1994). In specifying the exchange relations between generations, the research gradually expanded to examine variations because of gender, divorce, race, urbanism, value differentials, and elder's health and resources. It is well documented that women have served as kin-keepers in the family and between generations and that parents offer more financial help to their children than they receive, especially during key life course transitions or when special needs such as higher education emerge (Cooney & Uhlenberg, 1992; Goldscheider, Thornton, & Yang, 2001; Hogan & Eggebeen, 1995; Rosenthal, 1985; Silverstein, Parrott, & Bengtson, 1995).

An important recent development of intergenerational studies brings family values into the research framework. Study reports that exchange expectations rooted in family values will result in actual behaviors in parental support. In addition, earlier familism or family obligation history is associated with subsequent support exchanges (Parrott & Bengtson, 1999). Values toward marriage and college education also influence both the expectation and the parental support received (Goldscheider et al., 2001). Overall, children expect more support than parents do, and sons expect more than daughters. However, the final support provision is highly contingent on various situations in relation to the family values held by different generations.

The above studies are confined to the interaction between the first generation (i.e., elderly parents or G1) and the second generation (i.e., adult

children or G2). When grandparenthood is introduced, it creates a third generation category (i.e., grandchildren or G3), and the research becomes more diversified. On one hand, besides treating the intergenerational relation between G1 and G3 as an independent subject of its own, the relation and exchanges between G1 and G2 are investigated in terms of its potential effect on the relation between G1 and G3. In addition, earlier relations between G1 and G2 are analyzed in relation to the present relation between G1 and G2 and between G1 and G3. In other words, the interaction and exchanges among three generations open up a vast research possibility for generational studies.

### **The Relation Between G1 and G3**

With the increase of longevity, grandparents have assumed more important roles in the family (Aldous, 1995). The grandparents have been more available in family interactions, and their presence is even expected from childhood to adulthood during the family life course. The prevalent multigenerational bonds and related ambivalence observed within the family system have also been addressed (Bengtson, 2000; Luscher, 2002).

Most studies focusing on the intergenerational relations between G1 and G3 notice its possible impact on children's development, and a grandmother's participation is usually compared with a grandfather's participation. For example, a grandfather's nurturance in rearing a very young child is found to have a direct positive effect on the child's growth and is more salient than a grandmother's nurturance (Oyserman, Radin, & Benn, 1993). Child care by grandparents has also been examined. Researches identify various care patterns among grandparents (from extended full-time to sporadic care) and show that grandparent care is contingent on different family circumstances (Goodman & Silverstein, 2001; Morrow-Kondos, Weber, Cooper, & Hesser, 1997; Vandell, McCartney, Owen, Booth, & Clarke-Stewart, 2003). Effects on grandparents who parent their grandchildren are also examined by changes in lifestyle and in relations with friends and with family members (Jendrek, 1993).

Another significant aspect of the relationship between G1 and G3 is the affection or closeness expressed. The quality of generational relations is often measured by the contact frequency and/or the emotional attitudes reported (Crosnoe & Elder, 2002; Goodman & Silverstein, 2001; Whitbeck, Hoyt, & Huck, 1993). It is assumed that the expressed or perceived emotional closeness and affection between generations will lead to subsequent help and support exchanges (Parrot & Bengtson, 1999). The intergenerational

affection between G1 and G3 also consider the adult grandchild. Research reveals that Euro-American grandparents have greater affection for their granddaughters than vice versa, but the gap does not exist for grandsons. On the contrary, Mexican American grandsons report greater affection for grandfathers than their grandfathers have for them (Giarrusso, Feng, Silverstein, & Bengtson, 2001). In the same study, similar values between generations are shown to result in a smaller gap between the levels of affection expressed.

In addition, study has pointed out significant rural and urban differences in G1-G3 relations. Comparing urban, rural nonfarm, and rural farm youth, the urban sample reports less help from grandparents, less contact with paternal grandparents, but more conflict with maternal grandmothers (King, Silverstein, Elder, Bengtson, & Conger, 2003). Rural farm adolescents indicate more frequent contact and more help received from paternal grandparents. The rural-urban ecological differences in grandparenting are documented.

### **The Effect of the Older Generation on the Younger Generation (G1-G2→G1-G3)**

The possible effect of relations between grandparent and parent (G1-G2) on relations between grandparent and grandchildren (G1-G3) is clearly an interesting subject in multigenerational family context. Positive correlation is usually assumed in that grandparents who maintain close ties with their own children (i.e., parents) are more likely to enjoy close relations with grandchildren. A relevant question often raised is whether G1-G3 relations depend on or are mediated by G1-G2 relations. In other words, exchanges between a grandparent and a grandchild occur within the multigenerational context, and the parent's generation (G2) is regarded as the link between them. Therefore, although the concern is focused on G1-G3 relations, the relationship between G1 and G2 is presumed to operate as the basis of other generational relations.

