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First Generation Korean American Parents' Perceptions of Discipline

Eunjung Kim, PhD, RN, ARNP [Assistant Professor] and
University of Washington School of Nursing

Seunghye Hong, MA [Doctoral Student]
University of Washington School of Social Work

Abstract

Nurses not only need to be familiar with the professional guidelines of discipline and but also be aware of variances in styles of acceptable discipline across cultural groups. The goal of this study was to explore cultural influences in relation to (1) first generation Korean American parents' perceptions of common discipline strategies in the United States and (2) discipline strategies commonly used among first generation Korean American parents. Inductive content analysis was used to analyze interview data from seven first generation Korean American parents. Derived themes indicated that parents considered spanking/hitting and less hugging/kissing as Korean style and time out, using a sticker chart, hugging/kissing, removing/adding privileges, and giving chores as American style. Recent immigrant parents were not familiar with common positive discipline strategies in the United States. As they adapted to the mainstream society, they discontinued what they perceived to be negative aspects of Korean style and adopted positive aspects of American style. They were sensitive to children's views on discipline and they experienced communication difficulties with children. These findings indicated that Korean American parents' perceptions on discipline strategies were shaped by living in two cultures and were different from the western viewpoints.

Index words

Korean Americans; discipline; corporal punishment; cross-cultural parenting

First Generation Korean American Parents' Perceptions of Discipline

Nurses and other primary health care providers offer parents about developmentally appropriate guidelines for disciplining children (AAP, 1998; Ateah, Secco, & Woodgate, 2003; Green & Palfrey, 2002; Nelms, 2005). Discipline refers to the system of acts and rules parents use to teach children the values and normative behaviors of the society in which they will have to function as adults (Cherlin, 1996). To give effective advice nurses need to be familiar with guidelines from professional organizations such as National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners (NAPNAP, 2005) or the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP,

Corresponding author: Eunjung Kim, PhD, ARNP Assistant Professor Family and Child Nursing University of Washington Box 357262 Seattle, WA 98195 Office phone: (206) 543-8246 Home phone: (206) 542-0126 Office fax: (206) 543-6656, E-mail address: eunjungk@u.washington.edu

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1998). In addition, nurses need to understand that norms of acceptable discipline styles are largely shaped by culture and be aware of variances across cultural groups in styles of acceptable discipline. Without such cultural knowledge, nurses may misinterpret the discipline strategies commonly utilized by ethnic and racial minority parents.

Korean Americans are the third largest Asian-born population in the United States, after Chinese and Indian Americans (Bureau, 2002). Researchers have demonstrated that Asian American parenting differs from that of European Americans (Chao & Tseng, 2002). However, compared to Asian groups such as Chinese Americans (Chao, 1994; Gorman, 1998), relatively little is known about Korean Americans. Korean culture is viewed as a collectivistic culture, which is quite different from the individualistic culture commonly found in the United States (Hofstede, 1980). In collectivistic cultures, parents socialize children to be interdependent, whereas parents in individualistic culture socialize children to be independent (Howard, 1996; E. Kim, 2003; Pettengill & Rohner, 1985; Rudy & Grusec, 2001). These divergent cultural backgrounds may shape different perceptions of acceptable discipline styles between Korean American parents and European American parents. Besides, first generation Korean American parents may not be familiar with common discipline styles in the United States because they experienced a different socialization focus and process that fits Korean culture.

Nurses who care for ethnic and racial minority families need to assess parents' perceptions on discipline to avoid misunderstandings and to provide culturally competent care. The goal of this study was to explore cultural influences on discipline in racial and ethnic minority parents using Korean American families as a sample minority group. Specific aims are (1) to explore first generation Korean American parents' perceptions of common discipline strategies in the United States and (2) to explore discipline strategies commonly used among first generation Korean American parents.

