



How Do Teenage Experiences Affect young people's Lives?

Kim, Ji-Kyung Senior Research Fellow

Summary¹⁾

- ▶ This study began by raising the issue that the connectivity between the different stages in a youth's life should be considered in terms of a coherent policy structure. It also emphasized the importance of discovering what maybe be called the 'key chain' that connects adolescent and youth policies under the current policy structure. This is done in order to drive forward policies supporting adolescents and other youths who are in a specific age range and who are going through different stages of life. These adolescent and youth groups can be categorized as the 'target groups' for these policies.
- ▶ The purpose of this study is to secure an empirical basis for understanding how certain factors in relation to adolescents and youths are connected to each other, and how these factors relate to different policies that are put in place. This process is called, "policy chaining". In addition, it is important to use this empirical basis to formulate additional methods to study policies related to adolescents and other youths.
- ▶ This study analyzed an assortment of different teenage experiences and the effects they had on their lives. This was done by taking a sequential mixed method approach. The experiences were divided into different stages, and the effects that these experiences had in these stages were studied in their proper context. After comprehensive analysis, the results have shown that teenage experiences have concrete effects on youths' quality of life. In particular, the effects of negative teenage experiences play a large role in creating lasting negative emotions among the youth, even after a significant period has elapsed after these events.
- ▶ Based on the results of this study and after considering its inherent policy implications, a clear policy objective was formed. This policy objective is, namely, 'to prevent the occurrence of negative teenage experiences that affect adolescents' and youths' quality of life and to alleviate the effects of these events should they occur.' The focus of this study was on the target groups of its policy objective, as well as the factors that collectively act as a policy chain. This is done by connecting policies that involve the adolescent and youth groups with additional policies that the government should implement under the objective that was established by this study. Four different policy directions, in addition to policy strategies for each direction and twelve policy tasks were formulated. The policy tasks were created in relation to the guidelines set by the policy directions and policy strategies.

1) This Blue Note is an extract and summary of 'How Do Teenage Experiences Affect Young people's Lives?', a 2022 research report by the National Youth Policy Institute.

1. The Necessity and Purpose of This Research

■ It is important to consider how the different stages of life are connected when developing supportive policies for 'target groups' in a specific life stage or in a specific age range.

- Since life is a continuous process in time and what one experiences in one stage of life naturally affects his or her life in the following life stage, it is crucial to examine the link between one's past experiences with his or her current and future periods of life and how such past experiences affect current and future periods of life in terms of seeing life as a passage of time.
- Adolescent and youth policies for target groups are only focused on the stages of life they are currently in, and methods used to address problems are also only focused on said stages of life.
 - Despite the general awareness that personal growth and development for teens occurs as a continuous process, adolescent and youth policies have not been redesigned to reflect this fact, nor have existing policies been revamped to address how the different life stages are connected.

■ Policy chaining is necessary to improve the effectiveness of supportive policies and to effectively implement them.

- Adolescent and youth policies have evolved mainly in a way that increases the number of areas for supporting target groups within an age range as specified by certain laws. When looking at this in terms of a policy structure, the number of policy areas has been increased in a horizontal manner without considering the beneficiary's course of life, nor have policies that focus on expanding the target group in each policy area been implemented effectively.
- With regards to supportive 'policies for target groups' involving adolescents and the youth, different policy areas- such as education, labor, welfare, and culture- that are represented by the horizontal axis should be connected to one another. Also, supportive policies for adolescents and youths on the vertical axis representing time should be organically connected to each other with no break in between them.
 - When the focus is only horizontal policy expansion, or if the age range of a target group is considered in a linear way without considering the life course of a youth or an adolescent, problematic overlaps will occur between policy areas and supportive policies aimed at different age groups. This will result in problems continuing to occur in terms of budget distribution and policy efficiency.
- Building a policy structure framework that connects life stages in a vertical manner will enable a better identification of vulnerable adolescents and youths. It will also be easier to identify when and where policy interventions can be the most effective and thus establish starting points where it is possible to improve policy effectiveness when dealing with target groups, as well as the efficiency of budget and resource distribution.