Studies of similar research concerns seem to generate different answers. During grandchildren's transition to higher education, grandparents with college education provide more mentoring and report better intergenerational ties (in contrast with grandchildren not entering college; Crosnoe & Elder, 2002). But the link between G1 and G3 relationships during this life course transition is not moderated by the G1-G2 relationship. On the other hand, the parent as the mediator of the G1-G3 relationship is documented among rural families. Taking into account the lineage factor, the relationship quality between G1 and G2 is shown to affect the frequency of contact and the

relationship between all types of G1 and G3 dyads, regardless of gender or lineage (Whitbeck et al., 1993). Similarly, when G1-G3 relations are delineated with special emphasis on lineage differentials, the relationship between G1 and G2 again affects G1-G3 relations (Chan & Elder, 2000). To be specific, both the father's and mother's close ties with his or her parents contribute to better relations between the grandchild and the paternal and maternal grandparent, respectively. But overall, the matrilineal advantage is evident.

### **The Effect of Earlier Experience (Earlier G1-G2→Present G1-G2 and G1-G3)**

The earlier generational relation between grandparent and parent is presumed to have a lasting effect in that not only present relations between G1 and G2 arise from its quality but the present G1-G3 relations may become its consequence too. Empirical evidence supports this argument. Childhood negative relations between parents and grandparents (G2-G1) affect both the contemporary adult parent and grandparent relationship and the subsequent contact and relations between grandchildren and grandparents (Whitbeck et al., 1993). Even for a shorter time span, earlier intergenerational affection and stronger sense of family obligation are also associated with later exchange of support and help among parents and adult children (Parrot & Bengtson, 1999).

It should be pointed out that although positive emotions (e.g., affection) between generations may result in reciprocal and equitable exchanges, support and help based on a belief in familism are often less equitable and often to the adult child's disadvantage. In other words, in the analysis of intergenerational interactions in the West, it is shown that family values and attitudes will contribute to subsequent generational behavior. Nevertheless, emotional closeness in contrast with values and expectations appears to produce a more important effect in the actual exchanges that take place.

### **The Research Model**

This article will examine intergenerational relations in Taiwan from the perspectives of the adolescent. Based on previous research in the West and in Taiwan, various aspects of family experiences will be considered in the analysis of three generational interactions. Specifically, interactions between G1 and G2 and between G1 and G3 are assumed to be related. Furthermore, unlike most studies, the analysis will extend to the possible

consequence on current parent-adolescent grandchild (G2-G3) relations. In other words, the multigenerational relations studied will include dyadic pairs among three generations. This is especially pertinent because of the significant role grandparents perform in Taiwanese families.

From the research model shown below, it is clear that family experiences investigated are composed of behavior (G1-G2 contact; G1-G3 early child care), structure (G1-G3 coresidence in childhood and at present), and values (filial values) and attitudes (G1-G3 emotional closeness). The outcome relations are the perceived relational quality toward the mother and the father (G2-G3). In addition, because of the importance of lineage differentials in the family system in Taiwan, the analyses will be separated into paternal grandparents in comparison to maternal grandparents.

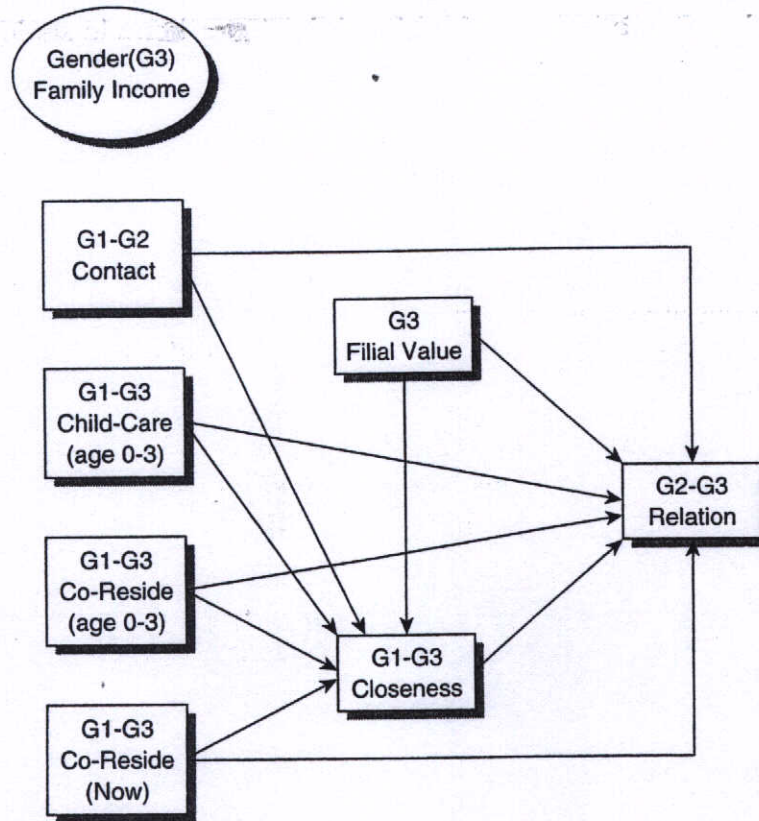
As discussed above, coresidence with grandparents (especially paternal grandparents) is in accord with the cultural norm among Chinese societies. The child care arrangement by grandparents is well accepted and has been a prevalent form adopted by a substantial number of dual-earner families. Hence, these earlier family experiences along with present family interactions are expected to affect the quality of the perceived intergenerational relationship. Being socialized in the patrilineal familial context, Taiwanese adolescents are presumed to have more contact with paternal grandparents. It will be interesting to investigate the relative importance between normative factors such as filial piety toward parental support and the existing family structural arrangement in accounting for the changing generational relations.

