

Predictors of Child Maltreatment in South Korea: Results from the 2011 Korea Youth and Child Panel

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Abstract. The increasing number of child maltreatment in South Korea has become an important social issue in South Korea. The current study attempts to examine the factors that predict child maltreatment in South Korea. The study examined child abuse, physical violence, and emotion violence using the most recent data set of Korea Child and Youth Panel (KCYPS), a longitudinal survey following elementary and middle school students in South Korea. We used the data from the 2011 panel data set. The study found various predictors of child maltreatment. First, factors affecting child abuse were a parents-child relation and father's education. Second, factors affecting physical violence were a child's gender and father's education. Third, factors affecting emotional violence were a child's gender and their parental level of lower income. The study suggests a need for parental education about adverse effect of child maltreatment on their children's wellbeing. Community level programs needs to be developed for educating low income fathers who did not have any higher education.

Keywords: Child, maltreatment, child abuse, physical violence, emotional violence, South Korea, Korea Youth and Child Panel.

1 Introduction

Child maltreatment is a serious social problem worldwide: Republic of Korea (Henceforth, South Korea) is not an exception [5,6,8,10]. National statistics conducted by Korean Ministry of Health & Welfare(2015) reported that the cases of child maltreatment have been constantly increasing annually. According to the report, child 5,657 cases of child maltreatment were reported in 2010, 6,058 cases in 2011, 6,403 cases in 2012, 6,796 in 2013, and 10,027 in 2014(Korean Ministry of Health & Welfare, 2015). These numbers represent cases that have been reported to child counseling centers throughout South Korea. The actual cases of child maltreatment supposed to be higher than this data due to several non-reported cases of child maltreatment.

Prior to 1980s, there was scant research on child maltreatment [8]. The early studies since 1990s emphasized on child physical abuse reporting the severity of child physical in cultural (e.g. Confucian patriarchal social norms) context of South Korea (Chun & Park; 1991; Huh, 1993; Kim 1998; Kim & Kim, 1987; Lee, 1997; Noh,

1994). Apart from physical abuse, studies on child maltreatment including child abuse have been conducted in South Korea since 1990s(Hong, 2008; Huh, 2003; Kim, 2002; Kim & Cho, 1998; Kim & Lee, 2009; Kim et al, 2003; Lee, 2006; Lee et al, 2000). These studies examine socio-demographic factors such as age, gender, education, income, relation, family structure, and portrays the results indicating that child abuse and maltreatment emerging social problem in cultural context of South Korea(Asscher et al, 2015; Berger, 2005; Cancian, 2010; Chaffin et al, 1996; Gelles, 1992; Hong, 2008; Huh, 2003; Meinck et al, 2015; Segal & Iwai, 2004).

Child experiencing child maltreatment is influenced by systemic factors (ecological system) including micro, meso, exo and macro system [9,11,13]. Hong et al (2011) studies attempted to explore the relationship between predictors of child maltreatment using ecological system perspectives to child maltreatment in South Korea. However, the review of literature produced no evidence of empirical analysis using nationally representative data on the predictors of child maltreatment in South Korea. The current study attempts to examine the factors that predict child maltreatment in South Korea. The study examines child abuse and physical violence, emotion violence using the most recent data set of Korea Child and Youth Panel (KCYPS).

2 Method

2.1 Data

This study used Korea Child and Youth Panel(KCYPS) data set. The Korea Child and Youth Panel is a longitudinal survey following elementary school(1 and 4 grade) and middle school(1 grade) in South Korea. At the time of the first survey(2010), the children were in the 4th grade classes. In the study, we use the data from 2011.

2.2 Measure

2.2.1 Dependent variable

We analyzed three dependent variables of child maltreatment: child abuse, physical and emotional violence. We recorded abuse and physical and emotion violence experience. From self-reported questionnaire, those who reported No(0) was coded as 'not experiencing child maltreatment' and Yes (1) were coded as experiencing child maltreatment.

2.2.2. Independent variable

The independent variables included child's gender, relation, parent's education (father, mother), family income and structure, absence days. Relation was coded 1

Mother, coded 2 Father, and coded 3 ect.(grandparents, brother and sister). Parent's education was coded as 1 when the parent's education level indicated less than college (college graduate or more was coded 2). Family annual income coded 1 low(<3,000), 2 middle, 3 high(5,000>).

2.3. Data Analysis

First, this analysis began by examining basic descriptive characteristics of all variables. Second, bivariate associations were examined using the Pearson χ^2 test for categorical variables while t statistics were used for continuous variables using the p value of associations. Finally, binary logistic regression models were utilized with adjusted odds ratio of 95% confidence interval(CI). The statistical analysis were performed using the SPSS for windows(version 20) statistical software program.

3 Result

Table 2 presents the descriptive statistics of selected independent variables and their relation with dependent variables. Of the 7 independent variables, 4 were found to have a statistically significant association with the abuse, physical and emotion violence. In abuse, father and mother education level, in physical and emotion violence, child's gender, father and mother education level, family income were found to be significant. However, relation, family structure, absence days were not found to be significant.

The results of the logistic regression analyses are presented in Table 3. The Odd Ratio (OR) showed that a male child was more likely to be physically and emotionally abused than a female child. The OR for a male child was 1.80(CI=1.43-2.67) for physical abuse and 1.96(CI=1.63-2.36) for female child. Fathers were .67(CI=.47-.97) times less likely to abusive their children than mothers. In the parent's education level, father's education only showed a statistical significant result. College graduate or more were less likely to abusive physically toward their children than fathers who had lower level of college education. Fathers were .62(CI=.46-.83) times less likely to abuse and .69(CI=.51-.94) less likely for physical violence than their mother. In the family income, children with high income were less likely to be experienced of emotion violence than low and middle income families. OR for high income was .74(CI=.56-.96).

4 Discussion and Conclusion

The purpose of this study is to explore (identify) triggering factors that predict child maltreatment in South Korea.

The study found various predictors of child maltreatment in South Korea. First, factors affecting child abuse was found a parents-child relation and father's education. Second, factors affecting physical violence were a child's gender and father's

education. Third, factors affecting emotion violence were child's gender, family income. In sum, significant factors in child maltreatment were child's gender, father's education level and family income.

In conclusion, the study suggests for a need for developing educational program for parents and children's about child maltreatment. First, we need to develop special program for father's education against child maltreatment (especially parents of abuse and physical violence). The educational programs should be targeted for lower income families where father did not have any higher level of education. Specifically, social welfare institutions based on community level, it is now necessary to impart special education program on child maltreatment and its adverse effect on children current and later life experiences.

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