

Korean Baby Boomers' Conceptualizations of Good Aging: A Phenomenographic Study

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(Abstract)

This study explored how Korean baby boomers conceptualized good aging at the beginning of their old age. The specific goal was to identify descriptive categories of good aging conceived by them. Phenomenography was used as a qualitative research methodology. Data were collected from May 2020 to February 2021 through semi-structured interviews. A total of 30 community-dwelling men or women (born in between 1955 and 1963) were participants of this study. As a result, the following six categories of Korean baby boomers' frames on good aging were identified; self-centered satisfaction, focusing on mental self-fulfillment, giving up greed and letting it be, recognizing harmonious coping, being considered a valuable person by others, and increasing the positive synergy of good relationships. Also, the following six categories of their strategies for good aging; distancing his/herself from the things he/she feels forced to do, maintaining the mental competence to accept different world, acknowledging that he/she is getting old, reflecting upon ways of living that work well, maximizing his/her remaining capacities, and creating independence for enjoying life. To provide a structural framework, the categories were placed into an outcome space, which consisted of two dimensions;

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psychological-physical and social-individual. Based on the Korean cultural context and existing theories of good aging, the Korean baby boomers' conceptualization of good aging was discussed. This study provides new insights regarding how Korean baby boomers personally conceptualize good aging.

Key words : Good aging, Korean baby boomers, Self-perception of aging

(초록)

본 연구의 목적은 노년기에 접어들기 시작한 한국의 베이비붐 세대가 좋은 노화를 어떻게 개념화하는지에 대한 서술적인 범주를 파악하는 것이었다. 연구대상자는 거주자 중 1955년부터 1963년 사이에 출생한, 인지기능과 의사소통에 문제가 없는, 그리고 지역사회에 거주하는 자로 30명을 편의표집에 의해 선정하였다. 반구조화된 면접 방식에 의해 얻어진 자료는 현상 기술학적 연구 방법을 적용하여 분석하였다. 분석 결과, 좋은 노화에 대한 개념화가 6개 범주 그리고 좋은 노화를 향한 전략도 6개 범주로 파악되었다. 먼저 좋은 노화에 대한 6개의 개념화 범주는 자기-중심의 만족감, 정신적인 자아 충만감에 초점을 둠, 욕심을 포기하고 순리에 따름, 조화로운 대처를 인정함, 가치 있는 사람으로 인정받음, 그리고 좋은 관계의 긍정적인 통합성 향상이었으며, 좋은 노화를 향한 6개의 전략 범주는 강요하는 것들과 거리두기, 변화된 세계를 수용하는 정신적 능력 유지하기, 자신의 노화를 인식하기, 잘 맞는 삶의 방법 성찰하기, 자신의 잔여 능력 최대화하기, 그리고 삶을 즐기는데 필요한 독립성 형성하기로 나타났다. 정신-신체적 세로(중) 기준과 사회-개인적 가로(횡) 기준의 구조적인 틀에서 개념화 범주는 모두 정신-사회-개인적인 면에 배치되어 나타났으며, 전략적인 범주는 정신-신체-사회-개인적인 면에 고르게 배치되어 나타났다. 본 연구는 한국 베이비붐 세대를 대상으로 좋은 노화에 대한 개념화를 범주화한 현상 기술학적 연구로서 의의를 지니며, 새로운 성찰과 방향을 제시하는 안내자로서 역할을 하는 데 공헌할 것으로 사료되었다.

주제어 : 좋은 노화, 베이비붐세대, 노화의 자가지각

I . Introduction

Due to advances in health-care and hygiene, the number of older adults has been increasing globally (United Nations, 2020). Consequently, both the population of older adults and the average length of old age have increased. For example, in Korea, adults who aged 65 years or older accounted for 17.5% of the total population in 2022 (Statistics Korea, 2021).

Although many studies have investigated how age stereotypes could change the beliefs and behaviors of older people (Settersten & Hagestad, 2015), the baby boomers, who are currently entering the older generation, tend not to incorporate age stereotypes into their self-concepts (Jopp, Wozniak, Damarin, De Feo, Jung, & Jeswani, 2015; Y. Kim, Kim, Boerner, & Han, 2018). Therefore, the subjective evaluation of older adults about their own aging

is gaining importance (Baek, 2019). Good aging has become a subject of great interest for the general public and academic researchers (Jopp et al., 2015; Wildman, Moffatt, & Pearce, 2018). However, no consensus has been reached on what good aging means, even though many studies suggest that subjective assessments of aging process may be important, regardless of one's disease or disability status, in determining the health and well-being of older adults (Sun, Kim, & Smith, 2017).

