Perceptions and Understanding of Family Violence Among Japanese Canadians

Sakata, Maki

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Perceptions and Understanding of Family Violence Among Japanese Canadians

by

Maki Sakata

B.Sc. University of Northern British Columbia

B.S.W. University of Calgary

A THESIS

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Abstract

This study explores and describes how Japanese Canadian participants in Edmonton and Calgary perceive and understand family violence. A qualitative descriptive methodology was utilized as the research method, and data was collected from ten Japanese Canadians through individual and focus group formats. Findings indicate that participants appeared to have a bounded view toward family violence. A bounded understanding of family violence included actions that were direct, intense, visible, and frequent. Participants indicated that Japanese culture influences participants’ perceptive on family violence. Language conveys culture and may limit perceptions; a strong patriarchal value places males at risk to abuse wives and children. This study also examines the barriers to reporting incidence of family violence and to access services. This study presents implications and direction for social work practice with Japanese heritage group and may also be applicable to wider social work practice inter-culturally.
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To my friends both within and outside of academia who kept me sane through sharing tears, good laughs, and grumble.
Dedication

To my wonderful husband, Stanley who supported me with love, encouragement, patience and everything he could proffer throughout this project.

To victims of family violence in hopes that their lives will be filled with love, hope and peace.

To survivors of the disaster and to all Japanese with tremendous strengths and resiliency during the difficult time.
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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Violence within families affects people of all cultures, race, class, gender, age, and countries (Heise, 1994; Sumter, 2006). Despite sustained efforts since the 1970s (Sumter, 2006) by researchers, health professionals, and policy makers to increase public awareness and to advance prevention and intervention strategies (Health Canada, 2004), family violence has not successfully been diminished within our society (Statistics Canada, 2011). The intransigency of family violence is related to the fact that it is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon influenced by culture, values, and beliefs (Heise, 1998; Sitaker, 2007; WHO, 2007). Canada has been internationally recognized for its multicultural policies valuing diversity and pluralism (Berry, 2001). While supporting and protecting diverse culture, values and beliefs is perceived by many as a strength potentially harmful traditional cultural practice observed in countries, such as Africa, Arab, South and East Asia, including dowry related violence (Naved & Persson, 2010; Rudd, 2001), early marriage and early childbearing (Gill & Anitha, 2011), genital mutilation (Omer-Hashi & Entwistle, 1995), honour killing (Baker, Gregware, & Cassidy, 1999; Kevorkian, 2006), and sex selective abortion (Arnold, Kishor, & Roy, 2002; Hesketh, Lu, & Xing, 2011; Vogel, 2012) have also been seen in Canada. Having diverse cultures in one nation may contribute to the complexity of the family violence phenomenon. Each culture understands and responds to family violence differently; nevertheless, one’s culture should not be used to justify violence. Instead, culture more likely may be the key for gaining wisdom, insight, and solutions to end domestic violence.

People of Japanese heritage reportedly constitute the tenth largest non-European ethnic group in Canada (Statistics Canada, 2006) and this population is growing faster than the national average (Statistics Canada, 2007). Japanese Canadians account for 3% of the total population in Canada.
Canada, representing over 81,300 individuals (Statistics Canada, 2006). Approximately 14% of all Japanese Canadians reside in Alberta; about 3,000 of whom live in Edmonton (Statistics Canada, 2007). However, Japanese-Canadian community in North America has been unnoticed among scholars and professionals.

Violence within families has existed in Japanese society for centuries; however, it has been recognized as a social issue only recently (Kozu, 1999; Sugimoto, 1997; Weingourt, Maruyama, Sawada, & Yoshino, 2001). The issue of spousal violence had been minimized until 1990s in Japan (Kozu, 1999; Sugimoto, 1997; Yoshihama, 2002a). Gradually, it has been acknowledged as a serious social problem (Kozu, 1999; Yoshihama, 2002a). Societal pressure intensified in early 1990, with calls for domestic violence to be dealt with as a national issue rather than a private familial issue. Parallel with the rise of an international movement against gender-based violence initiated in the United Nation, grassroots efforts by women’s organization against domestic violence in Japan motivated Japanese researchers to investigate the issue nationwide in 1992 (Hatashita, Hirao, Brykczyynski, & Anderson, 2006; Sugimoto, 1997; Yoshihama, 2002a). Those movements finally convinced the Japanese government to realize the problem as worthy of intervention, and the first national legislation was declared in 2002 (Sugimoto, 1997; Yoshihama, 2002a). Together with the women’s rights movement, public interests toward child abuse in Japanese society also increased in 1990s, largely through media (Hanada, Nagae, Yamazaki, & Oishi, 2007; Kozu, 1999; Tanaka, 2011). This led the Japanese government to declare the protection of child abuse legislation in 2000 (Tanaka, 2011; Yamazaki, 2005). Similarly, legislation dealt with protection and prevention of elder abuse was proclaimed in 2005 (Takeda, 2010).
Despite the rapid growth in attention and motivation to tackle family violence as a social issue in both Japan and Canada, little academic attention has been paid to Japanese Canadian cultural community. Only a few studies have investigated the prevalence and the nature of family violence among those of Japanese descent living in North America. One such study by Yoshihama (1999) reported a surprisingly high rate of spousal violence among Japanese women living in United States: eighty percent (167 out of 211) of randomly selected women of Japanese descent in Los Angeles had experienced some form of violence from their partners in their lifetime. In a meta-analysis conducted by Alhabib, Nur, and Jones (2009), 356 research articles dealing with violence against women in the past 10 years, found that the highest levels of physical violence were seen in Japanese immigrants to North America (approximately 47%), who also had high levels of emotional violence (approximately 78%) following respondents in South America, Europe, and Asia (37-50%). Similarly, a high prevalence rate of domestic violence has been found among samples of women in Japan; between one-half and two-thirds of Japanese women report experiencing violence from their partners during their lives together (Kozu, 1999; Weingourt et al., 2001; Yoshihama & Sorenson, 1994).

