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CHILD ABUSE BY IMMIGRANT WOMEN : THE MEDIATING EFFECT OF CONTROLLING BEHAVIOR, SOCIO-CULTURAL MALADJUSTMENT, AND DEPRESSION

Abstract:

The purpose of this study is to understand the realities and associations of controlling behavior, socio-cultural maladjustment, and depression and to examine the paths towards child abuse among immigrant women.

Based on the coercive control theory and the acculturation theory, the impacts and results of various systems(individual level, family system, social system) surrounding immigrant women were comprehensively considered. After the literature reviews, the model and hypothesis were set up and verified.

The multi-cultural family survey data in the 2010 Domestic Violence Survey of South Korea was used. 307 immigrant women were surveyed from September 6, 2010 to October 27, 2010 and the responses of 212 respondents who had a child were used for analysis.

The prevalence of child abuse was 38.8% and the rates of emotional and physical abuse were 34.8% and 16.4%, respectively. The associations among major variables were verified: Controlling behaviors of male partners not only influence directly but also indirectly on child abuse perpetration by immigrant women via socio-cultural maladjustment and depression. The three paths verified in the model are as follows;

[Path 1] controlling behavior → child abuse

[Path 2] controlling behavior → depression → child abuse

[Path3]controlling behavior → socio-cultural maladjustment → depression → child abuse(inferential path)

Based on the results, theoretical-practical-political implications were discussed.

First, the theoretical implications are 1) introducing and disseminating the coercive control theory to unfamiliar researchers in south korea 2) providing information about child abuse by immigrant women with limited previous research and 3) suggesting systematic intervention for child abuse by immigrant women based on the integrated viewpoint of social work.

Second, the practical implications are 1) providing family-based domestic violence intervention program on controlling behavior, 2) helping the immigrant women to adapt to the Korean society and to participate social activities, 3) offering service to improve mental health of immigrant women and reinforcing support system, and 4) providing parent education regarding the Korean culture and emotional characteristics.

Lastly, the political implications are 1) establishing sanctions against domestic violence (controlling behavior) perpetrators and legal basis to manage high-risk group 2) campaigning to improve the awareness of immigrant women and preparing for crisis intervention targeting illegal immigrants 3) expanding shelters for the victims of domestic violence(controlling behavior) and improving service accessibility by outreaching them, and 4) reinforcing an integrated case management system and

expanding case managers.

Keywords:

Immigrant Women, Controlling Behavior, Socio-Cultural Maladjustment, Depression, Child Abuse, Coercive Control Theory, Acculturation Theory