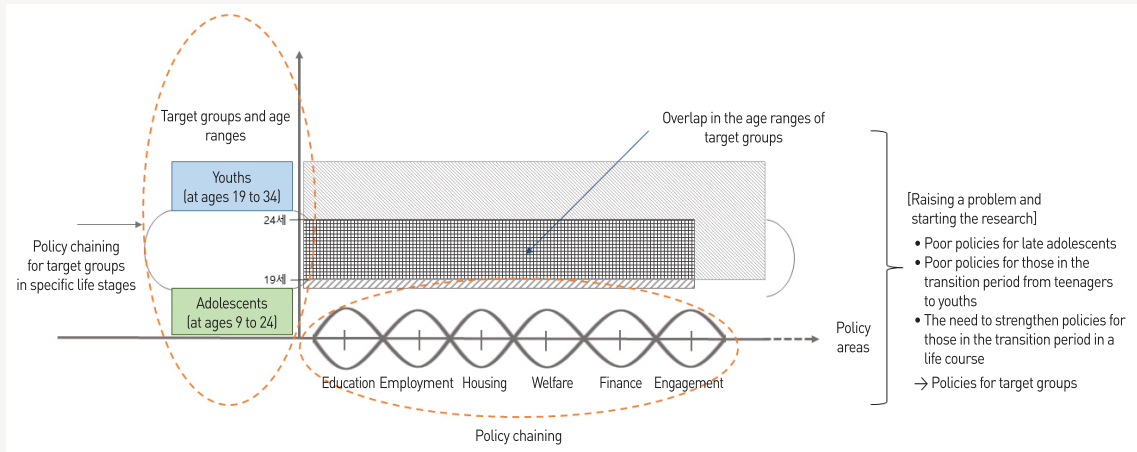


Figure 1 The Need for Vertical and Horizontal Policy Chaining in Adolescent and Youth Policies

■ As stated before, this study began by raising the issue that a vertical policy structure is needed to connect adolescent policies with youth policies. Both adolescents and youths are targeted at specific age groups going through a particular stage in a life course. It intended to empirically discover a 'chaining key' for designing the vertical policy structure, as well as to explore ways to strengthen this 'chaining key'.

- To that end, this study systematically examined the effects of teenage experiences on the quality of life of youths today, and suggested guidelines and methods to design effective supportive policies targeted at them.
- More specifically, this study empirically analyzed how teenage experiences in families, school, and society affect the quality of life of the youth, as well as their lasting effects. It identified the definitive effects of teenage experiences and explored the contextual factors in which these effects occur, enabling a comprehensive analysis and facilitating further discussions. It also suggested policy measures based on the results of the analysis and discussions.

2. Composition of Research Content and Methods

■ The basic design for the composition of research content and methods

- In order to effectively accomplish the purpose of this research within a limited time frame and budget, the main research content and methods were organized within the framework of a sequential mixed method design, which is a type of mixed methodology.
- The research content and methods were organized in a phased and sequential manner, using a graph with a sequential mixed method design and displaying research content on the x-axis and methods on the y-axis.
 - [Stage 1] Identify a correlation between the effects of teenage experiences and youths' quality of life by analyzing secondary sources. → [Stage 2] Conduct a survey using a questionnaire that contains items asking

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about teenage experiences that are not covered by secondary sources, but are worth notice given recent policy trends. Then analyze the results of the survey. → [Stage 3] Conduct an in-depth investigative interview to identify the concrete effects of teenage experiences in their proper context and analyze the results of the interview. → [Stage 4] Comprehensively review the results of the analysis of quantitative and qualitative data to formulate conclusions.