Another important point regarding the affection variable should be briefly mentioned. It has long been argued that to avoid potential interpersonal conflict and to maintain interpersonal harmony, the Chinese do not encourage the expression of emotional feelings (Hsu, 1948). However, this is only a partial description. The ideal pattern of human behavior, as delineated in the Confucian doctrine of the Wu-Lun (or codes of five social dyads), actually requires affection in the father-son relationship (Ruey, 1967). But affection expressed or practiced must follow the higher order of obedience and other appropriate family rules.

In short, the objectives of this article are the following:

1. To focus on the intergenerational relations across three generations: Specifically, the family process occurring among G1-G2 and G1-G3 will be related to the present G2-G3 relations.
2. To examine the possible impact of earlier family experiences on subsequent family relations: In particular, early child care by grandparents (and the coresidence experience) are expected to influence both the present closeness

**Figure 1**  
**The Research Framework**



to grandparents and the quality of the relationship with the adolescent's own parents.

3. To consider the effects of values, attitudes, and behaviors in the familial context: adolescents' filial values regarding parental support, affectionate attitudes revealed, and actual interaction experienced at home.
4. To take into account the gender differences in the intergenerational lineage: Patrilineal are compared to matrilineal lineage, and relations between adolescents and mothers are differentiated from relations with fathers.

## Data and Variables

### The Sample

We used the data conducted by the Taiwan Youth Project (the Institute of Sociology, Academia Sinica, Taiwan) to examine whether family structure

and early family process affect the current parent-child relations. This project is an 8-year longitudinal study with eight waves of surveys scheduled from 2000 to 2007. It consists of two cohorts of students: 2,696 seventh-grade students (first grade of the junior high) and 2,890 ninth-grade students (last year of the junior high) in 2000. In addition, one of their parents, usually the mothers, and their head master of the class were interviewed at the same year. To explore the growth trajectory of the youth, the research design of this project focuses on three main social mechanisms of adolescent development: family, school and community, and their interplay. Each wave of questionnaires includes two parts: current questions and retrospective questions. Current questions are asked in every year to explore adolescent developmental pattern. For example, to understand adolescent life experiences, we ask adolescents to report their life events in every year. On the other hand, retrospective questions are asked once. For example, in the Wave 3 parent interview, parents reported their children's early child care experiences.

The Taiwan Youth Project used a school-based, stratified sampling design. A sample of junior high schools in Taipei city, Taipei County, and Yi-Lan County, stratified by the level of urbanization was selected. These three areas located in the northern part of Taiwan have different levels of urbanization and different economic structures. Specifically, Taipei is the largest metropolitan city in Taiwan; Yi-Lan is a mostly agriculture-based county and Taipei County is in between these two regions. Thus, in the first stage of sampling, based on the level of urbanization, we divided Taipei city into three strata, Taipei County into three strata, and Yi-Lan County into two strata. In the second stage, based on the number of students registered in each stratum, we determined the numbers of schools in each stratum. Finally, 40 schools were selected from the pool: 16 schools from Taipei city, 15 schools from Taipei County, and 9 schools from Yi-Lan County. In each school, we randomly chose two classes in each grade and interviewed all students. One parent of students, usually the mothers (about 70%), and the headmaster of the class were also asked to fill out the parent questionnaire and the teacher questionnaire.

Because in this study we needed some retrospective questions, such as the early family process, the sample was based on the surveys of seventh-grade students and their parents from Wave 1 to Wave 3 (from year 2000 to 2002). In Wave 1, 2,696 students in seventh grade and their parents received the questionnaires. About 99.79% ( $N = 2,690$ ) of students completed the student questionnaire in the class, and about 98.89% ( $N = 2,666$ ) of parents filled out the parent questionnaire. In Wave 2, most students (99.62%,  $N = 2,683$ ) were reinterviewed. In Wave 3, about 98.77% of the

original sample ( $N = 2,663$ ) completed the student questionnaire in the class, and 75.03% of parents ( $N = 2,023$ ) received interviews at home. Because of missing samples in these three wave surveys, the exclusion of samples whose grandparents passed away, and listwise deletions of missing data on statistical procedures, our final sample includes 1,184 pairs of the students and their parents in the paternal model and 1,241 pairs in the maternal model.

