

Dual Mediating Effect of Spousal Support and Child Support in the Effects of Marital Intimacy on the Spousal Caregiving Awareness

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to identify the dual mediating effects of child support and spousal support in the effects of marital intimacy, on the spouse caregiving awareness targeting the middle to high elderly, noted as having the age of 45 years or older. The subjects of this study were middle to high elderly participants having the age of 45 years or older, and who were found to be residing in the Chungnam region, Korea. The survey was conducted from July to August 2018. To determine the dual mediation effect of spousal support and child support in the effects of marital intimacy on the spouse caregiving awareness, a SPSS PROCESS macro model 6 proposed by Hayes (2018) was used.

The marital intimacy had a significant positive effect on the child support, spouse support, and spouse caregiving awareness. In addition, child support had a positive effect on the spousal support, and the spousal support had a positive effect on the spouse caregiving awareness. However, the effect of child support on spouse caregiving awareness was noted as not as significant. In addition, the total effect of marital intimacy on spouse caregiving awareness was $\beta=.7043$ which had a positive effect. The direct effect of marital intimacy on spouse caregiving awareness was $\beta=.3431$ which was noted as being lower than the total effect. Therefore, it can be seen that the mediating effects of child support and spousal support are significant in this case as measured during the study. And, the bootstrap was used to verify the simple and dual mediating effects of child support and spouse support. The dual mediating effect of child support and spousal support in the effects of marital intimacy on the spouse caregiving awareness was subsequently verified in this case. In the case of having low caregiving awareness due to a low sense of intimacy with the spouse, in addition to improving the caregiving awareness by improving intimacy with the spouse, a method for improving child support and spousal support should be actively reviewed as a way to find interventions to increase this level of support in a marriage.

Keywords: Spousal support, Child support, Marital intimacy, Caregiving awareness, Dual mediating effect

Introduction

It is important to note that Korea's birth rate is expected to decline from 8.4% in 2015 to 6.1% in 2065, and according to resident registration demographics, as of August 2017, the population over 65 years old has exceeded 14% of the total population and Korea, which

shows that the nation has entered into the phase of an aging society within 17 years since the start of aging began in 2000¹. Currently, the supporting awareness for residents and individuals in Korean society is shifting from the eldest son to self or family, to the government and society as a whole². Even the value of the elderly is also changing into a more independent pursuit of life, rather than relying on their child thus in the future, spouses will be more likely to take care of their own needs, rather than their children being expected to care for the parents in the parent's twilight years. Even in a study in the United States has reported that the spouse of the elderly has become more of a general and primary

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caregiver, as opposed to just facilitating the relationship as a spouse alone³. Considering this social change, it is likely that marital support will be the main form of support in Korean society in the future years. Therefore, this study focuses on the study of spousal caregiving awareness.

First, it is predicted that the intimate relationship between husband and wife will play an important role in the caregiving awareness of the individuals who are parties to the marriage. In this context, the word intimate is derived from the Latin intimacy, which means inner, or the inner most⁴. In this sense, the factor of marital intimacy includes social, affective, mental, intellectual, sexual, and aesthetic and entertainment factors⁵, and encompasses affection, gender, expressiveness, coherence, conflict resolution, compatibility, autonomy and identity⁶. In addition, it has claimed that additional factors should also be included in this discussion, such as cognitive, emotional, sexual, mutual sharing information and dedication, etc., as are applied to the marital relationship, and are composed as a sub-factor in this case of review⁷.

While few studies have identified the importance of marital intimacy in spousal support, this study goes a step further to identify the areas of support in the marital relationship. According to the study of Cho⁸, it was noted that the husband had higher emotional caregiving awareness on the wife when the cognitive intimacy and sexual intimacy was seen to be higher, and the wife had higher caregiving awareness in all areas such as emotional intimacy, cognitive intimacy, sexual intimacy, etc., when the cognitive intimacy on the husband was measured as being higher. In addition, although the study has targeted university students, even in the study of attachment to parents, conflict and sense of parental support, and parental caregiving awareness, it has shown that the stronger the attachment to parents with less conflict, the parental caregiving awareness was noted as significantly higher in those cases⁹. Even for a study on intimacy and caregiving awareness between married daughters and their mothers¹⁰, the higher the intimacy with their mother, the overall caregiving awareness such as economic caregiving awareness and physical caregiving awareness was shown to be significantly high in those cases as well. In addition, when the relationship of the couple seems closer, in other words, the relationship between the couple at the time of support was intimate, this provided fewer burdens against the

receiving of the support¹¹. Through these prior studies, the marital intimacy is expected to have a positive effect on spousal caregiving awareness.