Today, the 'baby boomers' are notably affecting the aging population (B. Kim, Kim, Burr, & Han, 2020; H. Kim, Lee, Cheon, Hong, & Chang, 2018), and as they age, they are becoming representative of a new era for aged health-care (B. Kim et al., 2020; Harbour & Grealish, 2018; Kahana & Kahana, 2014). The term baby boomer can be defined differently, depending on a country's social and historical background. In general, those in the generation born after World War II, mainly in developed countries, are labeled baby boomers. In the United States, they are individuals born between 1946 and 1964 and in Australia between 1946 and 1966. Born between 1955 and 1963, Korean baby boomers are relatively younger than American ones and expected to live longer and more engaged in socioeconomic activities than their predecessors (Kwon & Park, 2018). Korean baby boomers grew up during the country's rapid industrialization, modernization, and urbanization after the Korean War and are

now gradually entering old age (Nam, Kim, Shin, & Yim, 2018).

Korean baby boomers have lived differently from their predecessors. However, the majority of them, like their predecessors, are married and adhere to the Confucian tradition that they are responsible for providing financial support to their parents and relatives (K. Kim, Zarit, Fingerma, & Han, 2015). In addition, they have invested significant resources to support the future success of their children (Y. Kim et al., 2018). Nonetheless, times have changed, and health-care providers need to recognize that older people's perceptions of aging have changed as well, necessitating the development of appropriate methods for providing the best care (Jopp et al., 2015; Harbour & Grealish, 2018; Kahana & Kahana, 2014). The baby boomers have lived through unprecedented periods of rapid change. Research into how they find meaning in life as they enter old age and what perspectives led to these meanings is especially needed for health-care providers working with older adults.

As life expectancy continues to increase while fertility rates decline, the lives of aging Korean baby boomers are expected to become more complex (E. Kim, 2021). The Korean baby boomers have been identified as a generation that continues to seek harmony between traditional and modern concepts pertaining to older adults (Park, 2021). In this process, they are contemplating how they will

live as older people (Baek, 2019; Ho, 2021; B. Kim et al., 2020). However, little is known about good aging as perceived by the Korean baby boomers. Thus, the aim of the study was to determine what good aging was from the participants' point of view, why and how they came to think so, and what kind of effort should be made to achieve good aging as they perceive it.

II. Methods

This study used phenomenography to explore the good aging conceived by the Korean baby boomers; the specific goal of this study was to identify descriptive categories of good aging they conceived. The method of this study is based on the phenomenographical assumption that the ways in which individuals conceptualize phenomena are qualitatively different (Marton, 1988).

1. Data collection

Data were collected from May 2020 to February 2021 through semi-structured interviews and questionnaires which designed to survey general characteristics and subjective socioeconomic perceptions. The interviews were conducted once or twice with each participant and recorded by an audio recorder. The interviews lasted 20 to 30 minutes and took

place at the participant's preferred time and location.

To initiate the interviews, the main theoretical definitions of good aging were presented to the participants to elicit each participant's own concept of good aging and to discuss the structure of their conceptualizations (see <Table 1>). The following questions were used: "What do you, from your point of view, perceive as good aging, and why and how did you come to see it that way?" and "How, from your perspective, should one strive for good aging management, and how and why did you come to recognize that?"

