A Hypothesized Model of Korean Women's Responses to Abuse

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Many abused married Korean women have a strong desire to leave their abusive husbands but remain in the abusive situations because of the strong influence of their sociocultural context. The article discusses Korean women's responses to spousal abuse in the context of patriarchal, cultural, and social exchange theory. Age, education, and income as component elements share common effects on the emergent variable, sociostructural power. Gender role attitudes, traditional family ideology, individualism/collectivism, marital satisfaction, and marital conflict predict psychological-relational power as a latent variable. Sociostructural, patriarchal, cultural, and social exchange theories are reconceptualized to generate the model of Korean women's responses to abuse.

Keywords: *abused married Korean women; responses to abuse; sociocultural context*

Many married Korean women are victims of domestic violence, and many of them tolerate this abuse. Abuse against Korean women has persisted throughout Korean history but was not officially recognized as an inappropriate behavior until 1998 when the Korean domestic violence law became effective. Korean feminists popularized the issue of domestic

violence in the late 1990s by publicizing hundreds of cases of abuse (Chang & Moon, 1998; E. Kim, 1998; J. Kim, 1998; Song & Moon, 1998). It is clear that these publicized cases remain just the tip of the iceberg. Thousands of Korean women still suffer from abuse regardless of the existing domestic violence law.

Controversy exists on the prevalence of abuse in Korea. According to the Korea Institute of Health and Social Affairs (1999), Korean women's abuse rate by husbands was 5.6%. The institute conducted telephone interviews with 1,000 men and women 20 years and older. Among those Korean women who reported having been abused, the physical abuse rate was 62.1%, followed by 35.3% emotional abuse, 2.6% financial abuse, and 11.3% other. The frequency of Korean women abuse was 2-3 times per month (27.9%), 2-3 times per week (13.9%), and every day (24.8%). Reasons for abuse cited by Korean married women in this study included husbands' drinking (29%), financial problems (16.5%), husbands' feeling of inferiority or low self-esteem (12%), and gaps of character, attitude, beliefs, and values between wife and husband (10.8%). Other reasons included the husband's hypervigilance and jealousy toward his wife and infidelity, and problems with in-laws. Most victims (63%) of abuse tolerated the abuse due to powerlessness and fear of retaliation or increased severity of abuse after reporting. Ninety percent (89.9%) of victims had physical symptoms including lacerations and bruises (42.7%), fractures (17.2%), injury of eardrum and teeth (7.9%), loss of vision (6.4%), and aphasia (0.7%). Eighty-three percent (83.3%) of victims had psychological symptoms (Korea Institute of Health and Social Affairs, 1999).

These statistics are not consistent with J. Kim's study (1998), which found 27.9% as the total abuse rate of Korean married women based on 1,523 married participants. The discrepancy between the findings of the Korea Institute of

Health and Social Affairs (1999) and J. Kim (1998) may be in part due to research methodology. The institute's telephone survey might have inhibited affirmative responses to a question about having been abused. Cultural issues may, however, also be at play. Korean cultural values hold that married women should sacrifice themselves for the family's harmony. Hence, husbands tend to blame their wives for problems in the family (e.g., a child's failing in school or sickness, a husband's not being promoted, and family feuds). Likewise, some women internalize these values and justify the abuse as appropriate. Such cultural issues likely yield inconsistent responses depending on the exact phrasing of questions.

Modernization and westernization of Korean society have influenced Korean women's awareness of domestic violence. Korean women have been entering the workforce in unprecedented numbers, and the opportunity to work has increased communication with other women regarding family issues. Although fewer women than men work, the gap is closing. According to the Korea Statistical Office (2003), the current employment rate of Korean women aged 30 years to 59 years is 59% (5,734,000 out of 9,691,132) as opposed to 97% (9,512,000 out of 9,856,130) for Korean men. This has led to an increase of interpersonal discussions of abuse. This opportunity for individual expression and growing knowledge has increased Korean women's levels of intolerance for abuse (E. Kim, 1998). Perhaps because of this, the Korean divorce rate has been soaring in recent years, with the crude divorce rate at 2.8 per 1,000 in 2001, up from 0.4 per 1,000 in 1970 (National Vital Statistics Reports, 2002). The Korean divorce rate ranks third in the world behind the United States and the UK. Up to 70% of these divorces have been attributed to abuse (Digital Korea Herald, 2002; Korea Focus, 2002). Little research has, however, been done on the specific variables that predict intolerance for abuse. Hence, based mainly on studies of domestic violence in the United States and using information about cultural variations in family relations, the authors present an explanatory model of tolerance for abuse grounded largely in concepts of power relations in marriage.