BACKGROUND

Guideline for Effective Discipline in the United States

To give appropriate advice on discipline, nurses should be familiar with guidelines from the health care professional organizations. For example, the NAPNAP (2005) provides a position statement on eliminating corporal punishment. A boarder guideline is offered by the AAP (1998). According to the AAP (1998), effective discipline includes strategies that reduce undesired behaviors, reward desired behaviors, and promote positive parent and child relationships (See Table 1). In western culture discipline strategies for promoting desired behaviors include social rewards (i.e., praising and hugging/kissing) and tangible rewards (AAP, 1998; Webster-Stratton, 2004). Tangible rewards such as a special treats, money, additional privileges, and stickers for a sticker chart can be effectively used to promote desired behaviors

Discipline strategies for reducing undesired behaviors include punishment and appropriate discipline (Webster-Stratton, 2002). Punishment is a penalty that parents use in response to children's undesired behaviors. Scolding/yelling is used by nearly 85% of American parents; however, two-thirds of parents believe that it is not effective (Organization, 1995). Corporal punishment is used by 94% of parents (Straus & Stewart, 1999). The most common corporal punishment is spanking using a hand (72%), followed by slapping extremities (63%), and spanking with an object (29%) (Straus & Stewart, 1999). Spanking is often related to parental frustration in response to child disobedience (Andero & Stewart, 2002; Wissow, 2002). Nevertheless, 50% of parents think that spanking is not effective (Organization, 1995). Discipline strategies need to be developmentally appropriate for children. For example, grounding or giving extra chores to young children may be considered harsh discipline (Webster-Stratton, 2005).

Instead of punishment, parents are encouraged to use appropriate discipline strategies such as ignoring, timeout, reasoning, correction, and removing privileges (Ateah et al., 2003; Gross & Garvey, 1997; Webster-Stratton, 2002). Children's behaviors are maintained by the attention they receive. Therefore, parents can effectively decrease non-dangerous undesired behaviors (e.g., whining) by ignoring them. When children are aggressive or noncompliant, a timeout in the form of a brief removal from parental attention is recommended. Parents can reason with children, ask children to correct behaviors, and remove privileges such as TV to effectively reduce undesired behaviors (Gross & Garvey, 1997; Webster-Stratton, 2002).

Cultural Competence in Providing Guidance in Discipline for Ethnic Minority Parents

With growing diversity in the United States, nurses have developed essential features of providing nursing care that is meaningful and fits with cultural beliefs of care recipients (Leininger, 1988). Consequently, providing culturally competent care has become an expected paradigm in nursing practice (Andrews & Boyle, 2003). Cultural competence is a process where nurses continuously attempt to achieve the ability to effectively work within client's cultural context (Andrews, 2003). To provide ethnic and racial minority parents with culturally competent guidance in discipline nurses need to have understanding on minority parents' beliefs, values, and practices related to discipline. The focus of ethnic and racial minority in this study is Korean Americans, an understudied population (Sohn, 2004).

Korean culture has been largely influenced by Confucianism and may be viewed as a collectivistic culture, where family members are expected to be interdependent (Hofstede, 1980; Lehrer, 1988). Children are raised to be obedient to their parents, loyal to the family, and to fulfill other aspects of filial piety (Kelly & Tseng, 1992; Lee, 1995; Oak & Martin, 2000). Korean parents tend to consider their children as extensions of themselves, and as such, assume full responsibility for their children's behaviors and outcomes (Ahn, 1994). Believing that they know the best way for their children, most parents are extensively involved in decision-making regarding their children's daily routines, choice of college, choice of profession, and choice of spouse (Lehrer, 1988). For Korean parents, parental authority reflects parental caring for children (Chao & Tseng, 2002; E. Kim, 2005).

When Korean families migrate to America, they encounter a much more individualistic culture (Hofstede, 1980), where family members are expected to be independent, distinct, autonomous, self-reliant, and self-assertive (Howard, 1996; U. Kim & Choi, 1994; Rudy & Grusec, 2001). American parents encourage less interdependence in their children than do parents who have migrated from a collectivistic culture (Howard, 1996; Phinney, Ong, & Madden, 2000) such as Korea. Children are expected to regulate their own behaviors and to act in a socially appropriate manner without explicit parental control or emphasis on obedience (Grolnick & Farkas, 2002).

There is a paucity of research on Korean American parents' use of discipline. Min (1988) suggested that Korean Americans are less likely to use monetary rewards for positive reinforcement and more likely to use corporal punishment. Ahn (1994) found that 79% of Korean Americans and 78% of European Americans believed that spanking/hitting was an effective discipline strategy when children are young or stubborn. However, 70% of Korean Americans compared to 7% of European American parents considered hitting a child on the hand as an appropriate strategy for a nine-year-old son who cheated at school. Ahn (1994) also found that Korean American parents use spanking not to control children with authority but to help children regulate the behaviors that they are not able to control by themselves. In addition, Korean American parents considered hitting their children the same as hitting themselves. In Ahn's study, Korean American parents were concerned about inappropriate impulsive spanking. Parents thought that if rules were set in advance about spanking and used consistently without impulsiveness, children would accept spanking as a punishment (Ahn, 1994).