2. Participants

In phenomenographic studies, the appropriate number of research participants (RPs) is unclear, but the suggested number is between 20 and 30 (Bowden & Green, 2005). In this study, the participants were taken from the available cohort. Then, a total of 30 Korean baby boomers born in between 1955 and 1963 [18 women & 12 men; mean age 62.7 years (SD: 2.57)] from the community were recruited, and participated voluntarily with providing informed consent. Twenty-seven RPs were married, 3 RPs were never married, and half were retired. As for their current or former occupations, 13 RPs were educators, 6 RPs were office workers, 4 RPs were health-care providers, 3 RPs were in administrative positions, 2 RPs were unemployed,

〈Table 1〉 Scholars' Definitions of Good Aging

Definition of Korean old persons' ego-integrity (Chang et al, 2004)	The ego-integrity of the older adults is a task that can be achieved in old age through successful performance of tasks in the developmental stage of the life cycle. It is formed in the process of achieving psychological stability by accepting the life that has been lived autonomously. As a result of achieving ego-integrity, by reinterpreting one's own life, have a harmonious perspective on the past and future, appreciate the surrounding conditions, have confidence in oneself, be in harmony with others, and do not feel economically limited. In addition, by comparing her/himself with those around her/him, she/he will be able to accept her/his life positively and comfortably accept death.
Definition of gerotranscendence (Tornstam, 2005)	For Tornstam, 'gerotranscendence' encapsulates his view that 'Old age is not a mere continuation of the activity patterns and values of mid-life, but, rather, something different: a transformation characterized by new ways of understanding life, "activities", oneself and others. The most frequently quoted Tornstam definition of the term is 'a shift in meta-perspective from a material and rational vision to a more cosmic and transcendent one, usually followed by an increase in life satisfaction.
Definition of successful aging (Rowe & Kahn, 1997)	Rowe & Kahn define successful aging as the absence of disease or disability, maintaining physical function along with cognitive function, and continuing active participation in life.

and 1 RP was self-employed. Concerning their educational backgrounds, 21 RPs completed graduate school, 7 RPs were college graduates, and 2 RPs were high school graduates. They subjectively perceived their health as relatively healthy (18 RPs), average (6 RPs), very healthy (5 RPs), and relatively unhealthy (1 RP). They described their economic status as economically not dependent on others (16 RPs), relatively poor (12 RPs), relatively wealthy (1 RP), and very poor (1 RP). To describe how socially active they were, 18 said they had a small number of close friends, 11 RPs said they had a relatively large number of friends, and 1 RP

stated having no close friends. In their marriage, 23 RPs said they maintained a very good relationship with their spouses, 4 RPs said they enjoyed average relationships, and 3 RPs were unmarried.

3. Ethical consideration

The institutional review board approved this research. After explaining the study's aim and procedures to each RP, written informed consent was obtained. They were also informed that the interview data would be used only for research purposes and that they had the right to

withdraw from the study at any time. Interviews were conducted individually to ensure confidentiality.

4. Data analysis

Phenomenographic data analysis was conducted to explore the RPs' conceptions concerning good aging. To accomplish this, we read and re-read all the transcribed data following the seven steps of the phenomenographic analysis procedure suggested by Dahlgren and Fallsberg (1991). For the first step *familiarization*, we read through the transcriptions and acquainted ourselves with the material in detail. Then, we identified the significant elements from the responses of the RPs regarding the phenomenon (*compilation*) and found the core meaning of their statements (*condensation*). The fourth step *grouping* was done by categorizing similar statements from which a pattern emerged. Subsequently, we initially described the essence of each group of answers to determine borders between the groups (*comparison*). The sixth step was to label (*labeling*) each group using a suitable linguistic expression, and in the final step, the obtained categories were compared to each other on their similarities and differences (*contrasting*). Following these steps, the RPs' conceptual categories of frames and strategies on good aging were identified.

5. Trustworthiness

For research findings to be credible, RPs should be able to communicate their experiences in open and reliable conversations about the topic in question (Collier-Reed, Ingerman, & Berglund, 2009). During data collection, participants were well aware of the study's purpose and were able to articulate their perceptions regarding good aging. All the researchers were familiar with gerontological nursing and had interacted with the RPs enough to have had sufficiently open dialogues with them. To ensure the study's credibility regarding the relationship between the data and the descriptive categories for RPs' conceptions of good aging, peer debriefings were conducted among the researchers at each step. All researchers deliberately searched for discrepancies across the interview transcripts to avoid overlooking any ambiguities in understanding RPs' conceptions of good aging.