PURPOSE

It is essential that women who are abused have the resources and support to leave the abusive situation. Our knowledge of the U.S. context provides some good clues as to what spurs women to leave an abusive situation. These include escalating violence, recognition that "he" is not going to change, realization that violence takes a toll on the children or her family, and availability of emotional and social support from family or friends who have knowledge of the abuse (Campbell, Rose, Kub, & Nedd, 1999; Campbell & Soeken, 1999). Different people may, however, see the same event in different ways, and different cultural norms may apply in determining whether women leave an abusive situation.

TABLE 1
Demographic Background of Participants

Married Korean Women (N = 6)	Mean		
	Age (Years)	Education (Years)	Monthly Income (US$)
Remained in the abusive relationship			
(n = 4)	60.75	8.25	150
Left the abusive relationship			
(n = 2)	40.00	21.50	1,750

A qualitative study was undertaken to examine married Korean women's lived experiences in relation to domestic violence. Drawing on empirical data from interviews with married Korean women, the study explores both their understanding of domestic violence and desire to leave the abusive situation. Semistructured interviews were undertaken with six married Korean women selected by convenience sampling. Data collection took place from April 2002 to May 2003. The semistructured interview was conducted by phone for several reasons: (a) It is easy to use (Cassani, Zanetti, & Rotter, 1992); (b) it is cost-effective because long-distance traveling is not needed to conduct interviews (Barriball, Christian, While, & Bergen, 1996; Hash, Donlea, & Wallasper, 1985); and (c) it poses less tension to participants than a face-to-face interview.

All six participants in the study had been abused (physically, psychologically, sexually, and financially) during their marriage (Table 1). Four women remained in the abusive marriage, and the remaining divorced their husbands. Although the four women who stayed in the relationships had a strong desire to leave their husbands, they did not because of their strong values rooted in the Korean sociocultural context. Data were compared on age, education, and income for these two groups. Women who divorced their husbands were much younger with an average age of 40 years, completed more years of education (average of 22 years), and earned higher incomes (1,750,000 won/month = $1,750) than those who stayed in the abusive relationship.

The four women provided the following reasons for staying with their abusive husbands congruent with the dominant Korean cultural norms:

Family members should stick together no matter what sacrifices are required.

The wife's duty is to take care of the family and to sacrifice her personal wants.

It goes against nature to place women in positions of authority over men.

Obedience to husbands is the priority in marriage.

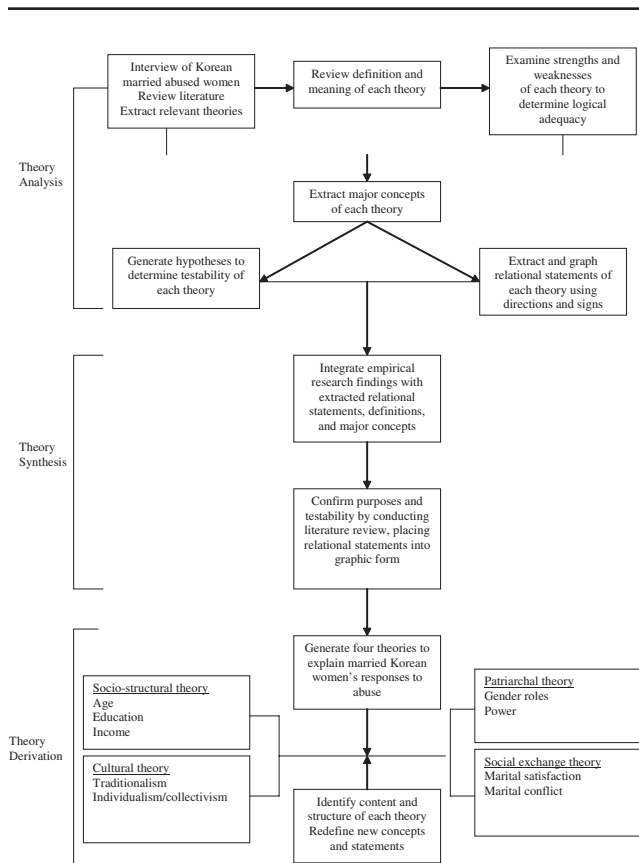A woman should never be allowed to talk back to her husband.

