A Study on The Psycho-Social Disturbance of Children Who Are Exposed to Domestic Violence : Focusing on Hierarchical Analysis Verification

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Abstract

This study is examined the harmful effects of two groups of children, one group exposed to domestic violence situations and another not exposed. The paper reports how children exposed domestic violence are seriously affected, and presents possible solutions with the help of social work and preventive ways employing practical data. Hierarchical Regression Analysis was used and the outcomes were applied to regression analysis. The significant difference and degree of influence between children in domestic violence situations and those not in such situations are presented as follows: aggressive behavior18%> depression anxiety14.4%> juvenile delinquency9.6%. Based on these results, intervention to protect children exposed to domestic violence, using micro, mezzo, macro approaches can be suggested. These include group social work, family therapy, participation of school and community, and administrative policy to help repair the harmful effects of children involved in domestic violence.

Keywords: Children, Domestic Violence, Children's Rights, CTS (Conflict Tactics Scale), Psycho-Social Disturbance, Social Work

1. Introduction

Domestic violence is a problem that seriously affects the entire family particularly children. Children exposed to domestic violence exhibit a range of the harmful effects[1]. Indeed, an examination of the actual incidence of domestic violence in Korea showed that 31.4% of all families experience domestic violence in a single year, which suggests that approximately 4 million families are affected by domestic violence[2]. A study of 7,500 married women by the Ministry of Gender Equality & Family Republic of Korea in 2016 reported that 60% had been abused by their husbands, and 30% of that 60% experienced physical abuse[3]. These statistics show that domestic violence is a serious social problem for the family, which is meant to be source of affection. In addition, domestic violence adversely affects all family members

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including the perpetrator and victim, and has a particularly deleterious effect on their children.

Many studies have reported that children exposed to domestic violence exhibit a range of physical problems and psycho-social mal-adjustments[4][5]. These include psychosomatic symptoms such as headache, stomachache, asthma, gastric ulcer, stammering, enuresis, insomnia, melancholia, attempted suicide, mental illness, fear and insomnia as well as behavioral disorders such as school refusal, lowered school grades, aggressive and destructive behavior, kleptomania, violence and running away from home[6]. Wolfe[7] reported that the parents' conflict exposed by their children has much larger effect on the harmful effects of the child than separation or divorce. Kashani & Allan[8] suggested that children from families with domestic violence might develop behaviors related to perversion and a negative conviction regarding society due to the functionally coercive and negative home atmosphere. Nevertheless, there is evidence suggesting that such a home is the first place where violence is learned. Children exposed to domestic violence or have a specific experience of violence can display problems such as "fight in usual" or "difficulty in school life" and have a higher likelihood of violence toward their friends[9].

Although the effects of domestic violence towards children are great there have been few empirical studies in Korea[10]. Overall, studies in Korea generally focused on fact finding, cause examinations and studies related to the wife as the victim of violence. Recently, some studies focusing on the perpetrator were reported. One study examined the impact of domestic violence on children and the effect of immediate intervention on parents but the impacts of domestic violence on the children were not easily revealed[8]. Several foreign studies have focused on the impact of domestic violence on children as well as harm minimization programs[7][8][11]. Therefore, to overcome the limitation of previous studies in South Korea, the present study examined the influence of domestic violence on children as well as social work intervention and counterplans for prevention using practical data.

2. Theoretical background

2.1 Concept of Children exposed to domestic violence

Domestic violence is a conceptualized category of violence according to the relationship between the perpetrator and victim and has a special feature in that both the subject and object of violence are in a close relationship such as family members[12]. Therefore, if we consider them based on the perpetrator and victim there are some types of violence, including

spousal battery, which is violence between the husband and wife, child abuse, which violence of parents to the children, parental abuse, which is violence of the children to their parents, and sibling abuse, which is violence between siblings. In the patriarchal social-cultural environment of Korea, violence of husband to wife is the most frequent and is gathering strength as a serious social problem. Therefore, this article focuses on the effects of physical violence of the husband to his wife.

Several reports have shown that child abuse often accompanies wife battery[8] and a father who strikes his wife will often hurt their children[13]. Nevertheless, this study focuses on how witnessing the physical violence of the father to the mother affects their children who are not themselves abused physically. In the present study[14], children who witness physical assaults by their father on their mother more than once or twice a month in a recent year are defined as "a children exposed to domestic violence"[15].