METHODS

Inductive content analysis was used to describe first generation Korean American parents' perceptions of discipline. This method focuses on making valid and replicable inferences from text data to their cultural and social contexts (Krippendorff, 1980; Weber, 1990). Central to this method is a systematic classification process of text data into fewer content-related themes that share the same meaning (Cavanagh, 1997; Downe-Wamboldt, 1992). Themes were inductively developed rather than being superimposed upon the data (Kondracki, Wellman, & Damundson, 2002). Content analysis is appropriate for studying phenomena about which little is known (Waltz, Strickland, & Lenz, 2005).

Sample

Network sampling technique, the selection of subjects by referrals from earlier subjects (Polit & Beck, 2004), was used to recruit parents. Participants were seven first generation Korean American parents (5 mothers, 2 fathers) with young children (ages 6 to 8) living in the Northwest United States. All participants were born in Korea and had lived in the United States for an average of 8 years (range 2 to 15). Three were citizens, two were permanent residents, and two were temporary residents. Although the parents temporarily living in the United States were not technically Korean Americans, they were included in this study to get a continuum of parents' perceptions. The mean age of parents was 36 (range 33 to 46) years. Parents were highly educated with an average 15 years (range 12 to 16). Annual family incomes were between \$40,000 – \$60,000 and the average number of children was two.

Procedure

Interview data were obtained as a part of a pilot test of the Korean version of the Parenting Practices Interview (Webster-Stratton, 2005) using Brinslin's (1970) translation and back translation method (Willgerodt, Yahiro, Kim, & Ceria, 2005). After informed consent was obtained, parents filled out the Korean version of the questionnaire. Next, parents were interviewed in Korean language using the following questions: (1) what do you think about the following discipline strategies: praising, hugging/kissing, giving tangible rewards, giving extra privileges, using sticker charts, ignoring, timeout, correction, reasoning, taking away privileges, scolding/yelling, threatening, spanking, slapping/hitting, grounding, and giving extra work chores? and (2) what discipline strategies do you usually use? The interviews were audio tape-recorded and transcribed in Korean for analysis.

Data Analysis

The interview transcripts were analyzed following Morgan (1993) and Weber's (1990) suggestion. First, the two authors independently read the transcripts several times to gain a broad understanding of the text. Next, as each author independently read the transcripts, they highlighted key quotations and identified key code related to each research question. Once key codes were identified, the first author checked the coded quotations from all files and combined them into one file that addressed each research question. The accuracy of placement of coded quotations in each file was confirmed with the second author. The two coded quotation files were then carefully read and each researcher independently identified major themes by putting key coded quotations together for each research question. After each researcher felt that they had identified major themes, the two researchers met and reviewed major themes together and engaged in active dialogue to resolve any discrepancies. After extensive discussion, both authors agreed about the themes found in the text. Then, the authors read the interview transcripts again to validate the structure of themes against the interview data.

FINDINGS

Findings are organized based on the themes developed to answer each research question (See Table 2). Translation of quotes involved not only staying true to the Korean meaning of the words, but also correcting for English grammar.

Korean American parents' perceptions of common discipline strategies in the United States

The first research goal was to explore cultural influences in relation to first generation Korean American parents' perceptions of common discipline strategies in the United States. Three major themes were derived: (1) Korean style, (2) American style, and (3) changes in discipline strategies.

Korean Style—Parents identified spanking/hitting and less hugging/kissing as Korean style. They learned Korean style from their parents as children. Regarding spanking/hitting, a mother stated, "I don't think spanking is good. I was spanked as a child and don't remember why I was spanked. It's painful. I do not want to spank, but when I am in a hurry, I use it." Both fathers talked about low expression of love such as hugging or kissing. One father said, "We still have influences from our parent's generation, who lived very strictly. There is not much expression of love to our children." The other father stated, "Fathers, especially Korean fathers, are not expressive."