Many authors have articulated the difficulties associated with determining the incidence and prevalence of domestic violence (Romans, Forte, Cohen, Du Mont, & Hyman, 2007). While findings cannot be uncritically generalized, it is perhaps not unreasonable to assume that the rate of domestic violence among people of Japanese heritage in Canada would not be enormously dissimilar. Furthermore, it is likely safe to assume that, among Japanese Canadians, violent incidences can occur at any time as the family members share their lives together; victims or perpetrators can be adult females or males, children or the elderly (Kumagai, 2007). Violence
impacts all family members (Straus, 1974), thus it is important to focus on violence in the family as a whole (Betancourt, & Khan, 2008; Kumagai, 2007; Straus, Gelles, & Steinmetz, 1998).

While research may continue to be needed, there appears to be no evidence that contradicts the conclusion that the prevalence of domestic violence in Japanese Canadian communities is at least equivalent to the rate among the nation’s general population. However, it is likely that culturally specific variables differentiate the phenomenon of family violence in Japanese Canadian communities. Investigating these cultural differences would help uncover factors that contribute to people’s perceptions and conceptions of family violence, including why family violence remains understudied. Exploring and understanding violence within a unique cultural context is critical for social workers to develop and provide effective policies, supports, and programs (Sumter, 2006), not only for planning intervention strategies, but more importantly for the preventing family violence.

It is a concern that there has not been any research or discussion about the issue of family violence within Japanese communities in Alberta, given the province’s number of Japanese Canadians. Currently, it appears that no prevention or education programs are specifically designed to address the problem of domestic violence within Alberta’s Japanese communities. Prevention and education programs would need to be built on a fuller understanding of violence and abuse, awareness of issues of violence, and developing strategies and intervention that is sensitive to cultural variations. The significant gap in knowledge related to domestic violence among Japanese Canadians presents a variety of research questions and opportunities. This study seeks to address the particular knowledge gap related the culturally specific perception of family violence within the Japanese Canadian community in Alberta. Specifically, this study will ask members of the Japanese communities in Edmonton and Calgary about their
understanding and perception of family violence and about what family violence means to them. The study will explore how participants understand the connection between their culture and their perception of family violence, and further will explore participant’s perception about improving access to services in a culturally sensitive way.

**Purpose of the study**

The purpose of this study is to gain insight into the Japanese cultural perspective toward family violence. This study seeks to investigate the understanding, assumptions, and cultural beliefs that surround the notion of family violence among those in the Japanese community. Study objectives include; 1) to explore how participants perceive and understand family violence, 2) to explore how Japanese culture is viewed as contributing to those perceptions, 3) to understand what perceived barriers exist that might prevent communities and individuals from addressing family violence in Japanese communities, and 4) to acquire participant insight into what the perceived strategies for effective interventions and prevention regarding family violence education within the Japanese community.

A qualitative approach is appropriate for exploratory research into the research question centering on perceptions of family violence among Japanese Canadians. Within the qualitative approach, I will specifically use a descriptive qualitative research method since a qualitative descriptive approach offers a fundamental, comprehensive summary of an event in everyday terms, and it is suitable when straight description of phenomena is preferred (Sandelowski, 2000). While the results of qualitative studies are by definition limited in terms of generalizability, the findings from this research could help to inform the development of sensitive and strategic education, intervention, and social policy initiative, especially applicable to Japanese Canadian community. This research project may also begin a dialogue – currently
missing in the literature, facilitating conversations about family violence within the Japanese Canadian community context, and ultimately leading to greater awareness and sensitivity to differences.

