SOUTH ASIAN AMERICAN DAUGHTER-IN-

LAW/MOTHER-IN-LAW RELATIONSHIPS,

CULTURAL VALUES CONFLICT, AND HELP-

SEEKING FOR DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

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"If you want to change the world, pick up your pen and write."

Martin Luther King

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Abstract: The South Asian American population growth rate is high, however, there is
little research regarding their mental health concerns and low utilization of services. One
of the most understudied and complex issues is the interpersonal relationships of South
Asian women, specifically the relationship between a daughter-in-law and mother-in-law.
This study is a first to examine the relationship between a South Asian daughter-in-law
and mother-in-law living in the US through a combination of feminist and relational-
cultural perspectives. Also investigated are the help-seeking sources daughter-in-laws
use for personal/emotional and domestic violence concerns. Participants in this web-
based, descriptive study were 155 married (or previously married) South Asian American
women (ages 18-69), who had a mother-in-law. Most identified as Muslims or Hindus.
T-tests, correlations, and standard multiple regression analyses were used to examine the
relationship between the daughter-in-laws' perceptions of their relationship with their
mother-in-laws, cultural values, and formal and informal help-seeking for
personal/emotional and domestic violence issues. Instruments used were adapted to be
culturally sensitive. Thirty-five percent of the participants reported psychological abuse
and 23% reported emotional abuse by their mother-in-laws. All identified caring and
controlling aspects of their relationship with their mother-in-law. Most of the women did
not meet full criteria for partner violence, however the daughter-in-law/mother-in-law
relationship differed between the women who were abused by their partner and those
who were not. Perceived care and control from mother-in-law was related to daughter-in-
law's sex role expectations, partner violence, and help-seeking. Daughter-in-law's help-
seeking sources differed depending on the type of problem; as with previous studies and
cultural expectations most identified informal help-seeking sources. Higher care from
mother-in-law predicted lower help-seeking intentions from mother-in-law for personal
issues and domestic violence. Sex role expectations and partner violence predicted help-
seeking from minister for personal issues. Intimate relations and partner violence
predicted higher likelihood of help-seeking from minister for domestic violence. To
promote interpersonal health among South Asian American women, it is necessary to
explore and comprehend the nature of in-law relationships and study both positive and
the negative in-law relationships. Implications of these findings for women's personal
relationships, for clinical work and future research needs are discussed.

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INTRODUCTION

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The 2010 U.S. Census reported 3.7 million South Asians (descendants of South

Asian countries, i.e., India, Pakistan, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and

Maldives) living in the United States. Several labels have been used to describe people

from South Asian countries, including South Asians, South Asian Americans (SAA),

Asian Indians, and Indo-Pakistanis. South Asians are the U.S. group with the highest

growth rate (annual growth rate = 78%) and also the fastest growing Asian American

ethnic group (growth rate = 43%) with 80% of the total U.S. South Asian population

composed of people from India followed by people from Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri

Lanka, Nepal and Bhutan in descending order (Asian American Federation [AAF] &

South Asian Americans Leading Together [SAALT], 2012).

Based upon a *Journal of Asian American Psychology* annual review of all

behavioral science research articles published in 2010, South Asian Americans are a

unique and most under studied/under researched ethnic group (Okazaki, Kassem, & Tan,

2011); only 16 (~6.1%) of all the articles published (N=261) focused on South Asian

Americans. Although 24 (9%) of the studies reviewed addressed prevention, intervention or help-seeking for mental health problems, it is noteworthy that none of empirical, peer-reviewed studies with South Asian Americans published in 2010 included domestic violence, help-seeking, and/or relationships as topics (Okazaki et al., 2011).

Despite the accelerated population growth of South Asian Americans (defined in this study as any South Asian currently residing in the US irrespective of his/her immigrant status), there is a lack of research to address their growing concerns. Hall and Yee (2012) reported that the mental health needs of Asian Americans- a group reaching 15.5 million (U.S. Bureau of Census, 2010) including South Asian Americans also have been neglected in public policy. Significant numbers of Asian Americans have experiences of perceived discrimination and acculturative stress which can and have led to psychopathology (Hall & Yee, 2012). One of the reasons for such neglect could be the negative biases about Asian Americans that exists among the predominantly non-minority decision-making group. The bias that Asian Americans are a small and successful group and thus not experiencing any psychological issues is pervasive among researchers as well as policy makers (Hall & Yee, 2012). High rates of depression and suicide among married and young South Asian Americans is evidence to disconfirm this bias and indicates a need for concern about their psychological functioning (Burr, 2002); domestic violence (Dasgupta, 2000; Fernandez, 1997; Mahapatra, 2008), and help-seeking among South Asian Americans remain under-researched (Loya, Reddy, & Hinshaw, 2010; Soorika, Snelgar, & Swami, 2011). Since Asian Americans including South Asians, with complaints of distress, seldom seek help professionally as compared to other groups (Hall & Yee, 2012), it is even more important to research their help-seeking behaviors.

There is a particular need to research topics that promote or are barriers to overall well-being including interpersonal relationships, domestic violence, and help-seeking to address the needs of the growing South Asian American community. One of the key interpersonal relationships for South Asian Americans is the relationship formed as a result of marriage between the woman and her in-laws, especially the mother-in-law. It is also considered an 'ambiguous' relationship as neither woman's expectations usually match the reality. Also, it is a relationship that is often considered tumultuous in today's media and popular culture worldwide. For many cultures, the daughter-in-law/mother-in- relationship is considered the most problematic of family relationships, and one that has a potential for becoming abusive. There is little research which addresses 'in-law' relationships between South Asian American mothers-in-law (MIL) and daughters-in-law (DIL) (Okazaki et al., 2011); Raval, 2009) even though in-law relationships have been widely studied among majority populations such as European Americans (Chen, 1999; Fischer, 1983; Rittenour & Soliz, 2009; Turner, Young, & Black, 2006).

In this study, I contribute to the literature and address some of the aforementioned gaps. Specifically, I looked at whether aspects of the relationship between South Asian American DILs and MILs were related to the daughter-in laws' seeking help formally or informally for domestic violence and personal/emotional issues. Using the framework and lenses of feminist and relational cultural theories, I further investigated the extent of domestic violence the DIL reported and the extent to which the her cultural values play a role in seeking help for domestic violence and for other personal/emotional issues. To provide context, I first briefly overview the literature on daughter-in-law/mother-in-law relationships,

domestic violence, South Asian American world views, cultural values, and the role of women within the South Asian family.

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between the South Asian American DILs' perceptions of their relationship with their mother-in-law, cultural values, and formal and informal help-seeking for personal/emotional and domestic violence issues. This study is a first of its kind to examine the relationship between a South Asian DIL and MIL living in the US through a combination of feminist and relational-cultural perspectives as well as gain insight into the help-seeking sources for personal/emotional and domestic violence concerns.

Relationship between Daughter-in-Law and Mother-in-Law

The relationship between a daughter-in-law and her daughter-in-law is one that is considered potentially turbulent. Fischer (1983) noted that the marriage of a son creates one of the most ambivalent of relationships- that of the daughter-in-law and the mother-in-law. As this relationship is considered complex and assumed 'inherently conflictual' (Shih & Pyke, 2010), only a few researchers (e.g., Chen, 1999; Cotterill, 1994; Fischer, 1983; Kung, 1999; Rittenour & Soliz, 2009; Sandel, 2004; Shih & Pyke, 2010; Turner et al., 2006) have examined this relationship and fewer still have studied the triads of daughter-in-law, mother-in-law, and husband/son (e.g., Kadir, Fikree, Khan, & Sajan, 2003). This relationship is often mentioned in the context of gender inequality and/or family studies (e.g., Lim, 1997) but the focus is usually shifted away from this dyad. Relationships, in general, are a crucial part of the human social experience and overall mental health and the most important aspect of relationships, i.e. communication (within in-law relationships), is relatively understudied (Yoshimura, 2006 as cited in Rittenour & Soliz, 2009).

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Since previous empirical research on relationships focused on married Caucasian couples, there is limited information on minority populations including African Americans, Hispanics, (Osterhou, 2009) and South Asian Americans. Rittenour and Soliz, (2009) studied the daughter-in-law/mother-in-law relationships in a mixed methods study (N= 190) among a majority (89.5%) European-American sample. They investigated the communicative and relational factors associated with satisfying and non-satisfying relationships. They used a structural model with a focus on shared family identity as a mediating factor between the several characteristics of this relationship and relational outcomes such as caregiving-financial and personal support and future contact as well as relational satisfaction. Through a daughter-in-law's perspective, the majority of the categories (resulting from theme analysis) focused on the specific behaviors of mother-in-laws in terms of positive as well as negative personality traits, inclusivity, exclusivity, loyalty, support, and influence (Rittenour & Soliz, 2009).

Lim (1997) referred to Korean mother-in-laws as 'cultural gatekeepers' as they occasionally moved into the daughter-in-law's house to assist in housework. Turner et al., (2006) used focus groups in a qualitative study on daughter-in- (21 white, 2 Hispanic) and mother-in-laws' (14 White, 3 Hispanic) perceptions of the quality of their relationship and the role it plays in establishing their place within family. They shed further light into the challenges of this relationship and found that the women held differing viewpoints yet their responses followed the themes of "expectations, realities and disillusionment, and perspective of the other" (Turner et al., 2006, p.593). This indicated that both the daughter-in-law and mother-in-law had mixed feelings prior to entering into the relationship and were

'anxious' to conform and at the same time exert independence from each other (Turner et al., 2006). It was not just that the expectations were in conflict but once the daughter-in-law married and entered the marital home or relationship, she found that the reality was very different from what she had expected and struggled with the acceptance of that new found reality (Turner et al., 2006).

In-law relationships may also have the potential for creating stress for family members including the married couple in marital relationships, however not all in-laws relationships are stressful or troublesome. These relationships are not inherently negative and are a significant part of a woman' identity (Turner et al., 2006) within the family system.

Daughter-in-law/Mother-in-law relationships among South Asian Americans. Due to limited research and a biased image of the 'evil' mother-in-law that predominates cross culturally, it is difficult to depict a typical South Asian daughter-in-law/mother-in-law relationship. This relationship is considered not just a complex/conflicted relationship, but also a violent one especially in domestic violence cases where the husband is the major perpetrator of violence against his wife (88%), followed by his mother (15%) (Rabbani, Qureshi, & Rizvi 2008). The stereotypes of a South Asian mother-in-law and daughter-in-law held by most people and depicted in media are 'dominant' and 'submissive' (Varghese, 2009). In an online blog post, journalist Narayan (2011) depicts this relationship in one sentence, "Two women who love the same man is hardly the recipe for a friendship" (para 1). There is a predominant belief, especially among South Asians, that a South Asian mother-in-law and daughter-in-law can never get along.

Again, few researchers have looked at this critical relationship within the South Asian family system. Raval (2009) qualitatively studied this relationship and its inherent conflict

explicitly within a multi-generational and relational context. She interviewed ten Indian

Gujrati (in India) daughter-in-laws and eight North American mother-in-laws of Indian

descent focusing on the situations of interpersonal conflict. She chose to study these two

categories of women because they are involved in playing 'two critical roles' in the Indian

family culture within a multigenerational context (Raval, 2009, p.494). She found that both

women's decisions in situations of conflict were driven by their motivation to benefit the

well-being of their children and grandchildren. Their predominant conflict was the one

between their personal desires and others' expectations which they resolved by staying

within the family structure. This was their way of exercising agency (contrary to popular

belief in which one may go against the social structure) and negotiating with their in-laws for

the benefit of the next generation (Raval, 2009). This study highlights the conflictual nature

of this in-law relationship but also brings to the forefront the possibility of resolving the

conflicts in a culturally specific way (a notion that is not usually celebrated).

Most researchers have discussed the daughter-in-law/mother-in-law relationship in a

negative context and as one that is highly troublesome for both women at different times in

the relationship, e,g., at the beginning of marriage when the daughter-in-law starts living with

the husband's family and experiences the authority of her mother-in-law in the household as

well as in decision making situations (Varghese, 2009). The practice of joint living has the

potential of greatly impacting the relationship between a husband and a wife as the mother-

in-law is supposed to guide the incoming daughter-in-law about the values and rules of her

home. Raj, Livramento, Santana, Gupta, and Silverman (2006) caution about perceiving the

role of the South Asian cultural practice of joint living as contributing to the conflict between

daughter-in-law and mother-in-law as it can perpetuate blame on the cultural practice.

In another qualitative study conducted in India, Thukral (2013) explored the complex nature of the daughter-in-law/mother-in-law relationship (living in the same household) through a feminist lens. Women in the study were initially hesitant to talk about relationships with their mother-in-law and did not anticipate any difficulties in the relationship prior to marriage. The daughter-in-laws felt that their particular mother-in-law was explicit in her expectations her daughter-in-law (e.g. house chores and family rules) and did not show much flexibility, indicating the power-imbalance in the relationship. Thukral speaks to the conflict that is portrayed in the South Asian mainstream media and society but is rarely communicated or resolved in the relationship. Despite limited generalizability and researcher bias, her study provides rich information into the interpersonal and sociocultural characteristics of this important yet misunderstood relationship (that crosses borders and cultures), which also affects the husband-wife and/or mother-son relationship.

Ironically, both the daughter-in-law and mother-in-law enter the relationship expecting to get along with each other and foresee a positive relationship (Thukral, 2013; Turner et al., 2006). Thus, it would be logical to assume that those expectations have the potential to be met by both women as they look for a healthy relationship so they may try hard to gain each other's love, care, and trust. For example, in a quantitative Indian study (N=2,444) daughter-in-laws between ages 15-39 were more likely to use maternal health care services when they had the support of their mother-in-laws and had better relationships with them (Allendorf, 2010). It is important to note that no formal instruments were used to measure the relationship between daughter-in-laws and mother-in-laws but the relationship quality was assessed via questions relating to the amount of difficulties daughter-in-laws had with their in-laws.

Turner et al., (2006) also found that some daughter-in-laws initially saw an ideal family in their future husband's family, but after ten years got a "real picture" (p.593) of their mother-in-law and were isolated from the family due to the negative perception of the daughter-in-law in her husband's family based on unresolved conflicts. Handling conflicts may contribute largely to the development and sustainability of a healthy relationship between the daughter-in-law and mother-in-law as both experience in-law anxiety portrayed and exaggerated in the media. The most important issue in the research of the interpersonal relationship between the two women is that most of the few researchers who investigated this relationship did so through a qualitative lens based upon focus groups, interviews, narratives, and case studies with small sample sizes (e.g., Fernandez, 1997; Fischer, 1983; Raval, 2009). The most relevant studies are qualitative. And, the instruments used in quantitative research among majority populations, e.g., a semantic differential to measure relational satisfaction (Huston, McHale, & Crouter, 1986), need modification or are not be applicable to the South Asian American daughter-in-law and mother-in-law relationship (Rittenour & Soliz, 2009).

Relationship in the context of domestic violence. Domestic violence (DV) or intimate partner violence (IPV) is one of the several forms of abuse inflicted on women, primarily by their male partners. IPV can be defined in its four components of physical violence, sexual violence, threats of physical or sexual violence and psychological or emotional violence (Saltzman, 2002). Few researchers have discussed the role of non-partner family members or mother-in-laws in domestic violence. Gangloi and Rew (2011) noted that Abraham (2000), Fernandez, (1997) and Kandiyoti (1988), had each noted this possible role. The contribution of females in the household (especially the mother-in-law) to DV, primarily a male to female phenomenon, is substantial (Abraham, 1991; Fernandez, 1997). Based on

Indian reports of DV, 33-40% of the acts of DV can be attributed to people other than the male partner in the household, often with the young daughter-in-laws suffering abuse from their mother-in-laws (Gangoli & Rew, 2005).

Mother-in-law abuse in South Asian society can include most of the forms of direct or indirect abuse including physical, psychological, emotional or verbal, and financial. Indirect tactics may include belittling the daughter-in-law in front of her husband and/or convincing the husband to abuse her (Fernandez, 1997), not acknowledging her heavy housework load, neglecting her basic needs like food, restricting access to money, minimizing her efforts, values, beliefs, blaming her for things outside of her control like bearing a son, etc. This abuse may exist in more subtle forms despite the living situation or arrangement of the couple. Fernandez (1997) talks about different roles the mother-in-law may operate from in inflicting violence against her daughter-in-law, instigator, oppressor, or both.

Mother-in-laws are not just 'gatekeepers' of the family, in charge of molding the young daughter-in-laws into the new family's beliefs, culture, ways of life, but they also are gatekeepers of the daughter-in-laws' dowries, especially their gold jewelry. At times conflicts in the marital household have resulted in bride burnings and deaths of the younger woman with dowry- related deaths being common and increasing 15 fold between 1980 and 2000 (Hitchcock, 2001). The practice of dowry, a highly prized tradition, started as a way to give the daughter some good wish money to start her marriage but has turned into a demand and grounds for in-law abuse.

South Asian American Worldview and Sociocultural Characteristics

People and their relationships are affected by the cultural worldviews and sociocultural characteristics of their ethnic backgrounds. To provide some understanding of

characteristics common to South Asian Americans, I highlight traditional South Asian American worldview and key sociocultural characteristics.

South Asian American worldview. South Asian Americans have a different set of values than their Western peers. Their cultural worldview is influenced by traditional values and beliefs towards family, marriage, sex/gender roles, identity, and religion (Ibrahim, Ohnishi, & Sandhu, 1997). In order to explore any interpersonal relationship it is crucial to consider components of both individuals' personal and collective worldviews as they likely influence the communication and nature of the relationship. Worldview is part of a personal and cultural identity and the beliefs and values associated with a worldview help individuals create meaningful relationships. Ibrahim et al., (1997) listed the important components of the South Asian American worldview which are consistent for most South Asian Americans and representative of their socio-historical culture, perspective. Important components of the worldview are "(1) self-respect, dignity, and self-control; (2) respect for family/filial piety, (3) respect for age, (4) awareness and respect for community, (5) fatalism, and (6) humility" (Ibrahim et al., 1997, "Cultural Identity and Worldview," para 2).

Self-respect, dignity, and self-control constructs are part of early childhood development and an adult is expected to achieve these and incorporate them into her daily life. Individuality is constrained within the family structure and context among South Asian Americans. Respect for the family/filial piety assumes it is the right of parents to be honored by their children at all times. Respect for age is reflected in the notion that the older person earns respect from all younger ones and is seen as the person to go to for familial advice regarding any individual or interpersonal conflict. Awareness and respect for community equates to extended family and reinforces group orientation. Fatalism is a common belief

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that a person is predetermined to run into challenges in life and is expected to handle them effectively. Humility is expressed by a belief that there is a direct relationship between one's accomplishments and humility, as the more achievements one has, the more humble he or she is expected to be and is discouraged from seeking attention and flaunting personal success (Ibrahim et al., 1997)

Sociocultural characteristics.

In addition to cultural worldviews, thoughts and behaviors are heavily influenced by society's ideas or expectations. Behavior in relationships is usually regulated and affected by societal forces and consequences. Important sociocultural characteristics for South Asian Americans include: patriarchy, strict gender roles, family before self, traditional structure of family, and institution of marriage.

Patriarchy. For South Asian Americans, patriarchy is a central characteristic (Ayyub, 2000) in which the males in the community/family make primary decisions for "their" females. Fathers usually make educational-and-marriage-related decisions for their daughters. Often religious scholars reinforce patriarchal beliefs by quoting and interpreting sacred Hindu and Islamic texts (*Gita* and *Quran*) to mean men have overall authority and superiority over women. Ahmad, Riaz, Barata, and Stewart (2004) found that women (N=47) who held to society's patriarchal beliefs were more approving of spousal abuse then those with low adherence to patriarchal beliefs.

Strict gender roles. In South Asian American society men and women have distinct roles with female roles being more strict and limiting. For example, the woman is not supposed to have sex outside of marriage and the males in the family guard her chastity and sexuality. Some of the descriptors that have been used to describe the ideal South Asian wife

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include financially dependent, submissive, polite, beautiful, domestic, obedient, virgin at the time of marriage, coy, and altruistic. The roles are stricter for young women as older women tend to have earned respect due to their age and status in their family through time and experience. Women are traditionally taught to obey all family males including her father in childhood, husband during marriage, and her son if she is widowed or divorced; the woman is the property of these men and has no choice but to obey them in a polite and submissive manner (Tang, Wong, & Cheung, 2002, as cited by Midlarsky, Venkataramani-Kothari, & Plante (2006).

Family before self. As pointed out by Preisser (1999), an Asian woman's personal identity occurs in relation to her family identity. This is true for a South Asian woman's identity in which she is defined by her relationships with her family. It is the family who has to meet the demands of its members before any outsider can help as South Asian Americans are protective of their family issues and do not want to discuss them with people outside of family, including professionals when some help is needed (Ayyub, 2000).

Traditional structure of family. In South Asian countries, a common practice within marriage is for the woman to live with her in-laws under the same roof, also called a "joint" family system. Most South Asian brides are supposed to live with their husband's family within the "extended" family system, which includes the father-in-law, mother-in-law, sisters-in law, and brother-in law. This system may put her at risk of violence not just from her husband but also from her in-laws as she is considered to be "answerable" to each of them (Midlarsky et al.2006).

Marriage. A marriage within South Asian culture holds different meaning for the woman and family than in western cultures where the marriage occurs between two adult

individuals. It symbolizes an alliance between their families (Liao, 2006). Marriage is considered as one of the most important institutions in a South Asian American's life. Many times parents start saving money and planning for a girl's wedding soon after she is born. Although changing, arranged marriages are still the norm among South Asian Americans with elders in the family responsible for choosing the bride or bridegroom for the individual.

A woman is supposed to fulfill her roles of daughter, sister, wife, and mother; this becomes her identity in the family system, especially in marriage as South Asian women are defined primarily by their ability to bear children, their passivity in the system (Abraham, 2000), as perfect homemaker, in charge of the moral development of their children (Abraham, 1998), and secondary social class citizen as compared to their husband (Dasgupta & Warrier, 1996). Divorce is frowned upon and the woman considered to bear the burden of a conflict-ridden marriage to protect her biological parents' image in the society.

Importance of Cultural Values Conflict

As indicated earlier, it is important to 'know' and/or understand the characteristics of a culture in order to explore and understand an individual's cultural values which are usually shaped by long held culture specific worldviews, beliefs and practices (Ibrahim et al., 1997). There was little to no emphasis in previous research on the role of internal values as they relate to the dominant culture nor attention to such phenomenon in acculturation research (Inman, Constantine, Ladany, & Morano, 2001). Inman (2006) studied the nature of identities and cultural value conflicts among South Asian women and found that religiosity significantly influenced the women's ethnic cultural values. Also, the ethnic and racial identity of first generation South Asian women predicted their cultural conflict in close relations (Inman, 2006). Some researchers have used ethnicity, ethnic identity, and

acculturation to address the cultural values of minority populations but these are relatively challenging constructs to understand, research, and communicate because there is no widely accepted definitions of ethnic identity which differs based on the researchers' underlying theory (Trimble, 2007). For example, according to Yoon (2011), ethnic identity can be understood as part of acculturation process which is defined by Kim and Abreu (2001) as an ethnic minority person's cultural socialization into the host culture while retaining the values and beliefs of one's original culture.

Cultural values or standards contribute to a sense of cultural identity or ethnic identity that include nationality, culture, language, beliefs, and standards. Values refer to the person's internal experience of acculturation and behaviors refer to overt or external experiences within the new culture (Ruzek, Nguyen, & Herzog, 2011). An individual's behavior may change more rapidly in response to the new culture as opposed to his/her culture-specific values (Szapocznik & Kurtines 1980 as cited by Inman et al., 2001; Kim, Atkinson, &Yang, 1999). An individual may be overtly 'American' but internally may hold on to his/her ethnic culture's beliefs and conflicting values not usually addressed by the behavioral and cultural acculturation measures (Inman et al 2001).

South Asian American women may experience conflict in adherence to their ethnic versus majority culture's values and practices stemming from possible conflict between their internal cultural beliefs or values and the outward values and behaviors associated with the majority culture resulting in 'Cultural-Value conflict' (Inman et al., 2001). Cultural values play a significant role in a person's cultural conflict experiences in relationships as well as in ethnic identities. Cultural conflict is defined as follows:

Experience of negative affect (e.g. guilt, anxiety) and cognitive contradictions that results from contending simultaneously with the values and behavioral expectations that are internalized from the culture of origin (South Asian culture) and the values and behavioral expectations that are imposed on the person from the new culture (White American culture) (Inman, Constantine, & Ladany, 1999, as cited by Inman et al., 2001, p.18).

Kaduvettoor-Davidson and Inman (2012) examined the influence of the quality of family relationships and avoidant coping on the cultural values conflict among Asian Indians (N=110) and found that women who reported good quality relationships perceived lower internal sex-role cultural conflicts; a limitation of this study was the small sample size. Throughout I use the terms cultural values and cultural conflict values interchangeably.

Cultural values and help-seeking. There is a growing concern and need to understand cultural factors associated with help-seeking as ethnic minority populations appear to underutilize psychological services (Abe-Kim et al., 2007; Chen, Sullivan, Lu, & Shibusawa, 2003 as cited by Soorika et al., 2011). Fischer and Turner (1970) define help-seeking as "tendency to seek or resist aid in the time of a personal/emotional crisis or after a prolonged psychological discomfort" (p.79). Help-seeking can be affected by a person's cultural and contextual factors (Chu, Hsieh, & Tokars, 2011; Kim & Omizo, 2003; Shah, 2010) as individuals make decisions to seek or not seek help based on their personal beliefs and values as well as previous experiences with help-seeking. In general, Asian Americans tend to work out their problems on their own and are less likely than Latinos to seek help for suicide attempts (Chu et al., 2011). In her dissertation (N=100 Asian Indians), Shah (2010) found that Indian-born Americans' help-seeking attitudes were significantly related to their

adherence to Asian values assessed by the Asian Values Scale (AVS, Kim et al., 1999) and Attitude Toward Seeking Professional Psychological Help Scale (ATSPPH, Fischer & Farina, 1995). Participants who reported high adherence to Asian values had negative attitudes towards help-seeking (Shah, 2010).

 In contrast, Sheikh and Furham (2000) did not find differences in help-seeking attitudes towards professional help for personal distress among British Asians, Westerners, and Pakistanis' (N= 287; with 73 Pakistanis living in UK and 77 in Pakistan). Interestingly, they did find the beliefs related to the perceived cause of mental health issues significantly predicted British Asians' and Pakistanis' attitudes toward professional help-seeking (Sheikh & Furham, 2000). It may be claimed that a person with high adherence to his or her cultural worldview/values may be more or less likely to access help depending on other factors such as kind of problem, age, or level of ethnic identity, etc. It could also be that a daughter-in-law's adherence to cultural values/beliefs may be related to her perceived quality of relationship with her mother-in-law in the South Asian American context.

Soorika et al. (2011) examined the relationship between attitudes towards psychological help-seeking among South Asian (41.9% Indian, 20.9% Pakistani, and 6.8% Bangladeshi, and 30.4% other South Asians) students in Britain (N=148) and cultural mistrust, ethnic identity, and adherence to Asian values. They found that the students' help-seeking attitudes were significantly affected by their adherence to traditional Asian values measured by the Asian Values Scale (Kim et al., 1999). In general, Asians hold superstitious beliefs related to the onset of illnesses including not just biological but also spiritual causes which may affect their help-seeking in a western culture (Soorika at al., 2011). Similarly, it may be harder for the daughter-in-lawto seek help for any concern regardless of the nature of

relationship with her mother-in-law if she closely identifies with and adheres to her cultural worldview which includes strong values of respect for elders and family.

