

“Ecosystemic Resilience Relative to Increasing Populations of Unwed Mothers in Korea:  
A Preliminary Mixed Methods Investigation”

Hyeseong Kang

University of Connecticut  
Human Development and Family Studies

ABSTRACT

The number of unwed mothers in Korea who raise their children on their own, instead of placing them up for adoption, is increasing. Even in the face of social stigma and discrimination, unwed mothers are beginning to advocate for their rights as mothers and challenge public perceptions of and cultural assumptions about unwed motherhood. The purpose of this research is to explore unwed mothers’ perceptions about their own resilience in wider contexts and the facilitative factors that may be contributing to this. This study used an exploratory sequential design in which qualitative interview data were first collected to explore these phenomena, followed by quantitative survey data to determine the degree to which the findings were generalizable to a larger population. Results revealed the ways in which these mothers utilize their resources and overcome challenges when navigating new social contexts as unwed mothers. These findings are discussed in the context of social policies/services and professional practices to better promote resilience among unwed mothers.