Following this introductory first chapter, I review theoretical and empirical literature broadly with respect to perceptions of family violence among Asian communities. This includes consideration of definitional issues, theoretical frameworks on violence, and research examining the variation of culture on perceptions of family violence. In Chapter Three of the thesis, I introduce the method and discusses the descriptive qualitative approach as well as my rationale for using it. I present the specific methods used in the study. In Chapter Four, I present the findings and my analysis of themes that have emerged. In Chapter Five, I link my findings to the extant literature to explore how this study advances our knowledge of family violence within Japanese Canadian community. This section examines and further develops a theoretical framework for understanding and intervening in family violence in Japanese community following social work practice implication and recommendation.
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter contains four main sections – a definition of violence within families, a conceptual framework on family violence, perceptions and attitudes toward family violence within Asian ethnic communities, and an exploration of specific familial, relational, and societal cultural values that are significant to Asian ethnic communities. In the first section, I consider definitional issues related to family violence in order to clarify my use of the terms in this thesis. In the second section, I illustrate a conceptual framework of family violence, developed predominantly in western countries with little attention paid to cultural differences. In the third section I present a brief description of various specific cultural differences that impact perceptions of family violence among Asian cultural groups. The final section of this chapter provides an overall summary of the literature, as it informs the context of the research question about perceptions and understanding of family violence among Japanese Canadians.

Concepts and Definitions

Definition of family violence: Controversial issues. Family violence is an abstract, contested and evolving concept which health professionals, services providers, academics, policy makers, and legal authority have difficulty coming to consensus on (Gelles, 1990; Hotaling, Straus, & Lincoln, 1989; Jouriles, McDonald, Norwood, & Ezel, 2001; Tolan, Gorman-Smith, & Henry, 2006). A central controversy is that on one hand there is pressure to keep the definition narrow and to leave out other terms, such as abuse, neglect and maltreatment (Jouriles et al., 2001). On the other hand, there are arguments to broaden the definition, insisting that the definition should not be limited to specific problems, but should include patterns that clearly are harmful and that are not to be tolerated (Tolan et al., 2006). Focusing narrowly, for example only on physical violence, can cause serious harm as it is ignores some other invisible forms of
violence, such as coercive control, neglect, and psychological and verbal abuse, which may happen along with physical violence, and are equally harmful (Barnett, Miller-Perrin, & Perrin, 2005; Heise, 1998).

Another definitional issue involves difficulty in determining to what extent the violence in families is justifiable (Straus, 1979), or sanctioned (Malley-Morrison, 2004) and by whom (Barnett et al., 2005). Malley-Morrison and Hines (2004) articulated four components - chronicity, motivation, injury, and perspectives of the victim. Chronicity refers to how many times a person can express violence towards another before the behaviour is considered as violence or abuse. It raises the question “if it happened once is it considered abuse?” (Malley-Morrison & Hines, 2004, p. 6). The motivation behind the behaviour may be considered legitimate or illegitimate; “are the actions, such as spanking and hitting a child, preventing the child from doing something harmful?” (Malley-Morrison & Hines, 2004, p. 6). Intensity implies questions regarding the degree of force. Finally, the perspective of the victim; if a victim believes that the person deserved to be punished according to their cultural norms, is this abuse?” (Malley-Morrison & Hines, 2004, p. 6).

A third difficulty surrounding a definition of family violence is the variety of problems within a family. Familial issues, such child abuse, spousal abuse and elder abuse were brought by different groups of people in separate era. Historical backgrounds of each issue became social problems when various interest groups engaged in the process of raising awareness about the condition (Spector & Kitsuse, 1977). Child abuse was recognized in 1960s in North America as the value society place on children grew in developed societies (Empey, Stafford, & Hay, 1999). As the women’s movement grew over time, wife battering became one of feminists’ most concerning issue (Barnett et al., 2005). The news of an opening of the first shelter for battered
women in England 1971 gained widespread public attention (Pizzey, 1975). Among other forms of violence in a family, elder abuse came to public attention in the 1980s (Wolf & Pillemer, 1989) when the media attended to the problem of parent battering, as it closely resembled child abuse (Barnett et al., 2005). Family violence work has been segregated within specialty areas and become competitive; a strong opposing view questioned why one aspect is more important than another and why one view should prevail over others (Chalk & King, 1998).

The last controversial issue is to what degree the familial context should be considered. A family consists of people of different age and gender, bound by unique relations and dependence. Not all violence in a family involves abuse through one’s effort to obtain power over another, and some forms of maltreatment exist without intention to exploit power and privileges (McPhail, Busch, Kulkarni, & Rice, 2007; Straka & Montminy, 2008). Some cases of abuse may lack the dynamics of power or control as seen in child maltreatment and neglect (Daro, 1988), as well as in elder abuse (Loske, Gelles, & Cavanaugh, 2005; Straka & Montminy, 2008). Both children and elders may be seen as vulnerable populations, since they may have limited mental, cognitive, and physical competency forcing dependence on caregivers (Straka & Montminy, 2008). Caregiver’s careless behaviours, such as inability to provide attention to children and elders due to caregiver’s illness, stress, mental health status, lack of education and knowledge, and financial limitations, may also lead to neglect of children (Dubowitz, Klockner, Starr, & Black, 1998) or elderly (Loske et al., 2005; Philips, 1986; Wolf & Pillemer, 1989).