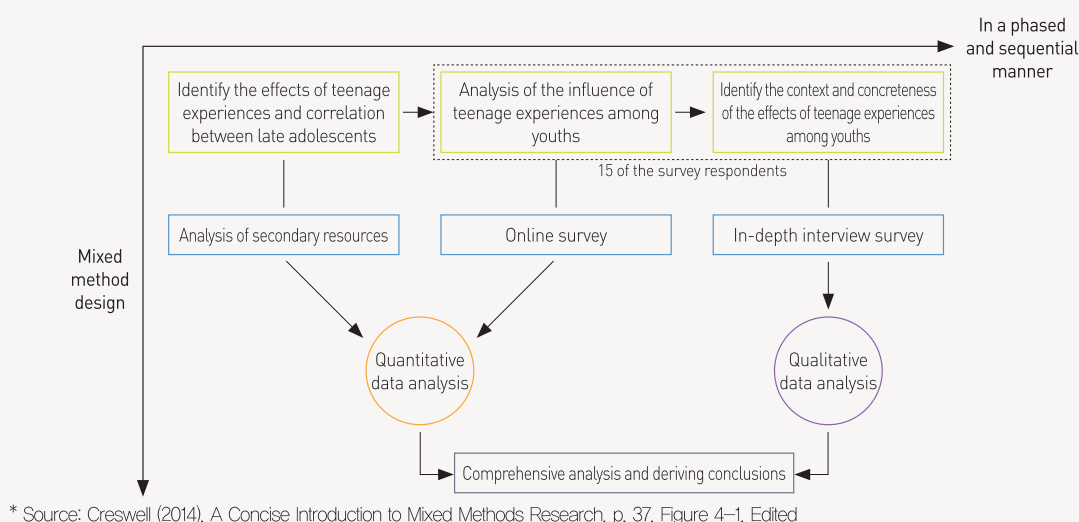


Figure 2 Basic Design of Research Content and Methods

3. Research Results

■ Main results of empirical analysis by stages

- Analysis of secondary resources: The effects of teenage experiences are relatively more significant in the period following high school graduation, and the effects of negative teenage experiences are most noticeable among the unemployed. Consequently, policies regarding late adolescents need to identify those unemployed in the early transition to adulthood as the primary target group.
- Survey: Of the three factors studied regarding the subjective well-being of youths (satisfaction with life, negative emotions, and positive emotions), negative emotions affect the well-being of youths the most, with depression or suicidal impulses during their teenage years being the most likely to be the cause of these emotions. Therefore, interventions are needed regarding youths with negative teenage emotions.
- In-depth interview investigation: For adolescents from economically vulnerable families, negative experiences accumulate and overlap over time, and the effects of these negative experiences grow more significant in their 20s and 30s. Consequently, vulnerable adolescents should be identified as the priority target group of future collaborative adolescent and youth policies.