III. Results

The goal of a phenomenographic study is to categorize existing conceptions, describe the nature of the phenomenon, and discover the structural framework within which various categories of understanding exist (Marton, 1988). According to the aim of the study, the questions asked to the RPs were about what

frame of good aging was, why, and how they came to think about it, and what efforts should be made to recognize good aging, which was about strategies on good aging. Accordingly, we presented the findings based on (1) conceptual categories of Korean baby boomers' frames on good aging, (2) conceptual categories of Korean baby boomers' strategies for good aging, and (3) a structural framework of identified categories (outcome space) on how Korean baby boomers conceive good aging.

1. Conceptual categories of Korean baby boomers' frames on good aging

The frames on good aging by Korean baby boomers are frames of reference that represent good aging in the Korean context. That is, these are the categories that describe what good aging is according to Korean baby boomers. We identified the following six categories of Korean baby boomers' frames on good aging (CF).

CF1 (*Self-centered satisfaction*). This category represents the perspective of good aging as an emotionally stable state as opposed to sacrificing one's personal satisfaction in order to fulfill one's role and expectations in the society, and its basis is self-centered satisfaction. Some of participants recognized that being able to pursue satisfaction by focusing on themselves, rather than on their children, parents, and work, was the basis for good aging.

CF2 (*Focusing on mental self-fulfillment*). The physical and social abilities associated with this category inevitably decrease with age, so good aging is ultimately about building a view of one's aging from a more psychologically comfortable perspective with a focus on mental achievement. Some participants perceived that focusing on this aspect was a foundation of good aging, because aging is marked by physical decline, while mental growth can mature by integrating life processes.

CF3 (*Giving up greed and letting it be*). In this category, the participants perceived that becoming less over-demanding on the material things and attentions from others as one grows older is a part of good aging. The basis for forming this view is that if you are greedy, the people around you will suffer and that you will become unhappy if you cannot live up to your expectation created by your greed. Therefore, it was recognized that letting everything flow as it is instead of obsessed with the material matters and the attention of others is the basis of good aging.

CF4 (*Recognizing harmonious coping*). Good aging was perceived to mean that a person ages well only while one feels a positive energy in personal relations. This category describes the perception that as you get older, sharing a sense of happiness with those close to you is a part of the good aging process, i.e., a harmonious

approach that includes enjoying and being enjoyed by other people is the basis of good aging.

CF5 (*Being considered a valuable person by others*). This category involves the perception that social reputation becomes more important for happiness as one becomes older, and that good aging occurs when one can serve others and receive social recognition. Some participants stated that even a person who was physically debilitated could be accepted as valuable to and by those around them.

CF6 (*Increasing the positive synergy of good relationships*). Relationships become more important as you get older and making the most of the good things you've built in life is important for leading a more vibrant life. Good aging in this category means being able to enjoy life by creating a rich network with local communities and friends and the basic recognition that it is important to form good human relationships to increase positive synergy in life.

2. Categories of Korean baby boomers' strategies for good aging

The categories of Korean baby boomers' strategies for good aging are the conceptions that they recognize that they should strive for achieving good aging. We identified the

following six categories of Korean baby boomers' strategies for good aging (CS). Statements from some of the Korean baby boomers who participated in this study that support the conceptual categories of their frames on good aging and the categories of their strategies for good aging are presented in <Table 2>.

CS1 (*Distancing one's self from the things one feels forced to do*). This category recognizes that in order to achieve good aging, it is necessary to break free from the sense of responsibility imposed on oneself, which was tied to the various social roles one played before growing old.

CS2 (*Maintaining the mental competence to accept different world*). Participants' conceptions in this category were that to age well one should put aside the social roles played in the past while retaining the mental capacity to deal with the different personal and social conditions older persons experience.

CS3 (*Acknowledging that one is getting old*). In this category, a person must admit that life in old age will impose different physical, mental, and social conditions from those in the past. This results in the aged having to rebuild themselves, surrounding environments, and social relationship after admitting that one is becoming old.

