

Korean's Resilience compare to the Westerner: Concept Analysis

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Abstract. The aim of this paper is to enhance the understanding of resilience by clarifying the concept of Koreans' resilience compare to the Westerners. After borrowing this concept from Westerners, it is still confused with ambiguous meaning. The technique developed by Walker and Avant was used as a guide in analyzing the concept of resilience in published literature. Inner personal strength, intellectual ability, spirituality, and environmental protective factors were found to be the defining attributes of Koreans' resilience. Antecedents included pre-existing adversity and risk factors such as personal vulnerability, environmental risk, and lack of supportive resources. Consequences included adapting psychosocially, realizing one's ideals, protecting psychopathological problems, and contributing socially. Korean resilience is derived from unique 'Han' of cultural factors. Although resilience is a totally new terminology, it has existed in Korean native consciousness. Korean's resilience is a more latent intrinsic capacity, which promotes adaptation despite the lack of social resources.

Keywords: Concept analysis, Korea, Resilience

1 Introduction

Stressful circumstances or adversity are damaging to health and may lead to mal-adaptation. When under painful stress, we use different methods for management of this stress, according to patterns of culture and behavior. Koreans tend to view stress or adversity as an individual problem, not a social problem.

When we borrow the concept of resilience from a different culture, there is a problem because of resilience is based on a diversity of socio-cultural influences. For this reason, each researchers use Korean's resilience in their own different ways. Korean nurses wishing to use this concept may wonder at first about its true meaning. The meaning of resilience is difficult to pin down and the concept can be criticized for being too amorphous. The lack of consistency in definition of the concept, combined with the complexity of evaluation, has led to few conclusions regarding attributes and operational scale in resiliency. In order to use this concept in the nursing field, researchers are in dire need of consensus on the definition of Koreans' resilience, not Westerners'.

2 Steps of Concept Analysis

Walker and Avant (2005) stated that a concept analysis is useful in the effort to understand and refine a concept by reducing the ambiguity it is associated with, and is a fundamental process required by nurse-researchers who are attempting to measure the phenomena of nursing practices.

Step 1: Selection of the Concept

The western concept of ego resilience was first introduced by Block in the mid-1970s. Although the concept of resilience is useful, broadly, from specific children and adolescents to all age groups, the meaning and attributes of resilience have rarely been examined in Korea. The concept of resilience is not yet static in Korea. Therefore, many problems exist in using the concept of resilience, which was borrowed from different cultures without critical thinking. This lack of consensus on terminology and taxonomy of resilience in Korea indicates a need for more systemic analysis of this concept. Compared to the west, relatively little research on concept analysis of resilience in nursing has been conducted in Korea.

Step 2: Purpose of Analysis

In order to explore the meaning of resilience, and to provide a precise operational definition of resilience, a concept analysis of resilience is needed. Theoretical discussion of resilience is plentiful; however, the complex nature of resilience has resulted in little conclusive evidence regarding the process of resilience. When we attempted to use the Westerners' concept of resilience in Korean society, some inconsistencies or omissions were observed. Therefore, the conceptual analysis is conducted by comparison between Korea and the west. This study analyzed the concept of resilience through a review of literature in order to provide greater understanding of the definition and characteristics of its attributes.

Step 3: Current Usage of the Concept

Resilience is defined as flexibility in a situation and resistance to external power, the status of bouncing back to an original condition after a substance was bent or stretched (Yonsei Korean dictionary, 2002). The Korean language did not use the concept of resilience in psychological adaptation, whereas it has a similar meaning in a Korean native concept 'Han', which has endured throughout more than 5,000 years of Korean history.

Considerable variations in the definition of resilience can be found in the Korean literature. Defining Korean resilience is difficult, because it is a borrowed concept. Therefore, although the meaning is the same, each researcher used different Korean words, including 'Tahl-Ruck-Sung' (flexibility), 'Juck-Ung-Yoo-Yeon-Sung' (flexible adaptability), 'Hae-Bok-Ruck' (recuperative power), 'Kuck-Bok-Ruck' (conquest, overcome), 'Bok-Won-Ruck' (restoring force, stability), 'Sim-Lee-Juck-Keon-Kahng-Sung' (psychological health), etc. The Korean native concept, 'Han', has been regarded as a universal emotion of Korean people. 'Han' is a unique emotion, which refers to suffering experienced during a long and painful period of Korean history.

The positive attribute of 'Han' has induced motivation from a negative situation by alleviation and sublimation (Yang & Choi, 2001). In the Korean language, 'Han' has

been used for positive successful adaptation, because resilience means substance and is regarded as an economic term for elastic qualities. Yoo and Shim (2002) reported on a number of protective factors and risk factors. Protective factors serve as buffers against negative effects of risk. Yoon et al. (2001) reported on the ability to change ego-control and cognition in stressful situations. Previous researchers have mainly reported that resilience of children and adolescents, those who have run away from home, and normal adolescents as well.