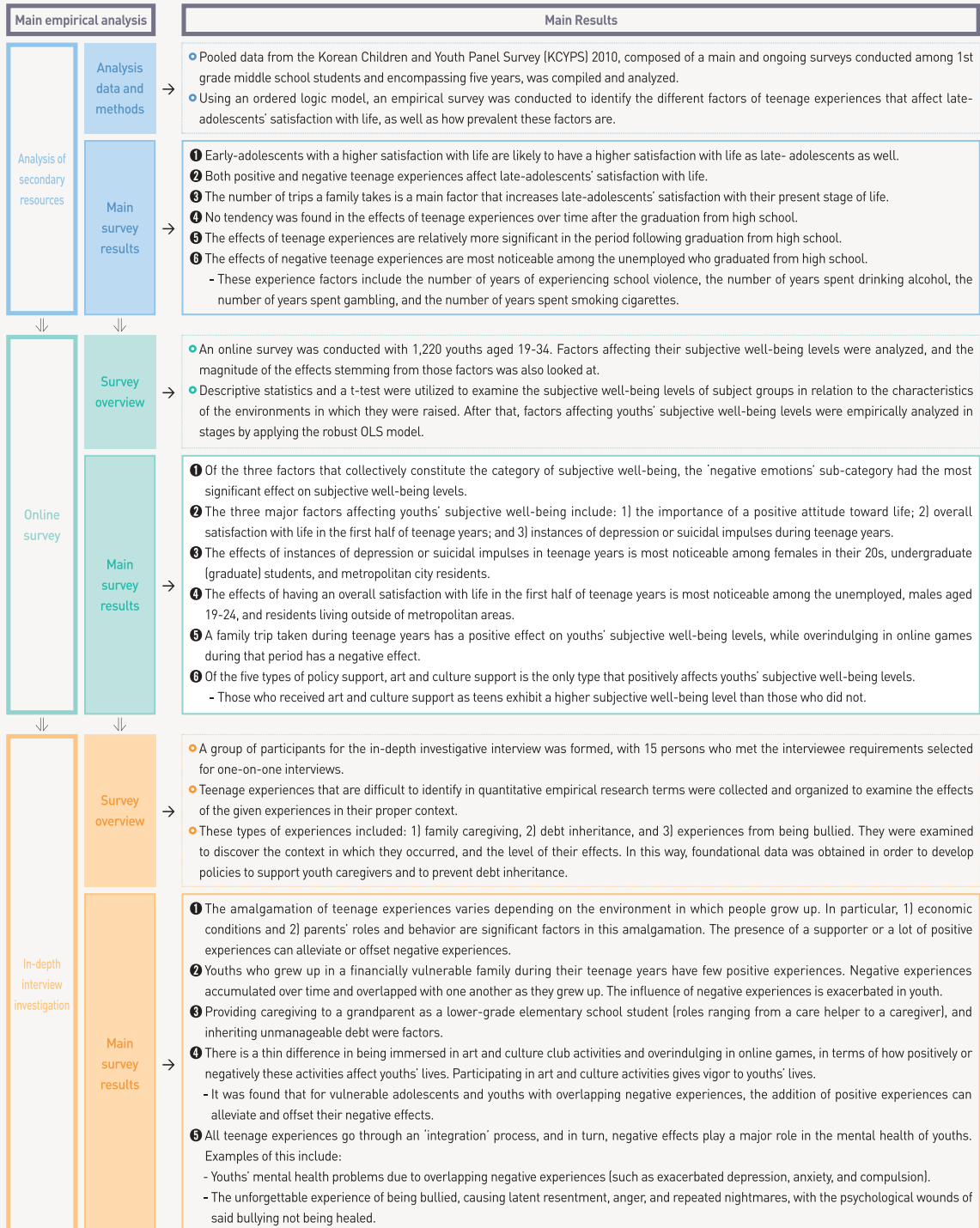


Figure 3 Summary of Main Empirical Analysis Results

■ Comprehensive analysis of the results of empirical analysis

- Teenage experiences have definitive effects on the lives of youths in their 20s and 30s. Despite the passage of time, negative teenage experiences play a major role in negative emotions among the youth.
 - The key factors in the composition of teenage experiences include whether youths are from economically vulnerable families, as well as their parents' roles and behaviors. While the effects of negative teenage experiences are being experienced, vulnerable youths without supporters are subject to additional negative experiences (such as bullying, depression, suicidal impulses, online game addiction, the burdens of being a family caregiver, or debt inheritance).
 - The presence of supporters and positive experiences work as an offsetting or alleviating factor to weaken the effects of negative experiences, and the effects of lingering negative experiences play a role in youths' negative emotions.
- At the heart of whether negative experiences will have negative effects or be offset is the presence of a 'supporter.' In addition to the presence of a supporter, sufficient positive teenage experiences (family trips, club activities, or art and culture activities) can offset the effects of negative experiences for those who grew up in a vulnerable environment.
- The effects of teenage instances of depression or suicidal impulses collectively play the largest role in youths' negative emotions, and the effects of such experiences can be exacerbated over time.

Factors affecting 19 to 24-year-old late- adolescents' satisfaction with life

- The higher the overall satisfaction with teenage life, the higher the satisfaction with life in late adolescence.
- Both positive and negative teenage experiences affect satisfaction with life in late adolescence.
- The effects of negative teenage experiences are most noticeable among unemployed and late-adolescents.
- There is no particular tendency regarding teenage experience factors.
- Family trips are a factor that increases the satisfaction of late-adolescent life.