Labeling particular behaviours as maltreatment or violence will affect people’s willingness to disclose a problem, professionals’ sense of obligations to report incidents, the likelihood of families receiving help, and involvement of the social service or criminal justice system (Malley-Morrison & Hines, 2004). It is important to capture accurate characteristics of
family violence to inform the public and professionals. These controversies and arguments may be resolved as future studies bring insight and understanding, into the nature of family violence, leading to a more enhanced definition of family violence.

**Family life cycle and family violence.** A family is an active living entity shaped by people who share life, experience, emotions, past and future. Carter and McGoldrick (1984) described a family is a living system which constantly changes and moves through time involving complex processes. Generations of families are propelled through life influenced by the developmental events of individuals within the family as they move toward independence, marriage, the birth of children, through adolescence, launching adult children, to retirement and the senior years - called the Family Life Cycle theory. The emotional and intellectual stages individuals experience from childhood to senior age are embedded in their family life cycle, and a family’s behavioral coping mechanisms are often influenced by changes and transitions as their family members move from one life cycle to the next and experience life events (McGoldrick & Carter, 2003).

It may be counterproductive to fragment research efforts into sub areas of family violence, such as child abuse, sibling abuse, spousal abuse (same and different sex), and elder abuse, since violent incidences can occur any time throughout the lifecycle. It is natural for an individual, as well as families, to experience life events, changes, happiness, and distress. Although those life events, changes and transitions may not be the only causes of family violence, a family’s ability to adapt to changes and events contribute to who one is and who one becomes (Carter & McGoldrick, 1984). It is, therefore, unsafe to assume that spousal violence, child abuse, and elder abuse are discrete issues, studied and dealt with independently. In fact, victims can be any one within the family at any time. Violent incidences can be the tip of the
iceberg of problems, dispute and unresolved issues that remain hidden within the family. Focusing on one area could blind the family, public, and professionals from seeing complex family relationship and dealing with family violence as the sign of unhealthy family function (Hashizume, 2011; Kumagai, 2007).

In addition, artificially separating issues creates competition over scare resource such as funding, diverts public and professional attention, limits the ability of police and professional services to intervene in incidences of the co-occurrence of violence in a family, and inhibits the coordination of a variety of policies, such as spousal violence, child protection, and criminal codes (Gelles, 2000; Masuda, 2010). The perspective taken in this paper of violence within a family is that of the whole, rather than fragmenting and family violence into separate issues such as child abuse, spousal abuse and elder abuse.

**Evolution of family violence legislations in Canada.** In Canada, the provinces and territories are responsible for the administration of justice and provision of services with regard to family violence in their jurisdiction (Department of Justice Canada, 2010). Alberta’s family violence legislation, Protection Against Family Violence Act (PAFVA) came into force in 1999, which aims to protect victims of family members and prevent future violence in families (Government of Alberta, 2011). This legislation has undergone review and evaluation twice in the last decade, and was amended in 2006 and 2011 (Government of Alberta, 2011). Amendments included adding stalking to the definition of family violence, expanding protection of family members regardless of whether they live with their abusers, and expanding the definition of those to be protected to include seniors and individuals with disabilities. In addition, the latest amendment now allows emergency protection orders to be granted even if the
offenders say they had no intention to hurt anyone (Government of Alberta, 2011). Under the PAFVA amended in 2011:

Family violence includes (i) any intentional or reckless act or omission that causes injury or property damage and that intimidate or harms a family member, (ii) any act or threatened act that intimidates a family member by creating a reasonable fear of property damage or injury to a family member, (iii) forced confinement, (iv) sexual abuse, and (v) stalking, … “but is not to be construed so as to limit a parent or person standing in the place of a parent from using force by way of correction toward a child who is under the care of the parent or person if the force does not exceed what is reasonable under the circumstances.” (p. 3)

The government's supplemental family violence handbook adds that any intentional and threatening act that intimidates or harms, acts and threats that triggers fear to a family member, can be categorized as physical, psychological or emotional, financial, and sexual abuse. Reckless act or omission can be neglect that may be due to caregivers’ unwillingness or inability to provide care that harms a family member (Alberta Justice Communications, 2008).

This legislation indicates that family violence occurs not only when the perpetrator is motivated to harm or to omit care, but also when the person is careless and does not have an expressed intention to harm the family member.

Other provinces and territories appear to be seeing the importance of creating family violence laws. Four province and territories, Saskatchewan, Prince Edwards Island, Alberta, and Yukon Territory, and Manitoba have proclaimed specific family violence legislation since the late 1990s (Department of Justice Canada, 2010). Similar acts in other provinces and territories; Nova Scotia, Northwest Territories, Newfoundland and Labrador, and Nunavut, came into force
from mid to late 2000s (Department of Justice Canada, 2010). However, British Columbia, Ontario, New Brunswick, and Quebec have not yet issued specific legislation on family violence, although all provinces and territories have developed acts protecting children against violence long before regulating the issue of family violence (Department of Justice Canada, 2010). For instance, in Alberta, the Child Welfare Act, which governs the welfare of children and families, became law in 1985 (John Howard Society of Alberta, 1987).