2.2 Concept of Psycho-Social Disturbance of Domestic Violence

Adjustment is regarded as a behavior process that maintains a balanced and harmonious relationship between individuals and circumstances, and settles unsatisfied desires or complication reasonably[16]. The opposite concept of a harmful effects and a psycho-social maladjusted child has some of the following characteristics:

- 1) Despite being an intellectually-sensible or physically normal child, their scholastic achievement is relatively low.
- 2) They lack the ability to establish and maintain desirable interpersonal relationships with friends or teachers.
- 3) They show inappropriate behavior or feelings even under normal conditions.
- 4) They are in unhappy and feel depressed.
- 5) They tend to exhibit physical suffering or terror when exposed to difficult problems.

Achenbach and Edelbrock[17] presented childhood and adolescence period adaptive problems by classifying them into internalizing problems, and externalizing problems. Defining internalizing problems as doldrums, uneasiness, atrophy, body symptoms, thinking problems and attentiveness problems etc., they defined it as passively and socially internalized and over-controlled behavior. Externalizing problems were defined as externalized and over-controlled behavior such as doing harm to another person as well as delinquent and aggressive behavior. In particular, in the case of children and youths in the growth process, it was reported that supplementing the weak points and using one's peculiar strong points has

an equally important function to handling appealing clinical symptoms.

Kashani & Allan[8] explained the effects on a child who has exposed domestic violence by classifying them into internalizing problems, and externalizing problems. Fantuzzo and his associates[18] also measured the harmful effects on preschool children exposed to domestic violence home by classifying them into internalizing problems, externalizing problems. Other scholars have presented research with the same or similar concept of harmful effects[6][7].

Therefore, the present study examined the harmful effects on the operational definitions using the concept of Achenbach and Edelbrock, as follows: 1) "internalizing problems", which is passively and socially internalized and over-controlled behavior. 2) "externalizing problems", which is doing harm to another person or externalized and under-controlled behavior, such as aggressive behavior, fighting and delinquency.

The harmful effects of children from abusive homes was classified into the following areas. First, it is important to understand this from a more synthetic viewpoint because the effects of domestic violence on children have multidimensional characteristics. Second, synthetic prevention and intervention from the overall viewpoint is needed in a social work approach.

3. Methods

3.1 Sampling

This is surveyed by sampling 1,335 students from 4th grade to 6th grade of elementary school in N ward of Seoul and 15,465 subjects 6,158 households receiving livelihood protection as of 2017, which was approximately 20%, the highest rate of subjects receiving livelihood protection in Seoul, South Korea.

After excluding the non-responders to the Conflict Tactics Scale or generally insincere response data, 1,161 datasets for children exposed to and not exposed to domestic violence were used as the final data. In the second level, 216(18.6%) examples the 1,161 data sets were chosen according to a distinction standard selected by a researcher of children exposed to domestic violence (children who witnessed their father physically assaulting their mother more than once or twice in the current year). As examples of children not exposed to domestic violence, 97 of the 614(55.26%) examples, who marked all "nothing" in 7 items and conform to physical assault in Straus's CTS, were chosen randomly.

3.2 Model of Analysis

[Fig. 1] Model of Analysis

3.3 Tools of Measurement

The Child Behavior Check List(CBCL) made by Achenbach and Edelbrock[17] was used to measure the harmful effects of the subject in this research.

3.4 Statistics of Analysis

The data used in this study was processed by SAS/PC and analyzed using the following analysis methods. Hierarchical regression was performed to measure the unique harmful effects of children exposed to domestic violence only.

4. Outcomes of The Study

4.1 Features of General

[Table 1] lists the traits of the exposed and unexposed group included in the analysis.

[Table 1] Traits of Statistics (n=313)

Variable	Category	Exposed G, N(%)	Unexposed G,N(%)	t or X ² (P)
Sex	Male	107(49.5)	49(50.5)	0.026(0.873)
	Female	109(50.5)	48(49.5)	
Age	Average	14.3	14.4	0.45(0.65)
School career of father	College	60(29.7)	34(36.6)	12.422(0.006) **
	High school	100(49.5)	54(58.0)	
	Middleschool	42.2(20.8)	5(5.4)	
Economic	High	32(14.8)	10(10.3)	6.792(0.034)**
	Medium	106(49.1)	63(65.0)	
	Low	78(36.1)	24(24.7)	
Family	Nuclear	203(94.0)	88(90.7)	1.089(0.297)
	Large	13(6.0)	9.(9.3)	
Father's religion	Buddhism	59(27.6)	24(25.0)	2.176(0.704)
	Christian	41(19.2)	20(20.8)	
	Catholic	20(9.3)	10(10.4)	
	Others	4(1.9)	0(0)	
	Nothing	90(42.0)	42(43.8)	
Mother's religion	Buddhism	63(29.7)	23(24.0)	1.593(0.810)
	Christian	62(29.3)	31(32.3)	
	Catholic	22(10.4)	13(13.5)	
	Others	5(2.4)	2(2.1)	
	Nothing	60(28.2)	27(28.1)	

* P < .05 ** P < .01

4.2 The Harmful Effects on Children Exposed to Domestic Violence

Hierarchical regression was performed to examine how seriously exposure to domestic violence affects children after controlling for all the variables that can influence the child's adaptation.