Key Concepts in Domestic Violence (DV)

        Definition of domestic violence. Physical violence includes any acts of the perpetrator toward the victim that can induce physical harm (e.g., kicking, hitting, slapping, pulling hair, pushing, shoving, burning, etc.). Sexual violence includes any forceful sexual contact (attempted or completed) with the victim. Psychological or emotional violence refers to the perpetrators' threats of acts that induce fear in the victim of any sort (e.g., humiliating, isolating victim, and withholding information) (Saltzman, 2002, as cited by CDC 2002). Domestic violence (DV) is conceptualized by most as male violence against women viewing women as victims or survivors of abuse, but there are studies (Hollenshead, Dai, Ragsdale, Massey, & Scott, 2006) where women have victimized other women during domestic conflict. Domestic violence and partner violence are used interchangeably in this study and reflect the same construct.

        Prevalence of domestic violence. DV is a serious crime in the US and is prevalent across social class, caste, race, nationality, age, gender, and several other parameters. In 2005, 14% of U.S. households suffered from one or more violent victimizations and about one in 320 homes were affected by DV (Klaus, 2007). One out of every four women in the South Asian community is a victim of DV perpetrated by her husband while keeping in mind the under-reporting and socio-cultural reluctance to identify the perpetrator (Fernandez, 1997, Ayyub, 1998). South Asian American non-profit organizations and researchers (Raj & Silverman, 2002) have referred to DV as being the 'most serious problem facing the female community" (Dasgupta, 2000). Anita Raj (as cited by Dasgupta,2000) surveyed (N= 160)

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South Asian American women in the Boston area and found that 35% of the women (ages 18-62) reported experiencing physical violence and 19% reported history of sexual violence at the hands of current male perpetrators. Mahapatra (2008), in her sample of 215 South Asian participants residing in US, found 82(38%) women reporting some sort of DV perpetrated by their intimate partner in the last year.

Cultural factors that may affect the risk of domestic violence. The risk factors for DV include strict and distinct gender roles for men and women, placing one's family over self, the model minority myth, conditions of marriage, structure of family, lack of financial independency, stigma associated with divorce, second generation issues, invalidation of the experience of abuse, allure of improving immigration status, lack of supportive networks, and conflicting relationship with the legal system (Midlarsky, et al., 2006). A protective factor against DV found in a Pakistani sample was that living in extended families protected against violence due to the moral or legal sanctions provided by the families (Naeem, Irfan, Zaidi, Kingdon, & Ayub, 2008). Living in a joint family may differ depending on where the family lives geographically as that study was conducted in a large Pakistani city.

Help-Seeking

There is no agreed upon definition of help-seeking in research literature. Help-seeking can differ based on the quality or characteristics of the sources, whether it is formal or informal. Formal help-seeking is when the person seeks help from a professional in designated field, e.g., mental health providers for stress management, or domestic violence, or clergy or teachers, or people who have been formerly trained to do the task at hand. Informal help-seeking usually refers to seeking assistance from one's social network of friends or family (Rickwood, Deane, Wilson, & Ciarrochi, 2005).

There are multiple instruments that measure the extent and nature of help-seeking, but I found none that are culturally sensitive to a South Asian population. For example, one instrument used in some studies was "Attitudes towards seeking professional psychological help scale" (Fischer & Farina, 1995; Gupta, Szymanski, & Leong, 2011). It measures intentions to seek help in form of attitudes, and orientations for seeking professional help (Sheikh & Furnham, 2000).

Help-seeking among South Asian Americans. People seek help for various reasons and issues and usually the nature of help-seeking differs from issue to issue. I summarize some of what researchers have found regarding South Asian American help-seeking for personal/emotional issues and domestic violence.

Personal/emotional issues. South Asian Americans have mental health issues or personal/emotional issues including depression, anxiety, schizophrenia, somatization, eating disorders (Holmes, 2007) and suicidal ideation and attempts (Chu et al., 2011). Chu et al. (2011) looked at help-seeking patterns in Asian Americans (N= 2554 with 467 other Asians excluding Chinese, Vietnamese, Filipinos) with suicidal ideation or attempts; 35.7% of Asian Americans with suicide attempts reported no previous help seeking. The other category of Asian Americans may include South Asians as they fall under the umbrella category of Asian Americans and are included as 'other' in most studies (e.g., Gupta et al., 2011; Ruzek et al., 2011; Yoshioko & Dang, 2000). As compared to Latinos in the study, Asian Americans with suicidal attempts reported low perceived need of seeking help. Important is that the Asian Americans who sought help for their suicidal ideation and attempts accessed non-professional help including support groups and helplines (Chu et al., 2011).

Help-seeking among ethnic minorities has its 'unique' qualities, as adherence to specific Asian cultural values and beliefs and one's ethnic identity has been shown to negatively affect professional psychological help-seeking attitudes (Kim & Omizo, 2003; Soorika et al. 2011). Mahmood (2008), in her quantitative research with Muslim South Asian Americans, found that the women in her sample held more positive views towards psychological help-seeking and leaned towards getting help from culturally aware and sensitive professionals. Overall, Asian Indians or South Asians experience feelings of shame, increased stigma and rejection in the community related to mental health issues which limit their disclosure or help-seeking to people in their family or friends network (Mohan, 2011). Also, Asian Indians reported seeking help from intimate partners, mental health providers, and general physicians as their top choices (Mohan, 2011). There may also be overlap between what constitutes a spiritual problem versus a psychological problem as many people from Pakistan and India seek religious figures' help before they turn to other professionals (Mohan, 2011).

Help-seeking for domestic violence. Similar to help-seeking for mental health (personal/emotional) issues, South Asians utilize both informal and formal help-seeking for issues related to DV (Abraham, 2000). Research is limited in exploring the help-seeking behaviors of South Asian Americans. Consistent with the help-seeking attitudes and behaviors related to mental health, South Asians utilize more informal sources (family, friends, community members) of help for DV as compared to seeking help from formal resources like social services, or shelters (Mahapatra, 2008). Underserved populations like South Asian Americans, usually place a higher value on religious or spiritual healing and access the support of their clergy or religious leader in times of distress (including intimate

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partner violence and trauma) (Bryant-Davis & Wong, 2013). Those who seek help from outside networks, e.g., police, legal system, and shelters, do so in extreme situations, possibly for mere survival (Mahapatra, 2008).

Yoshioko and Dang (2000, as cited in Mahapatra, 2008) reported on family violence (N= 62) among Cambodian, Korean, South Asian, Chinese, and Vietnamese populations in Boston, Massachusetts and found that South Asian Americans (5%) believed that a victim of DV should keep to herself about the abuse; 82% believed that one should tell a friend about DV and seek help. Often family, friends, and in-laws, who may not perceive abuse to be a problem or health hazard, encourage women to bear violence at any cost to maintain the family's honor which is at stake if it leaks into the community (Abraham, 2000). Culture, context, and law also may serve as barriers to South Asian American's help seeking.

Barriers to help-seeking. Along with the patterns of help-seeking among South Asian American victims of DV it is important to discuss other barriers that may prevent them from engaging in informal as well as formal help-seeking. These barriers (in their absence) could also possibly be viewed as motivators to seeking help for personal, emotional and specific issues like DV. Some may also be relevant to non-victims of DV or for other personal/emotional issues. These barriers can be divided into internal and external barriers (Abraham, 2000). Internal and external barriers may include parents-in-law, friends, religion, community, and police, courts, healthcare-providers (Abraham, 2000). Other barriers include the 'model-minority myth' (Gupta et al. 2011, Mahapatra, 2008), limited language skills, lack of social support, fear of deportation-especially for new immigrants, economic, other factors related to education and employment (Mahapatra, 2008) and the culturally-prescribed roles.

Theoretical Frameworks

      Feminist lens. Feminist theory is one of the most utilized and prominent theories that has been applied to the study of DV across populations (Lawson, 2003). Feminist theorists emphasize the role of general gender inequality and gender differences power imbalance in society as the root causes of sociocultural problems, such as DV (Fernandez, 1997). Feminists believe that DV or intimate partner violence (IPV) stems primarily from a social system of inequality and patriarchal values promoting an imbalance of power in abusive relationships. Accordingly, any form of violence against women is supported by the sociocultural context within which the violence occurs. In her in-law's home a woman is subjugated to and is responsible for sustaining several roles in the family, e.g., daughter-in-law, wife, mother, and sister-in-law. Maintaining these roles in any relationship is a challenge and may be a much greater challenge in an abusive relationship affecting the daughter-in-law's other relationships, such as those with her siblings and mother-in-law; this may impact her help-seeking for personal and DV concerns.

      Having a positive relationship between a daughter-in-law and mother-in-law , irrespective of the cultural background, adds to the personal well-being of both, as the feminist framework highlights the importance of the continuity of interactions between identity, intimacy and responsibility in this relationship (Turner et al., 2006). South Asian cultural characteristics can be conceptualized using the feminist framework.

      Relational-cultural lens. Within the South Asian context, DV and the relationships that are sustained and at risk for violence in the family must be understood in the light of Miller's (1976) Relational-Cultural perspective (RCT). RCT provides an alternative and inclusive model of a person's relational development through life (Comstock, Hammer,

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Strentzsch, Cannon, Parsons, & Salazar, 2008). In RCT a person strives physically and emotionally in the context of mutually growth fostering relationships; in the context of DV these relationships are compromised.

This framework seems to fit the collectivistic nature of South Asian culture best as there is more value placed on family and groups versus individual needs and desires that are characteristic of Individualistic cultures. RCT is closely aligned with feminist and multicultural schools of thought as it emphasizes the centrality of relationships contrary to the traditional theories of human development which focus on individuation, separation, and autonomy as indicators of increased emotional maturity and mental well-being (Comstock et al., 2008). RCT tends to emphasize the role of connections and growth towards relationships with others as a sign of emotional maturity (Comstock, et al., 2008) and also mutuality in female relationships.

Comstock et al., (2008) explains the major tenets of RCT by the concept of relational movement which is defined as "the process of moving through connections; through disconnections; and back into new, transformative, and enhanced connections with others" (p. 282). According to Miller (1996, p. 3), any person (especially female) in a relational connection "feels a greater sense of zest (vitality, energy), is more able to act and does act in world, has a more accurate picture of her/himself and the other person, feels a greater sense of worth, and, feels more connected to other persons and exhibits a greater motivation to connect with other people beyond those in one's primary relationships." In most marital relationships the daughter-in-law seeks connection at a physical and emotional level from her husband. In DV these and relationships with other extended in-law family members often turns violent.

Gaps in the Literature

Overall, South Asian Americans are the least researched U.S. ethnic group (Okazaki et al. 2011). Following are some of the identified gaps in research.

Lack of focus on relationship between South Asian American daughter-in-law and mother-in-law. Although some researchers have studied South Asian in-law relationships in the direct or indirect context of DV (Fernandez, 1997; Gangoli & Rew, 2011; Kandiyoti, 1988, Mehrotra, 1999; Rabbani et al 2008; & Supriya, 1996; as cited by Raj et al., 2006; Thukral, 2013) and others have mentioned this relationship as part of family dynamics (Abraham, 2000; Ayyub, 2000) and decision-making in fertility (Kadir et al., 2003), most of these researchers did not focus on the in-law relationship between two women. To date, no researcher to my knowledge has quantitatively explored the negative as well as the potentially positive aspects of the relationship between a South Asian American daughter-in-law and her mother-in-law. Ignoring the positive in these women's relationship perpetuates the negative nature of this relationship portrayed in the mainstream culture in the midst of limited evidence of supporting and satisfying daughter-in-law and mother-in-law relationships (Allendorf, 2010; Fischer, 1983; Rittenour & Soliz, 2009).

Daughter-in-law/mother-in-law relationship and help-seeking. There is limited research on specific factors that affect the help-seeking behaviors and attitudes of South Asian American women (Hollenshead et al., 2006). Researchers have shown the agency and influence of mother-in-laws in decision making for daughter-in-law's fertility (Kadir et al., 2003) and use of contraceptives (Akiko, & Radheshyam, 2008), but to date no researcher has quantitatively examined the perceived role of South Asian American mother-in-laws in help-seeking for DV and personal-emotional issues. It is important to examine the role of female

relationships in help-seeking because in abusive as well as non-abusive contexts, help-seeking is necessary for survival and growth and as women are usually 'relational' and seek connections (Comstock et al., 2008) they can be sources of help to each other.

Ignored role of cultural values conflict in in-law relationships and help-seeking. Few researchers have approached the examination of South Asian American's cultural values and their effects on relationships and help-seeking due to several factors including lack of universal definitions of ethnic identity, acculturation (Trimble, 2007), the complexity of 'in-law' relationships (Fischer 1983; Rittenour & Soliz, 2009) and/or the lack of culturally specific instruments (Inman et al., 2001). Despite the significance of cultural values on help-seeking attitudes (Chu et al., 2011; Kim & Omizo, 2003; Shah, 2010), it remains an under-researched topic especially in research exploring South Asian American female relationships. Predictors (quality of family relationships and avoidant coping) of cultural values conflict for a group of South Asian women have been studied (Kaduvettoor-Davidson, & Inman, 2012) but the relationship between cultural conflicts values and quality of in-law relationships has not.

The quality of the daughter-in-law/mother-in-law relationship has not been quantitatively researched so far due to the absence of culturally specific and context oriented instruments, however that should not inhibit inquiry that may improve the overall health of these women and others. To promote interpersonal health among women, it is crucial to explore and comprehend the nature of in-law relationships and study the positive and the negative in-law relationships to understand the bigger picture of women's relationships. Adherence to cultural values can play a role in an individual's overall well-being as these values are central to a person's unique worldview and have the power to influence her

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everyday behaviors. They play a role in relationships with nuclear and extended families, coworkers, and intimate others. It is important for professionals and advocates to understand the specific cultural factors and importance of relationships among South Asian Americans to other important in-law issues to better serve their mental health needs for personal/emotional as well as DV concerns.

The Present Study and Research Questions

In this study, I examined the relationships between daughter-in-law's perceptions of her relationship with her mother-in-law, adherence to cultural values and formal and informal help seeking among South Asian American daughter-in-laws for personal/emotional and DV issues through a multicultural perspective incorporating Feminist and the Relational Cultural frameworks.

This was a descriptive study using a correlational design with cross-sectional survey methodology. The following research questions were asked to address the gaps in research:

South Asian American Daughter-in-law/Mother-in-law Relationships and Cultural Conflict Values

1) What are the characteristics of the daughter-in-law's perceived relationships with their mother-in-laws in this sample?

2) Is there a relationship between the daughter-in-law's sex role expectations cultural values conflict (SRECV) and the amount of perceived care (CA) and control (CO) she experiences from her mother-in-law?

3) Is there a relationship between the daughter-in-law's intimate relations cultural values conflict (IRCV) and the amount of perceived care (CA) and control (CO) she experiences from her mother-in-law?

Partner Violence and Daughter-in-law/Mother-in-law Relationship

4) Is the daughter-in-law's reported level of partner violence related to the daughter-in-law's perceived relationship with her mother-in-law?

5) Is there a difference in the perceived control (CO) and care (CA) from mother-in-law based on whether daughter-in-law met criteria for Domestic violence (DV) by partner?

6) Is there a difference in CO and CA based on whether daughter-in-law experienced abuse (physical, psychological, emotional, and financial) from mother-in-law?

Help-seeking for Personal/Emotional Issues and Domestic Violence

7) Does the daughter-in-law's perceived relationship (level of control and care) with her mother-in-law relate to her total informal and formal help-seeking for personal/emotional issues and for domestic violence?

8) To whom (informal or formal and specific sources) do daughter-in-laws turn to most for help with domestic violence issues (DV) and for personal emotional issues (PE)?

9) Is there a difference in what issues (DV or PE) daughter-in-laws seek support for from each of the particular sources of support?

10) Among the variables of daughter-in-law's level of domestic violence (PV), perceived control (CO), perceived care (CA) in her relationship with her mother-in-law, adherence to sex role expectations cultural values conflict (SRECV) and intimate relations cultural values conflict (IRCV), which best predicts

a) total informal help-seeking for personal/emotional issues (HSPEIF);

b) total formal help-seeking for personal/emotional issues (HSPEF);

c) total informal help-seeking for domestic violence (HSDVIF); and

d) total formal help-seeking for domestic violence (HSDVF)

METHOD

Participants

The population was South Asian American women residing in the US, 18 years and older, and currently married who have a mother-in-law, both those who had been victims/survivors of DV and those who had not. Based on Green (1991)'s formula, the minimum number of participants needed for multiple regression analysis was calculated as N>104+m where m (5) is the number of predictors or independent variables (Green, 1991 as cited by Wilson Van Voorhis & Morgan, 2007). To establish adequate power and effect the minimum number of participants needed for this study were (104 +5 = 109) 109 or at least according to another rule, (30 *5 = 150) 150 or more.

Data was collected from 155 women, ranging in age from 18 to 69 years with the majority (77%) between 18 and 39 years. All were currently living in the US. Forty percent of the participants (n = 145) were born in India, 27% in the US, almost 14% in Pakistan, 3% in Bangladesh, and approximately 10 % in other countries, i.e. Canada, China, Portugal, and Saudi Arabia. Their parents' country of origin was primarily India (61%) or Pakistan (27%).

Almost 87% of the participants (n = 153) were currently married, 7% were divorced, 4% were separated, and 1% were widowed. Approximately 41% were married for more than 7 years, 22% for 3-4 years, 17% for 1-2 years, and 7% were married for 5-6 years. Fifty-four percent of the women (n = 154) had children and almost half (n = 84) had only

1-2 children. Eighty-five percent (n = 154) lived with their partner/husband, 35% (n = 132) for more than 7 years and 18% for 3-4 years. Twenty-five percent (n = 154) had lived at their current residence for 1-2 years, 24% for 7 or more years, and 20% for less than a year. Eleven percent of the participants (n = 152) had their mother-in-laws living with them.

In terms of religious affiliation, 41% of the participant daughter-in-laws (n = 145) identified as Muslim, 31% as Hindu, 11% as Christian, 3 % as Sikh, 1% as Jain, 6 % as none, and 1% as other. Regarding religiosity, 55% (n = 145) identified as somewhat religious, 19% as very religious, and 20% as not at all religious. The majority (48%) were employed full-time, 13% part-time, and 10% were students, volunteers, interns, or other. Sixty five percent (n = 144) reported their average family income before taxes as $70,000 or more, which is above average for this ethnic group; 16% between $40,000-$69,000; 5% between $20,000-$39,999; 0.6% less than 19,000, and 6.5% did not know about their average income. Important other demographic information regarding daughter-in-law and mother-in-law relationship characteristics is displayed in Table 1 in the Results section.

Procedure

A purposive sample of abused and non-abused South Asian American married women was recruited through several South Asian American list servs and cultural organizations utilizing snowball sampling, in which the participants and domestic violence organizations were asked to distribute the-English only-electronic survey link to their clients (appropriate for the study) and within the community at large. The list (see Appendix B) and contacts of South Asian organizations in the US was obtained from the

South Asian Women's Empowerment and Resource Alliance (SAWERA)'s website

(http://sawera.org/need-help/south-asian-anti-domestic-violence-organizations/) with

updated information collected from individual websites.

To obtain the appropriate sample, domestic violence advocacy and other

organizations serving South Asians in California, Georgia, Illinois, Maryland,

Massachussetts, North Carolina, Oregon, Texas, Virginia, and Washington State were

contacted. However, current resident state information was not collected to protect

possible participant identification. The responsive South Asian organizations were

housed in the large cities of Atlanta, Houston, New York, Raleigh, San Francisco, Austin,

Dallas, Chicago, Seattle, and Richardson, most of which are heavily populated with

South Asian Americans and have active South Asian organizations (see Appendix B).

South Asian organizations and listservs were contacted to request their

participation and cooperation in the study. Those agreeing organizations and list servs

were sent appropriate electronic recruitment scripts, recruitment flyer, and an

organization permission draft letter in an email (see Appendix C). The organizations

were asked to read the attached information and sign the draft letter to give indication of

participation in study. Most of the agencies and all list servs resorted to verbal or email

permission and did not return the signed draft letters. The organizations were also

requested to post study information at local South Asian markets, mosques, temples, and

fundraising events to maximize recruitment. Personal contacts were also asked to put the

study link on their social networks (Facebook) or professional online work pages, e.g.,

DoSAA facebook page, to assist in the recruitment of participants.

Follow up calls, emails, and email reminders were sent to the agencies and list servs in attempts to increase the response rate. To obtain a more representative sample, multiple contacts were made with the domestic violence organizations to encourage their clients to take part in the study. Each organization and list serv was reminded at least three times.

The study was titled as a *Relationships* study to protect any women who may be at risk of DV. It was important to reach women who had not been domestically abused in order to assess whether the degree or extent of DV was related to help-seeking and the type of help-seeking. To protect participants' identity and safety, multiple recruitment and participation methods were used. In addition, information about safety planning in case of DV episode along with a list of local DV shelters, community organizations and counseling services was provided at the beginning and end of the survey.

All participants provided informed consent (see Appendix D) and then completed the questionnaire which contained five instruments using a secure web based program, Qualtrics online survey software (http://www.qualtrics.com/). The questions were piloted with a small group of acquaintances to learn about specific issues related to answering the surveys and time to complete the survey (average time 25 minutes). A cover letter with information about the study and its' approximate completion time and an informed consent were presented before the actual online questionnaire. Participants were offered a chance to participate in a drawing for one of four $25 gift card to a local retail store as an incentive to participate.

Instruments

Instruments (see Appendix E) included the demographics form, HITS screening tool for domestic violence (Sherin et al., 1998), Intimate Bond Measure (IBM; Wilhelm & Parker, 1988), South Asian Cultural Values Scale (SACVS; Inman et al., 2001), and General Help-Seeking Questionnaire (GHSQ; Wilson, Deanne, Ciarrochi, & Rickwood, 2005).

Demographic Form. Participants provided information regarding their age, number of years in the US, country of origin, parents' country of origin, employment status, religious affiliation, religiosity, marital status, length of marriage, number of children, structure of household, number of years at current residence, household members and their length of stay, geographic location of mother-in-law, frequency and mode of contact with mother-in-law, and physical, psychological, emotional, and financial abuse from mother-in-law.

HITS. HITS (Sherin, Sinacore, Li, Zitter, & Shakil, 1998) is a brief screening tool, originally developed to measure DV in an outpatient clinical setting. Its brevity makes it a popular choice among researchers and professionals. HITS consists of 4 items that refer to hurt, insult, threat, and scream. For example, the participant is asked the primary question, "how often does your partner physically hurt you (item 1)." The items are each scored from 1- 5 on a 5 point Likert-type scale where 1= never and 5 = frequently. A total score is obtained by adding all the responses with a range of 4-20 possible; a score greater than 10 is clinically considered positive for domestic violence. HITS has been demonstrated to have good internal consistency or reliability (alpha=.80) and concurrent validity (.85) with the verbal and physical aggression items of Conflicts

Tactics Scale (CTS; Straus, 1979). HITS has also shown good construct validity when the

scores of respondents from shelter (self-identified as victims of DV) were significantly

different to those of 160 women patients at the clinic on t-test for independent samples (t

=24.12, p<.0005) (Sherin, et al., 1998). For the current study, I report the HITS mean

scores and standard deviations and the number of women who met the cutoff score as

victims of DV. For other analyses, I used the range of scores from 4-20 as a measure of

self-reported severity/extent of experiencing DV. The internal consistency reliability for

this sample was alpha = .87.

      Intimate Bond Measure (IBM). The Intimate Bond Measure (Wilhelm &

Parker, 1988) is a self-report, 24 items measure with two subscales of Care (12 items)

and Control (12 items) which assess the perceived nature of an intimate/close relationship

on a 4 point Likert type scale (3 = very true to 0 = not at all). The instrument (see

Appendix B for a copy of the complete instrument) asks the participant to judge their

partner's attitudes and behaviors towards him/her in recent times and choose from the

given items. For example, items on the Care subscale include: "is very considerate of

me" and "is a good companion" and Control subscale includes items like, "wants me to

take his/her side in an argument", and "insists I do exactly as I am told." According to

Wilhelm and Parker (1988), Care is depicted as emotional and physical care through the

constructs of "warmth, consideration, affection, and companionship." The Control

subscale depicts "domination, intrusiveness, criticism, authoritarian attitudes, and

behaviors" (p. 231).

      The score for each construct is obtained by adding all the items on Care subscale

and the Control subscale separately. IBM can be used to measure both constructs by

generating two separate scores. For the original version, (normed on 148 females and 96

males) the developers of IBM reported high internal consistency with Cronbach alpha of

.94 for Care subscale and .89 for the Control subscale (Cronbach, 1951, Wilhelm &

Parker, 1988). The test-retest reliability from a non-clinical sample was found to be .89

for the Care scale and .80 for the Control scale of the measure. According to Wilhelm

and Parker (1988), IBM had moderate concurrent validity as the scores on Care subscale

correlated at .68 (p <. 001) with amount of Care judged by first rater and at .43 (p <. 001)

by second rater. Control subscale scores correlated with both raters' judgments at .74 (p

<. 001) and .55 (p <. 001).

In the current study, I modified the instrument to measure the relationship

between a daughter-in-law and a mother-in-law through the daughter-in-law's

perceptions where the word "mother-in-law" was used instead of "partner" to assess

interpersonal relationship in terms of perceived care and control. The IBM had

previously successfully been modified for other relationships (e.g., Brennan &

Wamboldt, 1990; Wilhelm, Brownhill, & Boyce, 2000) I chose IBM (Wilhelm & Parker,

1988) over a semantic differential measure because it targets the two core elements of

close relationships (care- affection and consideration and control- criticism and

domination). For this sample, the internal consistency reliability was alpha = .96 for Care

subscale and .93 for Control subscale.

General Help-Seeking Questionnaire (GHSQ; Wilson et al., 2005). GHSQ, a

self-report measure, consists of two major questions (problem types) to measure future

help-seeking intentions in terms of sources (10 items each) that can be modified based on

target population. GHSQ was developed to assess the intentions of individuals to seek

help for several problems from different sources. The scale consists of three sub-scales of help-seeking intentions (informal, formal, and no one) (Wilson et al., 2005). The help-seeking intentions for both problem types are measured on a 7-point Likert type scale ranging from no intention to seek help (1 = extremely unlikely) to a high likelihood of help-seeking (7 = extremely likely) for both problems (Wilson et al., 2005). This tool has been used by many researchers in the field and has been adopted for research related to help seeking for stress, anxiety, suicide, depression, etc. (Wilson et al., 2005). GHSQ has been demonstrated to have satisfactory reliability and validity. Wilson et al., (2005) reported the following reliability for items under each problem type: suicidal (Cronbach's alpha = .83, test-retest reliability over 3 weeks = .88) and emotional/personal problems (Cronbach's alpha = .70, test-retest reliability over 3 weeks = .86). The reliability of the GHSQ scale that includes all help seeking items was a Cronbach's alpha of .85 and test-retest reliability over 3 weeks was found to be .92. Convergent and divergent validity of GHSQ were supported with positive correlations between student's intentions to seek counseling and their perceived quality of previous mental health experiences (Wilson et al., 2005). They found moderate correlations between actual help-seeking behaviors and intentions for several informal sources.