FIGURE 1   Process of theory development

Results from this study helped develop this new theoretical perspective on Korean women's responses to abuse by drawing from the theoretical underpinning of feminist perspectives to provide critical insight into the cultural context of domestic violence from which professional transcultural approaches to care can emerge. The proposed model was generated from the findings of this qualitative research as well as the literature. This theoretical model for married Korean women's responses to abuse focuses on the relationship between power (sociostructural and psychological-relational power) and abuse tolerance. The relationship of psychological-relational and sociostructural power to abuse tolerance has not been examined in Korea. Sociostructural, patriarchal, cultural, and social exchange theories are used to achieve these goals.

THEORY DEVELOPMENT

Theories used to explain the model of Korean women's responses to abuse were developed based on theory analysis, synthesis, and derivation (Walker & Avant, 1983) (see Figure 1). The meanings of sociostructural theory, patriarchal theory, cultural theory, and social exchange theory were exam-

ined, then followed by an analysis of the logical adequacy of each theory to determine the usefulness, testability, ability to generalize, and parsimony of the theory. Strengths and weaknesses of each theory were analyzed to determine the logical adequacy to incorporate the Korean women's desire to leave the abusive situation. Major concepts of each theory (e.g., rewards, costs, outcomes, and comparison level from social exchange theory) were identified. Relational statements were extracted to support the definitions used and to integrate the Korean women's experiences of abuse into the model. Information from various sources including research findings and empirical evidence such as semistructured interviews with six abused Korean married women were integrated at the theory synthesis stage.

The outcome of the qualitative study provided meaningful resources to build theories in determining variables for the model of Korean women's responses to abuse. Lastly, during the theory derivation, Korean women's responses to abuse were predicted by providing significant explanations about the phenomenon of spousal abuse within the Korean sociocultural context and choosing a theory that offers insightful ways of explaining the phenomenon of spousal abuse. Four theories were conceptualized to explain the model of Korean women's responses to abuse (Walker & Avant, 1983).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This article hypothesizes that Korean women's responses to abuse are driven in large part by their experiences of power relations in the family. This article deals with an emergent variable, sociostructural power, and a latent variable, psychological-relational power that might predict Korean women's tolerance for abuse. The emergent variable (sociostructural power) constitutes component elements (age, education, and income) that share common effects on sociostructural power. Component elements (attitudes toward gender roles, traditional family ideology, individualism/collectivism, and marital satisfaction/conflict), which share common causes of psychological-relational power, predict a latent variable (psychological-relational power) (Figueredo, 1999). Sociostructural power directly influences psychological-relational power and indirectly influences abuse tolerance through the mediating variable of psychological-relational power and perceived domestic violence (see Figure 2). Attitudes toward gender roles, traditional family ideology, individualism/collectivism, and marital satisfaction/conflict constitute the latent variable of psychological-relational power.

