First Generation Korean Immigrant Parents’ Perception of the Common Discipline Strategies: A Pilot Study

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Backgrounds
- Parents teach children socialization rules through discipline.
- Discipline is defined as the set of acts and rules that parents use to socialize their children, that is, to teach them the values and normative behaviors of the society in which they will have to function as adults.
- Therefore, parental discipline is culturally developed.
- To understand parental discipline strategies, one must know the cultural background of where parenting takes place.
- It is even more important to know parents' cultural background when parenting is taking place in a society where the socialization rules differ from the parents’ learned socialization rules.

Purpose
- To explore the perception of the first-generation Korean immigrant parents regarding discipline.

Korean Immigrants
- Voluntary migrants.
- Came to the US hoping for more political, social, and occupational security and better educational opportunities for their children.

Cultural differences between Korea and US

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Sample
- 7 first-generation Korean immigrant parents (5 mothers, 2 fathers) of children aged between 5 and 8 years.
  - Age: 36.3 (SD=4.8) years old.
  - Education: 14.8 (SD=1.9) years.
  - US residency: 7.7 (SD=5.2) years.
  - Family income: 82% between $40,000 - $60,000.

Interview Questions
- What do you think about [each specific discipline strategy]?
- Do you think it is effective? Why or why not?
- Does this strategy fit with your cultural background?
- Is there any other discipline strategy that you use?

Results
- 6 common themes: Korean-style, American-style, cultural change, sensitivity to child, unique strategies, & communication concerns.

1) Korean-style discipline: correction, spanking, hitting, less hugging/kissing
   - "When my children lived in Korea, they got hit, Korean style, because they did not listen to me. After we came here, people said we could not hit our children so they did not get hit. On the other hand, it is my voice that goes up now."
   - "Although it has changed for the better since our father's generation, when he lived very strictly, we still have influences from our parent's generation. Therefore, there is not that much expression (of love) such as, hugging or kissing, to our children."

2) American-style discipline: time out, using a sticker chart, praising, hugging/kissing, giving chores, removing/adding privileges
   - "Americans make children go to time-out frequently."
   - "Slacker charts are something that teachers do."
   - "Americans take away privileges often, but Korean parents don't do it that much."
   - "I think American people live very sensibly, giving out compliments very often such as you are pretty, your hair, glasses, and clothes are pretty."

3) Recent immigrant parents were not familiar with common positive discipline strategies. Parents try to discontinue intergenerational continuity of negative Korean-style discipline. They try to use positive discipline strategies that are contrary to Korean values.
   - Voluntary migrants.
   - Came to the US hoping for more political, social, and occupational security and better educational opportunities for their children.

Discussion
- Parents recognize how their experience as a child influences on their discipline strategies. Parents try to discontinue intergenerational continuity of negative Korean-style discipline. They try to use positive discipline strategies that are contrary to Korean values.
- Parents learn American-style discipline from preschool teachers, teachers of children, and customers of their small businesses.
- Parents are sensitive about how their children think about their discipline strategies. They recognize that their own discipline ideas can be different from their children's ideas. They are also conscious about the effectiveness and positiveness & negativeness of the discipline strategies.
- Korean parents seem to view children's time into two types: study and play. Other than stressing the importance of study, parents do not make explicit limit setting.
- Parents use two unique discipline strategies. They seem to use raised hands as a sort of time-out technique. It is time for children to think about what they have done wrong. They can be in pain from raising their hands.

Conclusions
- Professionals who work with Korean immigrant families need to be sensitive about their discipline strategies and cultural backgrounds that shape discipline.
- It is necessary to develop culturally sensitive parenting program for Korean immigrant families.

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