Provinces and territories seem to have struggled to find the most adequate descriptions and approaches to tackle violence in families. For instance, most jurisdictions include overt signs and types of violence, including actual or threatened physical and sexual abuse, forced confinement and damage of property. Some legislations explicitly designate emotional abuse in their acts (Government of Alberta, 2008), whereas others appeared to be hesitated. Adding emotional abuse is considered controversial, as it is difficult to prove and to find convincing evidence in court (A. Thiessen, personal communication, 2009). The most recent legislation in Northwest Territories proclaimed in 2005 is the only legislation clearly announced financial abuse as equally harmful as emotional abuse (Department of Justice, 2010).

A report by the Department of Justice Canada (2009) avoids asserting a clear definition of family violence. The department believes the definition of family violence will continue to evolve over time as scholars continue to deepen their understanding of the nature and the extent of family violence within families (Department of Justice Canada, 2009). Instead, the department provides clear descriptions of abuse, mistreatment, and neglect that adults or children may experience, including physical abuse, sexual abuse, exploitation, neglect, psychological or emotional abuse, as well as economic or financial abuse (Department of Justice, 2009). Although there are some differences in their expressions, stance and viewpoints towards family
violence among provinces and territories, universal and underlying purposes of these laws are protection of the victims and prevention of family violence.

**Japanese Canadians.** Japanese Canadians, individuals who self-identify as of Japanese descent or are of Japanese heritage, including second or later generation of Japanese Canadians, as well as new immigrants from Japan. In addition, many Japanese citizens came to Canada to work or study temporally, and some children of international couples (one parent is Japanese) may identify themselves as Japanese.

**Conceptual Framework of Family Violence**

In this section, I introduce a conceptual framework for understanding family violence using existing theories of family violence. Numerous theories have been developed to explain the occurrence of violence in families. These theories examine family violence from various perspectives including family systems theory, social learning theory, feminist perspective, and exchange theory. Competing theories also consider contributing factors such as personality, family of origin, poverty and low social capital factors, the role of gender and the culture of violence. Although a variety of theories may be useful to examine the etiology of family violence, the vast scholarship on violence in families, including intimate partner violence, child and elder maltreatment typically derive from a specific population – white middle class western individuals and families. Dominant theories are embedded in Western assumptions, values and beliefs of aggressive individualism, competition, mastery and control over nature, Christianity, and scientism (Sue & Sue, 1999).

This dominant world view fails to recognize the uniqueness of other cultures, with minimal attention given to the experiences of ethnic minorities (Feist-Price & Ford-Harris, 1994; Krane, Oxman-Martinez, & Ducey, 2000). Dominant and privileged theoretical perspectives
contribute to a situation in which the needs and supports for victims of family violence from the dominant culture are assumed to apply universally to all ethnic and racial groups and cultures (Bent-Goodley, 2005; Krane et al., 2000). Intervention and protection services are often developed and delivered by providers from the dominant culture (Aredonodo, 1998; Feist-Price & Ford-Harris, 1994; Sue & Sue, 1999). Therefore, many services and interventions are not entirely suited for minority clients or relevant to their day-to-day life (Lee, 1991; Sue & Sue, 1999). As a result, as help-seeking behaviours and treatment needs differ from the dominant culture, ethnic minorities often underutilizes intervention services (Sue & Sue, 1999).

**Ecological framework.** Theories relevant to various types of family violence have developed differently (Malley-Morrison & Hines, 2004). However, reviewing across and within sub-fields related to domestic violence reveals that there is a great degree of overlap among these phenomenon (Tolan et al., 2006). Regardless of the forms of family violence and the differences between perpetrators and victims, there are common critical factors which lead to violence in a family: individual characteristics, relationship dynamics, and contextual/situational factors (Tolan et al., 2006).

Building on Bronfebrenner’s Ecological System Theory (1979), Heise (1979) proposed an ecological framework to understand domestic violence. She derived this framework from integrating literature across different disciplines including psychology, sociology, and criminology, as all types of family violence share the notion of embedded levels of causality (Heisei, 1998). Heisei (1998) grouped concepts within the literature into four layers represented by four concentric circles (Figure 1).

The innermost circle denotes the personal historical factors that influence behaviours and relationship roles. The second circle, the microsystem, represents the immediate context in
which abuse takes place. The third level, exosystem, comprises the institutions and social
structures, both formal and informal, including neighbourhood, social networks, and identity
groups. Finally, the macrosystem illustrates the general views and attitudes that permeate the
culture at large (Heise, 1998).

Figure 1. Ecological model for understanding family violence.
Reprinted from “Primary prevention of intimate-partner violence and sexual violence:
Background paper for WHO expert meeting” by A. Harvey, C. Garcia-Moreno, and A. Butchart,
terms in brackets were used by Heise (1998)

Currently, the modified version of ecological model has been utilized by the World
Health Organization (WHO) to conceptualize spousal violence and to plan for interventions
(2007). Similar to Heise (1998), this model categorized current domestic violence theories into
four layers: (1) individual level is most inner circle, (2) interpersonal level wraps individual
circle, (3) community level surrounds interpersonal level, and finally, (4) cultural and societal level enfold all circles as a whole (Sitaker, 2007; WHO, 2002, 2007).