American Style—Parents identified timeout, sticker chart, adding/removing privileges, extra work chores, reasoning, praising, and showing affection as American style. Parents learned American style by talking or observing teachers or parents at their children's school and neighborhood, customers in their grocery store, and from their pediatrician. A mother stated about observing teachers' use of timeout, "Timeout is frequently used when a child misbehaves in American schools. If a child bothers a teacher or another child and if the teacher notices it, then the child goes to timeout." Another mother observed the use of sticker chart, "They do sticker charts at school. In the first grade class, students collect stickers for their proper behaviors. On the 30th of each month, students can pick a prize out of a basket."

Parents also observed American parents' use of discipline strategies. One mothers talked about observing the use of adding/removing privileges, "Taking away privileges is something American parents do; I don't think Korean parents use it much," and another mother observed reasoning, "The American mothers at my child's preschool seem to talk often with their children about problems." In addition, mothers observed the use of timeout and giving extra work chores as follows: Americans often use timeout. Since I didn't grow up in an environment where timeout was used, I don't know how effective it is. I don't know how to use timeout and I don't know what kind of effects it has on children. So, I cannot use this method.

Americans think that giving children extra chores is okay and use it often. I am not sure about other Korean families, but I don't do that. If my children made a mess, I tell them to clean it up until they do so, but I don't make them do extra chores.

Korean American parents thought that American parents over used praising and showing affection. A mother stated, "I think Americans over use praise. When a child has a habit you want to fix, it would be okay to give praise in the beginning if they do well. But, over praising is not good." Sometimes what they observed made them think about adaptation as one mother experienced, "My neighbor put out a banner when their child comes home from camping. So, I thought 'Ah! That's what American parents do. Is that something I should learn?'" Among what Korean American parents observed American use of discipline strategies, they identified grounding as harsh discipline for age. A mother stated, "Children will not reflect on what they have done wrong but actually wonder why they are being punished for such a long time."

Changes in Discipline Strategies—Recent immigrant parents were not as familiar with positive and appropriate discipline strategies commonly used in the United States compared to the parents who had been living in the United States longer. As parents adapted to American society, the following changes occurred in their discipline strategies: stop spanking/hitting, begin using timeout, more praising, and more hugging/kissing. These changes were more obvious for those who had more access to observing American discipline strategies and those who were more open-minded. For example, one mother who owned a small grocery store was more likely to change her strategy than another stay home mother who was socially isolated from the mainstream culture.

What Korean American parents heard about American's views on harsh discipline made them stop spanking/hitting. A mother said, "In Korea, my children got spanked, Korean style, because they did not listen to me. After we came here, people said we could not strike our children, so they were not spanked." Another mother stated, "I personally think hitting on the calf is okay. But, Americans can make it into a problem."

Changes also occurred when parents tried out what they observed. A mother explained this process: I was very envious of how Americans kiss and call their children 'honey.' I thought about it and tried in on my child. I hugged and kissed her. She liked it. Therefore, I continue to do it. Her dad also tries to hug and kiss her as well. He has never done anything like that before; he tries very hard now.

One mother learned to use timeout from a pediatrician as stated in the following: My child's pediatrician told me to try timeout. Before, I got in between of my two children to solve the problem they brought to me. Now, I tell them that they should solve their own problems. I tell them to go to their own room, as the doctor told me.

As Korean American parents learned more about American society, they come to realize that sometimes they needed to go against their own culture. A mother stated, "In order to raise children in the US, I think it is necessary to brag about children to other people, which is considered as foolish in Korea." Furthermore, parents acknowledged the necessity of learning to balance parenting practices as this mother stated: "I think we have to study a lot about how to raise Korean children in American society rather than raising them in the American way."

Discipline Strategies Commonly Used Among First Generation Korean American Parents

The second research goal was to explore cultural influences in relation to discipline strategies commonly used among first generation Korean American parents. Four major themes were derived: (1) strategies for rewarding desired behaviors, (2) strategies for reducing undesired behaviors, (3) sensitivity to children's views on discipline, and (4) communication difficulty.

Strategies for Rewarding Desired Behaviors—Parents commonly used praising, hugging/kissing, and tangible rewards as positive reinforcements. Parents varied on the level of praise and hugging/kissing they expressed. A mother stated, "When they win an award I just say they did well, I am not able to express over excitement." Another mother said, "I think it is good to hug and kiss the child." For tangible rewards, parents usually bought food, clothes, and books, but not toys. One mother said, "I am good with buying them food (for rewards) but I do not buy them toys very often." A father said, "When they win awards or read books, I usually give them a dollar."