In my current study participants used the seven point Likert scale (1= extremely unlikely to 7 = extremely likely) to respond to how likely they were to seek help from both informal and formal help sources for personal/emotional issues and for domestic violence. Among the options of sources of help, the original GHSQ item of 'other relative/ family member' source was replaced with, "mother-in-law." The scores on formal sources of help were combined into one score to assess formal help-seeking and

scores on informal sources were also combined to give a total score for informal help-seeking. According to Wilson et al., help seeking intentions are more closely related to actual behavior than other constructs. The internal consistency reliability for total help-seeking sources for personal/emotional problems in this sample was alpha =.54 and alpha = .65 for domestic violence. The reliability of informal sources of help-seeking for personal/emotional issues was alpha = .50 and .53 for formal sources. The internal consistency reliability for informal sources for domestic violence was alpha = .57 and .63 for formal.

Cultural-values conflict scale (CVCS). The CVCS (Inman et al., 2001) is a self-report instrument developed for use with and normed on South Asian Americans (N= 319) to measure the extent of conflict related to their cultural values. To reduce response bias, this instrument is called South Asian Cultural Experience Measure for administration purposes. It consists of 24 randomly ordered items rated on 6 point Likert-type scale (1= strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3= neutral, 4= agree, 5 = strongly agree, and 6 = not applicable) with two subscales (Intimate Relations, IR) and Sex Role Expectations, SRE). The IR subscale includes items that refer to dating/premarital sexual relations and marriage (e.g "I feel guilty when my personal actions and decisions go against my family's expectations" and "I experience anxiety at the thought of having an arranged marriage") while SRE subscale includes items related to family relations (e.g "my family worries about me becoming too Americanized in my thoughts and behaviors") and sex-role expectations (e.g "I feel that I do not belong to either the South Asian culture nor the American culture when it relates to my role as a woman"). Subscale scores are computed by adding item scores. A total South Asian Cultural

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Conflict Values score is computed by adding both subscales together. Higher scores on the total scale indicate high adherence to the cultural values conflict. In this study, I assessed cultural values by the level of adherence to cultural values conflict measured by the CVCS.

CVCS has been shown to have good internal consistency (.84 for total scale, .87 for intimate relations subscale, and .85 for sex role expectations subscale) (Inman et al., 2001). Convergent validity between CVCS and two measures of cultural adjustment and anxiety was found and discriminant validity between two groups of first and second generation women was found as well (Inman et al., 2001). CVCS has been used in previous studies with Cronbach's alpha in the range of .83-.91 for entire instrument, IR subscale (.78-.88) and SRE subscale (.84-.87) (Kaduvettoor-Davidson, & Inman, 2012).

For the current study, only the two subscales were used to differentiate the role of cultural values related to intimate relations from sex role expectations cultural values. Kaduvettoor-Davidson, and Inman, (2012) found that Asian Indians who perceived a satisfying relationship with their family, reported less cultural conflict related to sex roles and higher levels of intimate relations cultural conflict were related to religious coping among women. For current sample, the internal consistency reliability was alpha = .80 for IR subscale and .86 for SRE subscale.

Data Analysis

SPSS software 15.0 version (IBM, 2009) was used to conduct data analyses including descriptive statistics, correlations, independent samples t-tests, paired samples t-tests, and multiple regression. Descriptive statistics were used to describe the demographic characteristics and other variables (partner violence, care, control, intimate

relations, sex role expectations, and help-seeking). The assumptions underlying these statistical techniques were checked in the process of analyses. In order to use Pearson's correlation, the following key assumptions had to be met: (1) the variables (interval or ratio level) are bivariately normally distributed, and (2) the variables are linearly related (Cohen & Cohen, 1983). To assess normality, the Shapiro-wilk test, skewness, kurtosis, histograms, and Q-Q plots were utilized. The data can be assessed graphically or numerically as objective measures may lack sensitivity that graphs can be helpful in assessing (Laerd Statistics, 2013 https://statistics.laerd.com/spss-tutorials/testing-for-normality-using-spss-statistics.php); so the combination approach was used. The scatter plots of variables were used to assess linearity (Cohen, 1983). All variables except partner violence (as expected) met the assumption of normality and were correlated.

In order to conduct the t-test the following assumptions had to be met: (1) the scores are independent of each other, (2) the test variable is normally distributed within each of the two groups, and (3) the variances of the test variable in the two groups are equal (Cohen, 1983). All of these assumptions were met for the variables involved.

Finally, in order to use standard multiple regression, the following assumptions had to be met: (1) independent variables (PV, CO, CA, IRCV, and SRECV) are fixed, (2) all predictors have a linear relationship with the outcome variable (help-seeking), (3) errors are normally distributed, uncorrelated, have equal variance, and a mean of 0, and (4) all independent variables are measured without errors (Cohen, 1983). No multicollinearity was detected. Partner violence (PV) was slightly skewed and kurtotic and transforming it did not improve the skewness and kurtosis so it was used with no transformation. Control did not meet the objective (Shapiro-Wilk) measure of normality

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but met the skewness, kurtosis, and visual interpretation of normality. All variables

except PV met the assumptions (assessed by looking at skewness, kurtosis, Shapiro wilk,

p-p plots, scatter plots and histograms) for the multiple regressions to be carried out.

Because of the number of research questions the significance level was set at $p<0.01$ to

decrease the likelihood of Type -1 error (finding a significant difference where none

exists) (Taylor, 2014). In the following sections, I use the term daughter-in-laws and

women interchangeably unless indicated otherwise.

RESULTS

South Asian American Daughter-in-law/Mother-in-law Relationships

Research question 1. What are the characteristics of the daughter-in-law's perceived relationships with their mother-in-laws in this sample? In terms of the abuse from their mother-in-laws, 37% of daughter-in-laws (n = 145) reported psychological abuse, 23 % (n=144) reported experiencing emotional abuse, 8 % (n = 144) reported financial abuse and 3% (n = 145) reported physical abuse. The number of years daughter-in-laws' in-laws including their mother-in-laws stayed with them, other places where the mother-in-laws were living, and the characteristics of the contact women had with their mother-in-laws is described in Table 1.

Table 1

Daughter-in-Law's in-laws Living Situations, Length of Stay, Frequency, and Mode of Contact with their Mother-in-laws (N=155)

Characteristics		N	%
Years in-laws living with participants	17		
Less than a year		4	2.6
1-2 years		5	3.2
3-4 years		5	3.2
5-6 years		2	1.3
7 or more years		1	0.6
Mother-in-law alive	151		
Yes		134	86.5
No		17	11.0
Relationship with mother-in-law before she died	13		
Yes		13	8.4
No			
Mother-in-law living in same household currently	137		
Yes		18	11.6
No		119	76.8
Mother-in-law *lived* in same household (before dying)	13		
Yes		6	3.9
No		7	4.5
Length of mother-in-law's stay with women	23		
less than a year	5	3.2	
1-2 years		5	3.2
3-4 years		5	3.2
5-6 years		3	1.9
7 or more years		2	1.3
Occasionally	3	1.9	
Other places of mother-in-law residence	126		
In my neighborhood		7	4.5
In the same city as me		21	13.5
In the US, but not in my city		39	25.2
In South Asia		45	29.0
In another country		14	9.0
Frequency of contact with mother-in-law	145		
Multiple times a day		15	9.7
Daily		12	7.7
Several times a week		29	18.7
Several times a month		40	25.8
Monthly		27	17.4
Other		17	11.0
I have or had no contact with my mother-in-law		5	3.2
Mode of contact of mother-in-law	140		
Phone		66	42.6
Skype		12	7.7
Email		4	2.6
Face-to-face		51	32.9
Other		7	4.5

South Asian American Daughter-in-law/Mother-in-law Relationships and Cultural Values Conflict

Research question 2. Is there a relationship between the daughter-in-law's sex role expectations cultural values conflict (SRECV) and the amount of perceived care (CA) and control (CO) she experiences from her mother-in-law? Pearson's correlation analyses were conducted to examine the relationship between the variables of care, control, sex role expectations, and intimate relations cultural values conflict. As indicated in Table 2, there was a positive relationship between sex role expectations cultural values conflict and amount of perceived care from mother-in-law. Higher sex role expectations cultural values conflict were related to higher perceived care from mother-in-law. There was a negative relationship between sex role expectations cultural values conflict and perceived control from mother-in-law, i.e., higher sex role expectation cultural conflict values were related to lower perceived control from mother-in-law and lower sex role expectations cultural values conflict were related to higher perceived control from mother-in-law.

Research question 3. Is there a relationship between the daughter-in-law's intimate relations cultural values conflict (IRCV) and the amount of perceived care (CA) and control (CO) she experiences from her mother-in-law? As indicated in Table 2, there was not a relationship between intimate relations cultural values conflict and the amount of perceived care or control from mother-in-law.

Table 2

*Bivariate Correlations between *HSPEIF, HSPEF, HSDVIF, HSDVF, PATVIOL, IRCV, SRECV, CARE, and CONTROL and Descriptive Characteristics*

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1.HSPEIF	1	.18*	.58**	.27**	-.12	-.08	-.06	-.20*	.20*
2.HSPEF		1	.10	.69**	.32**	-.10	-.05	.11	-.13
3.HSDVIF			1	.25**	-.19*	.01	-.09	-.19*	.19*
4.HSDVF				1	.18*	-.06	.031	.019	-.02
5.PATVIOL					1	.20*	.29**	.32**	-.39**
6.IRCV						1	.49**	-.04	-.13
7.SRECV							1	.24**	-.35**
8.CARE								1	-.58**
9.CONTROL									1
M	17.63	12.53	17.17	15.41	6.16	33.92	36.95	18.92	23.09
SD	4.92	4.78	5.66	5.53	3.33	11.32	11.24	10.91	10.26
N	133	129	128	125	137	123	117	130	129

Note. *p<.05 = NS; **p<.01.

*HSPEIF = Help-seeking for personal/emotional issues informal; HSPEF = Help-seeking personal/emotional issues formal, HSDVIF = Help-seeking domestic violence informal, HSDVF = Help-seeking domestic violence formal.

Partner Violence and Daughter-in-law/Mother-in-Law Relationship

Research question 4. Is the daughter-in-law's reported level of partner violence related to the daughter-in-law's perceived relationship with her mother-in-law? HITS (Sherin et al., 1998) was used to measure partner violence in terms of 4 items (physically hurt, insult, threaten, and scream). A cut off score of 10 or higher indicates partner violence, which in this study was not met for majority of women (thus it was used as a continuous variable). Based on this analysis, partner violence was positively correlated with perceived care from mother-in-law and negatively related with perceived control from mother-in-law (see Table 2). In other words, higher perceived care from mother-in-law was related with higher partner violence and higher control from mother-in-law was related with lower partner violence in this sample.

Research question 5. Is there a difference in the perceived control (CO) and care (CA) from mother-in-law based on whether daughter-in-law met criteria for domestic violence (DV) by partner? Based on the cut-off criteria (10.5 or greater) for HITS, the DV screening tool (Sherin et al., 1998) used in this study, only a few daughter-in-laws (12%) met the criteria for partner violence. An independent samples t-test (see Table 3) was conducted to compare daughter-in-law's perceived care and control in relationship with her mother-in-law in non-abused and abused conditions. Levine's test for equality of means was conducted and was significant for care and not significant for control for DV by partner, so the t-test was interpreted accordingly. As indicated in Table 3, in terms of perceived care and control, there were significant differences between women who reported partner violence and those who did not.

Table 3

Care and Control Means for Daughter-in-laws who were Abused and Not Abused by Partner

| | Partner violence | | | |
	Non-Abused	Abused	*t*	*df*
Care	17.77	28.42	4.62***	19.50
	(10.69)	(7.77)		
Control	24.08	14.92	-3.26**	127
	(9.73)	(11.17)		

Note. *** = p<0.001,**p≤0.01. Standard Deviations appear in parentheses below means.

Research question 6. Is there a difference in CO and CA based on whether daughter-in-law experienced abuse (physical, psychological, emotional, and financial) from mother-in-law? A series of independent samples t-tests were conducted to compare daughter-in-law's perceived care and control in relationship with her mother-in-law in psychologically, emotionally, and financially abusive and non-abusive situations. T tests

were not conducted on physical abuse by mother-in-law as only 3 % of the participants

indicated physical abuse. Levine's tests for equality of means were conducted and were

significant for both care and control for psychological abuse, and for care for emotional

abuse, so t-tests were interpreted for unequal means for those particular tests. The

Levene's test was not significant for control for emotional abuse and care and control for

financial abuse so t-tests were interpreted for equal means. As evidenced in Table 4,

there were significant differences in the amount of perceived care and perceived control

for psychologically, emotionally, and financially non-abused and abused DILs.

Table 4

Independent Sample t Tests, Means, and Standard Deviations for Perceived Care and Control for Daughter-in-laws who were Psychologically, Emotionally, and Financially Abused and Those Who were Not Abused by Their Mother-in-Law

	Mother-in-law Psychological Abuse			
	No	Yes	t	df
Care	14.20	26.71	7.97***	116.5
	(9.70)	(7.96)		
Control	28.54	14.18	-9.73***	78.61
	(6.48)	(8.99)		

	Mother-in-law Emotional Abuse			
	No	Yes	t	df
Care	15.84	28.74	7.97***	71.98
	(10.07)	(7.02)		
Control	26.78	11.41	-9.44***	127
	(7.82)	(8.12)		

	Mother-in-law Financial Abuse			
	No	Yes	t	df
Care	18.00	28.81	3.25**	128
	(10.68)	(8.40)		
Control	24.36	9.45	-5.02***	127
	(9.55)	(7.43)		

Note. ***p<0.001, **p≤0.01. Standard Deviations appear in parentheses below means.

Help-seeking for Personal/Emotional Issues and Domestic Violence

      Research question 7. Does the daughter-in-law's perceived relationship (level of control and care) with her mother-in-law relate to her total informal and formal help-seeking for personal/emotional issues and for domestic violence? Bivariate Pearson's correlation analyses were utilized to examine the relationship between the independent variables (care and control) and dependent variable of help-seeking reasons and sources as shown in Table 2 above. Based on the analysis none of the correlations were statistically significant (see Table 2).

      Research question 8. To whom (informal or formal and specific sources) do daughter-in-laws turn to most for help with domestic violence issues (DV) and for personal emotional issues (PE)? As presented in Table 5, the means and standard deviations of daughter-in-law's help-seeking intentions indicate that the daughter-in-laws were most willing to seek the informal help of partner, friend, and parent; and formal help of mental health professionals for personal-emotional issues. For DV issues the daughter-in-laws were most likely to seek informal help from a friend, parent, and partner. They were mostly likely to seek formal help for DV from mental health professionals, general physicians, and phone lines.

Table 5

Paired sample t-tests for Help-Seeking Intentions from Informal and Formal Help-Seeking sources for Personal-Emotional (Per-Emot) Problems and Domestic Violence (Dom-Viol), Means and Standard deviations

| | Problem Type | | | |
	Per-Emot	Dom-Viol	*t*	*df*
Partner	5.75	4.43	6.63***	123
	(1.88)	(2.50)		
Friend	5.38	5.27	0.64	123
	(1.742)	(1.92)		
Parent	4.69	4.96	-1.77	124
	(2.01)	(2.13)		
Mother-in-law	2.47	2.66	-1.33	123
	(1.63)	(1.97)		
Total informal	18.12	17.28	1.99	124
	(4.40)	(5.60)		
Mental health	4.30	5.01	-4.90***	120
	(2.02)	(1.93)		
Phone line	2.56	3.95	-8.42***	123
	(1.85)	(2.21)		
Doctor/GP	3.38	4.07	-4.76***	121
	(1.73)	(1.90)		
Minister/Priest	2.53	2.67	-1.28	121
	(1.83)	(1.90)		
Total formal	12.62	15.58	-7.98***	122
	(4.87)	(5.415)		

Note. *** = p<0.001, Standard Deviations appear in parentheses below Means.

Evaluations were made on a 7-point scale (1 = "extremely unlikely", 7 = extremely likely").

Research question 9. Is there a difference in what issues (DV or PE) daughter-in-law s seek support for from each of the particular sources of support? Paired-sample t-tests were conducted to compare the sources of help-seeking intentions for personal-emotional issues and DV. As indicated in Table 5, the paired-sample t-test showed a statistically significant decrease in the likelihood of help-seeking from intimate partner for domestic violence compared to personal emotional issues. There was also a significant increase in the likelihood of help-seeking from a mental health professional for domestic violence compared to personal emotional issues.

The likelihood of help-seeking from a phone-line for domestic violence was significantly higher as compared to personal emotional issues. There was also a statistically significant increase in the likelihood of help-seeking from a general physician or doctor for domestic violence compared to personal emotional issues. Overall, daughter-in-laws indicated higher intentions to seek formal help for domestic violence rather than for personal/emotional issues. Intentions to seek informal help did not differ significantly for personal/emotional issues and domestic violence.

Research question 10. Among the variables of daughter-in-law's level of domestic violence (PV), perceived control (CO), perceived care (CA) in her relationship with her mother-in-law, adherence to sex role expectations cultural conflict values (SRECV) and intimate relations cultural conflict values (IRCV), which best predicts

a) total informal help-seeking for personal/emotional issues;

b) total formal help-seeking for personal/emotional issues;

c) total informal help-seeking for domestic violence; and

d) total formal help-seeking for domestic violence?

As shown in Table 2 above, only partner violence was statistically correlated with total formal help-seeking for personal/emotional issues. None of the other independent variables were correlated with the dependent variables so this analysis was not conducted.

Additional Analyses

Because total help-seeking for personal/emotional issues and domestic violence was not related to the independent variables, I further examined individual sources of help-seeking for both Personal/Emotional (Table 6) and Domestic Violence (Table 7)

issues for their possible relationship(s) to the independent variables of daughter-in-law's level of domestic violence (PV), perceived control (CO), perceived care (CA) in her relationship with her mother-in-law, adherence to sex role expectations cultural conflict values (SRECV) and intimate relations cultural conflict values (IRCV).

Table 6

Bivariate Correlations between Sources of Help-seeking for Personal/Emotional and Descriptive Characteristics

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1. Partner	1	.26**	.30**	.29**	.07	-.23**	.11	-.10	-.40**	-.12	-.15	-.26**	.31**
2. Friend		1	.15	.02	.42**	.07	.23**	.00	.03	-.18*	.07	.09	-.096
3. Parent			1	.33**	.05	-.06	.108	.05	.00	.06	-.06	-.01	.02
4. Mother-in-law				1	.06	.21*	.18*	.26**	.08	.11	-.07	-.44**	.32**
5. Mental health professional					1	.25**	.31**	.06	.16	-.19*	.05	.15	-.10
6. Phone line						1	.42**	.18*	.33**	-.07	-.03	.08	-.10
7. Doctor							1	.18*	.10	-.12	-.11	.10	-.03
8. Imam/Pandit								1	.25**	.13	-.17	-.08	-.03
9. PatViol									1	.20*	.29**	.33**	-.39**
10. IRCV										1	.49**	-.04	-.13
11. SRECV											1	.24**	-.35**
12. CARE												1	-.58**
13. CONTROL													1
M	5.59	5.23	4.54	2.44	4.16	2.64	3.32	2.49	6.16	33.92	36.95	18.92	23.09
SD	2.01	1.84	2.06	1.61	2.05	1.90	1.70	1.80	3.33	11.32	11.24	10.91	10.26
N	132	123	134	131	131	130	129	128	137	123	117	130	129

Note. *p<.05 = N.S., **p<.01

Table 7

Bivariate Correlations between Sources of Help-seeking for Domestic Violence and Descriptive Characteristics

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1. Partner	1	.21*	.21*	.36**	-.05	-.02	-.04	-.11	-.27**	.00	-.14	-.15	.15
2. Friend		1	.28**	.05	.45**	.26**	.39**	-.01	-.15	-.06	.15	.13	-.02
3. Parent			1	.38**	.03	.18*	.24**	.05	-.04	-.05	-.11	-.05	.07
4. Mother-in-law				1	.08	.21*	.19*	.20*	-.02	.05	-.18	-.41**	.32**
5. Mental health professional					1	.44**	.47**	-.02	.05	-.19*	.12	.05	-.02
6. Phone line						1	.56	.19*	.11	-.06	-.03	.00	.03
7. Doctor							1	.19*	.06	-.16	-.05	.07	-.03
8. Imam/Pandit								1	.33**	.29**	.08	-.05	-.07
9. PatViol									1	.20*	.29**	.33**	-.39**
10. IRCV										1	.49**	-.04	-.13
11. SRECV											1	.24**	-.35**
12. CARE												1	-.58**
13. CONTROL													1
M	4.44	5.22	4.92	2.70	4.90	3.90	4.02	2.65	6.16	33.92	36.95	18.92	23.09
SD	2.50	1.93	2.25	1.99	1.99	2.23	1.92	1.88	3.33	11.32	11.24	10.91	10.26
N	128	127	128	128	125	126	124	125	137	123	117	130	129

Note. *p<.05 = N.S., **p<.01

Additional Research Question 1. Among the variables of daughter-in-law's level of domestic violence (PV), perceived control (CO), perceived care (CA) in her relationship with her mother-in-law, adherence to sex role expectations cultural conflict values (SRECV) and intimate relations cultural values conflict (IRCV), which best predicts

    a) help-seeking for personal/emotional issues from mother-in-law;

    b) help-seeking for personal/emotional issues from minister;

    c)   help-seeking for domestic violence from mother-in-law; and

    d) help-seeking for domestic violence from minister.

Four standard multiple regression analyses were performed on the five independent variables of extent of partner violence (PV), perceived care (CA), perceived control (CO), intimate relations cultural values (IRCV), and sex role expectations cultural values (SRECV), and the dependent variable of help-seeking (HS). The Help-seeking scale was divided into formal and informal sources of help for personal-emotional issues and domestic violence. The help-seeking sources included were help-seeking from mother-in-law for personal/emotional issues (HSPEMIL), help-seeking for personal/emotional issues from minister (HSPEMINI), help-seeking for domestic violence from mother-in-law (HSDVMIL), and help-seeking for domestic violence from minister (HSDVMINI).

The rationale behind selecting these sources of help-seeking was that I was interested in further exploring the relationship between daughter-in-law and mother-in-law to see if that relationship could play a supportive role in help-seeking for personal/emotional issues and domestic violence. I also wanted to examine further

whether type of relationship (caring or controlling or both) may most influence help-seeking from mother-in-law. Cultural conflict can impact help-seeking from informal sources like family members also.

As in this sample, most of the women identified themselves as somewhat religious I wanted to explore if seeking help from an Imam or Pandit (religious leaders) was related to any of the independent variables. South Asian Americans utilize both informal and formal help-seeking so I wanted to look at those sources. Also, underserved populations like South Asian Americans, usually place a higher value on religious or spiritual healing and access the support of their clergy or religious leader in times of distress (including intimate partner violence and trauma) (Bryant-Davis & Wong, 2013). They also tend seek help from culturally sensitive professionals, e.g. religious leader. The source of help-seeking may differ depending on the problem a person may face, for example, internal conflict or issues in relationship. Below are the four additional research questions answered by multiple regression:

Help-seeking from mother-in-law for personal/emotional issues (HSPEMIL) Standard multiple regression was conducted to predict the women's help-seeking from mother-in-law for personal/emotional issues. Help-seeking from mother-in-law was simultaneously regressed on the set of five predictors; partner violence, perceived care form mother-in-law, perceived control from mother-in-law, intimate relations cultural conflict values, and sex role expectations cultural conflict values.

Table 6 displays bivariate correlations for the independent and dependent variables for this analysis. As noted there, bivariate correlations between CARE, CONTROL and HSPEMIL reached statistical significance at the .01 level. The squared

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multiple correlation coefficient for the regression was significantly different from zero [$F(5,107) = 5.95$; p<.0001]. Twenty-two percent of the variability in help-seeking from mother-in-law for personal/emotional issues was accounted for by the predictor set, with 78% of variability accounted for variables not included in this study.

Unstandardized regression coefficients are shown in Table 8. This table also presents the standardized regression coefficients with their corresponding t-values. Only one of the independent variables contributed significantly to the prediction of help-seeking from mother-in-law ($M = 2.48$, $SD = 1.60$) for personal/emotional issues, i.e. Care [t (107) = -3.31; p $\leq$ .001]. Thus, Care from mother-in-law, after controlling for all the other predictors, makes the strongest contribution to explaining the help-seeking from mother-in-law for personal/emotional issues.

Table 8

Predictors of Daughter-in-law's Help-seeking from Mother-in-law for Personal/Emotional Issues

Variables	B	SEB	β	t	Sig (p)
PV	.10	.05	.19	2.00	.048
IRCV	.00	.01	.03	.269	.788
SRECV	.00	.01	-.00	-.028	.978
CARE	-.05	.02	-.37	-3.31	.001
CONTROL	.02	.02	.16	1.36	.176

Note. N = 113

Help-seeking for personal/emotional issues from minister (HSPEMINI).

Standard multiple regression was conducted to predict the daughter-in-law's help-seeking from minister for personal/emotional issues. Help-seeking from minister was simultaneously regressed on the set of five predictors; partner violence, perceived care form mother-in-law, perceived control from mother-in-law, intimate relations cultural conflict values, and sex role expectations cultural conflict values.

Table 6 displays bivariate correlations for the variables in this analysis. As noted there, bivariate correlation between PV and HSDVMIL reached statistical significance at the .01 level. The squared multiple correlation coefficient for the regression was significantly different from zero [$F(5,105) = 5.21$; p<.0001]. Twenty percent of the variability in help-seeking from minister for DV was accounted for by the predictor set.

Unstandardized regression coefficients are shown in Table 9. This table also presents the standardized regression coefficients with their corresponding t-values. Two of the independent variables contributed significantly to the prediction of help-seeking from minister for personal/emotional issues, i.e., SRECV ($M = 36.95$, $SD = 11.24$) [t (105) = -3.28; $p \leq .001$] and PV ($M = 6.16$, $SD = 3.33$); [t (105) = 2.97; $p < .01$]. Controlling for all the other predictors, SRECV and then PV were the strongest predictors of daughter-in-law's help-seeking from minister for personal/emotional issues.

Table 9

Predictors of Daughter-in-law's Help-seeking from Minister for Personal/Emotional Issues

Variables	B	SEB	β	t	Sig (p)
PV	.16	.05	.29	2.97	.00
IRCV	.04	.02	.24	2.37	.02
SRECV	-.05	.02	-.34	-3.28	.00
CARE	-.03	.02	-.23	-2.0	.04
CONTROL	-.02	.02	-.11	-.92	.35

Note. N = 111

Help-seeking for domestic violence from mother-in-law (HSDVMIL).

Standard multiple regression was conducted to predict the daughter-in-law's help-seeking from mother-in-law for DV. Help-seeking from mother-in-law was simultaneously regressed on the set of five predictors; partner violence, perceived care form mother-in-

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law, perceived control from mother-in-law, intimate relations cultural conflict values, and sex role expectations cultural values.

Table 7 displays bivariate correlations for the independent and dependent variables for this analysis. As noted there, bivariate correlations between CARE, CONTROL and HSDVMIL reached statistical significance at the .01 level. The squared multiple correlation coefficient for the regression was significantly different from zero [$F(5,106) = 5.80$; p<.0001]. Twenty-two percent of the variability in help-seeking from mother-in-law for domestic violence was accounted for by the predictor set.

Unstandardized regression coefficients are shown in Table 10. This table also presents the standardized regression coefficients with their corresponding t-values. Only one of the independent variables contributed significantly to the prediction of help-seeking from mother-in-law ($M = 2.77$, $SD = 1.98$) for domestic violence, i.e. Care [t (106) = -3.09; p < .01]. Thus, Care from mother-in-law, after controlling for all the other predictors, makes the strongest contribution to explaining the help-seeking from mother-in-law for domestic violence.