Three theoretical traditions central to influencing psychological-relational power (perceptions of power) in the Korean marital context are hypothesized. Patriarchal theory suggests gender relations as central. Cultural theory draws attention to family ideology and individualism/collectivism. Social exchange theory draws attention to the importance of conflict and marital satisfaction (see Figure 2). One may predict that
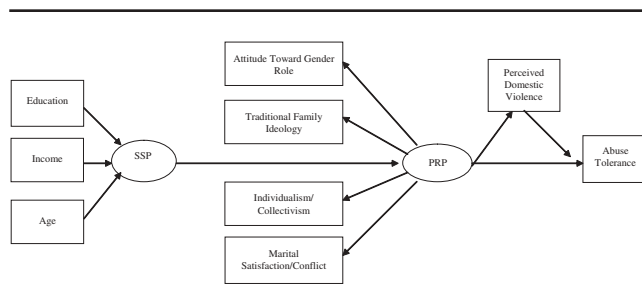
FIGURE 2   A theoretical framework of married Korean women's responses to abuse

NOTE: Rectangles: observed (manifest) variables. SSP: socio-structural power (emergent variable). PRP: psychological-relational power (latent variable).

women who see themselves as having more power in the family will be less likely to tolerate abuse. Finally, tolerance for abuse as an outcome variable can be seen as directly linked to perceptions of the level of abuse. Women who perceive themselves to be severely abused will be more likely to leave the situation. Specifically, this article focuses on identifying the key variables that will influence the degree of Korean women's tolerance for abuse or the likelihood of leaving the abusive situation (see Figure 2).

SOCIOSTRUCTURAL THEORY

Mulder (1976, 1997) argued that the main source of power is family, with family members as the victims of this exercise of power. The more powerful individuals in the family increase the power distance from the less powerful individuals to gain satisfaction (Mulder, 1976, 1997). In Korea, many men use their culturally traditional power to increase the power distance from the less powerful women. Thus, Korean women today are in situations of greater distance from the more powerful person than western women. Korean women are unable to reduce the distance because the power distance is indiscriminately applied in a family system. The authors predict the following:

1. The younger the Korean woman, the more power she has, the smaller is the power distance between herself and her husband, the higher is her perception of the level of domestic violence, and the stronger is her desire to leave the abusive situation.
2. The higher her income, the greater is her power, the smaller the power distance between herself and her husband, the higher is her perception of the level of domestic violence, and the stronger is her desire to leave the abusive situation.
3. The higher the woman's education, the greater is her power, the smaller is the power distance between herself and her husband, the higher is her perception of the level of domestic violence, and the stronger is her desire to leave the abusive situation.

Underlying these predictions, one finds the basic structure of the model: Women with higher levels of actual and perceived power are more likely to perceive abuse as inappropriate, are more likely to perceive the same behaviors as abusive, and are less likely to tolerate abuse than women with less power.

Age and Power

As can be seen from Figure 2, component elements including age, education, and income directly influence socio-structural power. The findings from the research supported this trend: The average age of the four who stayed with their husbands was 61, whereas the average age of the two who left their husbands was 40 (Table 1). Older women with lower perceived levels of domestic violence are more likely to tolerate abuse, whereas younger women with higher levels of perceived domestic violence are less likely to be tolerant. Younger Korean women influenced by western culture, mass media, and high technology such as the Internet have more opportunities to work in a community. These diverse circumstances and working opportunities empower younger Korean women by increasing perceptions of inequality and injustice against women. Thus, younger Korean women are more likely to divorce than older Korean women (the average age of the divorced was 36.7 in 2001; Digital Korea Herald, 2002; Korea Focus, 2002). Younger Korean women may also perceive power imbalance in the family system and be more likely to try to get equal opportunities than the older Korean women. Younger Korean women may have more power and control in the marital relationship, are more likely to contribute to a greater workforce, sacrifice less, and have more difficulty in balancing work and family compared to older women.

Education and Power

More educated Korean married women with higher levels of perceived domestic violence are less likely to tolerate abuse than less educated women with lower perceived levels of domestic violence. Findings from the research showed that the four women who stayed with their husbands had an average education of 8 years, compared to 22 years for the two women who left their husbands (Table 1). Education empowers and emancipates women by providing resources, supporting women's participation in their lives, recognizing multiple realities, increasing access to work opportunities, and promoting equality by challenging power imbalances in the family (Vor der Bruegge, 1995). Education plays a central role in shaping gender identity and women's desires and needs, which influence power in marital relationships. Better educated Korean women recognize imbalanced marital power relationships better than less educated women. Educated women may also be more likely to achieve power by managing their own finances (e.g., through enhanced career oppor-

tunities). In general, education leads to greater perceived level of domestic violence and less tolerance for abuse.