Strategies for Reducing Undesired Behaviors—Parents commonly used seven discipline strategies to reduce children's undesired behaviors including: corrections; yelling/scolding; warning/threatening; spanking/hitting; reflection, and reasoning; raising arms in the air for a certain amount of time (e.g., 5 minutes) while sitting or standing; and giving extra

homework. Generally, parents used correcting rather than ignoring. A mother said, “When my child does something wrong I never miss the chance to tell them what they have done wrong [referring to ignoring]. It wouldn’t make a difference if I say something or not but I have to say something.” They consider the correcting as coaching as this mother stated, “Mistakes, especially habits, should be corrected each time. I think minor mistakes should be scolded in order to reduce major problems. Socialization should start from small coaching such as teaching them to say ‘good morning.’”

When a child misbehaves parents tend to use correction the first. If the child does not follow directions a few times they are given, parents tended to scold the child as this mother stated, “When I tell my children not to do [something] and they do it again, my tone of voice goes up. For instance, my style is yelling or scolding.” If the child still did not conform, Korean American parents tended to give warning for spanking as this one mother stated: I tell him not to do something several times. If he still does it, I give him the last warning, ‘if you do it again you will get spanked!’ Then he says he understands and won’t do it again. After that, if it occurs again then I spank him.

Korean American parents considered spanking as the last resort that was effective for young children in stopping misbehaviors; for older children parents reported that spanking was not necessary because they could talk to children. When they spank, they tended to prefer using wooden rod rather than their hand. A mother explained: Spanking with my hand is something I use according to my emotions. But, spanking with a wooden rod is something I do when I decide to spank the child. While I look for a wooden rod, I take time to cool myself down from the thoughts that go through my head.

After the punishment, parents reconsidered the children’s behavior problems and parents’ choice of discipline and tried to communicate this with their children. A mother stated: In the morning, before school my daughter tries on different outfits while my son watches TV. I yell at them ‘Hurry up’ because it’s not good to be late. After yelling, I reflect ‘I should not have yelled.’ Therefore, I talk to them, ‘Let’s hurry in the morning.’

Giving extra homework and raising arms were unique strategies widely used among Korean American parents. A mother said, “I make them study, not do chores; ‘Go study!’” A father said, “To give my child time to reflect about his misbehavior I make him raise his arms. When he raises his arms, I want him to realize that ‘when I do something wrong, then I get this kind of pain.’”

Sensitivity to Children’s Views on Discipline—Overall, Korean parents, especially mothers, were sensitive to their children’s views on discipline. They were sensitive about how their children might view correction, reason for punishment, grounding, and praising. Parents stated: I don’t know if this is good or bad but I make my child to correct misbehaviors or mistakes. If my two children fight, then I tell him to apologize and accept their mistakes until they do it. If you look at it the wrong way, I am the type of person who presses them too hard. In one perspective, I think it is good, but I guess it may be unreasonable in some way.

[After the punishment] I ask my child why he had to raise his arms. Then, he tells me what he has done wrong. Then I tell him that he was in trouble because he repeated something I continuously told him not to do. But, my child thinks that he was in trouble just because he did it. When my daughter brings a good grade, I am happy. I compliment and jump up and down with joy; she likes that a lot. It works better if I over express my happiness.

Communication Difficulties—Communication difficulties were noted with respect to their impact on discipline and fears of disconnection from children. Children learn English faster

than their parents did; they also forget Korean as they age. To counteract this, parents try to teach children Korean by talking to them in Korean at home, by sending them to Korean language school, and by sending them to Korea during summer break. Parents stated that: When I scold my children, I get angry and start speaking in Korean. Then my children stare at me. When I am done, they ask 'What does that mean?' Sometimes it even makes me laugh and I tell my children that 'it's okay now' because the anger had gone away.

People say that when your children grow older they act like they do not understand Korean and stop listening. Children say that they only know English and mom only speaks Korean, which makes the mother go crazy!