〈Table 2〉 Relevant Interview Quotations for Categories of Korean Baby Boomers' Conceptions of Good Aging

Categories		Relevant interview quotations
Korean baby boomers' frames on good aging	CF1. Self-centered satisfaction	"To me, thinking this way is a preparation for aging. I've lived with a sense of responsibility so far, and I hate being criticized by anyone, so I think I was dependent on others' evaluations. Now I think I have to live my life in my way. So, I think I will be able to grow old well by living centered on close friendships, nurturing personal values, and centering on my satisfaction."
	CF2. Focusing on mental self-fulfillment	"After all, aging means that there are many parts that cannot function physically. Then, socially, there will be fewer friends and less activity, so naturally I spend a lot of time alone. So, for good aging and desirable aging, developing the mental fulfillment among the physical, social, and psychological aspects is an area I need to cultivate as I get older."
	CF3. Giving up greed and letting it be	"I thought that good aging is a life in which you have to give up a lot of greed on material things. I think if I get greedy as I get older, the people around me will be tired, and my family will also be tired. So, if you aren't greedy, you won't get annoyed or angry, and there are so many things to be grateful for when you think about what you've been through."
	CF4. Recognizing harmonious coping	"It is important to understand the other person's point of view. Sometimes the teaching assistants I meet are younger than my children. But sometimes, even if I don't like opposite opinions of them against mine. I'm like, 'Oh, they have this and that, so I'm trying to study and understand the characteristics of the new generation.'"
	CF5. Being considered a valuable person by others	"I think it's good aging to try to do what I can do for people who are having difficulties, like the elderly living alone. You have to go to the end with a sense of duty. It is a rewarding and worthwhile life for me to make efforts with such a sense of responsibility."
	CF6. Increasing the positive synergy of good relationships	"Good aging means what it's like to live together with your friends and community when you're old and alone. It's less lonely than being alone, and it's because they help each other in good relationships that we've built up so well when problems arise."

〈Table 2〉 Relevant Interview Quotations for Categories of Korean Baby Boomers' Conceptions of Good Aging (continued)

Categories		Relevant interview quotations
Korean baby boomers' strategies for good aging	CS1. Distancing one's self from the things one feels forced to do	"I've been told that caring for the people around me is right for a while, but in the end, it's the thoughts that I was educated and that I was tainted with by my habits, and that's not necessarily right. In the end, I suffered because of that. Now, I am trying to break the mold and focus on myself once again while contemplating by distancing a little rather than trying to force myself."
	CS2. Maintaining the mental competence to accept different world	"In my opinion, good aging is not being afraid of being forgotten by the people around you as you get older. I think that's good aging. Because when you start to fear that you will be forgotten, you become obsessed with it and then you become sad." "In the past, it was about whether I should accept or not accept the stereotypes that exist, but now, I think about how I should think about it and organize it."
	CS3. Acknowledging that one is getting old	"I think it's important to admit that you're old enough to grow old well. Now I have to admit that I can't do as many things as I did when I was young and that I don't have many opportunities."
	CS4. Reflecting upon ways of living that work well	"My parents-in-law were devout Christians, and they always worked hard for good deeds, and they lived a life of love and service, always fellowshiping with church members no matter how old they were. Because they were Christians, they had faith in the resurrection, so they were also convinced that they would go to heaven after death. It was good to see my parents-in-law growing old. I think it would be helpful to lead a religious life for good aging."
	CS5. Maximizing one's remaining capacities	"To age well, physically I mostly walk. I try to walk 10,000 steps every day. And I think I drink a little more water. Mentally, I try to exchange information and have a good time by reading books to prevent dementia and aging, and by meeting and talking with good people."
	CS6. Creating independence for enjoying life	"For good aging, you must first be healthy...To do that, you need to take care of your body while exercising. You also need some money...It would be nice if you could continue to earn a pension, savings, or money. You should also have friends to enjoy life with. I think this preparation is necessary."

Note: CF: Conceptual categories of Korean baby boomers' Frames on good aging

CS: Categories of Korean baby boomers' Strategies for good aging

CS4 (*Reflecting upon ways of living that work well*). Life in old age is, after all, a continuation of life. Therefore, good aging includes the understanding that one should utilize any strategy that has been recognized to be effective in creating successful lives. This category is about recognizing effective personal strategies and the strategies of others who have been credited with living good lives as they aged.

CS5 (Maximizing one's remaining capacities). Physical and mental declines are inevitable as one grows older, but for good aging, one must utilize their physical and social capabilities for as long as possible. This category recognizes the importance of maximizing the remaining potential ability to interact socially and physically with others for good aging.

CS6 (*Creating independence for enjoying life*). Both sickness and/or financial constraints can stop one from living a satisfying life as an older person. In order to enjoy aging together with those around her/him, it is important to create economic conditions that allow living independently without dependence on others and to engender conditions that enable physical and social enjoyment.