Income and Power

The more income and the less financially dependent a Korean woman is, the more likely she will perceive the level of domestic violence and the less likely she will tolerate abuse. Financial independence empowers women (Blumberg & Coleman, 1989). Findings from the qualitative study showed that the women who remained in the abusive relationship were more financially dependent on their husbands than the women who left their marriage (Table 1). Employed women prove less dependent on their husbands than unemployed women. Employed women have more resources and alternatives that allow them to leave abusive situations or to negotiate changes in their partners' behaviors. Financial independence strongly influences a women's termination of abusive relationships (Bramlett & Mosher, 2001; Gelles, 1972, 1976). Rogers (2003) reported that wives' income negatively affects marital quality. Becker (1981) argued that wives' income reduces spouses' gains from the efficiency inherent in the traditional division of labor. As a result, divorce has become more common in recent decades because spouses have less to exchange within marriage (Furstenberg & Cherlin, 1992). Working Korean, married women increasingly recognize that work is a critical means of constructing a more powerful self along with increasing perceptions of domestic violence and being less tolerant to abuse.

Hence, as can be seen from the model, higher levels of sociostructural power are seen as leading to a greater feeling of psychological-relational power (PRP). The next sections of the article elaborate on the concept of PRP, specifying additional variables that we believe contribute to Korean women's feelings of power.

PATRIARCHAL THEORY

Aristotle was the original "father" of patriarchal theory, because he believed that the State is a natural form of human life. As social beings, men aspire to create a patriarchal family, which is the foundation of State power. From this stance, the father is an active leader, able to solve problems on his own, and therefore has antidemocratic or abusive tendencies (Simpson, 1997). These traditions of paternalism and patriarchy are alive even today in many cultures. Patriarchal history teaches women that they are second to men, biological products of being, and imperfect creatures (Mansour, 2003). Many studies elucidate this patriarchal tendency to explain inequalities and promote challenging these tendencies as a way of achieving emancipation for oppressed women (Gelles, 1976; Osmond & Thorne, 1993; Snyder, 1995).

The foundation of the patriarchal theory is derived from men's power. Power is defined as "the ability of an individual to change the behavior of other family members, or as the ability to influence social outcomes" (Noller & Fitzpatrick, 1993, p. 124). Power in the family is associated with the theories of resource, equity, and gender. The theory of resource is "the reward of social interaction important in ensuring that one partner is willing to provide material resources for others" (Noller & Fitzpatrick, 1993, p. 235). The theory of equity is "the relation between fairness in the distribution of resources in the marriage and relationship satisfaction" (Noller & Fitzpatrick, 1993, p. 127). Individuals' feelings of power relate to their ability to envision alternative possibilities, to consider taking action to change their situations, and to feel a sense of control over their environment (Langer & Rodin, 1976; Rodin & Langer, 1977). Therefore, women with a greater sense of power in their relationships are more likely to perceive specific behaviors as violent, are less likely to tolerate abuse, and are more likely to consider alternative situations.

Attitude Toward Gender Role and Psychological-Relational Power

Given the relevance of gender issues to arguments concerning patriarchal relations and the exercise of interpersonal power, it remains important to consider the importance of gender roles and their influence on power and control in a family. One may use gender to distinguish female and male in the social rather than biological context. Different cultures view gender differently. In most societies, women have greater responsibilities for domestic activities, whereas men have greater responsibilities for external activities (Berry, Segall, & Kagitcibasi, 1997). Gender as a hierarchical structure is tightly associated with power relations (Baxter, 1993; Osmond & Thorne, 1993). Women are oppressed and are made to feel inferior and to accept it (Rowland & Klein, 1990). Oppressed women in a culture prove less powerful than nonoppressed or less oppressed women (James & Dallacosta, 1973).