The Individual level includes personal history and developmental experiences specific to individuals. The interpersonal level comprises the couple and their immediate context (e.g. communication styles, relations, and dynamics within the family). The community level, such as institutions and social structures influences the family (e.g. the environment, neighbourhoods, and community around the family). Finally, the cultural context implies socio cultural factors (e.g. societal factors social norms, gender inequality and public policy) (Sitaker, 2007; WHO, 2002, 2007).

Each level interacts with other factors at various levels. For example, a person with an aggressive personality or traits (individual) is more likely to act violently in a family or community where conflicts and disputes are habitually resolved through violence than if he or she were in a more peaceable and healthy environment (individual history and community). Men (or women) may abuse family members, because they were abused as a child, as he or she has a strong need to feel in control (individual factor), and they are in a culture in which maleness or parental authority is defined by one’s ability to respond aggressively to conflict and to teach lessons (societal), and in a place where “good” women (or children) are supposed to be submissive (societal) (Heisei, 1998, p. 285). A parent may be neglectful of his/her children, because he/she is simply incapable of providing care for children due to ongoing violence from family members (relational). Elder maltreatment may be influenced by both relationship and social factors, including social isolation result from loss of friends and family members (relational), and a societal change where people have become less respectful for the elderly in general (societal) (WHO, 2002).
Ecological model emphasizes that family violence results from the interaction of many factors at different levels. No single factor can account for why certain people are more at risk of becoming perpetrators and victims within their families than others, and why it is more common in some context than in others (WHO, 2002, 2007). This holistic perspective helps illuminate the complexity of family violence.

This Person-in-Environment framework fits well with social work practice and is a core principle, which distinguishes social work from other professions. Other social and health scientists have focused on one particular aspect of family violence, such as perpetrators internal process, personal characteristics, family relations and dynamics, and cultural norms, often neglecting associations between levels. Yet, social work professionals attempt to understand the person and the context as a whole. Cultural values influence with how people think, behave, communicate, interact, respond, and react to a specific social situation (Stolte & Fender, 2007), in this case, family violence.

**Incidents and Perception of Family Violence and East Asian Communities**

The issue of domestic violence was treated as non-existent by mainstream North Americans until recently (Bhandari-Preisser, 1999; Midlarsky, Venkataramani-Kothari, & Plante, 2006; Yick & Oomen-Early, 2008). Among many ethnic groups, especially in Asian communities within North America, domestic violence continues to be a nonissue; however, incidents of family violence have be found to be underreported among Asian Americans (Fuhua & Qin, 2009; Hines, Lemon, Wyatt, & Merdinger, 2004; Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000). The existence of domestic violence in ethnic communities slowly began to emerge as an issue in the mid 1990s, and since then an upsurge in exploring and investigating this phenomenon has occurred (Midlarsky et al., 2006; Yick & Oomen-Early, 2008).
A wide range of issues and approaches, such as exploring cultural scripts, views, values and beliefs, attitudes, help-seeking behaviours, barriers, and coping strategies have attracted attention. Currently evidence indicates that the role of race, culture, ethnicity and sociocultural contexts play an important role when examining family violence in culturally diverse communities (Bui & Morash, 1999; Fernandez, 2006; Flood & Pease, 2009; Haj-Yahia, 1998; Klevens, 2007; Malley-Morrison & Hines, 2004; Sokoloff, 2005).

Differences in perception of family violence exist among Asian communities. Common cultural beliefs and values may have influenced views of family violence and responses. This section discusses the under-representation of East Asian community in the westerners, and expands differences in perceptions of family violence among Asian communities. For propose of clarity, people from East Asian ethnic background in this section are descendants of Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Vietnamese, Cambodian, and Filipinos.

Underrepresentation of East Asian ethnic group in family violence literature. In the United States, there has been a disproportionate amount of involvement of child protection services with children of colour, especially African and Hispanic American children (42% and 15% of child welfare cases respectively). Recent national statistics show that Asian Americans and Pacific Islander children represent only 1% of the total child welfare cases (US DHHS, 1999, 2006, 2007; Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics, 2001; US Census Bureau, 2001). In addition, Asian and Pacific Islander children had the lowest rate of maltreatment (3.5 per 1,000 children) compared with African (19.9), Native (15.5), White (10.7), and Hispanic (10.4) Americans (Fuhua & Qin, 2009; US DHHS, 2006). Those low rates of child maltreatment among Asian Americans have been observed in many empirical studies (Futa, Hsu, & Hansen, 2001; Hahm & Guterman, 2001; Kenny & McEachern, 2000). Physical abuse,
however, was most widespread in Asian and Pacific Islanders when types of child maltreatment
were closely investigated (US DHHS, 2004); 16.4% of Asian and Pacific Islander children were
physically abused, whereas the national average was 12.1% (US DHHS, 2004).