1) Hierarchical Regression of Internalizing Problems

After controlling for all the variables that can influence the child's adaptation, hierarchical regression was implemented [Table 2] to determine if witnessing domestic violence affects the child's level of anxiety and depression.

[Table 2] Effect of Anxiety / Depression (Hierarchical regression)

	step 1		step 2			R ² change
Variable	Parameter Estimate	T for H0: Parameter=0	Parameter Estimate	T forH0: Parameter=0	Sig	0.1437
INTERCPT	9.653	2.703	16.502	4.880	0.0001****	
Individual variable						
gender	1.358	2.049	1.434	2.369	0.0261*	
Self esteem	-0.207	-1.697	-0.169	-1.515	0.1308	
Social skill relationship	0.167	1.822	0.181	2.159	0.0317*	
Family variable						
Support from family relationships	-0.257	-2.541	-0.207	-2.236	0.2339	
Father's nurturing attitude	0.092	0.777	0.150	1.383	0.4505	
Mother's nurturing attitude	-0.133	-1.019	-0.090	-0.756	0.5906	
Level of family conflict	0.293	1.955	0.075	0.539	0.0185*	
Societal-environmental variable						
Friendship	-0.126	-1.490	-0.092	-1.193	0.7040	
Support of teacher	0.020	0.315	-0.023	-0.380	0.4254	
Risk factors of living conditions	0.535	2.123	0.187	0.798	0.1678	
Exposure to domestic violence			-5.097	-7.687	0.0001****	
R ²	0.1486****		0.2923****			
Adj R ²	0.1194		0.2655			

* P<.05 ** P<.01 *** P<.001 **** P<.0001

As listed in [Table 2] the explanatory of the first level model was 14.86%, whereas the explanatory of the model in the level model was 29.23%. When an answer of yes or no to the question of exposure to domestic violence was input in hierarchical regression as a second level, it was found to have a absolute effect (14.4%) on the anxiety and depression variables.

These results support Cascardi & O'Leary[19], who reported that the wife's depression can deteriorate and be transferred to their children if the domestic violence is continued.

2) Hierarchical Regression of Externalizing Problems

(1) Effect of Delinquent Behavior

After controlling all variables that can affect children's adaptation, hierarchical regression was implemented [Table 3] to determine if exposure to domestic violence affects the child's delinquent behavior.

[Table 3] Effect of Delinquent Behavior(Hierarchical Regression)

	Step 1		step 2			R ² change
Variable	Parameter Estimate	T for H0: Parameter =0	Parameter Estimate	T for H0: Parameter=0	Sig	0.0955
INTERCPT	6.263	3.810	8.844	5.502	0.0001****	
Individual variable						
gender	-0.625	-2.051	-0.596	-2.074	0.0459*	
Self esteem	-0.089	-1.593	-0.075	-1.417	0.1575	
Social skill relationship	-0.048	-1.143	-0.043	-1.082	0.2804	
Family variable						
Support from family relationships	-0.107	-2.301	-0.088	-2.005	0.0140*	
Father's nurturing attitude	-0.047	-0.872	-0.025	-0.499	0.9160	
Mother's nurturing attitude	-0.010	-0.169	0.006	0.106	0.3187	
Level of family conflict	0.148	2.152	0.066	0.999	0.0390*	
Societal-environmental variable						
Friendship	0.078	2.009	0.091	2.471	0.0264	
Support of teacher	0.030	1.005	0.014	0.487	0.0374*	
Risk factors of living conditions	0.364	3.141	0.233	2.091	0.0181	
Exposure to domestic violence			-1.921	-6.096	0.0001*** *	
R ²	0.1560****		0.2515****			
Adj R ²	0.1271		0.2232			

* P<.05 ** P<.01 *** P<.001 **** P<.0001

As listed in [Table 3], the explanatory of the first level model was 15.6%, whereas the explanatory of the model in the second level model was 25.15%. When a yes or no to the question of exposure to domestic violence was input in hierarchical regression as a second level, the answer was found to have a significant effect on the children's delinquent behavior by adding 9.5% to the delinquent behavior variables.

These results support Markward[6] and Carlson[20], who reported that adolescents exposed to domestic violence have a higher risk of delinquent behavior and running away from home.

(2) Effect of Aggressive Behavior

After controlling all the variables that can influence the children's adaptation, hierarchical regression was implemented [Table 4] to determine to exposure to domestic violence affects the children's aggressive behavior.