Cross-cultural variations in gender roles and expectations are related to unequal power relationships between husbands and wives (Abrams, 2003). Thus, one may tie gender to violence. Over the past few decades, gender-based violence has been placed in the realm of women's human rights. Several studies report that negative feelings toward the female gender roles are positively associated with abuse (Check & Malamuth, 1983). Wife abuse often occurs with changing gender role expectations and performance in the context of economic hardship (Morash, Bui, & Santiago, 2000). Korean married women have obligations to perform domestic activities as wives, mothers, and daughters-in-law. The differences between husbands and wives' role expectations or performance within the same household and culture have, however, changed over time. It is clear that women who endorse the traditional gender roles in Korean society are more likely to be submissive, less likely to have power in the relationship, less likely to perceive the level of domestic violence, and more

likely to tolerate abuse. Traditional gender roles assign power to the husband and treat the wife as essentially the husband's property (Chang & Moon, 1998; E. Kim 1998; Kim-Goh, 1998).

CULTURAL THEORY

One may define culture as a complex whole that includes knowledge, belief, morals, laws, customs, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by people as members of society (Taylor, 1871). Therefore, culture reflects history, which is inseparable from human relationships, activities, values, and beliefs. Due to natural human interdependence (O'Hagan, 1999), thoughts, values, and beliefs that are problematic in one culture may be accepted elsewhere. Korean beliefs have influenced Korean women's perception of abuse by oppressing their consciousness and voices for hundreds of years. In the Korean cultural context, generalized oppression of women with regard to equality and justice remains the norm. Because few Korean women speak out openly and convincingly about their experiences, they help develop a norm of abuse-tolerance (Bernard, 1990; Markowitz, 2001). This article focuses on understanding the role of two important cultural variables (traditional family ideology and individualism/collectivism) in fostering tolerance for abuse.

Traditional Family Ideology and Psychological-Relational Power

Traditional family ideology concerns itself with how individuals value traditional Korean culture within the family system (Chang & Moon, 1998; E. Kim 1998; Kim-Goh, 1998). The family ideology in Korea derives from traditional Confucianism, which is "an ethical and moral system to govern all relations in family, community, and society" (E. Kim, 1998, p. 24). Greatly honored in China and Korea, Confucianism blended Taoist communion with nature and Buddhist concepts of afterlife. The current manifestation of Confucian gender roles in the family has proved to be one of the historically maladapted cultural remnants in Korea. In Confucian society, the family is the basic social unit, and personal sacrifice is commanded as necessary for family harmony and success (Dawson, 1942). Confucius (551-479 B.C) emphasized the family's proper regulation as the basis for order. Under the Korean Confucian family system, husbands and wives had separate functions in maintaining family harmony with the husbands playing the dominant role over their submissive wives. This doctrine of family discipline required the woman to become a member of her husband's family, to join in sacrifices to his ancestors, and to give her life over to bearing and rearing sons to continue the family line and preserve his ancestral temples (Dawson, 1942). Confucius believed that women were inherently inferior to men and incompetent to perform nondomestic activities. Under Korean Confucianism, men outranked women, who were born merely to be bio-

logical creatures as mothers, wives, and daughters (Song & Moon, 1998). Such beliefs have influenced Korean women's roles for hundreds of years in the areas of marriage, educational systems, and social relations (E. Kim, 1998). Therefore, less educated Korean married women prove more likely to accept a powerless role in the family as the appropriate place and the key to maintaining a successful family unit in the social hierarchy. Cultural change in Korea has, however, resulted in an increasing number of women rejecting this traditional organization. Therefore, Korean women's rejection of traditional family ideology tends to be associated with increased power in family relations, greater perceptions of domestic violence, and less tolerance of abuse.