Factors affecting the subjective well-being levels of youths aged 19 to 34

- Increasing youths' subjective well-being levels requires setting guidelines for reducing the levels of negative emotions.
- Positive and negative teenage experiences and current life characteristics affect youths' subjective well-being levels.
- Teenage instances of depression and suicidal impulses have the largest effects.
 - Those in their 20s, females, undergraduate (graduate) students, and metropolitan city residents are relatively more vulnerable.
- Satisfaction with life in the first half of teenage years is a factor with the second largest effect.
 - Those aged 19 to 24, males, the unemployed, and residents living outside of metropolitan areas are relatively more vulnerable.
- Family trips taken during teenage years is a factor that increases youths' subjective well-being levels.
 - Females, those aged 25-29, employed persons
- Online game overindulgence (addiction) in teenage years reduces youths' subjective well-being levels.
 - Those aged 25-29, employed persons
- The experience of receiving art and culture support during teenage years increases youths' subjective well-being levels
 - Males, employed persons, metropolitan city residents, those aged 30 to 34

The contexts and process of the effects of teenage experiences among youths aged 19 to 34

- Except for individual will, the key factors of environments where people grow up in the composition of teenage experiences are 1) economic conditions and 2) parents' roles and behaviors.
- All teenage experiences go through a process of integration, and the presence of a supporter is an important mechanism in alleviating the effects of negative experiences.
- Vulnerable adolescents have few positive teenage experiences and grow up with overlapped negative experiences. The effects of unaddressed negative experiences are exacerbated.
- Some lower-grade elementary school students have the experience of providing caregiving to a family member, even when a teenager is not recognized as a caregiver. They perform a range of roles from a care helper to a caregiver for parents or grandparents.
- The legal process of giving up inheritance because of debt or qualified acceptance of inheritance is substantially difficult for teenagers
- There is a thin difference between being immersed in art and culture club activities and overindulging in online games. The positive teenage experience of activities at school and outside school gives vigor to youths' lives.
- An unstable family environment and the experience of being bullied are key factors that should be addressed for youths' mental health problems.

Comprehensive analysis: Composition of teenage experiences and the process of how they affect youths' quality of life