[Table 4] Effect of Aggressive Behavior (Hierarchical Regression)

Variable	step 1		step 2			R ² change
	Parameter Estimate	T for H0: Parameter=0	Parameter Estimate	T for H0: Parameter=0	Sig	
INTERCPT	12.694	3.468	20.506	6.067	0.0001*** *	0.1796
Individual variable						
Gender	-0.078	-0.116	0.008	0.014	0.2305	
Self esteem	-0.356	-2.854	-0.313	-2.811	0.0053**	
Social skill relationship	0.130	1.382	0.146	1.738	0.0833	
Family variable						
Support from family relationships	-0.168	-1.623	-0.111	-1.201	0.1937	
Father's nurturing attitude	-0.033	-0.276	0.032	0.300	0.2156	
Mother's nurturing attitude	-0.198	-1.472	-0.149	-1.241	0.3426	
Level of family conflict	0.381	2.482	0.133	0.951	0.9890	
Societal-environmental variable						
Friendship	0.062	0.719	0.101	1.303	0.7509	
Support of teacher	0.069	1.023	0.019	0.318	0.3626	
Risk factors of living conditions	0.611	2.365	0.213	0.912	0.7643	
Exposure to domestic violence			-5.814	-8.773	0.0001*** *	
R ²	0.1414****		0.3210****			
Adj R ²	0.1120		0.2953			

* P<.05 ** P<.01 *** P<.001 **** P<.0001

As shown in [Table 4], the explanatory of the first level model was 14.14%, whereas the explanatory of the second level model was 32.10%. In addition, when an answer of yes or no to the question of exposure to domestic violence was input into hierarchical regression as a second level, an answer of yes to witnessing domestic violence was found to have a significant effect on the children's aggressive behavior by adding 17.96% to the aggressive behavior variables. These results support Markward[6] and Carlson[20], who reported that children exposed to domestic violence have behavior disorders, such as aggressive and destructive behavior and violence etc. with psychological symptoms. Moreover, the outcome of hierarchical regression for externalizing problems, which are listed in [Table 3] and [Table 4], may be a very meaningful result that supports advance research[6][7], in that children from abusive homes or had experiences of concrete abuse may progress toward "fight frequently" or "difficulty in school life", and might have a high likelihood of being violent to friends.

5. Conclusions and Suggestions

Based on these results, intervention for the protection of children exposed to domestic violence can involve Micro, Mezzo and Macro approaches.

First, as verified by the outcomes of this thesis, a social group work approach can be attempted as a curing intervention[21]. Because anxiety, depression and aggressive or delinquent behavior are relatively more common in children exposed to domestic violence than non-exposed children, a concrete treatment plan involving a social work approach focusing on education and prevention can be attempted as a solving method[21]. Cho[22] reported that the intervention of a male-female joint curer as a pertinent male-female relation model in treatment is more effective, and putting a male-female joint curer might also be desirable in group work approaches.

Second, the family therapy approach can be attempted. To implement family therapy for a domestic violence home, it is important to include the entire family - violent parent, nonviolent parent and children. At this time, domestic violence have to be assumed to be a family systematic problem and intervened at whole family system level. The decisive aspects for treating a family experiencing domestic violence include the whole family in problem solving training and conflict solving training.

The objects of these training are 1) help the couple solve the conflict or communication problem, and 2) help the parents and children solve problems more flexibly. Moreover, a social worker as an adult with solving skills and a nonviolent attitude need to be used as a model to abusive homes.

Third, A more effective, community-link problem is important for solving the harmful effects on children exposed to domestic violence. The purpose of community intervention in children from abusive homes is to confront quickly the harmful effects of domestic violence on children and prevent its advance on a community level. In addition, an education program targeting school teachers will be needed to help schools deal with the effects of domestic violence on the children. These include "an explanation of the traits and reactions of children exposed to domestic violence", "keeper program for children from abusive homes" etc.. The harmful effects of domestic violence on children can be managed appropriately through these programs by linking up with the school teacher.

Fourth, Although the problem of domestic violence is a social structural problem, discussing the individual difference in adaptation without structural intervention is only a temporary

remedy. That is, post countermeasures and preventive policies by government are needed to prevent the harmful effects of domestic violence on children. The previous protective policy for children and adolescents in Korea was mostly a post-preventive approach. On the other hand, post prevention is also important for children exposed to domestic violence, but in the long run, intervening at the point of prior prevention and protection is more important[23]. Therefore, a special law for the prevention of domestic violence must be publicized actively through community centers. Protecting children from the effects of domestic violence will require cooperation between community resources, such as police, religious bodies, school, hospital, women's organizations or community station. In addition, social workers need to link these human and material resources, organize them effectively, and change the distorted attitude and behavior of society toward domestic violence.

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