Individualism/Collectivism and Psychological-Relational Power

According to Hofstede (2001), individualism and collectivism prevail in cultures and reflect the way people live together in nuclear families or extended families. Individualism and collectivism have many implications for values and behaviors. Individualism can be understood as (a) placing personal goals and valuing happiness above the goals of collectives, (b) valuing personal identity, (c) being independent of others, (d) separating from family, and (e) deemphasizing hierarchy and harmony (Hofstede, 2001; Tonnies, 1957). In contrast, collectivists seek integration into strong, cohesive groups such as families, and value cooperation and harmony (Triandis, 1988). The manifestations of collectivism are (a) pleasure in spending time with others, (b) willingness to cooperate or share things with others, (c) taking care of family as one's duty, (d) sacrificing self for the benefits of family, and (e) emphasizing harmony within the family (Triandis et al., 1986). Because the ways in which Korean women abdicate power in their personal relationships are related directly to their need for social harmony and family integration, Korean women with more individualist tendencies prove more likely to seek and achieve power in their personal and family relationships, more likely to perceive high levels of domestic violence, and less likely to tolerate abuse (Chang & Moon, 1998; E. Kim, 1998; Kim-Goh, 1998).

SOCIAL EXCHANGE THEORY

Social exchange theory is based on the exchange of rewards and costs to quantify the values of outcomes from different situations (Thibault & Kelley, 1959). One may identify four fundamental constructs in social exchange theory: rewards, costs, outcome (the balance of rewards and costs), and comparison level (the evaluation of rewards and costs by an individual's own criteria of what he or she deserves). Social exchange theory assumes that individuals are rational and that they calculate and consider alternatives in social relations to maximize rewards (e.g., fun, loyalty, and attention) and minimize costs (e.g., stress, time, and energy) in their

exchanges (Blau, 1964; Chadwick-Jones, 1976; Homans, 1964). From this perspective, one must understand the intrinsic and extrinsic rewards and costs in a marriage, including the level of satisfaction with the relationship and the degree of conflict. Such issues will determine the extent to which abuse may be tolerated in the relationship and hence the likelihood of alternatives (i.e., leaving the relationship) being considered. One of the participants in the qualitative study demonstrates the reciprocal expectation she has of her husband. She expected that after she has devoted her time and energy to family harmony, she deserved her husband's loyalty and attention. Her husband's continued violence and infidelity, however, pushed her to leave the marriage and file for divorce.

Marital Satisfaction/Conflict and Psychological-Relational Power

Four participants in the study who did not leave the abusive situation expressed marital satisfaction derived from motherhood and handling family finances. They were, however, dissatisfied with their sexual relationship with their husbands, who usually forced them to have sexual intercourse. Difficult relationships with in-laws were cited as a common reason for marital dissatisfaction. Other causes of marital dissatisfaction cited by the women in the study included family finances, inability to make decisions, and the burden of expectations for women rooted in the Korean cultural context.

Successful marriage can be explained by many factors including cooperative reproduction, sexual relations, handling family finances, making major decisions, relationships with in-laws, philosophy of life, and other cultural factors of balancing rewards and costs (Blau, 1964; Daly & Wilson, 1996). One may describe good marriages in terms of successful management of conflict (Fitzpatrick, 1993; Fitzpatrick & Ritchie, 1992; Noller & Fitzpatrick, 1993; Thibault & Kelley, 1959). Balancing rewards and costs with regard to money, power, and inequality remains the sine qua non for the satisfaction of family and management of conflict (Spanier, 1976; Thibault & Kelley, 1959). Balancing rewards and costs that contribute to marital satisfaction constitutes the degree of power balance. It is predicted that one can associate increasing levels of satisfaction with more equal power distribution.

Marital conflict may be generated by an imbalance of marital power. Marital power is the ability of one spouse to impose his or her will on the partner (Sarantakos, 2002). The imbalance of marital power directly relates to marital conflict. Ineffective management of marital conflict also leads to power imbalance by oppressing and controlling women, and is associated with equality and shared responsibility (Fitzpatrick, 1993; Fitzpatrick & Ritchie, 1992; Noller & Fitzpatrick, 1993; Sarantakos, 2002). Couples who engage one another constructively maintain equal power relations and respect. Couples unable to manage conflict suffer from unequal power relations.