## Variables

### Independent Variables

Previous research suggested the importance of variations in the effects of paternal grandparents and maternal grandparents. Thus, we tested research models on paternal grandparents and maternal grandparents separately (see Table 1). For example, in the paternal grandparent model, we focused on the contact and relations with paternal grandparents and whether adolescents lived with paternal grandparents now and in early childhood. Thus, all independent variables referring to grandparents consider the paternal and maternal lines separately. In addition, because family structure is a main baseline for most arguments in this article, the coresidence arrangement will be differentiated and compared for all variables.

*G1-G2 contact.* G1-G2 contact was drawn from the Wave 3 parent questionnaire. With respect to paternal G1-G2 contact, if mothers responded to the questionnaire, it was measured by the question, "How often do you have contact with your parents-in-law?" If fathers responded, it was measured by the question, "How often do you have contact with your parents?" On the other hand, with respect to maternal G1-G2 contact, if mothers responded to the questionnaire, it was measured by the question, "How often do you have contact with your parents?" If fathers responded, it was measured by the question, "How often do you have contact with your parents-in-law?" The range of contact is from 1 (*once or twice per year*) to 7 (*almost every day*). The result shows that consistent with the paternal society, on average, parents have more frequent contact with paternal grandparents than with maternal grandparents.

*Grandparent-teenager early child care.* Our measure of grandparent-teenager early child care is a dummy variable. According to parent's reports of early child care arrangement, two items referred to who was the major child caregiver in daytime and nighttime. If paternal grandparents provided

**Table 1**  
**Variables Description**

	Paternal ( <i>n</i> = 1,184)	%	Maternal ( <i>n</i> = 1,241)	%
<b>Gender of G3</b>				
Female	577	48.7	615	49.6
Male	607	51.3	626	50.4
<b>Family income (in New Taiwan Dollars [NT])</b>				
Less than NT\$30,000	186	15.7	192	15.5
NT\$30,000 to NT\$49,999	275	23.2	290	23.4
NT\$50,000 to NT\$59,999	240	20.3	243	19.6
NT\$60,000 to NT\$69,999	87	7.3	91	7.3
NT\$70,000 to NT\$79,999	112	9.5	128	10.3
NT\$80,000 to NT\$89,999	56	4.7	59	4.8
NT\$90,000 to NT\$99,999	58	4.9	67	5.4
NT\$100,000 to NT\$109,999	56	4.7	54	4.4
NT\$110,000 to NT\$119,999	39	3.3	37	3.0
NT\$120,000 to NT\$129,999	11	0.9	12	1.0
NT\$130,000 to NT\$139,999	18	1.5	18	1.5
NT\$140,000 to NT\$149,999	16	1.4	15	1.2
NT\$150,000 and above	30	2.5	35	2.8
<b>G1-G2 contact</b>				
1 to 2 times per year	17	1.4	28	2.3
3 to 5 times per year	32	2.7	32	2.6
6 to 10 times per year	31	2.6	36	2.9
1 or 2 times per month	200	16.9	283	22.8
1 or 2 times per week	262	22.1	392	31.6
3 to 4 times per week	131	11.1	200	16.1
Almost every day	511	43.2	270	21.8
<b>Child care (age 0 to 3)</b>				
Yes	184	15.5	92	7.4
No	1,000	84.5	1,149	92.6
<b>Coresidence (age 0 to 3)</b>				
Yes	573	48.4	78	6.3
No	611	51.6	1,163	93.7
<b>Coresidence (now)</b>				
Yes	344	29.1	41	3.3
No	840	70.9	1,200	96.7
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Filial value	7.44	.03	7.43	.03
G1-G3 closeness	3.68	.03	3.59	.03
Relations with mom	57.99	.34	57.85	.34
Relations with dad	56.81	.36	56.86	.35

Note: G1 = grandparent; G2 = parent; G3 = grandchildren.

care in daytime or nighttime for grandchildren between ages 0 and 3, they were categorized as major caregivers (1 = cared, 0 = none). The maternal grandparent child care category was conducted in the same way. The result shows that 15.5% and 7.4% of teenagers were cared for by paternal and maternal grandparents, respectively, before age 3. This is a substantial proportion in terms of intensive interaction at early family socialization process.

*Grandparent-teenager coresidence in childhood.* Parents indicated whether teenagers lived with paternal or maternal grandparents before they were 3 years old. If the teens coresided with their paternal grandparents at that time, it was coded as a dummy variable with a value of 1; those who did not live with a grandparent were coded into 0. The same procedure was applied to the variable of maternal grandparents. The frequency showed that patrilineal coresidence during early childhood is a more common practice among our samples (48.4%), much higher than the matrilineal coresidence pattern (6.3%). All together, slightly more than half the teenagers had a coresiding experience with grandparents before age 3.