Meanwhile, child support and spousal support will mediate the relationship between marital intimacy and caregiving awareness in most cases. Centered on one individual, social support refers to help that an individual receives from family, relatives, neighbors, and experts surrounding an individual¹², and it is considered the manifestation of positive support for individuals through interaction with supportive others, where an individual meets his or her physical, mental, and material needs by receiving social support through an interaction with social relations. Among various social supports, this study has focused on the support from the spouse and child, where the spousal support as an aspect of social support, and can also be considered as a means to a social support within marital relations that provides help, care, and support to others in similar situations¹³. Spousal support as the most important source of social support that is found and is seen in a marriage means that the responsive behavior of the couple is a positive influence on the needs of each spouse. In addition, the social support of their children not only have a positive effect on the psychological well-being of the elderly¹⁴, but it was reported that there is also an effect of mitigating maladjustment for the elderly¹⁵, and the support of the child is an indispensable factor of support in the life of the elderly.

This social support not only positively affects the quality of life of the elderly, but also plays a role in reducing or cushioning negative influences in stressful situations as may be experienced by an individual, such as with an illness¹⁶. In other words, when an individual undergoes some stimulation or crisis, the cognitive interpretation of the individual on such fact should be made to be less shocking, in order that one can recover from such a life crisis, and by playing a role in controlling the impact on the heretofore unexpected life change that can occur in a human life, which is a continuation of change and crisis, whereby it allows humans to equilibrate and maintain a balanced and positive result for mental and physical health¹⁷.

When looking at the empirical research, it was reported that a supportive response based on an accurate understanding of the spouse's needs improves the satisfaction and intimacy of the spouse¹⁸. It was claimed that spousal support reduces the stressors of life as experienced by an individual, and has an effect

of enhancing satisfaction and well-being, while also increasing the marital satisfaction, improving marital quality, and reducing depressive symptoms and mood disorders in potentially affected individuals¹⁹. In particular, the spousal support, as an aggressive approach to understanding and helping each other in marital relations, is the most influential variable on determining factors related to the marital intimacy²⁰.

Social support of a child is a variable that affects the quality of life of the elderly as a leading factor for reducing the likelihood of a direct or undesirable experience, or by playing the role as a buffer for such experience²¹. This brings an understanding that such social support has a positive effect, especially on the elderly as compared to other age groups. Social support eliminates the social isolation that the elderly may experience in this situation, and provides the sense of belonging and makes one feel that they are the subject of interest. In addition, the elderly can benefit through sharing worries or problems with others by communicating their growing concerns over issues in their lives, through social support resources²². Therefore, the child support and spousal support are expected to be a dual mediator in the effects of marital intimacy on the spousal caregiving awareness.

Therefore, the purpose this study is to identify the dual mediating effects of child support and spousal support in the effects of marital intimacy, on the spouse caregiving awareness targeting the middle to high elderly, noted as having the age of 45 years or older.

Method

Study subjects and data collection procedures:

The subjects of this study were middle to high elderly participants having the age of 45 years or older, and who were found to be residing in the Chungnam region, Korea. The survey was conducted from July to August 2018, where the questionnaires were distributed to the general residents and collected afterwards. Finally, the data of 400 middle to high elderly people were obtained for this study.

In terms of sociodemographic characteristics, 44.5% were women and 55.5% were men, and the age group was 42~90 years with an average of 63.55 years. For the level of education, it is noted that the percentage of high school graduates (32.5%) was the highest, followed by college graduates (28.0%), elementary graduates

(17.5%), and middle school graduates (14.3%). For determining the numbers of participants who were married, the variable marital status was noted, whereby married participants accounted for 93.5% of the total, and the majority of the study participants were married. For noting the residence of the participants, it is noted that 55.5% of the participants lived in the city and 44.5% lived in rural areas.

Measurement Tools: The measurement tools used in this study are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Measurement Tools

Variable	Contents	Measurement Method
Dependent variable	Spousal caregiving awareness	The caregiving awareness has used the scale of Kim ²³ . A total of 9 items were measured using a 5-point Likert-type scale and the reliability is Cronbach's alpha value of .925.
Independent variable	Marital intimacy	Marital intimacy has used the scale of Lee ²⁴ . A total of 15 questions were measured using a 5-point Likert-type scale, and Cronbach's alpha value is .867.
Mediate variable	Social support	The social support measurement tool developed by Park ¹² as used by changing it to spousal and child support. Each item was composed of 22 items on the 5-point Likert scale, and the Cronbach's alpha value for spousal support was .901 and the child support was .867.

Analysis Method: To determine the dual mediation effect of spousal support and child support in the effects of marital intimacy on the spouse caregiving awareness, a SPSS PROCESS macro model 6 proposed by Hayes (2018) was used. The bootstrap was used to verify the mediator effect, and during the verification, the sample size was set to 5,000 samples, and the confidence interval was set at 95%. Also, the reliability and frequency analysis of the scale were performed using a SPSS Win 2.10.

Result and Discussion

Dual mediating effect of spouse support and child support in the effects of spouse intimacy on the spouse caregiving awareness: To verify the dual mediating effect of spouse support and child support in the relationship between spouse intimacy and spouse caregiving awareness, a SPSS PROCESS macro proposed by Hayes (2018) was used for the analysis. As a result, as shown in Figure 1, Figure 2 and Table 2, the marital intimacy had a significant positive effect on the child support ($\beta = .1577, p < .0001$), spouse support ($\beta = .5368, p < .0001$), and spouse caregiving awareness ($\beta = .3431, p < .0001$). In addition, child support had a positive effect ($\beta = .3658, p < .0001$) on the spousal support, and the spousal support had a positive effect ($\beta = .6057, p < .0001$) on the spouse caregiving awareness. However, the effect of child support on spouse caregiving awareness was noted as not as significant ($\beta = .0073, p = .9049$).