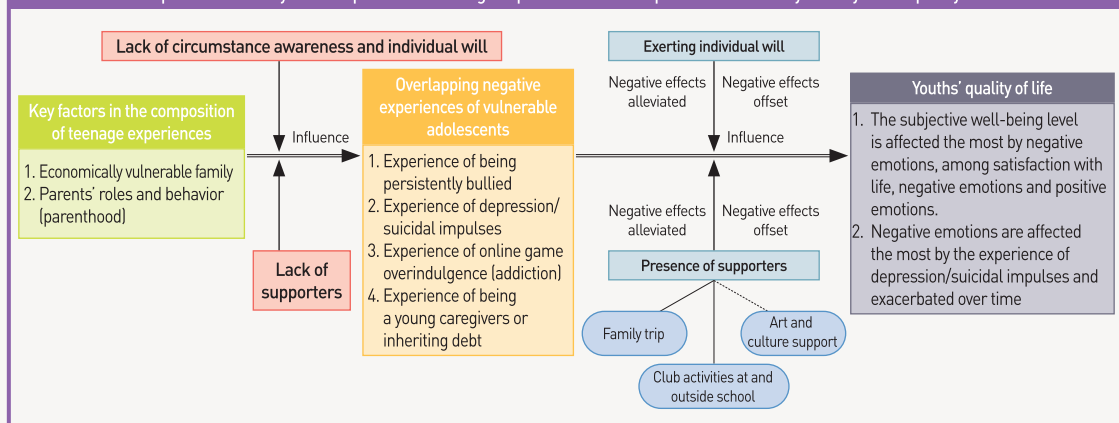


Figure 4 Comprehensive Review of the Results of Empirical Analysis

■ Comprehensive results and policy implications

- Policy implications were established after analyzing the comprehensive results. These policy implications fall into two categories: support from teenage adolescent policies and support from youth policies aimed at those aged between 19 to 34.
 - The focus of adolescent policies for teenagers should be on “preventing negative experiences,” while the focus of youth policies should be on “alleviating the effects of negative experiences.”
- Preventing negative teenage experiences requires more support for vulnerable adolescents who experience overlapping negative experiences in a vulnerable environment. In particular, this would include more support for them in the legal arena as well as increased welfare services and provision for cost-of-living expenses.
 - The public cultural support system can be strengthened, including increasing support for art and culture activities.
- The management of vulnerable youths’ negative experiences is the ‘key chain’ of connected adolescent/youth support policies.
 - In terms of policy target groups, vulnerable adolescents and the period of their transition to young adulthood are the key to establishing a link between adolescent and youth policies.
 - In terms of policy areas, the area of mental health is the key.
- Effects of negative experiences that are not offset through the process of integrating and filtering experiences are likely to play a negative role in the psychological, emotional, and mental health of youths.
 - Groups most vulnerable to depression or suicidal impulses include metropolitan city residents, females in their 20s, undergraduate (graduate) students, and youths who were victims of bullying and school violence.
 - Another type of vulnerable group is one that exhibits low satisfaction with their overall teenage lives and have the most noticeable negative effects. Noteworthy demographics in this group are: residents living outside of metropolitan areas, those aged 19-24, and males.