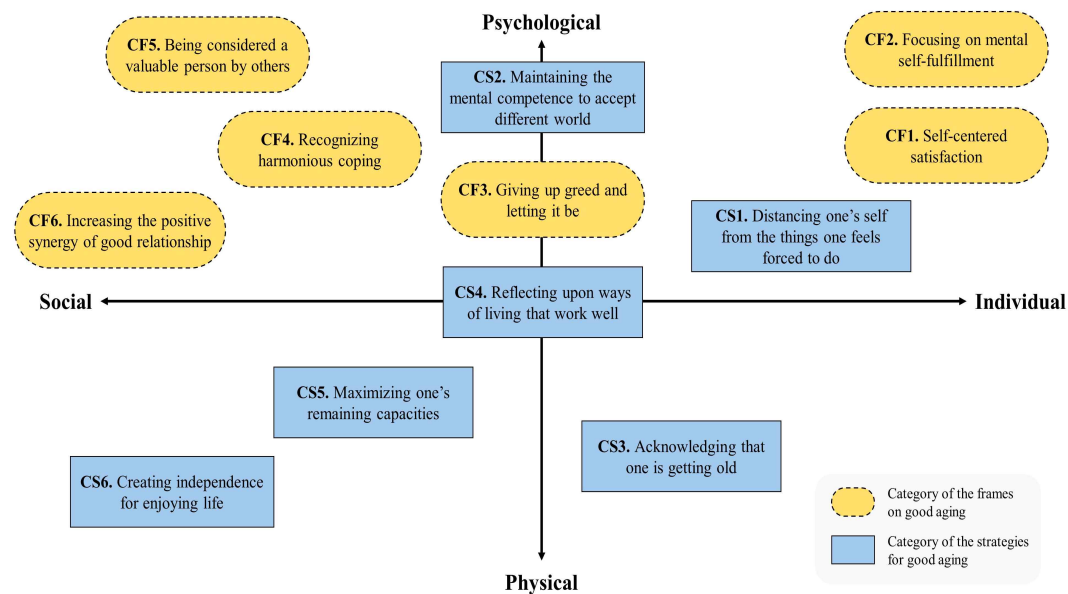
3. The structural framework of the identified categories for good aging

An outcome space consists of referential and

structural aspects that represent the descriptions of categories. It is a distinct characteristic of phenomenography that illustrates a picture of the experience of the phenomenon by developing logical structures (Forster, 2013). The referential aspects of the conceptual categories of Korean baby boomers' frames on good aging and the categories of their strategies for good aging were divided into social vs. individual as well as psychological vs. physical. The structural aspects were located in the four quadrants of social vs. individual and psychological vs. physical, as discussed in the next paragraph (see <Figure 1>).

The first categories of Korean baby boomers' frames on good aging, CF1, self-centered satisfaction, and CF2, focusing on mental self-fulfillment, were placed in the psychological and individual quadrants because they emphasized those aspects. On the other hand, CF4, recognizing harmonious copings, CF5, being considered a valuable person by others, and CF6, increasing the positive synergy of good relationships, were located in the psychological and social quadrants since they emphasize social relationships and psychological well-being. In contrast, CF3, giving up greed and letting it be, while located squarely in the psychological quadrant, spans the social and individual quadrants since it reflects individual and social attitudes for good aging.

CS1, distancing one's self from the things one feels forced to do, was placed in the