Table 10

Predictors of Daughter-in-law's Help-seeking from Mother-in-law for Domestic Violence

Variables	B	SEB	β	t	Sig (p)
PV	.12	.06	.19	1.98	.05
IRCV	.00	.02	.01	.11	.91
SRECV	-.01	.02	-.10	-.96	.33
CARE	-.06	.02	-.35	-3.09	.00
CONTROL	.03	.02	.14	1.20	.23

Note. N = 112

Help-seeking for domestic violence from minister (HSDVMINI). Standard multiple regression was conducted to predict the daughter-in-law's help-seeking from

minister for DV. Help-seeking from minister was simultaneously regressed on the set of five predictors; partner violence, perceived care form mother-in-law, perceived control from mother-in-law, intimate relations cultural conflict values, and sex role expectations cultural values.

Table 7 displays bivariate correlations for the independent and dependent variables for this analysis. As noted there, bivariate correlations between PV, IRCV and HSDVMINI reached statistical significance at the .01 level. The squared multiple correlation coefficient for the regression was significantly different from zero [F (5,104) = 6.48; p<.0001]. Twenty-four percent of the variability in help-seeking from minister for domestic violence was accounted for by the predictor set.

Unstandardized regression coefficients are shown in Table 11, along with the standardized regression coefficients and their corresponding t-values. Two of the independent variables contributed significantly to the prediction of help-seeking from minister ($M = 2.60$, $SD = 1.83$) for domestic violence, i.e. IRCV [t (104) = 3.51; p ≤ .01], and PV [t (104) = 3.12; p < .01]. Thus IRCV and then PV, after controlling for all the other predictors, make the strongest contribution to explaining the help-seeking from minister for domestic violence.

Table 11

Predictors of Daughter-in-law's Help-seeking from Minister for Domestic Violence

Variables	B	SEB	β	t	Sig (p)
PV	.17	.06	.30	3.12	.00
IRCV	.06	.01	.35	3.51	.00
SRECV	-.02	.02	-.13	-1.34	.18
CARE	-.03	.02	-.20	-1.78	.07
CONTROL	-.01	.02	-.06	-.54	.58

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to examine the perceived relationship between South Asian American daughter-in-laws and mother-in-laws, cultural conflict values, and help-seeking intentions from formal and informal sources for personal/emotional issues and domestic violence. I explored the aspects of relationship related to the daughter-in-law's help-seeking as well as the difference in source of help-seeking for different problems. I also looked at the importance of cultural conflict values in the daughter-in-law's in-law relationships and help-seeking. Furthermore, I investigated the extent of violence by intimate partner (e.g. husband) and mother-in-law.

South Asian American Daughter-in-law/Mother-in-law Relationships

Women or daughter-in-laws in this study reported controlling as well as caring aspects of their relationship with their mother-in-laws. The IBM (Wilhelm & Parker, 1988) questioned participants about attitudes and behaviors people reveal in their close relationships. For example, some of the controlling attitudes and behavior items included ordering, trying to change, criticizing, dominating, and insisting the daughter-in-law behave in certain ways. Most of the women's mother-in-laws were alive and living away from them either in different U.S. cities or outside of the U.S in South Asian countries;

they kept in contact with them mostly from several times a month to several times a week. They used a number of modes to stay in touch, mostly phone and face-face. Despite living away from their mother-in-laws, the women in this sample perceived control in their relationship with their mother-in-laws. Control or abuse from mother-in-law can exist independent of living arrangements or situations. For example, most of the daughter-in-laws s in this sample were living away from their mother-in-laws indicating absence of joint family system living which is the norm in South Asian countries. Most of the participants (65%) had income of more than $70,000 so they could potentially afford to live separately also.

The daughter-in-laws also perceived care in their relationship with their mother-in-laws indicating the positive aspect of the daughter-in-law/mother-in-law relationship in South Asian culture usually not discussed in the popular media or research literature. The caring attitudes on the IBM (Wilhelm & Parker, 1988) included being considerate of daughter-in-law, a good companion, physically gentle, and making her feel needed. Previous researchers also found a positive relationship between the two women in the context of maternal health (Allendorf, 2010). Also, there have been accounts of women finding pleasant surprises in the form of getting along with their mother-in-laws when initially they expected to be in conflict.

The supportive role of the mother-in-law for the South Asian American daughter-in-law is also highlighted in this study as the daughter-in-law's perceived level of care and control from mother-in-law was related to her help-seeking from mother-in-law for personal/emotional issues and domestic violence. A few studies, e.g. (Rittenour & Soliz, 2009) with European-Americans, shed light on the satisfying aspects of the daughter-in-

law/mother-in-law relationship despite conflicts. Usually this relationship is depicted in popular media and research as conflict ridden and abusive. South Asian American women are confronted with many challenges post marriage especially when culturally the common practice is for them to leave their parents' home and move in with the husband's family. It is as if she has to learn the rules of the new home and may feel increased pressure to get along with all family members especially parents in law. It could be that daughter-in-law/mother-in-laws in this sample felt understood by their mother-in-law and felt relationally connected with her and did not need to seek much help from their intimate partner for any concerns. The relationship between daughter-in-law and mother-in-law has the potential to impact the marital relationship in a positive as well as negative way and the daughter-in-law being the new person in family may feel comfortable seeking help from her partner for any personal issues (e.g conflict or control from mother-in-law, and navigating the new roles and responsibilities). It actually makes sense that the daughter-in-law is confronted with challenges in her relationship with mother-in-law because mother-in-law's status is threatened and it may take her some time to accept the other woman in her son's life.

Unhealthy control can take the form of abuse and a daughter-in-law may not feel as connected with mother-in-law when she tries to dominate her (which is consistent with the cultural stereotype). Perceived control form mother-in-law (e.g., being told how to do certain tasks or ordering DIL around) may push the daughter-in-law to seek help (as she wants to get along with her mother-in-law. As Turner et al. (2006) found, both women have mixed feelings before entering into the daughter-in-law/mother-in-law relationship but hope to get along with each other.

Daughter-in-laws were somewhat unlikely in their intentions to seek help from their mother-in-law for both personal emotional issues and domestic violence. It could be that they were influenced by the strained relationships depicted on South Asian television. It is likely that since most of the women in this study were working and living with their intimate partner instead of with their in-laws, they could easily reach out to their partners instead of their mother-in-laws, especially in relationships lacking violence. More than half of the participant's mother-in-laws lived in different cities and South Asian countries. They indicated significantly higher intentions to seek help from their intimate partner for personal/emotional issues compared to domestic violence issues. However, they were somewhat less likely to seek help from partner in domestic violence.

In terms of the abuse from their mother-in-laws, 37% of daughter-in-laws (n = 145) reported psychological abuse, 23 % reported emotional abuse, 8 % reported financial abuse and 3% of reported physical abuse. The level of reported violence from mother-in-law is previously reported by Rabbani et al., (2008) who found that that mother-in-law (15%) was the secondary perpetrator of domestic violence after husband (88%). Raj et al. (2006) also found that the South Asian women (15%) in her sample has experienced emotional abuse from in-laws. Any level of abuse can affect the relationship and in the present study, there was a difference in the daughter-in-law's perceived care and control in relationship with mother-in-law based on whether the daughter-in-law experienced abuse (psychological, emotional, and financial). The women who indicated abuse from mother-in-law reported higher care from mother-in-law.

The women also reported lower perceived control by their mother-in-laws. This might be explained by the phenomenon of Cognitive Dissonance (Festinger, 1957),

during which we try to hold two opposing views in our mind and try to make sense of them. It is usual to seek congruence in our attitudes, beliefs and behaviors but when that does not happen for any reason, it creates a sense of dissonance. Daughter-in-laws and mother-in-laws both have intentions to get along with each other but often are confronted with conflict in between them. It could also be that care from mother-in-law may be perceived as over involvement in the daughter-in-laws' personal affairs leading to unhealthy control or abuse. Control can be defined in various ways from the power to influence people's behavior to restriction to abuse (Dictionary.com). It could also mean a way to regulate some behavior, which makes sense that daughter-in-laws who reported no abuse from mother-in-law perceived higher control from her. The mother-in-law is often assigned the role of a gatekeeper (Lim, 1997) and to help the daughter-in-law fit into the new family structure.

Even though the extent of abuse from mother-in-law is higher than that reported elsewhere, in this sample, it could still be an underestimate as people tend to under report any behavior that may be stigmatizing. Most of the women reported psychological abuse, which is congruent with previous research that highlighted the psychologically abusive experiences of daughter-in-laws from their mother-in-laws in terms of demonstrations of power and control over the daughter-in-laws. For example, in her book *Speaking the Unspeakable*, Abraham (2000) talks about ways in which the freedom of the daughter-in-law is inhibited by demeaning her in housework, criticizing her, and monitoring her activities. It is possible that when mother-in-laws engage in controlling behaviors to exert influence and power over their daughter-in-laws, they also engage in psychological abuse of her.

Qualitative researchers also highlighted the emotional abuse experienced by women from their in-laws including isolation, financial control, verbal complaints, dowry concerns, and domestic servitude (Raj et al., 2006). My finding with this sample is congruent with that research which describes the roles of mother-in-laws in domestic violence; oppressor and instigator (Fernandez, 1997). One of the roles of the mother-in-law is that of gatekeeper which is prone to control and influence and can easily turn into direct psychological and emotional abuse. Compared to violence instigated by woman's husband/partner, abuse from mother-in-law takes subtle forms (like calling names, criticizing, dealing with her harshly) and may be unrecognizable; almost all women in this sample denied physical abuse from their mother-in-law but reported other types of abuse. According to Abraham (2000) the mother-in-law may instigate her son to discipline or abuse his wife which can contribute to psychological and emotional abuse.

South Asian American Daughter-in-Law/Mother-in-Law Relationships and Cultural Values Conflict

I measured cultural values conflict with two subscales: intimate relations (IR) and sex role expectations (SRE) (Inman et al., 2001). The intimate relations subscale assessed the dating or premarital sexual relations and marital relations; and the sex role expectations subscale included the items about family relations and expectations related to sex roles in South Asian culture (Inman et al., 2001). For example, one of the items on IR included "I would experience guilt engaging in premarital sexual relations due to social stigma attached to it within my culture" (p. 22). An example of SRE item is "I struggle with the pressure to be married and the lack of option to remain single within my culture" (Inman et al., p. 22). The daughter-in-law's perceived care and control in

relationship with her mother-in-law was not related to their cultural conflict values of intimate relations.

However, the daughter-in-law's cultural conflict values of sex role expectations were positively related to perceived care that the daughter-in-law felt in their relationship. In the daughter-in-law/mother-in-law relationship conflict is an uninvited guest and usually arises between personal desires and others' expectations of self. For example, the mother-in-law is known to have explicit expectations of her daughter-in-law and feels the sense of responsibility to teach her and introduce her to the new rules and her role in the family. Doing so can contribute to a sense of closeness and care that the women in this sample perceived. This could serve as an opportunity for them to work together towards resolving any issues related to the sex roles in the mainstream culture but could also instigate a sense of perceived control and competition. Kaduvettoor-Davidson, and Inman, (2012) found that Asian Indians who perceived a satisfying relationship with their family, reported less cultural conflict related to sex roles and higher levels of intimate relations cultural conflict were related to religious coping among women.

Furthermore, the daughter-in-law's perceived control from her mother-in-law was negatively related to cultural conflict of sex role expectations. In other words, women who saw their relationship with the mother-in-law as controlling (e.g. ordering her about or expressing hurt in disagreement, had lower conflict in terms of sex role expectations cultural values. The mother-in-law may try to lower the conflict by actively engaging in the teaching or supervising role. It could also be that the mother-in-law prefers to have the daughter-in-law adhere closely to cultural values and any discomfort in doing so could be resolved in their relationship. Previously researchers found a pull in between

the daughter-in-law and mother-in-law for independence and conformity which can promote a conflictual relationship. Fifty four percent of the women in this study had children, and researchers previously found that conflict resolution between daughter-in-law and mother-in-law is usually motivated by the well-being of children and grandchildren (Raval, 2009). Also, if the mother-in-law is dependent on the son and his family she may not want to challenge the new family system (Shih & Pyke, 2010) and promote the care of daughter-in-law. Most the women (65%) in this sample had annual household incomes of more than $70,000. South Asians have been reported to have the highest annual median household income ($65,000) between all different ethnic groups in the U S with most of them (65%) at least attaining Bachelor's degrees (http://www.allied-media.com/southasian/south%20asian%20demographics.html). Working outside home is often in conflict with the cultural sex role expectations for South Asian women and has the potential to create internal conflict which could affect the relationship between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law.

Partner Violence and Daughter-in-law/Mother-in-law Relationship

Partner violence was related to the levels of perceived care from mother-in-law and negatively related with perceived control from mother-in-law. Even though most of the women in this sample did not report high partner violence, those who were abused as well as those not abused by their partner differed in their perceived care and control from mother-in-law. Specifically, women who had experienced partner violence perceived higher care from their mother-in-law than those who were not. Also, they perceived lower control from their mother-in-law in the midst of abuse from their partner. This may suggest that mother-in-law possibly plays the role of a buffer in domestic violence

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situations where the major perpetrator may be the husband. In instances, of domestic

violence by partner, the women may perceive or expect their mother-in-laws to

understand their problems and worries while being considerate and less controlling. The

perpetrator (husband) may also control any outside sources of support and daughter-in-

laws rely on care from mother-in-law. Most of the women were not living with their in-

laws and it appears that care could be perceived despite physical or geographical

distances between them.

Any form of abuse has a potential to negatively affect the relationships and family

systems. For example, it can be hard to describe the nature of a relationship when the

woman is worried about her safety in emotionally, psychologically, physically abusive

relationship. Thukral (2013) noted in a study conducted in India that the women (living

with their in-laws) had a difficult time describing their relationship with their mother-in-

laws and talked about her more as her role than as a person. Daughter-in-laws indicated

that their mother-in-laws were explicit with their strict expectations of the daughter-in-

laws who were afraid of being labeled bad persons by their mother-in-laws. It is already

a misunderstood relationship and any form of control and violence (from partner or

mother-in-law) complicates the communication or relationship between the two.

Help-seeking for Personal/Emotional Issues and Domestic Violence

Help-seeking was defined in terms of the informal and formal sources for

personal/emotional issues and domestic violence. Mahapatra (2012), based on

Abraham's (2000) previous work, found that South Asians utilize both formal and

informal help for domestic violence, and mostly access their friends and family and

community members for less serious issues (Mahapatra, 2012). Daughter-in-laws in this

study were likely to seek some sort of help indicating possibly positive attitudes towards help-seeking similar to a study conducted in Boston including South Asians, 82% of whom believed that one should tell a friend about domestic violence and seek help (Yoshioko & Dang as cited by Mahapatra, 2008). Such help-seeking is not normative in the South Asian culture due to the potential stigma and shame associated with psychological issues as well as abuse. Women in this sample may feel comfortable asking for help regardless of the cultural barriers and see personal/emotional issues and domestic violence as unacceptable problems against the notion of cultural messages of not perceiving abuse as a health hazard.

Personal/Emotional Issues. Daughter-in-laws were most willing to seek help from intimate partner, friend, and parent for personal/emotional issues and somewhat unlikely from mother-in-law in terms of informal sources. Their higher perceived care from mother-in-laws influenced their decreased help-seeking from mother-in-laws for personal/emotional issues. It could be that the daughter-in-law feels embarrassed about personal problems and did not confide in her mother-in-law despite a caring relationship. This could be true especially in the newly married daughter-in-law who is developing a relationship with her mother-in-law and thus not feel comfortable asking for help.

There was an increase in the likelihood of help-seeking from intimate partner for personal emotional issues compared to domestic violence. In other words, the women in this sample were more likely to seek help from their partner for personal/emotional issues than for domestic violence. It makes sense for the woman in an abusive relationship to not trust her partner to seek help for any concerns. She may feel threatened by her husband and try to suffer from any psychological effects of domestic violence in silence

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(usually an echoing message in the society). Women's psychological functioning is greatly affected in abusive relationships and if the woman feels uncomfortable seeking help from partner for her issues (as in partner violence) it can greatly limit her help-seeking and social support. Many times social support is restricted to members of kin which can be advantageous considering Asian Americans tend to utilize informal sources of help (Loya et al., 2010) more than professional sources. In contrast, overall the daughter-in-laws in this study identified higher intentions to seek formal help for domestic violence as compared to personal/emotional issues.

Among formal sources of help, daughter-in-laws were most likely to utilize help from a mental health professional for domestic violence (which can contribute to emotional issues). There was also a significant difference in the likelihood of help-seeking from a mental health professional for personal/emotional issues compared to domestic violence issues. Women were less likely to seek help from mental health professional for personal/emotional issues than for domestic violence. This is an important finding which may encourage other women to support such help-seeking. In general, Asian Indians are less likely to recognize mental health issues and attribute their struggles to physical ailments (Mohan, 2011) but this may not have been the case for this sample of women as they reported higher intentions to seek formal help for domestic violence as compared to emotional issues.

Among formal help sources for personal/emotional issues, women were willing to seek help from mental health professionals. They were somewhat unlikely to seek help for personal/emotional issues from phone line, doctor, and minister or pandit or imam. This finding is in line with previous research (Rao et al., 2011) with South Asian women

who indicated a strong inclination to seek help from informal sources like family and friends instead of professionals. It is also congruent with Yoshioko, et al.,'s (2003 research findings in which the minority women (Hispanics, South Asians, and African American) sought help from a member of their kin for personal issues.

Previously Bryant-Davis and Wong (2013) found that underserved populations like South Asian Americans accessed support of ministers in times of distress. Similarly, I found in this study that help-seeking for personal/emotional issues from Imam or Pandit was predicted by partner violence and sex role expectations cultural values. Increased adherence to cultural sex role expectations predicted lower help-seeking intentions from Imam or Pandit for personal/emotional issues. It could be assumed that the daughter-in-law may fear perceived moral judgment from the religious leader in terms of sociocultural or religious roles of women and how stress should be handled. It may be that she adheres to keeping personal issues private and within home's boundaries.

Also higher partner violence among daughter-in-laws in my study promoted more likelihood of help-seeking from minister for personal/emotional issues as well as domestic violence. Mahmood (2008) found that Muslim South Asian women held more positive attitudes towards psychological help-seeking and leaned towards getting help from culturally sensitive professionals. Imams or Pandits may be perceived as culturally sensitive for the women in this study. Attitudes towards personal/emotional issues and personal stigma against mental illness can also prevent a person from seeking professional help; this may not have been the case with the daughter-in-laws in this sample as they intended to seek help from counselors or psychologists. This finding is

also in contrast with Loya et al. (2010) who found that South Asians had poorer attitudes toward help-seeking and were unwilling to utilize counseling services.

Domestic Violence. Women in this study were most willing to seek help for domestic violence from friend, parent, and partner among informal sources. They were somewhat unlikely to seek help from mother-in-law for domestic violence. Higher perceived care resulted in lower likelihood of help-seeking from mother-in-law for domestic violence. The daughter-in-laws were most willing to seek help for domestic violence from mental health professional, doctor, and phone line (e.g. lifeline) in terms of formal sources. They were least willing to seek help from Imam or pandit, however, most women in this study identified themselves as somewhat religious. Similar to findings in this study Mohan (2011) found that Asian Americans preferred to seek help from their intimate partners, mental health providers, and general physicians.

Daughter-in-law's help-seeking differed significantly for personal/emotional issues and domestic violence. They preferred different help sources depending on the nature of problem. The women were significantly more likely to seek help from formal sources with the exception of ministers for domestic violence issues but not personal/emotional issues. Among the formal sources, they had higher intentions to seek help for domestic violence rather than for personal/emotional issues from mental health professionals (e.g. psychologist), phone helplines and general physicians. Overall, they had higher intentions to seek help from formal sources for domestic violence than for personal/ emotional issues. Given that I used a list serv for South Asian Mental health providers as well as other list servs, it is likely that many women in this study belonged to

mental health professions or other helping fields and recognized the importance of professional help-seeking.

The daughter-in-laws intended to seek more help from a general physician for domestic violence than for personal/emotional issues. As Mohan (2011) highlighted in previous research (Mohan, 2011) Asian Indians are more likely to recognize physical ailments than emotional issues or emotional abuse and it could be that they feel comfortable reaching out to doctors instead of domestic violence shelters for example. Also, in the present study women 's help-seeking for domestic violence from Imam or Pandit was influenced by increased partner violence. Congruent with cultural expectations, domestic violence may be perceived as a greater threat than other personal issues and it could be seen as a resolution to seek help from a cultural/religious figure.

In present study, daughter-in-laws' high adherence to intimate relations cultural values also promoted higher help-seeking intentions from ministers for domestic violence. For example, if a woman felt guiltier about dating outside of ethnic culture or having premarital sex, it influenced her willingness to seek help from minister in context of domestic violence. Often people seek help from their religious leaders regarding moral complications and going against one's culture could be detrimental to their internal beliefs and identity. Kaduvettoor-Davidson, and Inman, (2012) found that Asian Indians who perceived a satisfying relationship with their family, reported less cultural conflict related to sex roles and that higher levels of intimate relations cultural conflict were related to women's religious coping among women.

The daughter-in-law's South Asian worldview and cultural values were embedded in the conflict experienced on those dimensions, intimate relations and sex role

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expectations. For example, one of the items on the scale (CVCS, 2001), "marrying within my own ethnic group would be less stressful than marrying outside of my racial/ethnic group" indicates the core value of marrying within one's culture. As highlighted by Ibrahim et al. (1997), South Asian American cultural worldview is influenced by traditional beliefs and values towards marriage, family, sex/gender roles, etc. Patriarchy and keeping privacy about family's problems are two of the strongest core beliefs and can discourage the woman to seek help from a professional.

As illustrated by my findings, cultural conflict in intimacy may bring about hesitancy for women to seek professional help. Previously, Holmes (2007) found that South Asians who adhered less to Indian-Pakistani cultural values perceived less family support and reported accepting views of mental health counseling sought more help from a professional. Other barriers may include adherence to cultural values, as Soorika et al., (2011) attributed South Asian college students' psychological help-seeking to cultural factors including ethnic identity, cultural mistrust and adherence to Asian values. However, as Kim et al., (1999) pointed out a person's actions can change quite rapidly as opposed to culture-specific values, which is a part of acculturation process; and acculturation involves navigating several kinds of conflicts. Previous researchers found that acculturation significantly predicted help-seeking among Chinese Americans, (N= 1747) who tended to utilize more informal help (Kung, 2003).

Clinical Implications

This study has several clinical implications for South Asian American women, especially daughter-in-laws. It sheds light on the preferred sources of help which, if known, can be promoted by professionals to increase the likelihood of help-seeking. For

example, even though the women were somewhat unlikely to seek help from their mother-in-laws, they identified caring aspects of their relationship. A mental health therapist could help the women reflect on her relationship with her mother-in-law and encourage help-seeking as culturally South Asian Americans are more likely to utilize informal sources of seeking help.

Given that several women in this study identified abuse from their mother-in-law, it is important to assess it as part of an initial interview or assessment for any mental health care. This relationship can be discussed as part of therapy, as it has the potential to be a positive as well as a negative influence in women's lives. These relationships can be promoted as mutually growth fostering ones and can improve the quality of life for these women.

Similarly, the internal cultural conflict that the daughter-in-laws in this sample identified with, can be a topic of discussion in therapy and social policies when making decisions that have the potential to negatively impact South Asian Americans (e.g. failing to address level of acculturation when deciding types of treatment). Following are the limitations and strengths of this study as they relate to the sample, method, instruments, and results. Future research is also discussed.

Limitations

Limitations of the study relate to its sample, method, instruments, and results. Convenience and purposive sampling instead of random sampling was used to recruit daughter-in-laws. It is to be noted that the level of education and immigration status were not collected as part of demographics in this study. Women in this sample were mostly professionals recruited from mental health list servs and had relatively high incomes. It

can be assumed that their English language skills were good. All data was self-reported and collected online through English only survey. This study may not be generalizable to population whose English language skills may be limited as well as those with restricted access to computer and internet.

I focused only on the daughter-in-law's perceptions of the relationship with her mother-in-law and did not obtain the mother-in-law's perspective. Observations from other members of the family were also not included in this study. Also, I was unable to successfully reach victims of domestic violence as planned despite vigorous efforts to advertise the study at shelters and domestic violence organizations. The research involved a sensitive topic and had a sensitive population to recruit.

I relied on instruments not previously used with South Asian Americans with the exception of one (Cultural Values Conflict Scale, Inman et al., 2001). Also, I adapted the Intimate Bond Measure (Wilhelm & Parker, 1988), not previously validated on South Asian Americans, from parent-child to women's in-law relationships. Cultural values conflict scale captures the conflict between the daughter-in-law's cultural values and the host culture's values but I used in this study to measure the cultural values embedded in those items. A scale strictly getting at the South Asian cultural values was not available at the time of data collection, so the results should be understood within the context. Since I measured help-seeking in terms of whom the daughter-in-law may go to for help, in relation to her perceived relationship with her mother-in-law and her cultural values, it can be wrongly assumed that attitudes translate into behaviors all the time.

The help-seeking measure (GHSQ, Wilson et al., 2005), previously used with high school students, had never been used to measure help-seeking among South Asian

Americans and displayed poor to barely acceptable reliability ($r = .5$ to .6) in this study. As there is no general rule of acceptability of reliability and knowing that it can be compromised based on the number of items included in the scale, results should be interpreted with caution. Nevertheless, this measure contributed significantly towards capturing the help-seeking sources for this population and was slightly adapted.

The results also should be interpreted with caution, as correlation does not imply causation. Since the questionnaires were not counterbalanced, participants' responses may have been influenced by the other questionnaires or items. Also, factors of acculturation and immigration that may be crucial were not a part of this study.

Strengths

There are several strengths of the current study. It is the first online quantitative study conducted among South Asian Americans on the subject of daughter-in-law/mother-in-law relationships. The sample in this study is one of the largest among the South Asian American population recruited to study in-law relationships and cultural conflict values. This study also included women who identified with two of the largest religious groups in South Asia including Muslims (41%) and Hindus (31%) with most participants (55%) somewhat religious.

This is a unique study that quantitatively sheds light on the positive aspects of women's in-law relationships while also exploring the conflict related to sex role expectations in relationships. It is also is the first online quantitative study of this scope to target the extent of violence from mother-in-laws among South Asian Americans. This study further highlights the nature of help-seeking for personal/emotional and domestic violence for a South Asian American population which is usually a challenge to access.

This study served as further validation of the cultural values conflict scale (Inman et al., 2001) with South Asian Americans with good reliability. It also validated the use of intimate bond measure (Wilhelm & Parker, 1988) for South Asian American women with good reliability. Other strengths include this study's results indicating a clear difference in help-seeking for different problems and support for discussion of cultural conflict values in the midst of help-seeking.

Future Research

Domestic violence or intimate partner violence is primarily conceptualized as violence in a relationship between two intimate partners in which one is the perpetrator while other is the victim. This approach ignores the role of other family members like the father-in-law or mother-in-law in abuse toward women. In-law research among South Asian Americans is almost non-existent due to the complex nature of this relationship. Future researchers could look at the extent of abuse from father-in-law and other family members and how that relates to help-seeking. Of the research that exists on in-law relationship most has been with majority cultures including Whites and European Americans with a focus on the conflictual nature of the relationship. Except for a few studies in the context of domestic violence (e.g. Fernandez, 1997; Gangoli & Rew 2011; Kandiyoti, 1988; Panchandeswaran & Koverala, 2005), there are no other quantitative studies that have made the daughter-in-laws' and mother-in-laws' relationship in South Asian American a focus. South Asian American daughter-in-laws and mother-in-laws dyad research is also rare due to lack of accessibility especially in abusive situations. Future researchers could also qualitatively study the aspects of relationships that are

positive and negative from each woman in the dyad and compare and contrast their themes of perceptions.

