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The association between family enmeshment and child functioning among Korean families in South Korea: A Global psychological perspective

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A systemic approach is vital for understanding family dynamics, given that families are deeply intertwined with cultural contexts and influenced by social ideologies. One particularly compelling concept in this realm is family enmeshment, which has attracted considerable attention from both clinicians and researchers (Jin, 2015; Chao, 2011). Contrary to the structural family therapy model articulated by Minuchin (1974), Jin and Roopnarine (2022) have found that family enmeshment can benefit Korean immigrant children in the U.S., especially when levels of American acculturation are low. It highlights the significance of cultural diversity in conceptualizing family enmeshment and defining what constitutes a healthy family, contingent upon cultural belief systems and practices. To promote culturally sensitive practices in mental health, it is imperative to incorporate both emic and etic perspectives within global psychology (Berry, 2012).

The current study aims to examine the associations between family enmeshment and child socioemotional and academic functioning among Korean families residing in South Korea. Specifically, this research will explore these relationships within the frameworks of collectivism and familism to evaluate the moderating effects of cultural beliefs.

This investigation is anticipated to enrich the understanding of family enmeshment within Korean heritage families in South Korea, a group that remains relatively underrepresented in research. By integrating cultural diversity into assessments of healthy family relationships, mental health professionals can enhance their cultural sensitivity and develop more effective interventions.

Biography

Bora Jin is a teaching assistant professor in the Department of Family Counseling at Dankook University in Gyeonggi, South Korea. She holds a Ph.D. in Child and Family Studies and an M.A. in Marriage and Family Therapy from Syracuse University, along with a B.A. in Psychology from Chung-Ang University in Seoul, South Korea. Dr. Jin received post-doctoral training with an ABFT team at Drexel University. She is a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist (LMFT), an AAMFT-approved supervisor, and a certified Attachment-Based Family Therapy (ABFT) therapist.

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