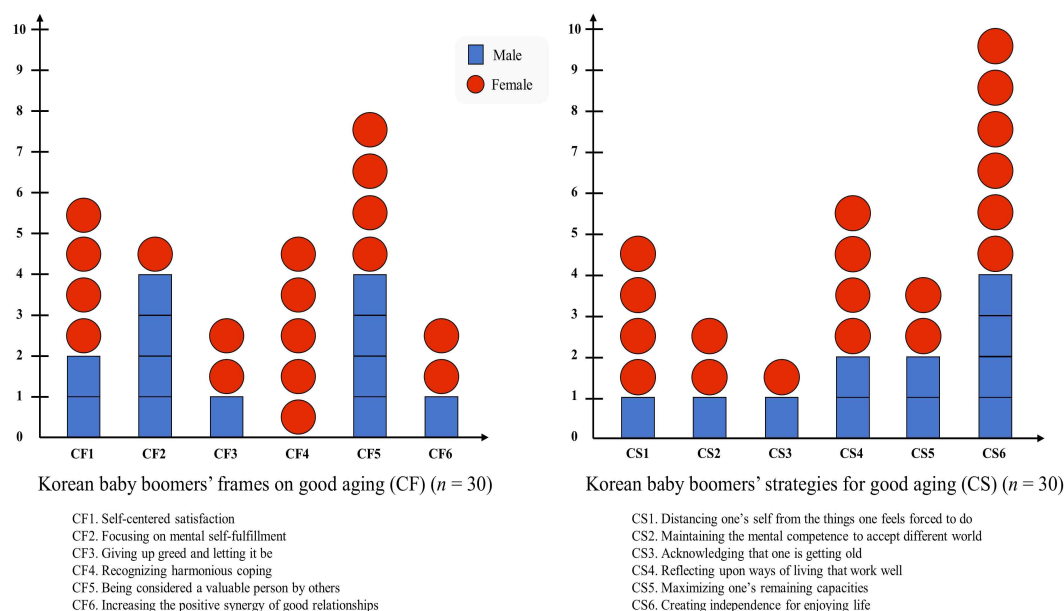
〈Figure 1〉 Outcome space of Korean baby boomer's conceptions of good aging

Note: CF: Conceptual categories of Korean baby boomers' Frames on good aging

CS: Categories of Korean baby boomers' Strategies for good aging

psychological and individual quadrants. However, CS2, maintaining the mental competence to accept different world, which means that one perceives the social change around her/him and then pursues individual adaptation, was placed in the psychological quadrant, but spanned the both social and individual quadrants. On the other hand, CS3, acknowledging that one is getting old, was located within the individual and physical quadrants, and CS5, maximizing one's remaining capacities, and CS6, creating independence for enjoying life, were positioned in the social and physical quadrants with the recognition that creating social, economic, and physical conditions for happiness while living with others in old age is an important strategy.

In contrast, CS4, reflecting upon ways of living that work well, involves personal and social strategies that include the mental and physical aspects of good aging and thus spans all four quadrants. The categories of Korean baby boomers' frames on good aging are all located in individual and social quartiles around the psychological axis, whereas the categories of Korean baby boomers' strategies for good aging were centered on the psychological-individual and physical-social quartiles. Figure 2 shows the distribution of the 30 participants for each of the categories of Korean baby boomers' frames on good aging and the categories of Korean baby boomers' strategies for good aging. In Korean baby boomers' frames on good aging,



〈Figure 2〉 Distribution of participants by category of Korean baby boomer's concepts of good aging

Note: CF: Conceptual categories of Korean baby boomers' Frames on good aging

CS: Categories of Korean baby boomers' Strategies for good aging

CF5, being considered a valuable person by others showed the highest frequency, and in Korean baby boomers' strategies for good aging, CS6, creating independence for enjoying life showed the highest frequency.

IV. Discussion

The older generation over 70 years in Korea was not well educated, had few opportunities to participate in society, and devoted all their resources to their children; hence, most were unable to create suitable conditions for self-reliance during old age. As such, most of

them depended on support from their children in their old age (Seoul Metropolitan Government Information Communication Plaza, 2014). After the Korean War, the baby boomers were relatively well educated due to their parents' enthusiasm for education and were provided with socioeconomic opportunities due to Korea's economic development (Ho, 2021; Park, 2021). However, they might be a generation that has lived with the triple burden of social accountability, raising their children, and taking responsibility for their parents' old age (Jeon, Gwak, & Kim, 2019; K. Kim et al., 2015; Park, 2021).

There has been no phenomenographic study

on the good aging of the older generation than the baby boomer generation. Therefore, it is not easy to compare the perception of good aging between the older generation and the baby boomer generation, but based on the results of this study, it is as follows. CS1, distancing one's self from the things one feels forced to do, reflects the desire of Korean baby boomers to escape the burden and oppression they have been imposed upon from their families and society once they reach old age. The findings in this study suggest that the participants perceived good aging through various focal points, indicating that it would be more meaningful to discuss the good aging perceived by them in conjunction with aging theories.