Future research can also focus on the positive nature of in-law relationships among South Asian Americans and the factors that make those relationships positive and satisfying, sometimes as much as family of origin among European Americans. Also, the relationship between care, control, and abuse from mother-in-law cannot be understood from this study, and could be further explored. Even though this dyad is the most frequently studied among majority populations, this is not the case among minority populations. In ethnic minorities the societal perceptions may cloud the actual experiences of daughter-in-laws and mother-in-laws especially when there exist healthy and satisfactory in-law relationships. The role of relationship between daughter-in-law and mother-in-law in general and specific help-seeking for domestic violence remains lacking in research. Also, there is a lack of culturally sensitive measures that can fully examine the relationship between two females in the South Asian American family.

Finally, help-seeking among South Asian Americans has predominantly been studied within the context of health behaviors and not on social issues. The role of in-law relationships in help-seeking has not been a focus in research even though informal sources like family and friends play a significant role in help-seeking. Another gap in research is the role of cultural values (differentiated from acculturation) in help-seeking and the quality of relationships.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Extended Review of the Literature

South Asian Americans are people living in United States (US) who began

emigrating from their host countries of Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri-Lanka,

Bhutan and Maldives since 1875 and continue to increase in numbers today

(Ayyub,2000). According to a leading U.S. South Asian organization, SAALT-South

Asian Americans Leading Together, (2012), as of year 2008 there were 2.7 million South

Asians residing in the US. Between 2000 and 2010 this group was the largest emerging

ethnic minority group with more than 3.4 million South Asians living in US, a

community growth rate of 78% (Asian American Federation [AAF] & South Asian

Americans Leading Together [SAALT], 2012). Throughout this review, I have used the

term 'South Asian Americans' to identify South Asians currently living in the US.

Based on an annual review in the *Journal of Asian American Psychology* of all

behavioral science research articles published in 2010, this is a unique and the most under

studied/under researched ethnic group in US (Okazaki, Kassem, & Tan, 2011).

Reviewers searched the PsychInfo database using the term 'Asian American' to identify

any articles written on or about Asian Americans (893 abstracts) and later used a specific

criteria to finalize their list of 261 abstracts which they reviewed and presented briefly in

their annual review.

The articles (N=261) included were published in a peer-reviewed journal,

empirical studies, and focused on Asian Americans (including South Asians and others).

Most of the active areas of research with Asian Americans were health related including

"cancer screening, management, substance use, health information, and insurance"

(Okazaki et al, 2011). Out of 261 articles only 16 (approx.6.1%) focused on South Asian

Americans with participant characteristics of Asian Indian, Pakistani, and Bangladeshi.

Although 24 (~ 9%) of the reviewed Asian American studies addressed prevention,

intervention or help-seeking for mental health problems, it is noteworthy that none of

South Asian American studies reviewed included domestic violence, help-seeking, and/or

relationships as topics.

In this current review I highlight key components related to South Asian

Americans' characteristics of in-law interpersonal relationships, culture, cultural conflict

values, issue of domestic violence and help-seeking attitudes. I begin by discussing the

relationship between daughter-in-law (DIL) and mother-in-law (MIL) in the popular

media and research across different ethnic groups followed by a description of this

relationship among South Asian Americans and within a domestic violence context. I

next discuss the different ways researchers have studied (quantitatively or qualitatively or

both) and conceptualized this complex relationship in majority as well as minority

population. As South Asian Americans have a different set of values than their Western

peers, I describe the cultural context of the DIL/MIL relationship among South Asian

Americans. I provide this context through a discussion of South Asian cultural worldviews, cultural conflict values, and ways of life that are relevant to the female in-law relationships, and help-seeking.

Additionally, key components of domestic violence literature are discussed briefly among majority cultures and detailed among South Asian Americans. The definition(s) of domestic violence and its incidence, prevalence, and unique South Asian American cultural aspects is presented. I conclude this review with a discussion of help-seeking among South Asian Americans for personal/emotional and domestic violence issues. As an important part of this construct, the conceptualization of help-seeking in several relevant studies and the barriers to help-seeking in the population of interest are also be presented. Finally, I discuss needed research.

Relationship between Daughter-in-law and Mother-in-Law

The relationship between a DIL and the MIL is one that is considered potentially tumultuous in today's media and popular culture all over the world. This is considered the most problematic of family relationships for most cultures. Popular U.S. television shows and movies (such as *Monster-in-law,* or *Meet the Fockers*) depict the in-law relationships as problematic and universal. There is a lack of representation of non-problematic in-law relationships in the media which promotes views and assumptions that a DIL and MIL are destined to not relate well to each other.

Despite this relationship being complex and assumed 'inherently conflictual' (Shih & Pyke, 2010), only a few researchers (e.g. Turner et al. 2006; Chen, 1999; Cotterill, 1994; Fischer, 1983; Kung, 1999; Rittenour & Soliz, 2009; Sandel, 2004;Shih & Pyke, 2010; Thukral, 2013) have examined the relationship between DIL and MIL and

even fewer have studied the triads including MIL, DIL, and husband/son (e.g. Kadir et al., 2003). Many times this relationship is mentioned in the midst of gender inequality and family studies (e.g. Lim, 1997) but the focus is usually shifted away from this dyad. Overall, communication in in-law relationships is relatively understudied (Yoshimura, 2006 as cited by Rittenour & Soliz, 2009). A search of two of the largest databases in social sciences, Psych Info and Sociological Abstracts, yielded only three hits with the key words: DIL, MIL, and South Asian.

   Relationship among other populations. According to Fischer (1983), the marriage of a son creates one of the most ambivalent of relationships, that of the DIL and the MIL. Past empirical research on relationships focused on married Caucasian couples, and information on minority populations including African Americans, Hispanics, (Osterhou, 2009) and South Asians is limited. Most researchers focused on the 'troublesome' in-law relationship versus the potentially 'healthy' relationship. The complexity of the in-laws relationship challenges many researchers to find appropriate methods for examining this relationship. Also, most family researchers focus on primary family relationships like husband-wife dyads instead of secondary (e.g. in-law) relationships (Turner, Young, & Black, 2006).

   It is hard for a DIL and MIL to explore and understand their relationship due to its 'ambivalence' and any subjective 'vulnerability' in the relationship each woman may feel (Turner et al., 2006). A few researchers (Lim, 1997) have referred to Korean MILs as the 'cultural gatekeepers' as they occasionally moved into the DIL's house to assist in housework (to promote/upkeep traditional values and methods of housekeeping) and childrearing. Fischer (1983) highlighted the importance of this relationship in the family

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as a DIL may fulfill the role of a 'gate-keeper' of the availability of her husband and her children to her MIL. Also, the birth of a child further complicates the relationship between the DIL and MIL as Chinese mothers reported more complaints about their MILs as compared to the childless women or DILs (Fischer, 1983; Shih & Pyke, 2010).

Turner et al. (2006) used focus groups for a qualitative study on DILs' (21 white, 2 Hispanic) and MILs'(14 White, 3 Hispanic) perceptions of the quality of their relationship and the role it plays in establishing their place within family. They shed further light into the challenges of this relationship and found that both women held differing viewpoints yet their responses followed the themes of "expectations, realities and disillusionment, and perspective of the other" (Turner et al, 2006, p.593)."

This indicated that both the MIL and DIL had mixed feelings prior to entering into the relationship and were 'anxious' to conform and at the same time exert independence from each other (Turner et al., 2006). Family relationships serve as a platform for the development of women's identities related to their sense of well-being and quality of life (Turner, Young, & Black, 2006). As the DIL strives to find and upkeep her identity in the marital relationship, the MIL seems to have difficulty 'letting go' of the identity she has acquired over several years within the family and especially in the eyes of her son (Turner et al. 2006). Simultaneously, usually the MIL serve as a role model for the incoming DIL and according to Erkison (1950, as cited by Turner et al, 2006) their developmental tasks are in conflict as older members in the family tend to mentor the younger members and teach them the 'values' and 'wisdom' as a way of passing their legacy. In summary, MIL and DIL both enter the relationship with different expectations from each other.

It's not just that the expectations are in conflict but once the DIL marries and enters the marital home or relationship, she finds that the reality is very different from what she expected and struggles with the acceptance of that new found reality (Turner et al., 2006). It is important to note that different does not mean negative or bad even though there is a widely held belief that DIL and MIL cannot ever get along. Turner and colleagues (2006) found that the daughters-in-law in their study expressed hopefulness as well as hopelessness in their relationship as some talked highly of their MILs in terms of the unconditional love they felt from her.

Finally, Turner et al (2006) highlighted how both of the women in the relationship were able to understand and identify with one another in terms of their struggles by considering or taking the 'perspective of the other.' They argued that although mothers-in-law and daughters-in-law were able to take each other's' perspectives; doing so did not seem to make their struggle in the relationship easier as they felt discomfort and 'ambivalence' of role in their 'intergenerational family network.' The differing viewpoints and stories of the relationship between DIL and MIL represent the strengths as well as weaknesses and are characteristics of 'intergenerational ambivalence' (Connidis & McMullin, 2002 as cited by Turner et al, 2006).

Rittenour and Soliz, (2009) studied the relationships between MIL and DIL in a mixed methods study (N= 190) among a majority (89.5%) European-American sample. They investigated the communicative and relational factors associated with satisfying and non-satisfying DIL- MIL relationships. They used a structural model with a focus on shared family identity as a mediating factor between the several characteristics of this

relationship and relational outcomes. As part of their survey measures, they used the

following question to unveil the factors that influence such relationship:

> "In your own words, can you explain what you like and what you do not like
>
> about your relationship with your mother-in-law MIL? Regardless of the quality
>
> of your relationship, think about both positive and negative aspects of the
>
> relationship in answering this question."

They examined the participants' responses using Owen's (1994) thematic analysis and

found 18 categories of relational and communicative factors between DILs and MILs.

The majority of the categories focused on the specific behaviors of MILs in terms of

positive as well as negative personality traits, inclusivity, exclusivity, loyalty, support,

influence, etc. This research was conducted through a DIL's perspective.

Additionally, in-law relationships may have the potential for creating stress for

family members including the married couple in marital relationships (Rittenour & Soliz,

2009) but it does not mean that the in-laws relationship is always stressful or

troublesome. These relationships are not inherently negative and are a significant part of

the family system. This area of research is equally important for scholars as there is a

lack of research about the nature of in-law relationships.

Relationships among South Asian Americans. A South Asian American DIL-

MIL relationship is considered not just a complex/conflicted relationship, but also a

violent one especially in domestic violence cases where the husband is the major

perpetrator of violence against his wife (88%), followed by his mother (15%) (Rabbani,

Qureshi, & Rizvi 2008). In a mixed methods study with a quantitative sample of 169

South Asian American women, 15% reported emotional abuse from their in-laws; women

in the qualitative sample (N=23) reported in-law abuse in the form of "isolation, social and economic control, verbal abuse, and degradation, and dowry complaints, and domestic servitude" (Raj, Livramento, Santana, Gupta, & Silverman, 2006, p. 944).

There is a predominant belief, especially among South Asians, that a South Asian DIL and MIL can never get along. In addition to the depictions of the DIL-MIL in western culture, South Asian society is notorious for portraying on national television shows of a strained relationship between a DIL and her MIL. Famous and popular media shows such as *SaasBhiKabhiBahooThii* (Mother-in-law was also a daughter- in-law once) promote the notion of vengeance among these two women in the extended family system and this perceived retribution has the potential for domestic violence in marital relationships.

To repeat, there is a severe lack of research focused on South Asian American in-law relationships, specifically the DIL and MIL relationship (Gangoli & Rew, 2011). One researcher, Raval (2009) qualitatively studied this relationship explicitly within a multi-generational and relational context. She interviewed ten Indian Gujrati (in India) DILs and eight North American MILs of Indian descent. She chose to study these two categories of women because both are involved in playing 'two critical roles' in the Indian family culture within a multigenerational context. Other characteristics similar between these two types of women were that they were not part of central decision making in their homes and were faced with daily conflict ridden situations that demanded choosing between personal wishes and others' (more central people in the household like father/brother, etc) wishes (Raval, 2009). Thus, conflict is present among South Asian American DILs and MILs; Raval (2009) found that both women tended to

actively negotiate conflict and made decisions by putting others' (children and grandchildren) benefits above their owns. Also, they made decisions while staying within the boundaries of their hierarchical culture and family structure in which, according to Kakar (1978), conformity is valued and autonomy is discouraged.

Another, more recent, qualitative study (Thukral, 2013) conducted in India highlights the complex nature of the mother-in-law and daughter-in law relationship by exploring their current relationships through a feminist lens. The study involved women (N=8) between the ages of 21-20 years old, had been married from 1-5 years, and were residing with their in-laws. The research technique utilized was 'Listening Guide' (Gilligan, Spencer, Weinberg, & Bertsch, 2003 as cited by Thukral, 2013) with a combination of vignette and semi-structured interviews. Women in the study were initially hesitant in sharing about relationships with their mother-in-law and did not anticipate any difficulties in the relationship prior to marriage. They also reported a lack of fulfillment of their expectations from their mother-in-law and had difficulty expressing their mother-in-law as a person. This highlights the influence of sociocultural phenomenon in which the role of mother-in-law takes precedence over her personality. Women felt that their mother-in-law was explicit in her expectations of them (e.g. house chores and family rules) and did not have much flexibility, indicating the power-imbalance in the relationship. Also, they expressed a fear of being labeled as a bad person by their mother-in-law if they shared their frustrations about not having a 'motherly' relationship with them (which they are seeking). Having a good relationship with one's mother-in-law seems to have an impact on the husband/wife relationship as well as this relationship exists only due to marriage. This study speaks to the conflict that

is portrayed in the South Asian mainstream media and society but is rarely communicated or resolved in the relationship. Despite limited generalizability and researcher bias, this study provides rich information into the interpersonal and sociocultural characteristics of this important yet misunderstood relationship (that crosses borders and cultures) which also affects the husband-wife and/or mother-son relationship.

The relationships between South Asian MIL and DIL may differ based on amount/type of contact, cohabitation, and other individual/situational factors. Most researchers have discussed this relationship in a negative context and one which is highly troublesome for both women at different developmental stages of life, for example, at the beginning of marriage when the DIL starts living with the husband's family and experiences the authority of her MIL in household as well as decision making situations (Varghese, 2009). The MIL may also perceive the incoming DIL as a threat to her power and hold within the family, thus leading to conflict within the relationship. It seems that the South Asian cultural expectations influence the quality of DIL and MIL relationship.

Predominant stereotypes of a South Asian MIL and DIL held by most people and depicted in media are 'dominant' and 'submissive' (Varghese, 2009). In an online article, journalist Narayan (2011), depicts the relationship between a South Asian MIL and DIL in this one sentence: "Two women who love the same man is hardly the recipe for a friendship (para 1)" and further goes on to refer to this relationship as a 'maligned' one that defines the collective South Asian culture and values. This relationship can be classified as an intimate one as both women strive to get along and at the same time win the heart of the younger male (husband/son) in the house. This is a relationship which

knows no standards like parent-child relationship or sibling relationships but one which

most people do not necessarily prepare for in advance.

Ironically, this is the relationship through which the elder woman's (once a DIL)

status is promoted up in the patriarchal hierarchy with the younger woman (incoming

DIL) at the bottom of it (Shih & Pyke, 2010). Thus, it may be that the South Asian MIL

gains more power, status, respect, filial piety, and freedom similar to what Shih and Pyke

(2010) found in their research with Chinese immigrant women, who achieve those

entities especially when the MIL has more resources, such as assistance and expertise

with childrearing, to offer to the couple. On the contrary, the dynamics of relationship

can change if the couple is financially independent and taking care of the MIL leaving the

MIL resistant to challenging the new 'family arrangements' (Shih & Pyke, 2010).

In South Asian culture, as a woman gets married, she not only marries her

husband but also the family at large. In the majority of households, especially in South

Asian countries which fall under the patriarchal joint family structure, the MIL lives with

the couple permanently or intermittently (Fernandez, 1997). In western societies this

may not be the usual case as the MIL tends to occasionally visit the couple especially if

she lives overseas. The practice of joint living has the potential of greatly impacting the

relationship between a husband and a wife as the MIL is supposed to 'teach' the

incoming DIL about the values and rules of her home; also consistent with Erikson

(1950)'s developmental stages of humans. As women in this culture are responsible for

maintaining the honor of family (Dasgupta, 2000), it becomes the responsibility of the

MIL to make sure that the DIL does not do something to affect the honorable status of the

family. According to Fernandez (1997), many times husbands delegate the control of

younger women to older women in all aspects. Many MILs abuse this opportunity and engage in controlling behaviors either actively or passively to have power on the DIL.

According to Abraham (2000), the primary relationship of the married woman in marriage is to her MIL and the husband with his father. This can also be considered one of the intimate relationships in addition to the couple's marital relationship based on several expectations that they both have from one another while desiring closeness to their husband/son and perhaps with each other. Some of the demonstrations of a MIL's power and control as it relates to the DIL may include: limiting her freedom, demeaning her in the housework that she does, criticizing her, and monitoring her activities (Abraham, 2000). It seems that the relationship-based hierarchies in South Asian American families cannot be disturbed and when the new woman enters the home, the MIL perceives a struggle to maintain her position and role in the family which she has accumulated through her experience and age.

It is important to note that South Asian culture is heavily patriarchal and in many households, the father-in-law (if alive) or other males of the household have final control and voice. As mentioned in her book on South Asian immigrant experience, Abraham (2001) talks about the nature of a MIL to prove to the newcomer in the family her existence, power, control, and love over her son; and this manifests into extreme conflicts between the two women.

Due to limited research and a biased image of the 'evil' MIL that predominates cross culturally, it is difficult to depict a typical relationship between a South Asian DIL and her MIL. Some women shared what they think their relationships are like with their MILs in response to an online article by organization, India Parenting (2012). The

responders were mostly DILs and in their postings shared their experiences and views

related to the following questions posed by the article writer: "(1) What kind of

relationship do you share with your in-laws? (2) Do you think mothers-in-law can be

good friends? and (3) Do you agree with the image of a mother-in-law portrayed in the

media?" Interestingly, most (total ~50) of the posts were of negative experiences yet a

good handful of respondents (~16) shared positive experiences with their MILs.

The posts by those respondents about the relationship between the South Asian

MIL and DIL may be represented by the following three excerpts from their posts:

1- "I am an Indian and I have both parents in law. I can't exactly say that they are

good. Of course they are very good to their son and other children. But to me they are

different. I am treated like an outsider in my house I am not in the part of decision maker.

I have always been treated like a in house maid in the name of daughter-in-law. That's it.

Mother-in-law is always a mother-in-law and she can never be your MOTHER. That is

why she is mother by law only."

2- "My mom in law is not a friend to me. I have tried every possible way to

become a friend of her but to no avail. I have given up my career to make her happy but I

really don't know why she is so typical, dominating, and interfering. I wish she becomes

my best friend."

3- "When I got married I was very scared about what kind of relationship will I

share with my mother-in-law. Lots of questions were flooding in my mind like will she

be friendly with me? Will she behave like typical mother-in-law shown in TV soaps? Or

will she be kind and generous? But after 5 years of marriage I can proudly say that I share

a healthy mother-daughter bond with my mother-in-law. I call her mom, she treats me

like her daughter…….my mother-in-law says she is happy to have such a nice DIL who is not less than a daughter. I feel great" (How to, 2012, para 2).

Relationship in context of domestic violence. Domestic violence (DV) or intimate partner violence (IPV) is one of the several forms of abuse inflicted on women, primarily by their male partners. IPV can be defined in its four components of physical violence, sexual violence, threats of physical or sexual violence and psychological or emotional violence (Saltzman, 2002). It is important to point out that very few researchers have discussed the role of wider family members MIL in domestic violence. Gangloi and Rew (2011) recently noted that Abraham, (2000), Kandiyoti (1988), and Fernandez, (1997) had each noted this possible role. The contribution of females in the household (especially the MIL) to domestic violence, primarily, a male to female phenomenon, is substantial (Abraham, 1991; Fernandez, 1997) and therefore it is important to explore this relationship within the context of domestic violence for South Asians. The role has been described as influenced by the patriarchal values or within the broader marital household (Gangoli & Rew, 2011; Fernandez, 1997; Panchandeswaran & Koverala, 2005). Based on Indian reports of domestic violence, 33-40% of the acts of domestic violence can be attributed to other people in the household, not just the male partner, often with the young DILs suffering abuse from their MILs (Gangoli& Rew, 2005).

Nature of South Asian mother-in-law abuse against daughter-in-law. The abuse from a MIL in South Asian society can include most of the forms of abuse except sexual, including physical, psychological, emotional/verbal, and financial. MILs have been found to physically hit their DILs, in addition or in conjunction with their son

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(DIL's husband) (Fernandez, 1997). They can be verbally or emotionally abusive when they practice their control over the DILs by demeaning their performance at household tasks by shouting or yelling at them, asking to get more dowry, giving birth to sons or remaining childless and engaging in other indirect abusive tactics (Fernandez, 1997). Indirect tactics may include: belittling her in front of her husband- sometimes convincing the husband to abuse her (Fernandez, 1997), not acknowledging her heavy housework load, neglecting her basic needs like food, restricting access to money, minimizing her efforts, values, beliefs, blaming her for things outside of her control like bearing a son, etc. There is an imbalance of power already existing in the family and it becomes apparent within the relationship of these two women and is usually the source of everyday conflict (especially if they live in joint family system, not as commonly practiced in US).

This relationship is mediated by the son/husband/male in the family as if it was not for either of those people, these two women would not be bound in a relationship and expected to get along in the midst of physical as well as psychological conflict. This abuse may exist in more subtle forms despite the living situation or arrangement of the couple. Fernandez (1997) talks about two roles of the MIL that she may operate from in inflicting violence against her DIL: 'instigator', 'oppressor' or both. The MIL may prompt her son to set his wife right if she does not meet her standards or she may further harass her DIL by calling her names, minimizing her worth, skill, criticizing her or dealing with her harshly herself. As most of the marriages are arranged within the South Asian culture, it may not matter whether the MIL chose the bride for her son (her DIL) or

not; many women have reported violence from their family members (in the case of

cousin marriages fairly more common in Pakistan or Islamic countries).

This relationship may look different in different contexts, for example, if the DIL

is a new immigrant she is three times more likely to suffer domestic violence and is at

greater risk of injury from domestic violence than non-immigrant women (Raj &

Silverman, 2003). It may also differ depending upon whether the MIL lives with the son

and DIL and/or upon the modes of their communication. Depending on one's

geographical distance, this relationship may present with different forms of violence.

Dowry issue. At times the conflicts in the marital household have ended in bride

burnings and deaths of the younger woman with dowry- related deaths being common.

Dowry-related deaths have been referred to as 'common' and 'commonly ignored' acts of

murder and have increased 15 fold over the past two decades (Hitchcock, 2001). In the

Indian subcontinent, dowry is referred to as some substantial amount of money or

materials given to an outgoing bride on her marriage by her parents, mostly under the

pressure of the other (in-law) family. The practice of dowry started as a way of giving

the daughter some good wish money to start off her marriage (highly priced tradition) but

has turned into demand and grounds for in-law abuse.

MILs are not just the "gatekeepers" of the family, in charge of molding the young

DILs into the new family's beliefs, culture, ways of life, but they also are the gatekeepers

of the DILs dowries, especially their gold jewelry. As a counselor in the southern U S

with South Asian American female victims of domestic violence, I personally was told of

instances where the women had to give up their gold jewelry, furniture, substantial

household items as dowry to their MILs. Some of the women who were living in US also

had to give away their valuables to their in-laws as they moved away from India,

relinquishing any individual right to it. This dowry practice has the potential to create

more conflict and abuse between a South Asian American or South Asian MIL and DIL

as the dowry does not stop at the time of marriage but continues, in many cases,

throughout marriage during events of happiness such as child birth or a promotion.

Fernandez (1997) sums it up beautifully as she talks about the role of dowry in domestic

violence in South Asian women:

> "violence is triggered by unmet demands, either real or fabricated, for dowry and
>
> gifts or suspicion of the woman's character, her desire to work outside the home,
>
> disputes over housework and child care and/or the husband's extramarital affairs
>
> and alcoholism. (p. 442)."

Most of these behaviors are controlled by the older woman (MIL) in the family as

fathers-in-law relinquish their control of the DILs to MILs. One rationale given for

dowry is that daughters are considered a 'burden' in wider society so they need to bring

money into the family for themselves.

Conceptualization of Relationship between Mother-in-law and Daughter-in-Law

To this date, I found no study in the social sciences that explored the relationship

of a South Asian American DIL and MIL in a positive/healthy light. The most important

issue in the research of the interpersonal relationship between the two women (MIL and

DIL) is that most of the few studies investigating this phenomenon did so through a

qualitative lens including focus groups, interviews, narratives, case studies, etc with small

sample sizes (e.g. Fernandez, 1997; Fischer, 1983; Raval, 2009). And, instruments that

have been used in quantitative research among majority populations, e.g. a semantic

differential to measure relational satisfaction, would need modification or would not be

applicable to the South Asian American MIL/DIL relationship (Rittenour & Soliz, 2009).

In one of the few studies that look at in-law relationships, Rittenour and Soliz

(2009) assessed relational factors in positive and negative MIL and DIL relationships.

They modified an 8-item semantic differential measure of marital relationship over the

first year (Huston, McHale, & Crouter, 1986) to measure relational satisfaction of DIL

with the MIL. They further supplemented their modified instrument with open ended

question asking participants to explain likings and dislikings in their relationship with

their MIL, regardless of the quality of relationship. Semantic differential rating scales are

widely used to measure attitudes in which a participant is allowed to choose between two

opposite adjectives describing the phenomenon of study, often utilizing likert scales (e.g.

helpful/discouraging, good/bad) (Osgood, Suci, & Tannenbaum, 1957). The use of

modified semantic differential rating scales seems appropriate for the above mentioned

researchers as they looked at positive as well as negative factors associated with

relational satisfaction in a general MIL and DIL relationship. The context of a research

study may change the type of instrument used to measure the constructs of interest.

Sociocultural Characteristics of South Asian and South Asian Americans

In this section, I provide an overview of South Asian American cultural

characteristics that most South Asians share in the form of their cultural worldview. I

further discuss the importance of cultural values in help-seeking and relationship

dynamics assuming that one's knowledge about his/her culture is related to his/her

ethnicity. The individual's adherence to the South Asian cultural worldview plays a key

role in their help-seeking and relationship development.

South Asian Cultural Worldview. South Asian Americans have a different set of values than their Western peers. Their cultural worldview is influenced by traditional values and beliefs towards family, marriage, sex/gender roles, the individual's identity, and religion. According to Ibrahim, Ohnishi, and Sandhu, (1997), the mediators of a South Asian Americans' cultural identity and worldview include generation, educational level, social class, identification with own ethnicity and culture, and experiences with racism, sexism, and exclusion. Worldview is part of one's personal and cultural identity and the beliefs' and values associated with a worldview help individuals create meaningful relationships. Therefore, it is important to understand the following components of the worldview (Ibrahim et al., 1997) which may be consistent for all South Asian Americans. These are derived from their socio-historical and cultural perspective Important components of the South Asian American worldview are delineated by Ibrahim, et al. (1997). They are (a) *self-respect, dignity, and self-control;* (b*) respect for family/filial piety, (c) respect for age, (d) awareness and respect for community, (e) fatalism,* and (f) *humility* (Ibrahim et al., 1997, "Cultural Identity and Worldview," para 2).