*Grandparent-teenager coresidence at present.* Based on the teenager's self-reported household roster, if there were paternal grandparents in the same household, this family was regarded as a complex paternal household with a coresidence living arrangement (1 = yes; 0 = no). In addition, if maternal grandparents lived in the same household, this family falls into the maternal complex household with a coresidence living arrangement (1 = yes; 0 = no). As expected, there are still more respondents who currently live with paternal grandparents (29%) than with maternal grandparents (3.3%), but the proportion is less when compared with the childhood experience.

*Filial value.* Filial value was conducted by two-item questions pertaining to providing care for elderly parents. Adolescents were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with the following statements: "When parents get older, children have the obligation to take care of them" and "When elderly parents encounter financial shortage, children have an obligation to provide financial support for them." The sum of both items is the scale score. The higher the scores, the stronger is the level of filial values.

*Grandparent-teenager emotional closeness.* A strong argument in the research model is the importance of emotional attachment between grandparents and teenagers in mediating the generational relations. Grandparent-teenager emotional closeness was assessed by a question about their feeling

toward their grandparents. Teenagers indicated how close they feel to their paternal and maternal grandparents, respectively. The range of closeness is from 1 (*not close at all*) to 5 (*extremely close*). Results show that greater closeness is expressed toward paternal grandparents than toward maternal grandparents (3.68 versus 3.59).

### **Dependent Variables**

Relations with mothers and fathers were measured by two sets of 12-item questions. Adolescents were presented with a list of situations at home and reported whether it occurred during the past 6 months when they were with their mother and father. Questions included items such as "You asked his or her opinion on important things; you cared about your mother or father; you were proud of your mother or father; you were angry with your mother or father; you were negligent toward your mother or father; and you felt your mother or father did not care about you." The original response ranges from 1 (*always*) to 7 (*never*). To have consistent direction in the calculation, the values of some items were revised. The sum of 12 items is the scale score, and the range is from 12 to 84. The higher the scores, the better the relations with mother and father. The standardized alpha level of relations with mother is .84 and of relations with father is .84.

### **Control Variables**

To control for the effects of demographic factors, there are two control variables in this study: adolescent's gender and family income. With respect to gender, previous research suggested that daughters are more likely than sons to have better relations with family members and be more willing to take care of elderly parents. For our sample, 48.7% of the adolescents are females in the paternal model and 49.6% are females in the maternal model. Family income is an important indicator of socioeconomic status. It was assessed by the question on total family monthly income. The range is from Category 1 (*below New Taiwan Dollar [NT] \$30,000*) to Category 13 (*above NT\$ 150,000*). Results indicate that among our samples, family income falls between NT\$50,000 and NT\$69,999.

## **Results**

This article examines whether the generational relations among Taiwanese youth are affected by the structural arrangement within the family context,

**Table 2**  
**Coresidence (Co-R) and Child Care (CC) Arrangement**  
**Among Taiwanese Adolescent Before Preschool Ages**

Co-R	Paternal CC			Maternal CC		
	Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	Total
Yes	136	437	573	37	41	78
% within Co-R	23.7	76.3	100	47.4	52.6	100
% within CC	73.9	43.7	48.4	40.2	3.6	6.3
No	48	563	611	55	1,108	1,163
% within Co-R	7.9	92.1	100	4.7	95.3	100
% within CC	26.1	56.3	51.6	59.8	96.4	93.7
Total	184	1,000	1,184	92	1,149	1,241
% within Co-R	15.5	84.5	100	7.4	92.6	100
% within CC	100	100	100	100	100	100

Note: The likelihood ratio,  $\chi^2$ , is 58.5\* for paternal CC and 104.81\* for maternal CC.  
 \* $p$  = significant at .001 level.

especially during childhood. Coresidence with grandparents and preschool child care arrangements by grandparents are used as indicators for this family experience. Because possible lineage differential is a focus of study, the following analyses will be separated into the paternal versus the maternal sides.

We will begin with an examination of the lineage differences in the early family process. Table 2 presents a cross-tabulation of the coresidence and the child care arrangements before school age, with special attention to its relationship with lineage lines.

The child care arrangement experience supports the paternal dominance thesis but with less differences than might be expected between lineage lines. Between ages 0 and 3, 15% of adolescents were cared for by paternal grandparents as compared with 7% cared for by maternal grandparents. A further examination of the actual involvement of coresiding grandparents in the child care role reveals interesting results. Let us look at the paternal line first. Although coresiding grandparents constitute major care providers among grandparents who parent the grandchildren, grandparents in general do not assume a major role for child care arrangement in Taiwan. Among coresident paternal grandparents, only one fourth participates in actual child care since childbirth (23.7%). In other words, the majority of coresident paternal grandparents do not provide care for their grandchildren; but if paternal grandparents do provide child care, they are more likely to be coresiding with their sons (74% vs. 26%).