The definition of successful aging by Rowe and Kahn (1997) emphasizes active social participation during old age as a part of successful aging. This characteristic, however, is not one of the characteristics of good aging in Korean older adults presented in Chang et al., (2004). In this study, however, it was found in CF6, increasing the positive synergy of good relationships, reflects that economic and social independence must be achieved for good aging, is presented as conditions for achieving a sense of self-integration in Chang et al. (2004), but not in Tornstam(2005)'s definition of gerotranscendence. This reflects not only the economic conditions of Korean baby boomers who are entering old age, but also their realistic awareness that successful old aging cannot be

accomplished with only the welfare provided by the government (Jeon et al., 2019). They are also well aware that they cannot depend on their children during their old age as their parents did, and they predict that they will live a different aging than their parents (H. Kim et al., 2018; Y. Kim et al., 2018).

In addition, Korean baby boomers are a generation that has had to accept both the influence of Confucianism, which influenced their parents' generation, and the individualism of the western countries, which influences their children (Ho, 2021; Y. Kim et al., 2018), simultaneously. The individualist point of view was revealed in CF1, self-centered satisfaction. On the other hand, CF4, recognizing harmonious coping, and CS4, reflecting upon ways of living that work well, are results that reflect the Confucian thinking of Korean baby boomers that emphasizes the virtue of social order. The old age, as suggested in the Analects of Confucius, is a time to embrace quiet human relationships is closely related to the need for the elderly to meet Asian societal expectations (Zhang, 2000).

Traditionally, Korea has a culture of respecting older adults, informed by the idea that the adults should be respected by those around them (Ho, 2021), which is indicated in CF5, being considered a valuable person by others, an aspect that is not emphasized in Tornstam(2005)'s definition that gerotranscendence is strongly related to the reconstruction of

identity and of personal frames of reference. On the other hand, the category CS2, maintaining the mental competence to accept different world, aligns with Tornstam's definition. While Tornstam's study demonstrates the signs of change in the meta-perspective of the elderly, this study emphasizes that Korean baby boomers must maintain their mental capacity to re-establish themselves. Unlike previous generations, Korean baby boomers were actively engaged in socio-economic activities in various occupations during Korea's economic boom period (Park, 2021).

Therefore, they admit that they cannot live as they did when they were young because current social and financial situation is different from their younger times, but they cannot depend on their children as they age like their parents' generation did. Moreover, they must recognize that they will have a longer lifespan (Baek, 2019). These views are presented as CS3, giving up greed and letting it be, and CS5, maximizing one's remaining capacities. Furthermore, the perception that Korean baby boomers, who had more social relationships than did the older generations and were relatively active in social life, want to continue those human relationships through social activities, even in old age, was presented as CF6, increasing the positive synergy of good relationships, in this study. The participants represented in this category emphasized good interpersonal relationships maintained through

active social activities in their lives.

How to define good aging in Korea in the 21st century requires understanding and analyzing good aging from the perspective of the elderly entering old age. We intended to explore perceptions concerning what good aging is for Korean baby boomers, who have lived differently from older generations, and what strategies are necessary for them to do so from their perspective. To the best of our knowledge, this study is the first attempt at exploring the structures of good aging as perceived by Korean baby boomers.

One limitation of this study was that the educational levels and socio-economic status of the participants may be relatively higher than those of the average Korean baby boomer. Another was that there were 18 female RPs, relatively more than the 12 male RPs. Therefore, the 30 RPs of this study may not fully represent Korean baby boomers. However, the purpose of this study was not to generalize the perceptions on good aging of Korean baby boomers, but to identify the characteristics and structure of good aging conceptualized by Korean baby boomers through a phenomenographic study.

This study provides a perspective on how the baby boomers who are entering old age perceive good aging to practitioners and policy makers who care for the elderly in the context of Korea. We believe that the awareness of good aging and strategies for good aging

recognized by the baby boomers who are entering the older generation can serve as reference materials for effective aging policies in Korea for quality of life management in old age.

Conflicts of Interest

The Authors declare no conflict of interest.

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- Received: September 6, 2022
Revised (first form): November 10, 2022
Revised (final form): November 18, 2022
Accepted: November 23, 2022