Similarly, the incidents of intimate partner violence among White, African American,
Asian/Pacific Islander, American Indian/Alaska Native reported that Asian/Pacific Islander
women generally had reported lower rates of rape (10% lower than average) and physical assault
(3% lower than average) than any of the other groups investigated (Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000).
When comparing among Asian cultural groups, Leung and Chang’s (2008) findings suggested
that Vietnam, Filipino, and Korean Americans had higher self-reported incidence of physical
spousal abuse (22.4%, 21.8% and 19.5 respectively), whereas only 9.7% of Chinese and
Japanese American reported intimate partner violence. Moreover, Wu (2009) investigated the
rate of intimate homicide among all homicide cases occurred in 1990s in California and found
that East Asian Americans were slightly higher involvement in intimate homicide (8.8%)
compared with non-East Asians (6.7%) (Wu, 2009). In Canada, official statics regarding
domestic violence among East Asian populations are not available, although the demand for
domestic violence services by Chinese Canadian women has been increasing in Toronto (Tam,
2004).

Finally, although the incidence of elder abuse among older adults in East Asian
communities in North America is not known, a recent study done by Lai (2011) shed a light on
the prevalence of elder abuse in older Chinese in seven Canadian cities; 4.5% of participants in
his study reported elder abuse and neglect, which was similar to the rate found in general older
adults in Canada. However, Lai (2011) cautioned that older Chinese may have not admitted
incidents due to stigma around this topic; therefore, older Chinese participants are more likely to underreport incidents of elder maltreatment.

Although official statistics and information of family violence among East Asians in Canada is not yet known, it is reasonable to say that incidents of family violence among East Asian communities in Canada may have been under-reported. The tendency of underreport may continue, which could mask the true nature and be interpreted as not worthy of intervention, until we rule out what causes underreporting family violence in the community.

**Cultural variations in the perceptions of family violence.**

**Variations in perceptions.** Significant investigation into the discrepancies in views, perceptions, and understanding of family violence among Asian immigrant communities has been conducted (Bui & Morash, 1999; Liu & Zhang, 2005; Mo Yee & Law, 2001; Moon, 2000a; Nagpaul, 1998; Rhee, Chang, & Youn, 2003; Shibusawa & Yick, 2007; Yamawaki, Ostenson, & Brown, 2009; Yoshihama, 2001). For instance, physical violence appears to be viewed as the most concrete and tangible form of family violence among Americans, Chinese, and South Asians, because of the visible consequences such as injury (Midlarsky et al., 2006; Yick, 2000). On the other hand, interpretations of psychological, sexual, and verbal abuse appear not to be associated with family violence among these three groups (Midlarsky et al., 2006; Yick, 2000). Evidence indicates that Chinese college students who had migrated to the United States at a young age had a narrow view of what constitutes physical violence against women (Agbayani-Siewert, 2004). Agbayani-Siewert (2004) compared four ethnic groups, Filipino, Hispanic, and white students and found that Chinese students defined physically and emotionally aggressive behavior as violent less often when answering dating violence definitional scales, compared to other three groups (Agbayani-Siewert, 2004). Likewise, Korean American women often do not
perceive husbands’ violent behaviours as abusive unless the physical altercations lead to injuries, and often disregarded other forms of violence (Shim & Nelson-Becker, 2009). They categorized abusive experiences, at least to the western eyes, as couple conflicts, disputes, or personality clashes (Shim & Nelson-Becker, 2009). Japanese women seemed to have similar views to those of Chinese and Korean Americans. Yoshihama (2002b) revealed that Japanese battered women, too, underestimated husbands’ physical violence. The participants failed to recognize partners' non-physical actions, such as verbal put-downs, yelling, and attacks, as abusive (Yoshihama, 2005; Yoshioka, DiNoia, & Ullah, 2001).

In addition, while Americans and south Asians define psychological abuse to include such things as invalidation, denial, minimization, berating, and derogation, Chinese immigrants did not (Midlarsky et al., 2006). Sexual abuse connoted unwelcome touching and forced sex in North American society, while only forced sex was treated as abuse by Asian immigrants (Midlarsky et al., 2006). Sexual abuse, however, was treated as not existed in South Asian as all sex in marriage is usually considered as the right of a husband (Midlarsky et al., 2006). Furthermore, controlling behaviours such as physical restrictions, coercion, financial and emotional control, were described as another form of violence among Americans and South Asian immigrants, but not by Chinese immigrants (Midlarsky et al., 2006). Finally, another studies investigated child and elder maltreatment suggested that Chinese and Korean Americans did not recognize neglect as abusive (Fuhua & Qin, 2009; Hee Yun & Shin, 2010; Hee Yun et al., 2011; Larsen, Kim-Goh, & Nguyen, 2008).