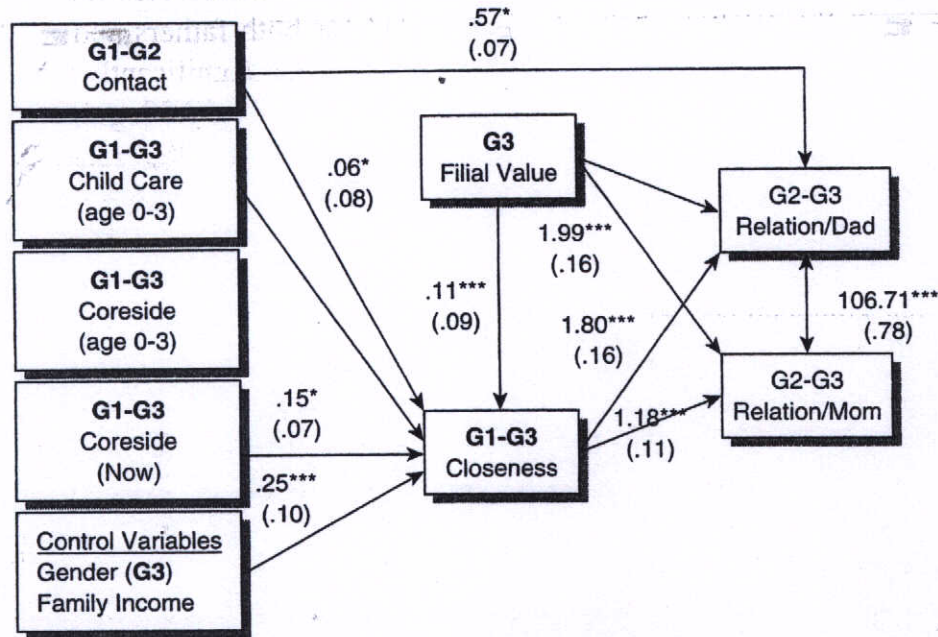
The results for the role of maternal grandparents in child care show a different pattern. On one hand, Taiwanese maternal grandparents have less involvement in grandchildren's care arrangement (7.4%). But with a coresidence structure, the percentage of grandparents who parent their grandchildren increases to 47.4%. The proportion is much higher than their paternal counterpart (23.7%). In other words, grandparents who live with daughters are more likely to care for their grandchildren than those who live with sons. Child care demand may assume a higher consideration for the decision to coreside with maternal grandparents.

In short, with regard to the lineage differential in child care arrangement, two clear patterns can be derived from Table 2. First, although paternal grandparents in Taiwan are more likely to coreside, grandparents of both paternal and maternal lines have low participation in child care responsibilities (between 7% and 15%). Second, the coresidence experience produces different outcomes for caring for the grandchildren in that coresident paternal grandparents have much lower participation than their maternal counterparts. It is apparent that most coresident paternal grandparents do not assume the child care role. But among the minority of grandparents who do care for their grandchildren, coresident paternal grandparents constitute a major component, whereas nonresident maternal grandparents assume proportionately more responsibility (59.8%) than their paternal counterpart (26%).

The above statements point out that childhood family experience, namely, coresidence with and child care by grandparents, does have important lineage differentials. Because the focus of this article is to investigate the possible effect of earlier family experience on present family relations and its interplay with the lineage, we will now turn to the analysis of the research model. To delineate possible lineage differences, path analyses are performed for paternal grandparents and maternal grandparents separately. We use Amos 5 to generate simultaneous effects, and only significant paths (using standard coefficients) are presented in the following. In general, the results show that both research models fit our data well.

For Taiwanese youth who report their relations with paternal grandparents, all preceding variables considered in the model refer to the report with paternal grandparents as well. Using structural equation modeling that allows controls on all simultaneous effects, the path model shows a goodness of fit. As can be seen, we find the expected direct effect of childhood family experience, especially G1-G3 interaction, on present G1-G3 emotional closeness. But we do not find direct effects of childhood experience on the G2-G3 relationship (see Figure 2). Filial values that teenagers hold also produce significant association in both their subjective

**Figure 2**  
**The Paternal Grandparent Model**



Note:  $N = 1,184$ ;  $\chi^2 = 2.23$  ( $p = .69$ );  $df = 4$ ; goodness-of-fit index = 1.00; root mean residual = 0.03; root mean square error of approximation = 0.00; standard regression coefficients are in parentheses.

emotional closeness with grandparents and in relations with mothers and fathers.