Self-respect, dignity, and self-control constructs are part of the early childhood development and an adult is expected to achieve these and incorporate into his or her daily life. The individuality of the person is constrained within the family structure and context among South Asian Americans. Respect for the family/filial piety assumes it is the right of parents to be honored by their children at all times. Respect for age is reflected in the notion that the older person earns respect from all younger ones and is seen as the person to go to for familial advice regarding any individual or interpersonal

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conflict. Awareness and respect for community equates to extended family and reinforces group orientation. Fatalism is a common belief that a person is predetermined to run into challenges in life and is expected to handle them effectively. Humility is expressed by a belief that there is a direct relationship between one's accomplishments and humility, as the more achievements one has, the more humble he or she is expected to be and is discouraged from seeking attention and flaunting personal success (Ibrahim et al., 1997, "Cultural Identity and Worldview," para 2)

Patriarchy. Patriarchy refers to the practice of male dominated beliefs and values usually against female interests (e.g. in extreme cases, violence against women). Although it is a global phenomenon, among South Asian Americans patriarchy is a central characteristic (Ayyub, 2000) in which the males in the community/family make primary decisions for their females. For example, fathers usually make educational and marriage related decisions for their daughters. Another patriarchal practice is for the daughter to live in the house of her father and then go to live with her husband upon marriage as women are still considered *property* of their male counterparts and a burden in South Asian society. Often religious scholars reinforce patriarchal beliefs by quoting (as they apply their own interpretations) text from sacred Hindu and Islamic texts (*Gita* and *Quran)* of men's overall authority and superiority over women.

Strict gender roles. In South Asian American society men and women have distinct roles with female roles being more strict and limiting. For example, the woman is not supposed to have sex outside of marriage and the males in the family guard her chastity and sexuality. Since dating and having an intimate relationship before marriage is frowned upon or prohibited, sexual activity is confined to one's marital life in which

the responsibility for keeping the husband fully satisfied falls into the lap of his wife. Some of the descriptors that have been used to describe the ideal South Asian wife include financially dependent, submissive, polite, beautiful, domestic, obedient, virgin at the time of marriage, coy, and altruistic. Society often keeps the woman from becoming financially independent through unequal opportunities of work and limiting her from going outside without her husband, brother, or father. This is especially so in remote areas of South Asia although recently the trend is changing as more women enter the workforce.

Interestingly, the role rules are stricter for young women as older women tend to have earned respect due to their age and earned status in their family through time and experience. One way for a woman to regain respect is to move higher into the family hierarchy influenced by patriarchal values and norms. Gender roles are less strict and usually more liberating towards males in South Asian society as he is considered as the bread winner, protector, and the powerful one to control the women. The women are traditionally taught to obey all the males in her family in terms of authority, including her father in childhood, husband during marriage, and her son if she is widowed or divorced implying that the woman is the property of these men in his life and has no choice but to obey them in a polite and submissive manner (Tang, Wong, & Cheung, 2002 as cited by Midlarsky et al., 2006).

Family before self. For a South Asian person, man or woman, the family, nuclear as well as extended, plays an important role throughout life. As pointed out by Preisser (1999), an Asian woman's personal identity occurs in relation to her family identity. Within this context, such a person's behavior is often considered as a 'reflection' of his or

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her family (Midlarsky et al. 2006) and can create internal conflict among the personal and familial identity of the person. According to Dasgupta (2000, as cited by Midlarsky et al., 2006) the woman is usually informed of the consequences of sharing the family's information with a person outside of the family and this inhibits greatly the ability to seek professional help for a South Asian victim of domestic violence. Strict boundaries exist delineating the types of information (private or public) and the consequences of not sustaining those boundaries can push the woman to stay silent about any personal issues and put her family's well-being over her own. Also, it is the family who has to meet the demands of its members before any outsider can help as South Asian Americans are protective of their family issues and do not want to discuss them with people outside of family, including professionals when some help is needed (Ayyub, 2000).

Traditional structure of family. In South Asian countries, a common practice within marriage is for the woman to live with her in-laws under the same roof, also called a "joint" family system. Most South Asian brides when married are supposed to live with their husband's family within the "extended" family system which includes the father-in-law, MIL, sisters-in law, and brother-in law. Usually the eldest male member in the family (e.g. father, father-in-law or grandfather) is on top of the family 'hierarchy' that exists within South Asian Americans, followed by other older males (sons), and older females (e.g. mother, MIL, grandmother); young incoming females (daughters, DIL, and/or sisters-in-law) are at the lowest position in terms of power or decision-making. This system may put her at risk of violence not just from her husband but also from her in-laws as she is considered to be "answerable" to each of them (Midlarsky et al.2006).

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Institution of marriage. A marriage within South Asian culture holds different

meaning for the woman and family than in western cultures where the marriage occurs

between two adult individuals. The marriage occurs by the primary, and in some cases

only, consent of the parental figures in the family of the two adults. Thus, it symbolizes

an alliance between not just two individuals but their families at large (Liao, 2006).

Marriage is considered as one of the most important institutions in a South Asian

American's life. Many times parents start saving money and planning for a girl's

wedding soon after she is born. Arranged marriages are still the norm among South

Asian Americans and elders in the family are responsible for choosing the bride or

bridegroom for the individual. The ideal male mate is required to have high education,

social class, and prestige within the community/society while the ideal female mate is

required to be beautiful, coy, virgin, and self-sacrificing.

A family's honor primarily depends on the woman and her virginity at the time of

marriage. A woman is supposed to fulfill her roles of daughter, sister, wife, and mother

in marriage. It is ironic that the women in this culture, just like in majority cultures, are

seen as valuable objects and those that need protection; and, the person responsible to

provide them safety may potentially abuse them in marital violence (Ayyub, 2000).

Especially in marriage women are defined primarily by their ability to bear children, their

passivity in the system (Abraham, 2000), as perfect homemaker, in charge of the moral

development of their children (Abraham, 1998), and secondary social class citizen as

compared to their husband (Dasgupta & Warrier, 1996). Divorce is frowned upon and

the woman is considered to bear the burden of a conflict ridden marriage to protect her

biological parents' image in the society. Thus, the responsibility of upkeeping the

marriage is not just the individual's but the entire family's. The pressure of this can

manifest itself as domestic violence during which not just the spouse but his in-laws may

perpetuate abuse towards the DIL (Abraham, 1998).

Importance of Cultural Values Conflict

It is important to 'know' and/or understand the characteristics of a person's

culture in order to explore and understand his or her cultural values which are usually

shaped by long held culture specific worldviews, beliefs and practices (Ibrahim et al,

1997). Interestingly, there was little to no emphasis in research on the role of internal

values of a person as they relate to the dominant culture and not much attention has been

given to such phenomenon in acculturation research (Inman et al. 2001) until later.

Inman (2006) quantitatively studied the nature of identities and cultural value conflicts

among South Asian women and found that religiosity significantly influenced the

women's ethnic cultural values. Also, the ethnic and racial identity of first generation

South Asian women predicted their cultural conflict in close relations (Inman, 2006).

Some researchers have used ethnicity, ethnic identity, and acculturation to address the

cultural values of minority populations but these are relatively challenging constructs to

understand, research, and communicate because there is no widely accepted definition of

ethnic identity and it differs based on the researchers' underlying theory (Trimble, 2007).

For example, according to Yoon (2011), ethnic identity can be understood as part of

acculturation process which is defined by Kim and Abreu (2001) as an ethnic minority

person's cultural socialization into the host culture while retaining the values and beliefs

of one's original culture.

The cultural values or standards contribute to one's sense of cultural identity or ethnic identity that includes the person's nationality, culture, language, beliefs, and standards. Values refer to the person's internal experience of acculturation and behaviors are overt or external experiences within the new culture (Ruzek, Nguyen, & Herzog, 2011). An individual's behavior may change more rapidly in response to the new culture as opposed to his/her culture-specific values (Kim et al., 1999, Szapocznik & Kurtines 1980 as cited by Inman, Constantine, Ladany, & Morano, 2001). An individual may be overtly 'American' but internally may hold on to his/her ethnic culture's beliefs and conflicting values not usually addressed by the behavioral and cultural acculturation measures (Inman et al., 2001).

South Asian American women may experience conflict in their amount of adherence to their ethnic versus majority culture's values and practices that may result from the disagreement between their internal cultural beliefs or values and the outward values and behaviors associated with the majority culture resulting in 'Cultural- Value conflict' (Inman et al. 2001). Cultural Conflict refers to, "experience of negative affect (e.g. guilt, anxiety) and cognitive contradictions that results from contending simultaneously with the values and behavioral expectations that are internalized from the culture of origin (South Asian culture) and the values and behavioral expectations that are imposed on the person from the new culture (White American culture)" (Inman, Constantine, & Ladany, 1999, as cited by Inman et al. 2001, p. 18). Recently, researchers examined and reported the influence of quality of family relationships and avoidant coping on the cultural values conflict among Asian Indians (N=110) indicating women who reported good quality relationships perceive lower internal sex-role cultural conflicts

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(Kaduvettoor-Davidson, & Inman, 2012); a limitation of this study was the small sample size.

Cultural values and help-seeking. There is a growing need to understand the cultural factors associated with help-seeking as several researchers have established the underutilization of psychological services among ethnic minority population (Abe-Kim et al., 2007, Chen et al., 2003; as cited by Soorika et al., 2011; Brant-Davis & Wong, 2013). Fischer and Turner, (1970, p.79) define help-seeking as: "one's tendency to seek or resist aid in the time of a personal/emotional crisis or after a prolonged psychological discomfort." Help-seeking can be affected by a person's cultural and contextual factors (Chu, Hsieh, & Tokars, 2011; Kim & Omizo, 2003; Shah, 2010) as individuals usually make decisions to seek or not seek help based on their personal beliefs, values as well as previous experiences with help-seeking. In general Asian Americans tend to work out their problems on their own and are less likely than Latinos to seek help for suicide attempts (Chu et al., 2011). In her dissertation (N=100 Asian Indians), Shah (2010) found that Indian-born Americans' help-seeking attitudes were significantly related to their adherence to Asian values assessed by Asian Values Scale (AVS, Kim, Atkinson,& Yang, 1999) and Attitude Toward Seeking Professional Psychological Help Scale (ATSPPH, Fischer & Farina, 1995). Also, participants who reported high adherence to Asian values had negative attitudes towards help-seeking (Shah, 2010).

In contrast, Sheikh and Furham (2000), did not find significant differences in help-seeking attitudes towards professional help for personal distress among British Asians, Westerners, and Pakistanis' (N= 287; with 73 Pakistanis living in UK and N= 77 in Pakistan). Interestingly, they did find the beliefs related to the perceived cause of

mental health issues significantly predicted British Asians' and Pakistanis' attitudes toward professional help-seeking (Sheikh & Furham, 2000). It may be claimed that a person with high adherence to his or her cultural worldview/values may be more or less likely to access help depending on other factors like the kind of problem, age, level of ethnic identity, etc. It could also be that a DIL's adherence to cultural values/beliefs may be related to her perceived quality of relationship with her MIL in South Asian American context.

Soorika et al. (2011) examined the relationship between attitudes towards psychological help-seeking among South Asian (41.9% Indian, 20.9% Pakistani, and 6.8% Bangladeshi, and 30.4% other South Asians) students in Britain (N=148) and cultural mistrust, ethnic identity, and adherence to Asian values. They found that the students' help-seeking attitudes were significantly affected by their adherence to traditional Asian values measured by the Asian Values Scale (Kim, Atkinson, and Yang, 1999). In general, Asians hold superstitious beliefs related to the onset of illnesses including not just biological but also spiritual causes which may affect their help-seeking in a western culture (Soorika at al., 2011). Similarly, it may be harder for the woman/DIL to seek help for any concern regardless of the nature of relationship with her MIL if she closely identifies with and adheres to her cultural worldview which includes strong values of respect for elders, family, etc. It has been shown in research that underserved populations like South Asian Americans, usually place a higher value on religious or spiritual healing and access the support of their clergy or religious leader in times of distress (including intimate partner violence and trauma) (Bryant-Davis & Wong, 2013).

Key Concepts in Domestic Violence

Definition of domestic violence. Domestic violence or intimate partner violence (IPV) is one of the several forms of abuse inflicted on women primarily by their male partners. IPV includes physical violence, sexual violence, threats of physical or sexual violence and psychological/emotional violence (Saltzman et al., 2002). Physical violence includes any acts of the perpetrator toward the victim that can induce physical harm (e.g. kicking, hitting, slapping, pulling hair, pushing, shoving, burning, etc.). Sexual violence may include any forceful sexual contact (attempted or completed) with the victim. Psychological or emotional violence refers to the perpetrators' threats of acts that may induce fear in the victim of any sort (Saltzman et al., 2002).

Domestic violence has been conceptualized by the majority of scholars as male violence against women which views women as victims or survivors of abuse (Hollenshead et al., 2006). According to Walker (1979), it has been established that being a woman is a significant risk factor for a person to become a victim of domestic violence. On the other hand, there have been studies (Hollenshead et al., 2006) where women have victimized women during domestic conflict. So, women's role as agents of violence in a marital relationship has not been thoroughly explored within a cultural context. Both definitions above conceptualize violence from one partner to the other but the perpetrator of violence can include any other member/s of the family.

Prevalence of domestic violence. Domestic violence is a serious crime in US and is prevalent across social class, caste, race, nationality, age, gender, and several other perimeters. In 2005, 14% of US households suffered from one or more violent victimizations and about one in 320 homes were affected by domestic violence (Klaus,

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2007). According to the CDC, 5.3 million women, 18 and older, suffer from intimate

partner violence (CDC, 2003). Based up on a domestic violence study conducted by

WHO (World Health Organization) across multiple countries, 13%-61% of women who

ever had a partner suffered physical violence at the hands of that intimate partner and

6%-59% experienced sexual violence (Garcia-Moreno, Jensen, Hellsberg, Heise, &

Watts, 2005).

Most research in domestic violence has been focused on Caucasian women;

minorities had been invisible in research until a few years ago as it was established that

the impact of domestic violence on minorities is just as devastating as it is for Caucasian

women (Gill, 2004). However, there are cultural differences that should not be discarded

as they relate to each minority's background. On the contrary, there are similarities in

some minority cultures. For example, South Asian, African American, and Hispanic

community share sense of familism, collectivism, and South Asians in addition, share

with Asian Americans second class citizenship of women, cooperation as opposed to self-

centeredness, 'loss of face' (Lim, 1997; Midlarsky et al., 2006; Yoshioko et al., 2003).

According to the Asian Pacific Islander Institute on Domestic Violence

(http://www.apiidv.org/organizing/index.php), Asian women have the highest prevalence

rate of reported physical and/or sexual domestic violence (41-61%) followed by

American Alaskan Indians (30%), African Americans (26.3%), Caucasian (21.3%),

Hispanics (21.2%), and last but not least Asian Pacific Islanders (12.8%).

Prevalence of domestic violence in South Asian countries. One out of every four

women in the South Asian community is a victim of domestic violence perpetrated by her

husband while keeping in mind the under-reporting and socio-cultural reluctance to

identify the perpetrator (Fernandez, 1997; Ayyub, 1998) and one in every two women in South Asian have experienced violence against them (Mehta, 2004). Specifically, in South Asia, 80% of Pakistani women suffer domestic violence, 50% of Indian women had at least one abusive experience at home with 15,000 women killed in dowry related issues, and 47% of Bangladeshi women reported physical violence in their lifetime (Oxfam, 2004). Domestic violence may not be reported as including psychological, financial, emotional, and sexual forms of violence thus undermining the actual prevalence rate of domestic violence in most of South Asian countries.

For example, according to a quantitative study (N=500) conducted at tertiary-care hospitals in Pakistan, 21% of the women reported experiencing sexual violence in their marital life (Kapadia, Saleem, & Karim, 2010). Based on the results, women who had more than five children, unwanted pregnancies, or reported differences with in-laws were more likely to be abused and social support served as a protective factor against sexual abuse by intimate partner. This study also speaks to the cultural factors associated with sexual violence –one of the most silent domestic violence experiences of South Asian women.

Prevalence among South Asian Americans. In the South Asian American community abuse is more complex as the crime may involve both the husband and his family (Fernandez, 1997). As indicated above, many advocates have heard from the women detailed accounts of abuse perpetrated by their in-laws (Kapadia et al., 2010); many times the husband is a passive participant in the violent situation (Dasgupta, 2000). South Asian American non-profit organizations and researchers (Raj & Silverman, 2002) in the US have referred to domestic violence as being the 'most serious problem facing

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the female community" (Dasgupta, 2000). The issue of domestic violence among South Asian Americans is a growing concern for the community and professionals. However, there is a lack of studies that examine the attitudes and beliefs of the South Asian American perpetrators and victims in domestic violence suggesting the need for research in this area.

Most recent research has focused on explaining the prevalence and associations between domestic violence and socio-demographic factors (Rabbani, Qureshi, & Rizvi, 2008). In a survey (N= 160) conducted by Anita Raj (as cited by Dasgupta (2000) in the Boston area, 35% of the women (ages 18-62) reported experiencing physical violence and 19% reported history of sexual violence at the hands of current male perpetrators. According to Mahapatra (2008), in her sample of 215 South Asian participants residing in US, 82(38%) women reported some sort of domestic violence perpetrated by their intimate partner in last year. The nature of abuse suffered by the participants included: physical abuse (27%), psychological abuse (94%), sexual abuse (33%), and injury (11%). The participants in the sample represented 33 US states and most of them were born in South Asia (82%) and were married (78%).

Cultural Factors that may Increase the Occurrence and Risk of Domestic Violence

Researchers have found cultural factors (e.g. prescribed gender and marital roles) that may increase the occurrence and risk (Liao, 2006; Midlarsky et al., 2006) of wife battering or domestic violence among Chinese and South Asian immigrant communities in the US. The factors include strict and distinct gender roles for men and women, placing one's family over self, the model minority myth, conditions of marriage, structure of family, lack of financial independency, stigma associated with divorce, second

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generation issues, invalidation of the experience of abuse, allure of improving

immigration status, lack of supportive networks, and conflicting relationship with the

legal system (Midlarsky, et al., 2006). In contrast, Naeem, Irfan, Zaidi, Kingdon, and

Ayub, (2008) found in a Pakistani sample that having an education, and living in

extended families were protective against violence due to the moral or legal sanctions

provided by the families.

Observing through a socio-cultural lens, one may partly attribute domestic

violence to unique cultural practices or society's rules and values. Although, each culture

is distinct in its rules and practices, it is important to consider and explore to what extent

specific intrinsic cultural factors may contribute to or create conditions in which domestic

violence may be more likely to occur. It is also important to note that no culture is safe

from domestic violence. As Liao (2006) notes, domestic violence is not caused by

specific attributes of a culture, but it meditates and represents how the domestic violence

appears in the family in cultural context. It is important to make a clear distinction

between a culture's religion and cultural norms. There is a tendency to explain cultural

norms as part of religion (e.g., practice of dowry- giving materials of high monetary

value to the bride in order to marry her bridegroom in South Asia), with many mistaking

the cultural practice of dowry in religious context by attributing it to an Islamic condition

versus a cultural one.

Help-Seeking

There is no agreed upon definition of help-seeking in the research literature.

General help-seeking is defined using a modified version of Fischer and Turner's (1970)

definition as "one's tendency to seek or resist aid in the time of a personal/emotional

crisis or after a prolonged psychological discomfort" (e.g. domestic violence) (p.79).

Another more comprehensive definition was offered by Rickwood, Deane, Wilson, and

Ciarrochi (2005) which explains help-seeking as the "behavior of actively seeking help

from other people, it is about communicating with other people to obtain help in terms of

understanding, advice, information, treatment, and general support in response to a

problem or distressing experience" (p.4). Help-seeking can differ based on the quality or

characteristics of the sources, whether it is formal or informal. Formal help-seeking is

when the person seeks help from a professional in designated field, e.g., mental health

providers for stress management, or domestic violence, or clergy or teachers, people who

have been formerly trained to do the task at hand. Informal help-seeking usually refers to

seeking assistance from one's social network of friends or family (Rickwood, et al.,

2005).

 Help-seeking among South Asian Americans. A search on the PsychInfo

database resulted in 32 hits with the key words of help-seeking behavior and South

Asians. The first reference was dated 2000, indicating the novelty of this topic in

research and one in need of more research. Help-seeking may vary depending upon why

someone is seeking help. I thus discuss help-seeking among South Asian Americans

separately for personal or emotional issues and for domestic violence.

 Personal/emotional issues. High rates of depression and suicide have been

reported for married and young South Asians which indicates that their psychological

functioning is a grave concern (Burr, 2002), yet help-seeking among South Asians

remains an 'under-researched phenomenon not just in United States (Loya,Reddy, &

Hinshaw, 2010) but also in Britain (Soorika et al. 2011). According to Hall and Yee

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(2012), the mental health needs of Asian Americans- a group reaching 15.5 million (US Bureau of Census, May 2010) including South Asian Americans, have been neglected in public policy as well. Significant amount of Asian Americans have experiences of perceived discrimination and acculturative stress which can and have led to psychopathology (Hall & Yee, 2012). South Asian Americans also have mental health issues or personal/emotional issues including depression, anxiety, schizophrenia, somatization, eating disorders (Holmes, 2006) and suicidal ideation and attempts (Chu et al., 2011). In a recent study, Chu, et al., (2011) looked at help-seeking patterns in Asian Americans (N= 2554 with 467 other Asians excluding Chinese, Vietnamese, Filipinos) with suicidal ideation or attempts; 35.7% of Asian Americans with suicide attempts reported no previous attempts at seeking help. The other category of Asian Americans may include South Asians as they fall under the umbrella category of Asian Americans and are included as 'other' in most studies (e.g., Gupta, Szymanski, & Leong, 2011;Ruzek, Nguyen, &Herzog, 2011; Yoshioko & Dang, 2000). As compared to Latinos in the study, Asian American participants with suicidal attempts reported low perceived need of seeking help. Important to notice is that among the Asian Americans who sought help for their suicidal ideation and attempts, they accessed non-professional help from online support groups and help lines (Chu, et al., 2011). Usually Asian Americans including South Asians, with complaints of distress, seldom seek help professionally as compared to other groups (Hall & Yee, 2012).

In her study, Holmes (2006) explored the help-seeking experiences of Asian Indian and Pakistani people to determine why they do not seek help from professionals, for what problems they may seek help, to whom do they turn for help regarding a

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personal problem or a mental health problem and the factors that influence or predict

their help-seeking. She found that the majority of presenting concerns were conflicts

with others and experiencing physical symptoms of anxiety and depression. The

Pakistani and Indian people reported accessing their family members and friends for help

in the past and expressed a desire to do the same in the future as compared to outside

professional help. During the preliminary analyses, Holmes (2006) found that people

who adhered less to Indian-Pakistani cultural values, perceived less family support, and

reported accepting views of mental health counseling sought more help from a

professional mental health professional. It seems that loss of respect of family in the

community was not a deciding factor in seeking or not seeking help for their troubles.

Also, among the predictors of help-seeking among her sample were lack of social support

from family and less adherence to Indian-Pakistani cultural values (Holmes, 2006).

Help-seeking among ethnic minorities has its 'unique' qualities, as adherence to

specific Asian cultural values and beliefs and one's ethnic identity has been shown to

negatively affect professional psychological help-seeking attitudes (Kim & Omizo, 2003;

Soorika et al., 2011). Soorika et al. (2011) examined the influence of cultural factors on

psychological help-seeking attitudes among South Asian college students residing in

Britain and found that in general the male students reported negative attitudes while the

women reported positive attitudes towards psychological help-seeking. Also, among the

factors that influenced the attitudes towards psychological help-seeking (measured by

participants' attitudes towards recognition of need, stigma tolerance, interpersonal

openness, and confidence in seeking help through the attitudes towards seeking

professional psychological help scale (ATSPPH) were the participants' ethnic identity,

cultural mistrust, and adherence to Asian values while controlling for sex (Fischer &Turner, 1970; Soorika et al., 2011). For mental health issues, females have been known to seek help more than males in other studies (Yooh, Goh, & Yoon, 2005).

Attitudes towards personal or emotional issues (i.e. mental health) can greatly affect one's help-seeking behaviors as indicated by Rao, Goga, Inscore, Kosi, Khushalani, Rastogi, Subramaniam, and Jayaram (2011). According to the researchers (Rao et al., 2011) highly educated (17 or more years of education), unmarried South Asian American women respondents (N= 267) between the ages of 25 and 40 years indicated a strong inclination to seek help from informal sources like family and friends instead of professional sources. The women were born outside of the US, were living with others and reported high acculturation. It is to be noted that the sample included both males and females, a highly educated group of women who had access to the internet and the instruments used to measure help-seeking and their perceptions about mental health were not psychometrically strong (Rao et al., 2011).

Mahmood (2008), in her quantitative research with Muslim South Asian Americans, found that the women in her sample held more positive views towards psychological help-seeking and leaned towards getting help from a culturally aware and sensitive professionals. One limitation of this study was a very small sample size (N=13) and limited age range (20-35 years), which restricts its generalizability to the South Asian American Muslims at large. When comparing Caucasian students to South Asian students residing in Britain in their psychological help-seeking for mental issues, Loya et al. (2010) found that South Asians had poorer attitudes towards help-seeking and were more unwilling to utilize counseling services. Also, 32% of the difference in the

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participants' differing attitudes was based on South Asian respondents' greater personal

stigma towards people they perceived to be suffering from a form of mental illness.

South Asians are known to be collectivistic in their values and culture and value greater

social connection and social belongingness. This relatedness, family's respect, and

reputation may be at stake if one decides to seek help outside of his/her community. The

fear of 'rejection' and 'ostracism' may be greater than the desire to seek help contributing

to negative attitudes towards help-seeking in general (Loya et al., 2010). It may also be

that South Asians feel comfortable seeking help for other problems (e.g non-college

based) than the specific ones (e.g. alcohol abuse) that need counseling mental health

services (Loya et al. 2010).

On the other hand, Asian Americans usually utilize informal sources of help for

their personal/emotional issues like anxiety and depression including their friends and

family (Loya et al., 2010; Hesketh & Ding, 2005, as cited in Mohan, 2011). In a study by

Tummala-Nara, Algeria, and Chen (2012), family support, among South Asians, was

found to moderate the positive relationship between perceived discrimination and

depression; indicating the importance and utilization of in-formal sources of help.

Yoshioko et al.(2003), found the majority of all women, including Hispanic, South Asian,

and African American, sought assistance from a member of their kin. South Asians are

more likely to seek help from their friends or family in contrast to professional help due

to the collectivistic nature of their culture and strong emphasis on keeping issues hidden

within the family. Usually, Asian Indians or South Asians overall experience feelings of

shame, increased stigma and rejection in the community related to mental health issues

which limit their disclosure or help-seeking to people in their family or friends network

(Mohan, 2011). Also, Asian Indians reported seeking help from intimate partners, mental health providers, and general physicians as their top choices (Mohan, 2011). It is unclear in those studies what the specific issues were for which the participants sought and resisted help-seeking. It is to be noted that Asian Indians and Pakistanis are less likely to recognize mental health issues and use relative help-seeking as compared to physical ailments due to the increased stigma related to mental health or being referred to as crazy or insane (Mohan, 2011). There may also be overlap between what constitutes a spiritual problem versus a psychological problem as many people from Pakistan and India (majority of South Asian population) seek religious figures' help before they turn to other professionals (Mohan, 2011). Also, underserved populations like South Asian Americans, usually place a higher value on religious or spiritual healing and access the support of their clergy or religious leader in times of distress (including intimate partner violence and trauma) (Bryant-Davis & Wong, 2013).