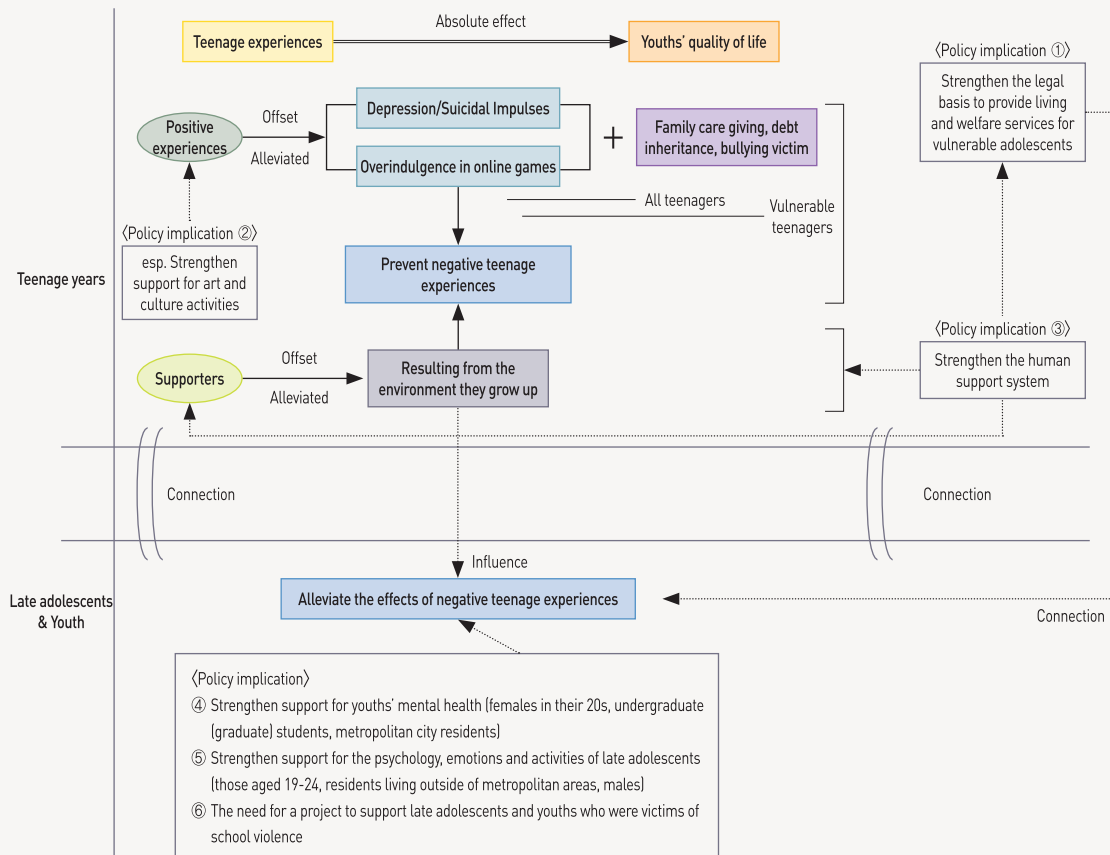


Figure 5 Comprehensive Results and Their Policy Implications

4. Policy Suggestions

■ Purpose and guidelines for driving forward policies

- It is possible to prepare methods to drive forward policies that can maximize policy efficiency and consumer-oriented effectiveness by connecting adolescent and youth policies. Both of the targeted adolescent and youth groups are in the first half of life, and are assigned into different life stages based on comprehensive results, policy implications, and policy intervention guidelines that were discussed in this study.
- The methods to drive forward policies were prepared and organized based on the target groups that the policies seek to serve, as well as areas that effectively make up a policy chain that connects adolescent policies with youth policies. By using an empirical basis, this study sought to identify things that the government should implement.

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- The organization of this study began by setting a specific policy objective, namely, ‘to prevent the occurrence of negative teenage experiences that affect adolescents’ and youths’ quality of life and to alleviate the effects of these events should they occur.’ The four basic policy guidelines that were established are as follows: 1) Offset the effects of negative teenage experiences, 2) Strengthen the basis for preventing vulnerable adolescents’ negative experiences, 3) Alleviate the effects of negative teenage experiences, and 4) Support the rehabilitation of youths with negative teenage experiences.
 - The guidelines for driving forward policies fall into two categories. One is “preventing negative teenage experiences” in terms of adolescent policies, and the other is “alleviating the effects of negative teenage experiences” for youth policies.
 - Of the four policy guidelines, “offset the effects of negative teenage experiences” and “strengthen the basis for preventing vulnerable adolescents” fall under the category of preventing negative teenage experiences. In contrast, the other two policy guidelines that “alleviate the effects of negative teenage experiences” and “support the rehabilitation of youths with negative teenage experiences” fall under the category of alleviating the effects of negative teenage experiences.