Sexual relationships outside of marriage, failing to bear a male child, conflicts with in-laws, financial crises, and husbands' drinking prove to be the main factors explaining marital conflict in Korea (Song & Moon, 1998). According to traditional Korean family ideology (Dawson, 1942), not producing a male child is one of three reasons that a Korean woman should be returned to her family of origin by her husband's family. Many Korean women are expected to conceive until a baby boy is produced. Therefore, having sex without consent becomes the duty of a wife, and hence forced sex is not recognized as sexual abuse in a Korean marriage. This forced sexual relationship directly relates to marital conflicts and negatively relates to satisfaction. Korean women who have marriages with a high level of marital conflict prove more likely to seek social interaction (Chang & Moon, 1998). The women who seek social interaction tend to be individualistic and tend to move toward academic achievements and careers (Digital Korea Herald, 2002). Through this social interaction, Korean women in conflict-ridden marriages perceive the level of domestic violence as higher and because less likely to tolerate abuse in comparison with those in more satisfying relationships.

DISCUSSION

This hypothesized model of Korean women's responses to abuse was developed based on Korean women's lived experiences, the literature, the definition of abuse, and the theoretical framework of sociostructural, patriarchal, cultural, and social exchange theory. Sociostructural power (SSP) commonly affected by age, education, and income will influence psychological-relational power (PRP), which is predicted by attitude toward gender role, traditional family ideology, individualism/collectivism, and marital satisfaction/conflict. PRP will then influence the perceived level of domestic violence. Both PRP and the perceived level of domestic violence will influence the level of abuse tolerance. Marriage is "an exchange relationship governed by culturally defined principles of equity and status expectations" (MacMillan & Gartner, 1999, p. 948). Many Korean married women, however, remain vulnerable to abuse because of a family system based on power imbalance (Song & Moon, 1998). Likewise, many Korean men tend to be motivated by aggressive proclivities and the desire to dominate women (Song & Moon, 1998). Korean men often quote the saying, "A tame woman and dried fish should be beaten once every three days for its real taste," to justify the abusive behavior. Many Korean men believe that women do not have enough knowledge or experience to adequately make important decisions (L. I. Kim, 1998). The surging Internet culture and media have greatly influenced Korean women's perception of domestic violence. When Western culture infuses into Korean culture, a newly formed social cognition stimulates the recognition of self. This newly recognized self will prove likely to reject

arbitrary authority. Abused married Korean women who perceive power imbalance in marriage tend to recognize the higher level of domestic violence and are more inclined to leave the abusive husband as shown by empirical evidence: The incidence of spousal abuse remains the highest in the younger age group with higher education (Ahn et al., 2000; Moon, Choi, Jeun, Lee, & Hong, 1998); 70% of divorce was due to spousal abuse; and the average age at divorce was 36.7 in 2001 (Digital Korea Herald, 2002; Korea Focus, 2002).

Power exists in any society and in any social group. Historically, human beings have been using power since the beginning of time. Human beings have more power in a hierarchical social system. Thus, hierarchical social systems and power are inseparable. The family is a hierarchical social system. How the individual recognizes and acts on this imbalance of power, however, proves to be the key ingredient in not becoming a victim of domestic violence in marriage.

IMPLICATIONS FOR NURSING

The purpose of this article is to discover relationships between variables by examining associations, strength, and directions of the relationship within the model (Hox & Bechger, 1998). Examining the relationships of an emergent variable, a latent variable, and observed variables within the model will provide elucidated ground of theories of the perceived level of domestic violence in marriage and abuse tolerance. Examining factors of domestic violence toward Korean married women remains essential in understanding why some Korean women have a strong desire to leave their abusive husbands. Understanding the phenomenon of domestic violence against married Korean women will empower abused women as a vulnerable population by expanding their consciousness of spousal abuse. Expanding Korean women's consciousness would have a profound impact on the frequency and severity of domestic violence. This hypothetical model provides new directions for nursing research by exploring psychological-relational and sociostructural power incorporating sociostructural, patriarchal, cultural, and social exchange theory for the abused Korean married women in the Korean sociocultural context. This hypothetical model would be the basis of new approaches for the Korean community nursing practice using the theoretical framework in education, practice, and research.

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