DISCUSSION

This study explored the first generation Korean American parents' perception of common discipline strategies in the United States and their commonly discipline strategies. Overall, the themes revealed that Korean American parents' perceptions of discipline were shaped by living in two cultures: Korean culture and American culture. First, the embeddedness of Korean culture in the parents' perceptions of discipline was shown on the decreased expression of emotion by parents. In particular, fathers recognized that they were influenced by strict Confucian values that did not allow expression of emotions. This implicit way of showing love is very contrast to the common recommendation in the Untied States that love should be demonstrated (Gordon, 2000). Nurses who work with Korean American parents need to understand that absence of explicit love does not necessary indicate that parents do not love their children.

Second, parents considered correcting even minor misbehavior as their obligation to teach appropriate social behavior. This perception is most likely rooted in Korean Confucian beliefs that parents are fully responsible for their children's behaviors (Ahn, 1994). Therefore, parents did not consider ignoring bad behavior as an appropriate discipline strategy (Willgerodt et al., 2005). Third, parents preferred buying essential living items such as food, clothes, and books as tangible rewards rather than toys. This may be related to the collectivistic nature of Korean culture that emphasizes duties and obligations of parents to provide essential living items. Fourth, two discipline strategies that were unique to Korean parents were revealed: raising arms and giving extra homework. Raising arms was used as a sort of timeout technique, where children were isolated and were expected to reflect on their misbehavior. Parents asked children to do extra homework rather than extra chores; this may be related to parents' belief that their children's education is important (Min, 1988). These findings suggest that nurses who care for ethnic and racial minority families need to understand that cultural ideology is mingled in shaping parents' view of acceptable discipline styles. For Korean Americans parents, collectivism and Confucian culture are two important ideologies that shape their beliefs, values, and practices in discipline.

Last, and perhaps the most important, Korean American parents considered spanking as a last resort to managing misbehaviors. This finding is similar with recent finding of in racial minority parents from 27 different counties that they considered disciplinary practices need to include physical method such as spanking (McEvoy et al., 2005). In addition, Korean American parents believed that spanking/hitting with a wooden rod were more acceptable and emotionally controlled than spanking using a hand. This perception is rooted in the Korean value system (Ahn, 1994). One ancient Korean proverb states that, "when you hate your children, give them a rice cake, when you love them, give them a spanking with a wooden rod." This belief is in sharp contrast to American views that spanking with an open hand is more acceptable than spanking with an object (Saadeh, Rizzo, & Roberts, 2002). The AAP (1998) specifies that striking children with an object is unacceptable because it has more risk for causing physical

injury than spanking with an open hand. These findings indicate that nurses need to consider this fundamental difference in what are acceptable discipline styles when assessing discipline strategies used by Korean Americans. In addition, Korean American parents need to be educated about the different cultural norms on spanking in the United States.

Not only are parents' views of discipline strategies influenced by Korean culture, they are also influenced by American culture. Changes in discipline were noted in two ways: decreasing corporal punishment and learning appropriate and positive discipline strategies. Parents who had more access to American culture and those who were open-minded made these changes more quickly. When parents first came to the United States, they heard that they should not hit children. Given that information, various reactions were noted: stopping, trying to stop, or continuing to spank/hit. It is not clear what makes these Korean American parents act differently. However, this may be related to their beliefs about spanking and access to learning alternative strategies. In a previous study with mostly African American low-income parents, some parents did not physically punish their children the same way they were punished as children when they had strong negative feelings about it, desired for their children not to experience the same feelings, learned alternative discipline, and had support from family members and friends (Garvey, Gross, Delaney, & Fogg, 2000). However, some of parents repeated physical punishment because they believed in its effectiveness, valued it culturally, and had stress (Garvey et al., 2000). These findings suggest that nurses need to teach ethnic and racial minority parents not only alternative discipline strategies but also stress management techniques.

Parents who learned timeout employed timeout to control sibling rivalry. In this process, parents changed from being problem solvers to letting children take the initiative in resolving conflict. Moreover, although praising is contrary to Korean culture, parents were willing to adopt this discipline strategy. Korean American parents also expressed more verbal and physical affection. For example, fathers tried hard to increase their expressiveness, a behavior that is not encouraged under Confucianism. Finally, in the process of adapting new discipline strategies, parents were eager to learn and adapt new strategies and tried to balance two cultures so that they could nurture competent and well-mannered children. Korean American parents in this study were markedly sensitive to their children's views on discipline. Parents were aware enough to realize part of their discipline might be unreasonable and tried to communicate with their children when they have different views on misbehavior or what discipline strategy was employed. This sensitivity of parents was consistent with Choi's (1986) previous finding that Korean American mothers were insightful with their children's needs and knew what to do for them.