Most researchers have defined the resilience focus according to the style of Westerners and used the same measurement, which indicated uncertainty of the validity of the instrument for measurement of Korean resilience. Resilience is the ability to know how to use personal strengths, resources and energies to solve stressful situations (Klohn, 1996; Connor & Davison, 2003). However, Koreans do not usually try to use and access social resources when they fall into adversity. A resilience concept is now being used by many researchers in order to solve complex problems of human adaptation. Therefore, research on resilience has stimulated research in a wide variety of disciplines, including epidemiology, sociology, education, psychology, and psychiatry. Conduct of multi-disciplinary research may allow for integration of biological, psychological, and sociological perspectives on adaptation and development.

Step 4: Defining Attributes

Inner personal protective factors can be seen as positive personal strengths, cognitive competency, and spirituality. Resilience is enhanced by an individual's internal-protective factors. 'Han' has a meaning of mitigation and sublimation too (Yang & Choi, 2001). It can endure and withstand adversity with constant intention to redirect in order to change. Sublimation of a strong desire can lead to socially acceptable development without failure or retaliation. Han is an emotion that is quite popular among Koreans; however, it could never be adequately translated into any western language. Neither could it be found with other Asian cultures, such as those of China or Japan (Park, 1999). The meaning of resilience has existed in Korean concept of 'Han' (Yang & Choi, 2001). The positive motivation in the concept of 'Han' includes Korean's resilience. Positive personal strengths include strong self-esteem, self-efficacy, self-control, extroversion, honesty, responsibility, emotional stability, openness, autonomy, optimism, motivation, mastery-oriented, help-seeking behavior or a sense of humor.

Park (1999) reported that 'Han' is a perception and understanding of its entity and cause. It should include a cognitive system for acceptance of one's own adversity. Cognitive competency includes intelligence, IQ, attention skills, self-confidence, confronted risk, or problem solving skills.

Spirituality is a fundamental element of humanity and a natural internal need to pursue the meaning of life. Belief and spirituality exist in each experience that involves suffering. 'Shamanist performance of Han' of Korea is the process of mitigation and alleviation, followed by sublimation into adversity. 'Han' is a part of spirituality for the healing function. The 'Han' of Korean people might become a great spiritual energy (Park, 1999; Yang & Choi, 2001). Spirituality is included in spiritual well-being, faith, belief, hope, vitality, tolerance, meaningfulness of life, sense of belonging, or connectedness.

External protective factors help to promote resilience too. Resilience is enhanced by family, school, and community protective resources. A large family system and filial piety have an influence on resilience by family protective factors in Korea; however, due to importation of a western lifestyle such as a nuclear family, this has decreased. These family-protective factors include in at least one secure attachment relationship, good parenting, socioeconomic advantage, family cohesion, and lack of discord or tension in the family. External protective factors, such as social support or social resources, are insufficient in Korea. However, recent researches have suggested most important variable of resilience is how to use of available community resources or support systems like Westerner. School and community protective factors are included in positive school and community experiences, other opportunities to learn or qualify for advancement in society, teacher's support, teacher's good role, care of community facilities or churches.

Step 5: Antecedents and Consequences

Antecedents are applied to specific early predictors of such later outcomes. Stress is subjective experience and the personal interpretation. Inner personal risk factors increase symptoms of psychopathology or interrupt the ability to reach one's desired goals. There are pre-existing severe traumatic events, perceived stressful situation as adversity, inner personal risk factors, environment risk factors in antecedents. Consequences are the results or outcomes of resilience. Positive consequences include psychosocial adaptation, individual development, self-actualization, protection of psychopathological problems, mental and spiritual health and well-being, strength-focused, or social contributions across social contexts. Negative consequences include psycho-social mal-adaptation, high-risk behavior problems, social withdrawal, fixed developmental stages, and mental emotional problems, or psychopathological problems

3 Conclusion

Resilience is a continuous critical concept for use in investigations of how resilience is less determined by the stressors experienced and more related to resources available to address the stressors, how people deal with life changes and the manner in which they address their situation during the process of change. Further studies are needed for reevaluation of the result of this study, suggesting that 'Han' is related to resilience of Koreans. This concept analysis study of Korean resilience has enabled nurses to understand which factors place humans' adaptive development in jeopardy and to offer information on how best to assist clients who need to increase resilience for achievement of successful adaptation. In addition, nursing intervention to encourage resilience should be tailored to culturally specific solutions.

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