In addition, the total effect of marital intimacy on spouse caregiving awareness was $\beta = .7043 (p < .001)$ which had a positive effect. The direct effect of marital intimacy on spouse caregiving awareness was $\beta = .3431 (p < .001)$ which was noted as being lower than the total effect. Therefore, it can be seen that the mediating effects of child support and spousal support are significant in this case as measured during the study.

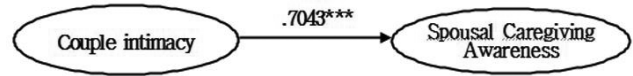


Figure 1: Influence of marital intimacy on spousal caregiving awareness

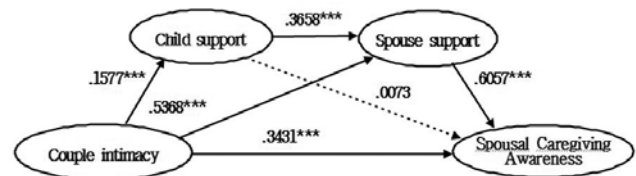


Figure 2: Dual Mediation Effect of Child Support and Spouse Support

Table 2: Verification of dual mediation effect of child support and spouse support

	β	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
Mediation model (dependent: child support)						
constant	3.0179	.1166	25.8847	.0000	2.7887	3.2471
Couple intimacy	.1577	.0343	4.6044	.0000	.0904	.2251
	β	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
Mediation model (dependent: spousal support)						
constant	.3885	.1674	2.3215	.0208	.0595	.7176
Couple intimacy	.5368	.0308	17.4227	.0000	.4762	.5973
Child support	.3658	.0439	8.3266	.0000	.2794	.4521
	β	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
Mediation model (dependent: spousal caregiving awareness)						
constant	.6149	.2158	2.8494	.0046	.1906	1.0391
Couple intimacy	.3431	.0524	6.5458	.0000	.2400	.4461
Child support	.0073	.0610	.1196	.9049	-.1126	.1272
Spouse support	.6057	.0643	9.4228	.0000	.4793	.7320

In this study, the bootstrap was used to verify the simple and dual mediating effects of child support and spouse support. As a result of verification, in the path between marital intimacy → child support → spousal caregiving awareness, the mediating effect of child support has shown the presence of 0 in between the lower limit and upper limit value (-.0232 ~ .0308) of bootstrap, and for that reason it was not significant. On the other hand, in between the path of marital intimacy → spouse

support → spouse caregiving awareness, the mediating effect of spousal support has not shown the presence of 0 in between the lower limit and upper limit value (.2065 ~ .4583) of bootstrap, and therefore it was found to be significant. Lastly, as a result of examining the dual mediating effect of child support and spousal support, in between the path of marital intimacy → child support → spouse support → spouse caregiving awareness, it has not shown the presence of 0 in between the lower limit and

upper limit value (.0125 ~ .0726) of bootstrap, and thus it was found to be significant. Therefore, the dual mediating effect of child support and spousal support in the effects

of marital intimacy on the spouse caregiving awareness was subsequently verified in this case (Table 3).

Table 3: Verification of indirect effects of child support and spouse support

	β	Boot E	Boot LLCI	Boot ULCI
TOTAL	.3612	.0683	.2375	.5052
Couple intimacy → Child support → Spousal Caregiving Awareness	.0011	.0135	-.0232	.0308
Couple intimacy → Spouse support → Spousal Caregiving Awareness	.3251	.0639	.2065	.4583
Couple intimacy → Child support → Spouse support → Spousal Caregiving Awareness	.0349	.0154	.0125	.0726

Conclusion

The purpose this study is to identify the dual mediating effects of child support and spousal support in the effects of marital intimacy, and on the spouse caregiving awareness, as it is seen targeting the middle to high elderly having the age of 45 years or older. To achieve this, the survey was conducted from July to August 2018 and finally, the data of 400 middle to high elderly people were obtained.

As a result of analyzing the dual mediating effect, the dual mediating effect of child support and spouse support was verified, as noted in the relationship between marital intimacy and spouse caregiving awareness. Therefore, in the case of having low caregiving awareness due to a low sense of intimacy with the spouse, in addition to improving the caregiving awareness by improving intimacy with the spouse, a method for improving child support and spousal support should be actively reviewed as a way to find interventions to increase this level of support in a marriage. In addition, because child support has a positive effect on spousal support, one of the most important ways to improve the caregiving awareness on the spouse is receiving a high level of support from the child, thus it can be seen that the relationship between the child and the elderly is important as reviewed in most cases.

Ethical Clearance: Not required

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Conflict of Interest: Nil

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