We should point out that when we examine factors accounting for generational closeness, the paternal model seems to receive better support. All variables are confirmed with significant coefficients relating to the subsequent factor within the model. Specifically, more frequent contact between parents and paternal grandparents (G1–G2 contact) has an effect on teenagers’ emotional closeness with paternal grandparents (.08) and in relations with fathers (.07). Having care provided by paternal grandparents at ages 0 to 3 also contributes significantly to the perceived closeness between them during adolescence (.13). Furthermore, having a coresidence experience, both at ages 0 to 3 and in the present (.07 and .10), clearly leads to affection toward grandparents. In other words, earlier and present family interactions between generations are positively associated with the emotional closeness between G1 and G3.

The positive emotion between paternal grandparents and youth affects the perceived relations with mothers and fathers, with fathers receiving more significant influence (.16 versus .11). Filial values also have direct effects on the relations between G2 and G3 for both fathers and mothers (.16 and .16). Endorsement of traditional filial piety is significantly related to a positive evaluation on parent-child relations. It is not surprising that having emotional closeness with paternal grandparents helps the relationships between youth and their fathers, because more frequent contact between upper generations and more exposure either in childhood or at present with paternal grandparents all produce a stronger bond between teenagers and paternal grandparents. Also, fathers appear to benefit more from the family interaction.

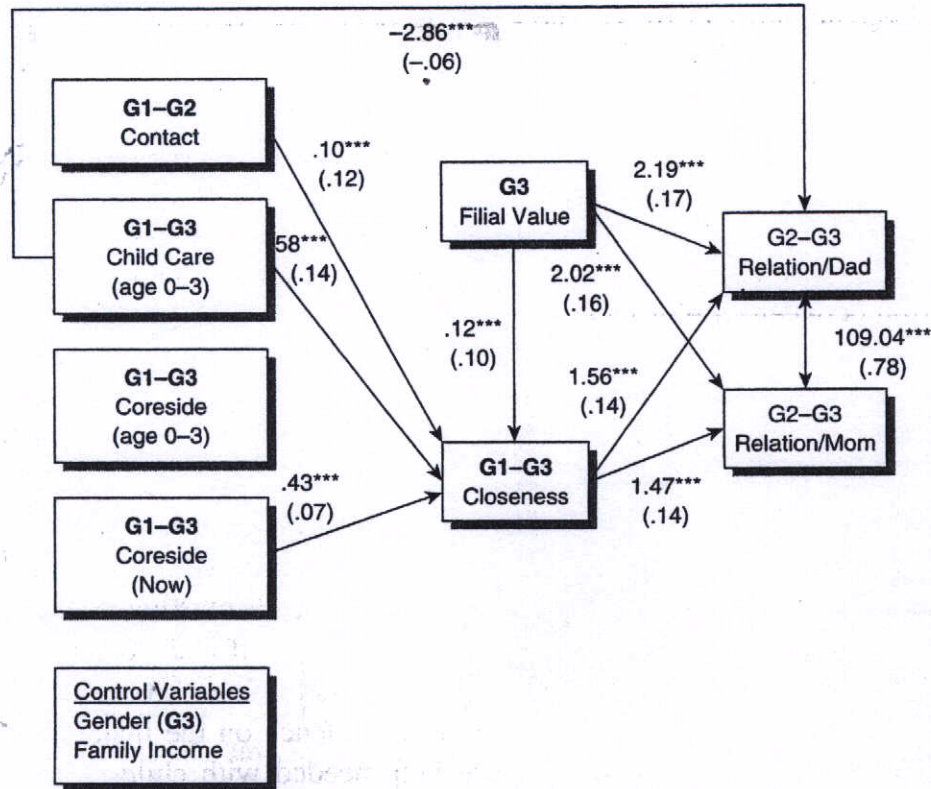
If the relations between youth and paternal grandparents significantly account for relations between youth and both parents, how about the relations between youth and maternal grandparents? This is the question we will investigate next.

The result for the matrilineal side indicates a goodness of fit of the path model. A similar pattern among factors examined in the model is shown (see Figure 3).

As can be seen, no direct effect of G1-G2 interaction is found on the G2-G3 relationship. But if maternal grandparents care for grandchildren younger than 3 years old, this early family experience tends to result in a negative report on the relations with fathers (-.06). Other than this, G1-G2 contact, early G1-G3 child care arrangement, and present G1-G3 coresidence all contribute to the G1-G3 emotional closeness, which serves as an important mediator between the expected association between earlier childhood family experiences and present parent-youth relations. Filial value toward elderly parental support also contributes to positive relations with maternal grandparents (.10) and with both parents (.17 and .16).

A closer scrutiny of the two models points out two major differences. First, earlier coresidence between youth and maternal grandparents does not have significant effects in the model. It is early child care experience that not only produces the emotional bond between G1 and G3 but also has significant negative effects on the adolescents' relations with fathers. Second, for the paternal model only, G1-G2 contact has an independent effect on G2-G3 relations. Because more teenagers in Taiwan are exposed to paternal interaction both during childhood and at present, the lineage differences found may be attributed to the opportunity structure existent in the family system.