   Help-seeking for domestic violence. Similar to help-seeking for mental health (personal/emotional) issues, South Asians utilize both informal and formal help-seeking for issues related to domestic violence (Abraham, 2000). Research is also limited in exploring the help-seeking behaviors of ethnic minorities (especially South Asian Americans). Consistent with the help-seeking attitudes and behaviors related to mental health, South Asians utilize more informal sources (family, friends, community members) of help for domestic violence as compared to seeking help from formal resources like social services, or shelters (Mahapatra, 2008). Those who seek help from outside networks (e.g., police, legal system, and shelters do so in extreme situations, possibly for mere survival (Mahapatra, 2008). One relevant issue is that if the abused

woman does not feel comfortable with the person she is seeking help from in terms of their lack of understanding about cultural characteristics, she is less likely to seek help (Sorenson, 1996, as cited in Liao, 2006).

Yoshioko and Dang (2000, as cited in Mahapatra, 2008) published a family violence report focusing on Cambodian, Korean, South Asian, Chinese, and Vietnamese populations in Boston, Massachusetts. They found that South Asian Americans (5%) believed that a victim of domestic violence should keep to herself about the abuse along as did others including Korean (29%), Cambodian (22%), Chinese (18%), and Vietnamese Americans (9%). Similarly, South Asian Americans (82%) believed that one should tell a friend about domestic violence and seek help as compared to Cambodian (44%), Chinese (37%), Vietnamese (29%), and Korean Americans (27%). Calling the police for domestic violence was also one of the options that 74% of South Asian women agreed with in this survey.

In Mahapatra's (2008) quantitative research (N=215) on help-seeking patterns of South Asian victims of domestic violence, 57 out of 82 answered the question on help-seeking with 61% (35 women) reporting that they sought some form of help-seeking last year: 20 among them utilized informal sources of help, one accessed formal help, and 14 utilized both informal and formal sources of help-seeking. Thus, 60% of the women accessed informal sources of help including friends (88%), family members and spouse's immediate family (47%), extended family members (35%), and co-workers (32%) (Mahapatra, 2008; Mahapatra & Dinitto, 2013). It is important to note that in her study, participants used multiple sources of help (at least 5) for domestic violence purposes. Women's (N=15) formal help-seeking sources included doctor/nurse (60%), lawyer

(40%), police (33%), counselor (73%), social worker (33%), domestic violence shelter (27%), and South Asian women's organization (20%). These help-seeking patterns reflect only those women who reported at least one item indicating abuse on the Revised Conflict Tactics Scale (Straus, Hamby, Boney-McCoy, & Sugarman, 1996) under the following most to least occurring circumstances: 'last option resort (31%), medical reasons (23%), concern for children (23%), recommendation of a friend/relative (19%), increased abuse (19%), learning about legal options/counseling (15%), dowry harassment (11%), and others (35%) (Mahaptra, 2008; p.106).

One of the main factors to disclosure, which is a form of help-seeking, concerns the perpetrator (Gill, 2004) as women see the abusing person as more powerful and feel that nobody can help her escape this situation. If there is more than one perpetrator, including the entire extended family, then the woman/DIL's belief in help-seeking may disappear. If there was even a single person to whom she felt she could disclose her situation, it may promote her further help seeking. Usually, there is more risk of abuse in settings where the role of woman is in transition from traditional to non-traditional which questions her status in family and community (Naeem et al., 2008).

South Asian women disclosed about abuse more to their father, brother, and siblings of the abuser. Hispanic women reported that a member of their abuser's family was a critical source of mental support (Yoshioko et al., 2003). This highlights the importance of kin members in encouraging or discouraging the disclosure of abuse and help- seeking among domestic violence survivor minorities. This significance is even more crucial for South Asian immigrants who leave their family members and move to a

different country with the in-laws, and do not have that level of support available to them which leads to isolation-another important risk factor of abuse.

Additionally, culture, context, and law serve as barriers to South Asian American's help seeking. Specifically, family-and community-based help seeking is not productive, rather the dominant message for the woman is to suffer silently, be self-sacrificing, and ignore the abuse to put her family first (Raj & Silverman, 2002). In terms of context, lack of culturally tailored services, including language-specific services also serve as help-seeking barriers in this population, especially for immigrants or people who have recently emigrated from their host countries.

Barriers to Help-seeking

Along with the patterns of help-seeking among South Asian American victims of domestic violence it is important to discuss any other barriers that may prevent them from engaging in informal as well as formal help-seeking. These barriers (in their absence) could also possibly be viewed as motivators to seeking help for personal, emotional and specific issues like domestic violence. Some of these may also be relevant to non-victims of domestic violence or for other personal/emotional issues. These barriers can be divided into internal and external barriers (Abraham, 2000). Internal and external barriers may include: parents-in-law, friends, religion, community, and police, courts, healthcare-providers (Abraham, 2000). Other barriers can include the *model-minority myth* (Gupta et al. 2011, Mahapatra, 2008), limited language skills, lack of social support, fear of deportation-especially for new immigrants, economic, other factors related to education and employment (Mahapatra, 2008) and the prescribed role of culture discussed previously.

Internal barriers. For South Asian Americans living in U S, a variety of family structures exist in terms of who may live or not live with the couple including their siblings and parents-in-law. The couple (especially the younger woman or DIL) may be more susceptible to 'oppression or contestation' as well as on a positive note, more support if the family structure includes the couple's parents-in-law (Abraham, 2000). Parents-in-law, especially the MIL to the DIL, can be referred to as direct or indirect 'partners in domestic violence'; they can exploit the DIL, which can serve as a barrier to the victim for seeking support/help (Abraham, 2000). One of the ways in which one or both of the parents-in-law may exploit the DIL is by limiting or denying access to the DIL's biological parents and siblings (Abraham, 2000).

To the contrary, if allowed access, the DIL may go to her parents or siblings if they are within a close geographic region and not overseas as a support; they can 'act as buffers' to occurring violence and play the role of mediators (Abraham, 2000). They may also discourage the abused woman from seeking help (especially outside of family) (Dasgupta, 2000) in order to save their reputation in the community and to sustain 'family honor' (Ayyub, 2000). For them, the presence of abuse in the family may indicate that the entire family's values, beliefs, and morals are in jeopardy, especially indicating that the DIL has failed in her marital role as if she called for abuse from her husband.

In times of the DIL's suffering due to personal or domestic violence issues parents-in-law may also be limited in their support, especially if they are emotionally and financially dependent on their son. They may want to help the distressed young woman but may not be willing to put their own security on hold for their DIL's well-being and

safety (Abraham, 2000). Women who report healthy relationship with their MIL may have a better chance of escaping the effects of violence provided they are not neurotically dependent on their sons for emotional as well as financial support which may limit their offering of help. The literature is void of any research on positive interpersonal relationships that may exist between a MIL and DIL but personal accounts of the researcher with a few women and online blogs have detailed healthy relationships as well as ways to 'get along' with each other. For example, in an online article on an Indian website (India Parenting, 2012), a woman has the following to say about her relationship with her MIL:

> "I am really lucky in this world to have a understanding and good MIL. But we never stayed together due to working conditions…..but she is really affectionate towards me, she never interferes between me and my husband and is very cool…." (para 18)

The domestic violence victim's friends in the community, as well as her family, can also serve as barriers or supports to her for personal as well as domestic violence concerns. A friend's help can be perceived as positive or negative which may dictate further help-seeking. Many times friends of the victim encourage her to bear the abuse for her parents' or family's sake and not take any action or do something herself to change the dynamics of abuse (which she cannot because she is not the instigator of abuse, the husband or male is in most situations). Women in Abraham's (2000) study indicated that they were scared that their close-minded friends may attribute the violence or abuse to them instead of the perpetrator and did not feel comfortable asking them for

help. On the contrary, an open-minded friend who has the ability to empathize with the victim and understand her position can serve as a support to her.

South Asian Americans in general have a strong sense of community and prefer identifying with their collective identities as compared to personal identities. Perceived stigma related to mental health as well as domestic violence greatly inhibits help-seeking and fosters further suffering. Elders in the family and community are often the ones people go to for any kind of help (Mahapatra, 2008). The overall status of a woman is collectively maintained by the community at large as 'caretakers' and 'representatives' of typical South Asian women (Abraham, 2000). Reducing stigma related to sickness and abuse in the society can encourage more women to seek help in time and quality.

Most South Asian Americans identify with a variety of faiths including Hinduism, Islam, and Buddhism as the three biggest practicing religions among them (Ayyub, 2000). Religion is at the center for most South Asian Americans and plays an important role in their lives, especially in the development and maintenance of their collective identity (Abraham, 2000). Religious scholars or leaders usually discourage the women in the family from seeking help (e.g. for marital problems) as they reinforce the gender roles, family roles, and patriarchy in the society. Religion has the power to unite people as well as divide them into groups with opposite, many times oppressive values. In the case of domestic violence women are encouraged to be silent (Ayyub, 2000) and endure the pain for the betterment of the family and promote the value of *family before self*. Often, the elders in the family reinforce their known religion onto the young ones in family, especially the incoming new members (such as the DIL).

External barriers. Police, courts, and healthcare providers can serve as barriers to help-seeking for women suffering with domestic violence in the South Asian American community as negative attitudes and perceptions against ethnic minorities in general can hinder potential growth and help-seeking in a community (Abraham, 2000). The professionals may not be trained to address the unique needs of the ethnic minority thus making the insensitivity and inadequacy of the nurses or doctors and treatment more than a mere chance for the individuals needing appropriate assistance. This can be compounded by the lack of English speaking skills, access to interpreters and social support as they put the women at further risk of not being able to disclose as she may wish (Abraham, 2000). Other external barriers can include once again the 'model-minority myth' (Mahapatra, 2008; Gupta et al., 2011), fear of deportation-especially for new immigrants, economic, and other factors related to education and employment (Mahapatra, 2008). Financial dependency of the woman (DIL) may prevent her from getting the services she may need. In contrast, her economic independence can help her reduce violence and increase help-seeking for emotional as well as domestic violence concerns.

Model-minority myth. One of the very significant barriers towards help-seeking among Asian Americans (including South Asian Americans) at large is the presence of a common perception in the U.S. mainstream about Asian Americans being the "modern day American success story" based on the positive stereotypes of this population (Gupta, Szymanski & Leong, 2011). For example, positive stereotypes include the perceptions that South Asian Americans do not suffer psychologically and lack social problems (Mahapatra, 2008). In a sample of Asian Americans (N= 291) which included Indian

(31%), Pakistani (3%), and other (16% - including South Asians, Malaysian Biracial, Thai, and Burmese), participants who closely identified with the positive stereotypes about Asians reported negative attitudes towards help-seeking and more psychological distress (Gupta et al. 2011). This study sheds light on the positive stereotypes in contrast to the more readily permeated negative stereotypes about South Asian Americans. It also provides evidence that the 'model-minority myth' is in fact a myth as Asian Americans' household income is usually less than their Caucasian counterparts as well as there are more than twice the number of Asian Americans who have a less than 9th grade education compared to Caucasians (Kim &Park, 2008, cited in Gupta et al., 2011).

Conceptualization of Help-seeking

Research on help-seeking among South Asian Americans has been mixed in terms of measuring several aspects of help-seeking including attitudes, behaviors, and intentions. The research between help-seeking attitudes and cultural factors is equivocal with some findings indicating the influence of cultural factors like adherence to cultural values and acculturation (Tata & Leong, 1994) and some reporting no significance at all (Mahapatra, 2008). The importance of culture and context in the help-seeking process can be understood through the help-seeking model. The steps involved in their general help-seeking model involve "problem recognition, decision to seek services, and service selection" (Goldsmith, Jackson, & Hough, 1988 as cited in Walcott & Music, 2012; para 3), which can be impacted by sociocultural and contextual factors.

The studies included in this literature review have used multiple instruments to measure the extent and nature of help-seeking with none that are culturally sensitive to a South Asian population. For example, some of the instruments used have been attitudes

towards seeking professional psychological help scale (Fischer & Farina, 1995; Gupta et al, 2011) measuring intentions to seek help in form of attitudes, and orientations for seeking professional help (Sheikh & Furnham, 2000).

Theoretical Frameworks

Theorists use single or multiple lenses or theories to view and understand the concept of relationships and domestic violence. The following multi-level framework and a multicultural lens seem appropriate to study the complex phenomena of the South Asian American DIL-MIL relationship, help-seeking and domestic violence.

Feminist lens. Feminist theory is one of the most utilized and prominent theory that have been applied vigorously to domestic violence across populations (Lawson, 2003). Feminist theorists emphasize the role of general gender inequality, gender differences power imbalance in society as the root causes of sociocultural problems (like domestic violence) (Fernandez, 1997). Feminists believe and support that domestic violence or intimate partner violence stems primarily from a social system of inequality and patriarchal values promoting an imbalance of power in abusive relationships. According to feminist school of thought, any form of violence against women is supported by the sociocultural context within which the violence occurs. Usually violence in any relationship is perpetrated by the person (mostly male) who is perceived to have the most control and power in relationship and has negative consequences for the victim (mostly female). It recognizes that power and control can be abused by any member of society male or female and could be directed from one female against the other female (for example interpersonal violence between two females in a family) but focuses on the male perpetration of domestic violence (Fernandez, 1997).

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Several forms of power and control are present in abusive relationships, cross-culturally, including: patriarchy, economic imbalance, role-imbalance, and gender inequality. As a result, women or victims experience 'entrapment' as well as 'dependence' in abusive relationships at the hands of their abusive male partners or husbands. In South Asian culture, the female in the family is considered and socialized to be: dependent, modest, shy, self-sacrificing, inferior, and submissive (Abraham, 1999). N ot adhering to the socially prescribed gender roles can lead a woman towards unjustified abuse/violence. This social inequality can be seen as translating into lack of power for the women in family and has the potential for making an 'excuse' for the abuse in any interpersonal relationship. These culturally bound roles not only affect a woman prior to marriage but also after when she goes to live with the husband's family (in wide majority of South Asian cultures). In her in-law's home she is subjugated to and is responsible for sustaining several roles in the family, for example, DIL, wife, mother, sister-in-law, etc. Maintaining these roles in any relationship is a challenge and can be a much greater challenge in an abusive relationship and can affect the woman's (DIL's) other relationships (e.g. with her siblings, MIL, etc) as well as help-seeking for personal as well as domestic violence concerns.

By ignoring the positive aspect of DIL and MIL relationship in research and advocacy there is a danger of supporting the negativity and promoting unhealthy in-law relationships. Both mothers-in-law and daughters-in-law want their relationship to be positive and have the anxiety about the future of their relationship (Tuner, Young, & Black, 2006). Having a positive relationship between a DIL and MIL, irrespective of the cultural background, adds to the personal well-being of both, as the feminist framework

highlights the importance of the continuity of interactions between identity, intimacy and responsibility in this relationship (Turner, Young, & Black, 2006). South Asian cultural characteristics, as previously described in my discussion on gender roles, can be conceptualized using the feminist framework.

Relational-cultural lens. Within the South Asian context, domestic violence as well as the relationships that are sustained and are at risk for violence in family must be understood in the light of the Relational-Cultural perspective, RCT (Comstock, Hammer, Strentzsch, Cannon, Parsons, & Salazar, 2008). This framework seems to fit the collectivistic nature of South Asian culture best as there is more value placed on family and groups versus individual needs and desires (characteristic of Individualistic cultures). RCT emphasizes the centrality of relationships and connections by providing an alternative view of human development focusing on individuation, separation, and autonomy as indicators of increased emotional maturity and mental well-being (Comstock et al., 2008).

RCT provides an alternative and inclusive model of a person's relational development through life (Comstock, et al. 2008). In RCT a person strives physically and emotionally in the context of mutually growth fostering relationships and within domestic violence it's these relationships (relationships between the woman and her husband and the extended family including her in-laws) that are compromised. According to Comstock, et al. (2008), the major tenets of RCT can be best explained by the concept of relational movement which is defined as "the process of moving through connections; through disconnections; and back into new, transformative, and enhanced connections with others." Another claim RCT makes is that all relationships go through

that process and once a person learns that, it is referred to as his/her 'relational awareness.' Miller (1986) has delineated the following 5 specific characteristics of a person's relational connection, which she refers to as "5 good things." So, according to her any person (especially female) in a relational connection may, "feel a greater sense of zest (vitality, energy), more able to act and does act in world, have a more accurate picture of her/himself and the other person, feel a greater sense of worth, and feel more connected to other persons and exhibits a greater motivation to connect with other people beyond those in one's primary relationships. (p.3)"

The above qualities are usually present in empathic and mutually growth fostering relationships, they thus signify the relational connection between people and the opposite of those *5 good things* is what is considered the essence or experience of disconnection (Jordan & Dooley, 2000). A person who is in disconnection may experience less energy, unable to act constructively, confusion about self, and others, low self-esteem which may contribute towards minimizing social inclusion by limiting oneself from connection in relationships (Jordan, & Dooley, 2000). As the relational process in RCT involves transformation of connections and disconnections into enhanced connections, when disconnection is not transformed, it can lead to feelings of isolation. Increased emotional and psychological difficulties can result from a sense of disconnection and its effects can be compounded by imbalance of power, strict gender roles, oppression, and other social injustices like domestic violence for example, especially among marginalized populations like South Asian Americans (Comstock et al., 2008). Also, according to Miller and Stiver (1997), this disconnection can lead to disempowerment of the individual. In most marital relationships the DIL seeks connection at a physical and

emotional level from her husband. In domestic violence these and relationships with

other extended in-law family members usually turns violent.

Appendix B

South Asian American Anti-Domestic Violence Organizations

US – California

- **Aasra**: 1-800-313-ASRA (1-800-313-2772) or (510) 657-1245 or 510-657-1246. Email: Asraa1@aol.com.
- Maitri: (Bay Area) Toll-Free Hotline: 1-888-8-MAITRI, Office- (408) 436-8393, Email: maitri@maitri.org
- Narika: (Bay Area) (800) 215-7308
- South Asian Network (Southern California).
- **Asian Women's Shelter**. (415)-751-7110 (office) (415)-751-0880 (crisis)
- **Center for Pacific Asian Family** (CPAF, Los Angeles). 800-339-3940. Emergency and transitional shelter, multicultural and multilingual. Email: CPAFsc@aol.com
- Sahara: (888) 724-2722
- SAWI — South Asian Women's Initiative. San Diego area. Email: sawi_sd@hotmail.com.

US – Connecticut

- **Sneha**: is an organization for women of South Asian origin and their families. They offer a support line and provide information about support services when required. Contact: Sneha, Inc. P.O. Box 271650 West Hartford, CT 06126-1650. Ph: (in Connecticut) 1-800-58-SNEHA. From elsewhere: (860) 658-4615. Fax: 860-521-1562. Email: sneha@sneha.org.
- **Shamokami**: (203) 624-8727

US – Florida

- **Sahara of South Florida** is a Miami-based organization working to combat domestic violence in the Asian communities of South Florida, and to provide support for Asian women in distress.

US – Georgia

- **Raksha** in Atlanta is a support network for all South Asians in distress. Info. hotline 404- 842-0725   **Website: www.raksha.org**

  Address: P.O. Box 12337, Atlanta, Georgia 30355

  Phone: 1 (866) 725-7423; 1 (877) 672-5742

  Programs/Activities

Raksha (meaning "protection" in several South Asian languages) is a Georgia-based nonprofit whose mission is to promote a stronger and healthier South Asian community through confidential support services, community education, and advocacy. Founded in 1985 by resettled refugee women, the organization serves clients from Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. While primarily dealing with domestic/family violence-related issues, Raksha also seeks to address concerns that intersecting with and contribute to family violence, such as discrimination, immigration, legal and economic issues, immigration and assimilation.

US – Illinois

- **Apna Ghar**, Chicago: (773) 334-4663 Email: info@apnaghar.org
- **Hamdard Center** provides emergency and longterm help, including psychological counselling and referral. Chicago:(708) 628-9195 96 W. Moreland, Suite 10, Addison, IL 60101.
- Asian Human Services. provides competent and compassionate services to the Asian American community of Chicago, including mental health counselling, health care, advocacy, legal help for domestic violence, youth mentoring, employment.

US – Louisiana

- **Metropolitan Battered Women's Program**. P.O Box 10775, Jefferson, La 70181. Hotline: 1-800-738-8900. Fax 504-828-2893

US – Maryland

- **Asian/Pacific Islander Domestic Violence Resource Project** works with all Asian women, including South Asian, in the DC area. They provide peer support, community education, victim advocacy and referrals for shelter, legal and counseling services. Ph: 202-464-4477
- Asha: 301-369-0134 / 888-417-2742
- Samhati (301) 229-6597

US – Massachusetts

- **Saheli Boston** provides support, resources and guidance for career, health, cultural and family growth. They also plan community-based education on domestic violence, outreach and referral to victims of domestic violence.
- A member of Manavi: (508) 427-5700 x202, (617) 497-0316
- Asian Task Force against Domestic Violence. 24-hr multilingual confidential hotline, a 90-day emergency shelter, 14-day safe home program, legal, housing,

public benefits and medical services advocacy, job training and ESL class referrals.

US – Michigan

- **[Michigan Asian Indian Family Services](#)** (MAIFS) works in the Detroit area, and will try to arrange suitable help for family crises due to marital problems, divorce, alcohol or drug abuse, parental, spousal or child abuse, cultural issues, legal needs, language translators, or moral support.

US – Minnesota

- **Asian Women United of Minnesota** provide advocacy services for Asian battered women of all ethnic groups, 24-hour multilingual crisis line, and community education on domestic violence. Crisis phone line: 651-646-2261. Business phone line: 651-646-2118. Fax: 651-646-2284

US – New York / New Jersey

- **[Manavi](#)**: (732) 435-1414
- [Sakhi](#): hotline (212) 868-6741
- **New York Asian Women's Center**. Provides direct assistance to battered women and victims of sexual assualt, through culturally sensitive, multi-lingual shelter services, individual advocacy and counseling. 24 hr hotline: (212) 732-5230
- **AIWA (Asian Indian Women in America)**: (973) 992-5210. Formed in 1980, it works in career development, acculturation, health, education and general welfare to aid in the growth of vibrant Asian/ South Asian American communities. President: Anju Bhargava, email: aiwaemail@aol.com
- **Bangladeshi Mahila Samiti**: (718)-689-0017
- **Muslim Women's Committee**: (212)-316-6446
- **Sikh Women's Association**: (718)-699-1593
- **Shomokami**: (203)-624-8727

US – North Carolina

- **[KIRAN](#): Domestic Violence and Crisis Services for South Asians in North Carolina**. KIRAN promotes the self-reliance and empowerment of South Asians in crisis through confidential services such as outreach, peer support and referrals free of charge. KIRAN serves people from or with ties to South Asian countries. It is non-profit, confidential, non-religious, multi-cultural and multi-lingual. Address: Kiran Inc., P.O. Box 3513, Chapel Hill, NC 27515-3513. Crisis Hotline: 919-865-4006 (Please leave a message and a KIRAN volunteer will call you). Toll Free: 866-KIRANINC. Email: kiraninc@hotmail.com

US – Oregon

- **SAWERA** (South Asian Women's Empowerment and Resource Alliance) is a resource referral for local South Asian women in need; it will aid victims of domestic violence and help newcomers network with the rest of the community. Phone:(503)-778-7386; Email address: sawera@sawera.org.

US – Pennsylvania

- **Sewaa** : P.O. Box 43622, Philadelphia, PA 19104   Phone: (215)62-SEWAA

US – Texas

- **Daya** : P.O. Box 571774, Houston, TX 77257. Offers peer support, referrals, transportation, legal advocacy, outreach/ education.   Phone: (713) 914-1333
- Saheli: (512) 703-8745. P. O. Box 3665, Austin, Texas 78764-3665 Email:saheli@saheli-austin.org.
- **Chetna**: Dallas/Fort Worth area. P.O.Box 830802, Richardson, TX 75083. Toll free helpline: 1-866-410-5565 Office no. 469-532-2407.

US – Virginia

- **Asian/Pacific Islander Domestic Violence Resource Project** works with all Asian women, including South Asian, in the DC area. They provide peer support, community education, victim advocacy and referrals for shelter, legal and counseling services. Ph: 202-464-4477
- Asha: 301-369-0134 / 888-417-2742
- Samhati (301) 229-6597

US – Washington D.C

- **Asian/Pacific Islander Domestic Violence Resource Project** works with all Asian women, including South Asian, in the DC area. They provide peer support, community education, victim advocacy and referrals for shelter, legal and counseling services. Ph: 202-464-4477
- Asha : 301-369-0134 / 888-417-2742

US – Washington State

- **Chaya**. P.O. Box 22291, Seattle, WA 98111. Phone: Toll free- 1-877-922-4292 Office- 206.325.0325. Messages on the helpline will be returned within 24 hours. Email: chaya@chayaseattle.org. Provides translation and interpretation services, referrals to shelters, counseling, medical services, legal and immigration services, community outreach, and training.

Appendix C

Research Study Recruitment Scripts

Organization Recruitment Email/Letter

Dear _____,

I am writing this letter to request assistance with my dissertation project titled ***South Asian American Mother-in-law/Daughter-in-law relationships, Cultural Values, and Help-seeking for Domestic Violence.*** My dissertation is in partial fulfillment of my Ph.D. in the Counseling Psychology program at Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, OK under the supervision of Dr. ***Sue C. Jacobs***.

The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between the South Asian American Daughter-in-Laws' perceptions of their relationship with their mother-in-laws, cultural values, and formal and informal help-seeking for personal/emotional and domestic violence issues.   This study will be a first of its kind to examine the relationship between a South Asian Mother-in-Law and Daughter-in-law living in the US through a combination of feminist and relational-cultural perspectives. I hope to gain insight into the help-seeking sources for personal/emotional and domestic violence concerns. Knowledge and information generated from this study may help other researchers, similar South Asian organizations, or community members**.** To participate in this study the participants must be women who are (1) either born in Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, or Maldives or born to a parent from any of those countries, (2) 18 years or older, (3) currently married or previously married, (4) living in the US, and (5) have a living mother-in-law or have had a relationship with mother-in-law who is now deceased.

I am soliciting women who may have experienced domestic violence and those who have not. The title on the poster is different from the title above to reduce the risk of potential danger to women in abusive relationships. The title on the flyer is South Asian American women's In-law Relationships and Cultural Experiences study.

I hope to recruit the women who may be engaged in _____ programs or others in the community and request that you post the enclosed flyer and let others who qualify know about the study. I believe that the women have unique experiences and input relating to their intimate relationships and culture. The study is an online survey, and thus requires computer and internet access. Findings from the dissertation will be shared with other relationship researchers, South Asian organizations and others who request it.

I am hoping that people at _____ can post the attached flyer and at your discretion distribute it and/or post it to local markets or other community gathering places. My contact information and the contact information for my advisor are on the

flyers. Interested women will be able to detach the tear-off tab from the flyer with the title of study, link to online survey and my contact information.

Participation is completely voluntary. Each woman will make her independent decision as to whether or not she would like to be involved. All women will be informed and reminded of their rights to participate or withdraw before proceeding with the online survey.

Participants will be eligible to participate in **a gift card (4 total giftcards)** drawing after the completion of online survey. There will be a place at the end of the survey for the participants to indicate whether or not they wish to participate in the drawing. If so, they will be asked to provide contact information (email preferred) so I can contact them upon winning. This information will be on a separate place from their responses to the online survey questions and cannot be linked to their contact information.

The duration of the data collection will be approximately one year. All electronic data collected will be retained for 5 years in a secure and password protected computer and/or USB drive owned by the researcher, Fatima Wasim and/or her advisor Dr. Jacobs. Finally, only I and my advisor, *Dr. Sue C. Jacobs* at Oklahoma State University will have access to the data.