Parents experienced communication difficulty with their children due to parental limitations in English and the limitations of children in their ability to speak and understand Korean. Previous studies found that nearly 90% of Korean born mothers speak Korean as their first language and approximately 80% of Korean American adolescents were worried about their parents' limited English proficiency (Organization, 1995; Park, 1995). Establishing meaningful communication between parents and children was an obvious challenge. Consequently, parents felt anxious about adequately disciplining children and maintaining good relationships with them. To solve this challenge, parents tried to teach children Korean language. Nurses who work with Korean American families need to assess how well parents are able to communicate with their children.

CONCLUSIONS

The guidelines about effective discipline from the NAPNAP (2005) and AAP (1998) are based on the social norms of the United States, and therefore do not reflect the cultural backgrounds

of ethnic and racial minority families such as Korean Americans. Because of the different socialization norms, Korean American parents have different perceptions of acceptable discipline styles from the standardized recommendation. Korean American parents' perceptions of acceptable discipline were shaped by the experience of living in two cultures and some of these perceptions were contrast from the AAPs (1998) guideline for effective discipline. Korean culture formed parents' strategies that included less emotional expression, correction, raising arms, and spanking/hitting with a wooden rod. In being exposed to American culture, parents learned to stop spanking/hitting, to use timeout, and to be more expressive. During this process, parents were sensitive to children's perception of discipline and tried to balance two cultures.

Although this study is based on only seven parents' perceptions, the findings have several important implications. In assessing discipline, nurses need to gain a comprehensive understanding of ethnic and racial minority parents' perceptions, which may be significantly different from the recommendations from the professional health organizations. Using the AAP guidelines, which are based in the social norms of Americans, may lead to a critical misunderstanding of discipline strategies used by minority parents such as Korean Americans. In addition, nurses should educate Korean American parents that spanking child with an object is not an acceptable strategy in the United States although they reported using it in an emotionally controlled manner. Striking child with an object may be dangerous to the health and well-being of the child (AAP, 1998). Most of all, nurses need to teach parents appropriate and positive discipline strategies that parents can use instead spanking.

Recommendations for future research include examining Korean American parents' use of discipline strategies using self-report. Exploring the factors related to behavior changes is also necessary. What makes parents respond differently to the information, 'parents should not hit children'? What are the consequences of spanking on Korean American children's development? Research on children's views of their parents' discipline strategy is also recommended. It is also necessary to explore what parents mean when they say Korean style or American style. What symbolizes Korean style other than what they learned from their parents? What constitutes American style other than the fact that Americans often use it? It would be important to learn the effects of difficulty in communication on discipline strategies. Lastly, research is needed to testing the effect of a standardized parenting program with Korean American parents delivered in Korean language.

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Table 1

Common Discipline Strategies for Young Children in the United States

Rewarding desired behaviors , Positive discipline		Reducing undesired behaviors Punishment			Appropriate discipline
Social rewards	Tangible rewards	Verbal punishment	Corporal punishment	Harsh for age	Ignore Timeout Correction Reasoning Removing privilege
Praising	Special treats	Scolding/yelling	Spanking	Grounding	
Hugging/kissing	Money	Threatening	Hitting/slapping	Work chore	
	Adding privilege Sticker chart				

Table 2
Korean American Parents' Perceptions on Discipline Strategies

1. Korean American parents' perceptions of common discipline strategies in the US	Korean style	Spanking/hitting, less hugging/kissing
	American style	Timeout, sticker chart, adding/removing privilege, grounding, extra work chores, reasoning, praising, hugging/kissing
	Changes in discipline strategies	Stop spanking, using timeout, more praising, more hugging/kissing, the necessity of learning to balance parenting practices
2. Discipline strategies commonly used by Korean American parents	Rewarding desired behaviors	Praising, hugging/kissing, tangible rewards
	Reducing undesired behaviors	Correction, scolding/yelling, threatening, spanking/hitting, raising arms, extra homework, reflection, reasoning.
	Sensitivity to children's views on discipline	Correction, reason for punishment, grounding, praising
	Communication difficulties	Impact on discipline, fear for disconnection, teaching children Korean language