**Figure 3**  
**The Maternal Grandparent Model**



Note:  $N = 1,241$ ;  $\chi^2 = 8.33$  ( $p = .08$ );  $df = 4$ ; goodness-of-fit index = .99; root mean residual = 0.01; root mean square error of approximation = 0.03; standard regression coefficients are in parentheses.

### Conclusion

The results generally support our basic research model. The intergenerational relationship of Taiwanese adolescents is shown to be accounted for by relations with older generations and by early childhood family experiences. Gender differences in lineage are specified, and findings document the paternal advantage of generational bonds, particularly in relation to the paternal coresidence experience. Besides the behavioral aspect, filial values produce significant effects on positive relations with older generations among youth. In addition, affection is as expected to be significantly related to prior family experiences and to the quality of perceived generational relations. However, it should be noted that overall, early family experience and the exposure to

contact among generations are mediated through the affection reported between grandparents and youth.

The other research question addressed in this article concerns the child care arrangement and its possible consequences for the intergenerational relations. With regard to the minority grandparents who care for their grandchildren, the patrilineal advantage is clear. Paternal grandparents are more likely to coreside with their adult sons. This experience, mediated through G1–G3 affection, actually contributes to better relations between teenagers and their fathers. The results of our analyses show that earlier socialization experience does produce significant effects on the subsequent affection between care providers (i.e., grandparents) and the youth. But the only direct significant effect from child care experience on current G2–G3 relations is a negative product on the maternal side, implying that stronger matrilineal generational interactions, deviant from the paternal cultural norm, may bring unfavorable outcomes for the father–teenager relations.

The finding that early child care by maternal grandparents is associated with a negative relation between father and teenager relations, although somewhat unexpected, is actually consistent with the existing patriarchal norms. Although coresidence with married sons fits well with social norms, coresidence with married daughters is often regarded a less conventional living arrangement (Yi, 1999). Therefore, if coresidence on the maternal side occurs, it is more likely because of the help needed with child care. This is clearly quite different from the Western experience in which married daughters remain close to their own parents and, if needed, are likely to turn to them for child care help. In other words, coresidence and child care–giving have different meanings for Taiwanese grandparents, depending on the lineage differential. Our findings point out that if the family resorts to the maternal coresidence, it may undermine the father–adolescent relationship afterwards. To understand the specific dynamics operating in the process may require further qualitative studies.

In terms of specific findings, several points are worth further discussion:

1. All generational pairs should be considered. The basic argument that intergenerational relations of the youth result from the interplay between each pair of generations concerned is supported. Interactions of upper generations (G1–G2) and present coresidence structure imply greater exposure to the contact opportunity and thus contribute to the affection formed toward both grandparents and parents. Furthermore, by including all dyadic generational pairs in the model, this article suggests that future study should focus on possible interplay between all generational pairs in the study of adolescents' generational relations.

2. The early family process matters. Early family socialization, namely, the child care and the coresidence experience from birth to age 3, significantly affects generational relations at adolescence. Looking from the life course perspective, this finding has important theoretical meaning. Family processes in the earlier stage are shown to lead to significant consequence in later generational development. The early family experience not only affects present relations between youth and grandparents but also affects parent-youth relations directly through the mediation effect.
3. The patrilineal advantage of grandparenthood deserves more attention. G1-G3 affection plays a significant role for the positive relation reported among parent-youth relations. Most notably, having a closer bond with paternal grandparents is conducive to better relations with fathers than with mothers. As illustrated above, being cared for by maternal grandparents is unfavorable to the subsequent adolescent's perception of father-teenager relations. This finding exemplifies a patrilineal advantage in the intergenerational relations in Taiwan. However, the finding for the maternal grandparent model suggests that deviation from the paternal lineage norms may be associated with more negative father-child relations in adolescence.
4. The interplay between values and affection for youth requires more studies. For Taiwanese youth, it is clear that with regard to relations with parents, filial values and affection toward grandparents produce significant effects for lineages. It is emphasized that in addition to the behavioral dimension concerned, affection and value aspects significantly account for the generational quality reported.
5. In sum, this study is able to document that current parent-adolescent relationship quality is significantly affected by both G1-G2 and G1-G3 affection. With similar importance, early care provision from grandparents to youth is indeed an important factor leading to the present affection toward them. In general, the result implies that the exposure to contact opportunities during childhood and at present results in emotional bonds between generations.

Given the important role of grandparents in contemporary Taiwanese families and in world families in general, relations with grandparents and its possible impact on relations with parents deserve further studies. The analyses in this article support the importance of including all possible dyadic pairs in generational relations. Because there will be growing opportunities of having three generations at home, future studies need to investigate all dyadic relations taking place in the family context. Last, lineage distinction is an important aspect in most paternal societies. Comparison between paternal versus maternal generational relations will allow us to delineate lineage effects within the family.

## Notes

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