There are no known or anticipated risks to participants in this study, however participants will be informed if they use a home or public computer to delete the cookies; otherwise someone they do not want to have access, may have access to it.

If you have any questions regarding this study or would like additional information to assist you in reaching a decision about your assistance or participation, please contact me at 678-313-2772 or by email *Fatima.wasim@okstate.edu*. You may also contact my supervisor, *Dr. Sue C. Jacobs* at *405-744-9895* or by email *sue.c.jacobs@okstate.edu*.

I have attached to this email a copy of the flyer that I am asking you to distribute. I have also attached a draft letter that you can use to give permission to post flyers for this study. If you agree, please print this and fill in the relevant information and print it on your agency's letterhead. Either send this to my advisor via email in a pdf file or fax it to her. Her email is: *sue.c.jacobs@okstate.edu.* Her fax number is 405-744-6756 **ATTN**: Sue. C. Jacobs. I am asking you to send it to my dissertation chair because I will be in the process of moving my year long pre-doctoral internship.

I hope that the results of my study will be beneficial to _____ and the South Asian community as well as the broader research community. I very much look forward to speaking with you and thank you in advance for your assistance with this project.

Yours sincerely,

 Fatima Wasim, M.S., PhD Candidate

Educational Psychology, Specialization: Counseling Psychology
Oklahoma State University
Fatima.wasim@okstate.edu
678-313-2772.

Sue C. Jacobs, Ph.D.
Ledbetter-Lemon Counseling Psychology Diversity Professor
School of Applied Health and Educational Psychology
425 Willard, Oklahoma State University
Stillwater, OK 74078.

Electronic/Email Recruitment Letter for List Servs

My name is Fatima Wasim; I am a doctoral candidate in the Counseling Psychology program at Oklahoma State University who is recruiting participation for my dissertation. I am inviting you to be a participant in my research study and help me access more participants through your list serv. I am conducting a web-based survey research study on the nature of South Asian American's in-law relationships, cultural experiences, and seeking help. The purpose of this study is to explore and understand the perceived relationship between a daughter-in-law and her mother-in-law within a cultural context. I am inviting you to participate in this study as a South Asian female.

Participants who meet the following **criteria** are encouraged to participate:

- ➢ 18 years or older,
- ➢ either born in Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, or Maldives or born to a parent from any of those countries,
- ➢ living in US,
- ➢ currently married or previously married, and
- ➢ have a living mother-in-law or have had a relationship with mother-in-law who is now deceased

The research study will require approximately **10- 25 minutes** of your time. All questions will be answered online through a secured website. You will be asked to complete a demographics questionnaire followed by 4 brief self-report instruments. If you or your family is originally from India, you will be asked to complete one additional questionnaire. At the end of the survey you will have the opportunity to be redirected to separate web page allowing you to enter your email in a drawing for the chance to win one of four $25 gift cards. Your email will not be associated to the information you provided in the survey.

Your participation is completely voluntary and you may withdraw at any time with no penalty. To ensure confidentiality you are not asked for your name or contact information for the survey. Researchers will not be able to create a link between your responses and your contact information since no contact information is required.

All materials will be stored on a secure web server which will only be accessible to the researchers involved.

If you are interested in participating please follow the link below which will provide further information. You are welcome to inquire more about the study or request any additional information by contacting the researcher, Fatima Wasim, doctoral student at Oklahoma State University, phone 678-313-2772, email: Fatima.wasim@okstate.edu. You may also contact my dissertation advisor, Dr. Sue C. Jacobs at phone 405-744-9895 and Email: sue.c.jacobs@okstate.edu. If you have questions about your rights as a

research volunteer, you may contact Dr. Shelia Kennison, IRB Chair, 219 Cordell North, Stillwater, OK 74078, 405-744-3377 or irb@okstate.edu

Once entering into the website http://tinyurl.com/c8httwx you will be prompted to review the informed consent and information regarding the research study. Once you continue to the assessments you will be giving your consent to participate and affirming that you meet the requirements to participate.

Please feel free to forward this email to other South Asian females and/or list servs to assist me in accessing maximum participants who meet the requirements of the research study who may also be interested in participating.

Thank you for your assistance,

Fatima Wasim, MS

Counseling Psychology Doctoral Candidate

Oklahoma State University

Online Solicitation For Social Media

Chance to win a $25 gift card

Are you more or less likely to seek help for relationship issues (including your in-laws)?!

Are you also (1) either born in Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, or Maldives or born to a parent from any of those countries, (2) 18 years or older, (3) currently married or previously married, (4) living in US, and (5) have a living mother-in-law or have had a relationship with mother-in-law who is now deceased? Then…

Please, share your opinion!!!

Have you ever wondered about the South Asian American Mother-in-law/Daughter-in-law relationships, Cultural Values, and Help-seeking? Maybe not but I am sure you have wondered about the relationship. I'm hoping you can help me find some answers! I've transformed this simple inquiry into my dissertation, and I'm examining the relationship between the South Asian American Daughter-in-Laws' perceptions of their relationship with their mother-in-law, cultural values, and formal and informal help-seeking for their issues. This topic is currently unexplored in our field, which offers an exciting opportunity to further inform ourselves, researchers, and the community and shed more light on South Asian American in-law relationships, culture, and help-seeking.

I hope to gather a fair representation of women's perspectives on this important topic. I request that you help reach this goal by completing my online survey. Participation is completely voluntary and will take approximately 10-25 minutes. If you choose to participate, <u>below you will find the URL link to the on-line survey</u>.

Whether you complete the survey or not, I would appreciate your help in forwarding this solicitation and the survey link to other women who may qualify and might be interested!

As a current graduate student in the mental health field, I understand the importance of this research area. Your participation and/or forwarding of this study is
greatly appreciated!

Thank you!

Fatima Wasim, M.S.
Doctoral Candidate
Oklahoma State University
678-313-2772
Fatima.wasim@okstate.edu

Okla. State Univ.
IRB
Approved 10-17-13
Expires 5-22-14
IRB # ED-13-88
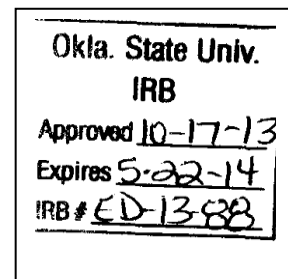
Survey link   → http://tinyurl.com/c8httwx   (Participant consent form and information listed below can also be found by clicking on the survey link above.)

Recruitment Flyer

South Asian American Women's in-law relationships and Cultural Experiences Study
A South Asian doctoral student is requesting your help!
Are you or your parents originally from South Asia (Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka, or Maldives)? Are you 18 or older female and currently or previously married? Do you also have or have had a mother-in-law? If Yes, THEN
Please help me by participating in this Online Study (Survey), No identifying information required, and your other information will be confidential and protected.
Go to: http://tinyurl.com/c8httwx

You will be able to read more about the study before giving informed consent.
CONTACT
Fatima Wasim @ 678 313-2772 or Fatima.wasim@okstate.edu or Sue Jacobs @ sue.c.jacobs@okstate.edu
for any questions or concerns related to study. You can be eligible to win a $25 gift card (4 drawings)

| In-law relationships and Cultural Experiences Study

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|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

← Please tear one off and take with you. Type the link to survey in your browser for info about study and Informed Consent. Thank You.

Organization Permission Letter

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

RE: PERMISSION TO POST FLYERS

       I am aware of Fatima Wasim's dissertation study titled: South Asian American Mother-in-law/Daughter-in-law relationships, Cultural Values, and Help-seeking for Domestic Violence. It has been provisionally approved by Oklahoma State university's Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Human Subjects Research. With this letter, I give her permission to recruit potential participants from our client population via flyers at _____. I have seen the copy of the recruitment letter and agree to post it at _____.

Name of Organization: _____

Signature: _____   Date: _____

Title (of person giving permission): _____

Informed Consent

Project Title: '*South Asian American Women's in-law relationships and Cultural Experiences Study*'

Investigator(s): Fatima Wasim, M.S.; Sue C. Jacobs, Ph.D., Oklahoma State University

Purpose: This study is in partial fulfillment for a Ph.D. in counseling psychology. This is a web-based survey research study on the nature of South Asian American women's in-law relationships, cultural experiences, and seeking help. The purpose of this study is to explore and understand the perceived relationship between a daughter-in-law and her mother-in-law within a cultural context. I am inviting you to participate in this study as a South Asian female. If you choose to participate you will be asked to provide information regarding your in-law relationships and cultural experiences as well as demographic questions about yourself.

Procedures: Starting the web-based survey implies your consent to participate in this study. If you decide to participate, you will first indicate your age and then be directed to the survey. Only individuals who are age 18 or over can participate. All questions will be answered online. To participate in this study you must be **(1) either born in Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, or Maldives or born to a parent from any of those countries, (2) 18 years or older, (3) living in the US (4) currently married or previously married, and (5) have a living mother-in-law or have had a relationship with mother-in-law who is no longer living.**

Any information gained from this study will be confidential and your privacy will be protected.

You will be asked to complete a demographics questionnaire followed by 4 or 5 self-report instruments (*If you or your family is originally from India, you will be asked to complete the 5th questionnaire*). Two self report instruments will ask you various questions about your experiences in relationships with your partner and in-laws, two self-report instruments will ask you about your cultural experiences related to South Asian and US cultures and one will ask you about help-seeking. The demographics questionnaire will ask you to provide information on age, marital status, education, country of birth, household members, income, your culture, religion, any experiences of domestic violence, help-seeking, and other social experiences. The amount of time to

complete the survey will be between 30 and 45 minutes. When you complete the survey you will be asked to submit your answers.

Risks of Participation: The risks associated with this study are minimal. You may experience some emotional discomfort when answering a few questions related to bad experiences in marriage. Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you are experiencing domestic violence and taking this survey will put you in harm's way for any reason, I strongly suggest you do not take this survey unless you have a safe computer. These risks are not greater than those ordinarily encountered in daily life. *If you use a home or public computer, please delete the cookies otherwise someone you do not want to have access, may have access to it*.   Moreover, you may simply not answer any survey items that you perceive as threatening and/or discomforting; you may also stop at any time.

If you would like some help for domestic violence, please contact the following resources:
National Domestic Violence hotline @ 1-800 799 SAFE (7233) or TTY 1-800 787 3224 any time of the day (it's a 24 hour hotline). They can help you with crisis intervention, shelter, safety planning, referral to agencies in your State or local city. Help is available in several languages. http://www.ndvh.org/ At the end of survey you will be given the opportunity to be directed to Additional resources.
Benefits: South Asians are a group that is not studied frequently and often their needs and concerns are overlooked. Through this research participants may get a chance to reflect on their intimate and in-law relationships. This research may also contribute to the society by highlighting positive relationships between in-laws to serve as a model for future relationships. This research will also encourage other researchers to focus and expand on research related to South Asians and domestic violence and devise culturally appropriate interventions. Another possible benefit to society is gaining knowledge to contribute to future research and interventions that may increase relational –cultural awareness. It will also bring forth the latest rates of prevalence of domestic violence among the population.

I hope that the information gained from this study will expand the current knowledge available regarding this particular group. In addition I hope that this assessment will provide a useful source of information to mental health providers in addressing the needs of this group of individuals. This survey can be an opportunity for you to get a better understanding for your experiences and your position as a South Asian woman in the US. Your responses also may help find ways to reduce or prevent some domestic violence.

At the end of the survey you will have the opportunity to be redirected to separate web page allowing you to enter your email in a drawing for the chance to win one of four

$25 gift cards. Your contact/email will not be associated to the information you provided in the survey.

Confidentiality: This survey will be completed online and no name or contact information is necessary to participate. There will be no way for researchers to create a link between the individual participating in the study and any identifying information as none is needed to participate. Once data has been collected all information will be stored on a password protected computer and USB drive that will remain in a locked filing cabinet with access available only to the researchers involved in the study. Any written results will discuss group findings and will not release any information that could possibly identify you as an individual. The data will be kept for at least five years after the end of study on a password protected computer and USB. Only researchers and individuals responsible for research oversight will have access to the records. It is possible that the consent process and data collection will be observed or monitored by research oversight staff responsible for safeguarding the rights and wellbeing of people who participate in research.

Contacts: You are welcome to inquire more about the study or request any additional information by contacting the researcher, Fatima Wasim, doctoral student at Oklahoma State University, phone 678-313-2772, email: Fatima.wasim@okstate.edu. You may also contact my dissertation advisor, Dr. Sue C. Jacobs at phone 405-744-9895   and Email: sue.c.jacobs@okstate.edu. If you have questions about your rights as a research volunteer, you may contact Dr. Shelia Kennison, IRB Chair, 219 Cordell North, Stillwater, OK 74078, 405-744-3377 or irb@okstate.edu

Participant Rights: Your participation in this research in voluntary. You can discontinue the survey at any time without any negative consequences or penalty. You may also skip questions that you do not wish to answer.

Thank you for helping me in this research. If you know someone who meets the criteria (South Asian married female 18 or older) for this study and would be willing to participate, please share this information with them and provide them with the link to this survey.

It is recommended that you print a copy of this consent page for your records before you begin the study by clicking below.

Consent: I have read and fully understand the consent form. I understand that my participation is voluntary. By choosing yes below, I am indicating that I freely and voluntarily and agree to participate in this study and I also acknowledge that I am at least 18 years of age.

Appendix E

Research Study Instruments

Demographics Questionnaire

What is your age?

Are you living in United States of America?

Yes

No

What is your marital status?

Married

Widowed

Separated

Divorced

How long have you been (or you were) married?

1-2 years

3-4 years

5-6 years

7 or more years

Do you have any children?

Yes

No

How many children do you have?

1

2

3

4

5 or more

How long have you lived at your current place of residence?

Less than a year

1-2 years

3-4 years

5-6 years

7 or more years

Do you live with your PARTNER or HUSBAND?

Yes

No

How long have you lived with your PARTNER or HUSBAND?

Less than a year

1-2 years

3-4 years

5-6 years

7 or more years

Do your IN-LAWS live with you?

Yes

No

How long have your IN-LAWS lived with you?

Less than a year

1-2 years

3-4 years

5-6 years

7 or more years

Is your mother-in-law living?

Yes

No

Did you have a relationship with your mother-in-law before she died?

    Yes

    No

Does your MOTHER-IN-LAW live with you?

    Yes

    No

Did your mother-in-law live with you?

    Yes

    No

How long (has or had) your MOTHER -IN-LAW lived with you?

    Less than a year

    1-2 years

    3-4 years

    5-6 years

    7 or more years

    Occasionally

Where does (or did) your MOTHER-IN-LAW live?

    In my neighborhood

    In the same city as me

    In the US, but not in my city

    In South Asia

    In another country

How frequently do (or did) you have contact with your MOTHER-IN-LAW?

    Multiple times a day

    Daily

    Several times a week

    Several times a month

Monthly

Other

I have or had no contact with my mother-in-law

How do (or did) you usually keep in contact with your MOTHER-IN-LAW??

Phone

Skype

Email

Face-to-face

Other

Where were you born?

Pakistan

India

Bangladesh

Nepal

Sri-Lanka

United States

Bhutan

Other

Where were your parents born?

Pakistan

India

Bangladesh

Nepal

Sri-Lanka

United States

Other

What is your average family income (before taxes)?

Less than 19,000

20,000-39,999

40,000-69000

70,000 or more

Don't know

Are you employed?

Yes

No

How would you BEST describe your job? (Check all that apply)

Full time

Part-time

Retired/ on Disability

Student

Volunteer/Intern

Other

What is your religious affiliation?

Muslim

Hindu

Sikh

Jain

Christian

Jew

Buddhist

None

Other

How would you rate your religiosity?

Very religious

Somewhat religious

Not at all religious

Have you ever experienced any Physical abuse (e.g slap, kick, pulled hair, etc) from your MOTHER-IN-LAW?

Yes

No

Have you ever experienced any Psychological Abuse (e.g criticizing, putting me down, etc) from your MOTHER-IN-LAW?

Yes

No

Have you ever experienced any Emotional Abuse (e.g black mail, etc) from your MOTHER-IN-LAW?

Yes

No

Have you ever experienced any Financial Abuse (e.g stopped me from accessing my rightful money) from your MOTHER-IN-LAW?

Yes

No

Please read each of the following activities and fill in circle that best indicates the frequency with which you partner acts in the way depicted.

How often does your partner?

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Fairly often	Frequently
1. Physically hurt you	O	O	O	O	O
2. Insult or talk down to you	O	O	O	O	O
3. Threaten you with harm	O	O	O	O	O
4. Scream or curse at you	O	O	O	O	O
	1	2	3	4	5

Each item is scored from 1-5. Thus, scores for this inventory range from 4-20. A score of greater than 10 is considered positive.

Sherin, K.M., Sinacore, J.M., Li, X., Zitter, R.E., & Shakil,A. (1998) HITS: A short domestic violence screening tool for use in a family practice setting, Clinical Research and Methods 30 (7) 508-512

The Intimate Bond Measure (IBM)

This questionnaire lists some attitudes and behaviors which people reveal in their close relationships.   Please judge your **Mother-in-law's** attitudes and behavior towards you in recent times and tick the most appropriate box for each item. My Mother-in-law:

		very true	*moder ately true*	*some- what true*	*not at all true*
1.	is very considerate of me	3	2	1	0
2.	*wants me to take his/her side in an argument*	*3*	*2*	*1*	*0*
3.	*wants to know exactly what I'm doing & where I am*	*3*	*2*	*1*	*0*
4.	is a good companion	3	2	1	0
5.	is affectionate to me	3	2	1	0
6.	*is clearly hurt if I don't accept his/her views*	*3*	*2*	*1*	*0*
7.	*tends to try to change me*	*3*	*2*	*1*	*0*
8.	confides closely in me	3	2	1	0
9.	*tends to criticize me over small issues*	*3*	*2*	*1*	*0*
10.	understands my problems and worries	3	2	1	0
11.	*tends to order me about*	*3*	*2*	*1*	*0*
12.	*insists I do exactly as I'm told*	*3*	*2*	*1*	*0*
13.	is physically gentle and considerate	3	2	1	0
14.	makes me feel needed	3	2	1	0
15.	*wants me to change in small ways*	*3*	*2*	*1*	*0*
16.	is very loving to me	3	2	1	0
17.	*seeks to dominate me*	*3*	*2*	*1*	*0*
18.	is fun to be with	3	2	1	0

19.	*wants to change me in big ways*	*3*	*2*	*1*	*0*
20.	*tends to control everything I do*	*3*	*2*	*1*	*0*
21.	shows his/her appreciation of me	3	2	1	0
22.	*is critical of me in private*	*3*	*2*	*1*	*0*
23.	is gentle and kind to me	3	2	1	0
24.	speaks to me in a warm and friendly voice	3	2	1	0

Very true scores 3, *Moderately true* scores 2, *Somewhat true* scores 1, and *Not at all true* scores 0.   Add scores from items 1, 4, 5, 8, 10, 13, 14, 16, 18, 21, 23 & 24 to get the total score for *Care*.   Add scores from items *2, 3, 6, 7, 9, 11, 12, 15, 17, 19, 20 & 22* to get the total score for *Control*.

care total: _____   **control total: _____**

Wilhelm K & Parker G *The development of a measure of intimate bonds*

Psychological Medicine 1988;18:225-34

South Asian Cultural Experience Measure

Directions: This questionnaire is designed to help us understand some experiences of South Asian women in the US. For each statement below, indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the statement. There is no right or wrong answer. Circle the number that is true of you rather than what you wish were true. Please respond to each statement.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
1	2	3	4	5	6

1. I believe dating is acceptable only in a mutually exclusive relationship leading to marriage   1   2   3   4   5   6

2. I would experience anxiety if I decided to marry someone from another racial/cultural/ethnic group   1   2   3   4   5   6

3. I feel guilty when my personal actions and decisions go against my family's expectations   1   2   3   4   5   6

4. I would feel guilty if I were dating someone from another cultural/ethnic group   1   2   3   4   5   6

5. Despite cultural expectations, I would not experience anxiety if I engaged in premarital sex with someone I was in love with   1   2   3   4   5   6

6. I feel that I do not belong to either the South Asian culture nor the American culture when it relates to my role as a woman   1   2   3   4   5   6

7. I feel like a pendulum in my role as a woman, wherein within my ethnic culture, I am expected to be dependent, submissive, and putting other's needs before mine, but in the American culture, I am encouraged to be independent, autonomous, and self-asserting of my needs   1   2   3   4   5   6

8. I experience anxiety at the thought of having an arranged marriage   1   2   3   4   5   6

9. I struggle with the double standard within my ethnic culture, wherein women more so than men are expected to be equally attentive to both their professional roles (e.g., maintaining career) as well as their home lives (e.g., household chores, parenting)   1   2   3   4   5   6

10. I would not experience discomfort if I were to engage in premarital sexual relations with someone I was physically attracted to   1   2   3   4   5   6

11. I struggle with the value attached to needing to be married by age 25

                                              1   2   3   4   5   6

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
1	2	3	4	5	6

12. I feel frustrated in going back and forth in my role as a woman within the South Asian community and within the American community   1   2   3   4   5   6

13. I would experience guilt engaging in premarital sexual relations due to the social stigma attached to it within my culture   1   2   3   4   5   6

14. I often find it stressful balancing what I consider private and what my family considers to be public and vice versa   1   2   3   4   5   6

15. I feel guilty for desiring privacy from my family   1   2   3   4   5   6

16. I feel conflicted about my behaviors and options as a woman within the South Asian and in the American culture   1   2   3   4   5   6

17. Marrying within my own ethnic group would be less stressful than marrying outside of my racial/ethnic group   1   2   3   4   5   6

18. The idea of living with a partner prior to marriage does *not* create anxiety for me

                                              1   2   3   4   5   6

19. I struggle with the pressure to be married and the lack of option to remain single within my culture   1   2   3   4   5   6

20. My family worries about me becoming too Americanized in my thoughts and behaviors   1   2   3   4   5   6

21. I believe that premarital sexual relations are acceptable only after being engaged to the person   1   2   3   4   5   6

22. I am bothered by the fact that in my ethnic culture, marriage for a woman is considered to be more important than having a career   1   2   3   4   5   6

23 An interracial marriage would be stressful to me   1   2   3   4   5   6

24. I struggle with my family's need to be involved in my day-to-day activities

                                              1   2   3   4   5   6

General Help-Seeking Questionnaire- Original Version (GHSQ)

Question 1 = Personal or emotional problems Question 2 = Suicidal Ideation (replaced with domestic violence)

Note: In all questions, items a-j measure help-seeking intentions. Help sources should be modified to match the target population.

If you were having a **personal or emotional problem**, how likely is it that you would seek help from the following people? Please indicate your response by putting a line through the number that best describes your intention to seek help from each help source that is listed. **1= Extremely Unlikely 3 = Unlikely 5 = Likely 7 = Extremely Likely**							
a.Intimate partner (e.g., husband)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
b. Friend (not related to you)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
c.Parent	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
d.Mother-in-Law	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
e.Mental health professional (e.g., psychologist, counselor, social worker)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
f.Phone helpline (e.g. lifeline)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
g.Doctor/GP	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
h. Minister or religious leader (e.g Priest, Rabbi, Chaplain)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
i.I would not seek help from anyone	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
j.I would seek help from other not listed above (please list in the space provided. (e.g work colleague. If no, leave blank)_____	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

If you were experiencing **domestic violence**, how likely is it that you would seek help from the following people? Please indicate your response by putting a line through the number that best describes your intention to seek help from each help source that is listed. **1= Extremely Unlikely 3 = Unlikely 5 = Likely 7 = Extremely Likely**							
a.Intimate parner (e.g., husband)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
b. Friend (not related to you)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
c.Parent	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
d.Mother-in-law	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

e.Mental health professional (e.g., psychologist, counselor, social worker)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
f.Phone helpline (e.g. lifeline)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
g.Doctor/GP	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
h. Minister or religious leader (e.g Priest, Rabbi, Chaplain)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
i.I would not seek help from anyone	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
j.I would seek help from abother not listend above (please list in the space provided. (e.g work colleague. If no, leave blank)_____	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Wilson, C. J., Deanne, F.P., Ciarrochi, J., & Rickwood, D. (2005). Measuring help-seeking intentions: Properties of the general help-seeking questionnaire. Canadian Journal of Counseling, 39, (1), 15-28

Appendix F

Institutional Review Board Approval

Oklahoma State University Institutional Review Board

Date: Thursday, May 23, 2013

IRB Application No   ED1388

Proposal Title: South Asian American Mother-in-law/Daughter-in-law relationships, Cultural Values, and Help-seeking for Domestic Violence

Reviewed and   Exempt
Processed as:

Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): Approved   Protocol Expires: 5/22/2014

Principal
Investigator(s):

Fatima Wasim   Sue Jacobs
4599 N Washington St Apt 38   431 Willard
Stillwater, OK 74075   Stillwater, OK 74078

The IRB application referenced above has been approved. It is the judgment of the reviewers that the rights and welfare of individuals who may be asked to participate in this study will be respected, and that the research will be conducted in a manner consistent with the IRB requirements as outlined in section 45 CFR 46.

X The final versions of any printed recruitment, consent and assent documents bearing the IRB approval stamp are attached to this letter. These are the versions that must be used during the study.

As Principal Investigator, it is your responsibility to do the following:

1. Conduct this study exactly as it has been approved. Any modifications to the research protocol must be submitted with the appropriate signatures for IRB approval. Protocol modifications requiring approval may include changes to the title, PI, advisor, funding status or sponsor, subject population composition or size, recruitment, inclusion/exclusion criteria, research site, research procedures and consent/assent process or forms.
2. Submit a request for continuation if the study extends beyond the approval period of one calendar year. This continuation must receive IRB review and approval before the research can continue.
3. Report any adverse events to the IRB Chair promptly. Adverse events are those which are unanticipated and impact the subjects during the course of this research; and
4. Notify the IRB office in writing when your research project is complete.

Please note that approved protocols are subject to monitoring by the IRB and that the IRB office has the authority to inspect research records associated with this protocol at any time. If you have questions about the IRB procedures or need any assistance from the Board, please contact Dawnett Watkins 219 Cordell North (phone: 405-744-5700, dawnett.watkins@okstate.edu).

Sincerely,

Shelia M. Kennison

Shelia Kennison, Chair
Institutional Review Board

VITA

Fatima Wasim, M.S. NCC

Candidate for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy/Education

Dissertation: SOUTH ASIAN AMERICAN DAUGHTER-IN-LAW/MOTHER-IN-LAW RELATIONSHIPS, CULTURAL VALUES CONFLICT AND HELP-SEEKING FOR DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Major Field: Educational Psychology with an option in Counseling Psychology

Biographical: Born in Pakistan, moved to U.S in 1999 to Atlanta, GA

Education:
> Oklahoma State University, 2010 – Present, **Doctoral Candidate**, Expected Graduation Summer 2014
> Georgia State University, 2006-08, MS, Professional Counseling
> Georgia State University, 2001-2005, B.S., Psychology
> National Certified Counselor (NCC) ID: 239270
> Licensed Associate Professional Counselor (LAPC) ID: APC002480

Experience:
> Supervised Clinical experience through Internship at Duke University Counseling and Psychological Services, Administering Assessments at current internship, Provision of Supervision for Masters students, Practicum Counselor at University of Central Oklahoma, Practicum Counselor at Stillwater Domestic Violence Services, Mental Health Therapist at Center for Torture and Trauma Services, Domestic Violence Therapist at Raksha Inc.

Professional Memberships:
> Carolina Group Psychotherapy Society (CGPS) Current Member
> American Psychological Association (APA), Current Student Affiliate
> Asian American Psychological Association (AAPA), 2011- Present