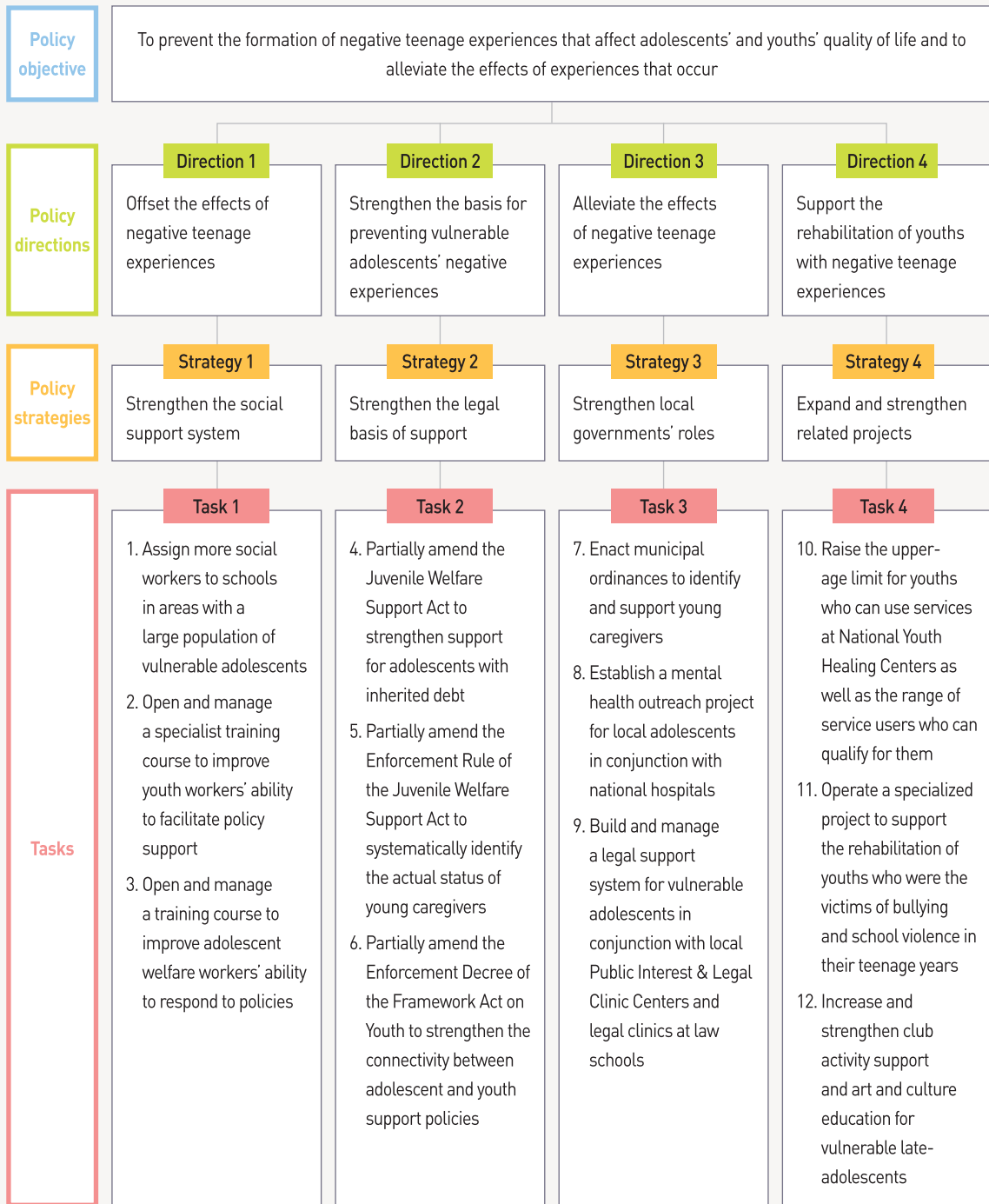


Figure 6 Basic System for Promoting Policies to Strengthen the Connection between Adolescent and Youth Policies

■ Strategies to keep up with policy guidelines and tasks

- This research suggests four policy strategies corresponding to each strategy guidelines (1. Strengthen the social support system, 2. Strengthen the legal basis of support, 3. Strengthen local governments' roles, 4. Expand and strengthen related projects), along with 12 policy tasks.
- The policy tasks to strengthen the social support system include: 1. Assign more social workers to schools in areas with a large population of vulnerable adolescents; 2. Open and manage a specialist training course to improve youth workers' ability to facilitate policy support; and 3. Open and manage a training course to improve adolescent welfare workers' ability to respond to policies.
- The policy tasks to strengthen the legal basis of support include: 1. Partially amend the Juvenile Welfare Support Act to strengthen support for adolescents with inherited debt; 2. Partially amend the Enforcement Rule of the Juvenile Welfare Support Act to systematically identify the actual status of young caregivers; and 3. Partially amend the Enforcement Decree of the Framework Act on Youth to strengthen the connectivity between adolescent and youth support policies.
- The policy tasks to strengthen local governments' roles include: 1. Enact municipal ordinances to identify and support young caregivers; 2. Establish a mental health outreach project for local adolescents in conjunction with national hospitals; and 3. Build and manage a legal support system for vulnerable adolescents in conjunction with local Public Interest & Legal Clinic Centers and legal clinics at law schools.
- The policy tasks to expand and strengthen related projects include: 1. Raise the upper-age limit for youths who can use services at National Youth Healing Centers as well as the range of service users who can qualify for them; 2. Operate a specialized project to support the rehabilitation of youths who were the victims of bullying and school violence in their teenage years; and 3. Increase and strengthen club activity support and art and culture education for vulnerable late-adolescents.

Reference

Creswell, J. W. (2014). *A Concise Introduction to Mixed Methods Research*. Los Angeles: SAGE.