**Child rearing practice and maltreatment.** Significant variations in perceptions of child abuse exist among ethnic communities. This occurs in part as childrearing practices are shaped by cultural beliefs and values (Fontes, 2002). Each culture excises its’ unique parenting styles
and disciplinary techniques to guide children into socially acceptable behaviours. Consequently, some forms of parenting styles, which could be interpreted as abusive and violent, or potentially harm children through North American perspectives, are seen as appropriate in other cultures. Although immigrant parents and families adjust their parenting beliefs and practices accordingly throughout the process of migration and acculturation to a new country (Kim & Wong, 2002; Maiter, Alaggia, & Trocme, 2004; Maiter & George, 2003), enduring cultural parenting beliefs seems to exist (Larsen et al., 2008; Rhee et al., 2003; Yang, 2009). For instance, south Asian parenting styles tend to be permissive, and parents do not use any physical discipline techniques when children are infants (Gupa, 2008); however, mothers often use shame and guilt to control a child’s behaviours when children did not meet parent’s expectation (Suzuki, 1980). Children are expected to be obedient to parental roles, to respect and accept the decisions by elders, and to be socialized quickly with adults. Often parents have strict expectations, which may lead to harsh consequences for children who fail to meet these expectations (Hines, Garcia-Preto, McGoldrick, Lmeida, & Weltman, 1992; Maiter & George, 2003; Maker, Shah, & Agha, 2005).

Research has investigated variations of physical discipline techniques across racial and ethnic subgroups. A general consensus among Asian Americans is that child abuse and maltreatment only exist when excessive physical punishment is inflicted on child. Physical discipline, such as striking a child is not regarded as child abuse (Tran, 1997). Korean parents have positive attitudes toward corporal punishment, as this punishment is understood as a necessary way to promote children’s desirable growth and maturation (Park, 2001, 2005; Yang, 2009). Japanese college students in the U.S. are no exception to this norm. Japanese students considered that disobeying parents, such as talking back to parent as inappropriate, and therefore, felt that children deserved more sever punishment when the child disrespect his/her parents
(Chang, Pettit, & Katsurada, 2006). Variations existed between Japanese and American students in terms of where on the body physical punishment reportedly was applied. American students indicated that the bottom and the hand were common places to be spanked, whereas Japanese students responded that the head and the face were the top two locations for receiving physical punished by their parents (Chang, et al., 2006).

Other cultural differences in behavioural practices with children may concern child protection and health care professionals from mainstream North American society. For example, Filipino Americans are comfortable seeing toddlers run naked around the house, and young children were rarely viewed as sexual beings (Gray & Cosgrove, 1985). In addition, some Asian groups (Cambodian, Korean, and Vietnamese) favour parent-child co-bathing for a longer period than do Caucasians, African Americans and Hispanic (Ahn & Gilbert, 1992). Personal anecdotes indicate Japanese parents also favour co-bathing with children (regardless of the parent and the child’s gender) until approximately 10 years old or sometimes until child reaches puberty. There is a high degree of tolerance of what may be considered as sexual abuse among Koreans and Vietnamese; Koreans and Vietnamese report that it is acceptable when a grandfather touches his 3-year-old grandson’s genital to embrace the child’s growth (Ahn & Gilbert, 1992).

Overall, it appears that Asian immigrant communities are more likely to be accepting of harsh behavioural consequences during childrearing. Child abuse and child maltreatment have begun to receive more attention as social problems in mainland China (Qiao & Chan, 2005) as well as in Japan (Segal & Iwai, 2004). Recent studies found that physical abuse happens within the context of corporal punishment (Bang, 2008), and the findings also suggest that physical punishment actually increases the risk of physical abuse (Chang, Rhee, & Weaver, 2006; Lau, Liu, Yu, & Wong, 1999).
Elder abuse. Recognition of elder mistreatment may differ among ethnic groups. Moon (1993) found that African Americans, Korean Americans, and non-Hispanic whites had different understanding of elder abuse; few Korean elder women identified abusive scenarios as abusive compared with Whites and African Americans; older Korean immigrant women in the U.S. were significantly less sensitive to potential abusive situations than Caucasian or African American (Moon & Williams, 1993). In addition, Korean Americans are inclined to be more tolerant of abuse compared to other Asian Americans.

Due to a low level of public awareness of elder abuse and maltreatment in Japanese society, no generally accepted definition of abuse exists (Arai, 2006). It is also dangerous to assume that and Japanese people living in North America are entirely aware of elder abuse in a community. Moon, Tomita, and Jung-Kamei (2002) revealed that approximately half of Japanese and Chinese American participants have difficulties labeling elder abuse and what constituted an act of mistreatment. When participants were asked to respond to statements investigating their level of tolerance for elder abuse, large number of participants responded, “Don’t know” and “It depends” (Moon, Tomita, & Jung-Kamei, 2001, p. 160). Moon, Tomita, and Jung-Kamei concluded that Asian Americans (Chinese, Japanese, Korean and Taiwanese Americans) might be unfamiliar with the problems of elder abuse and maltreatment.

Although some Japanese people are cognizant of elder maltreatment, their views and knowledge are somewhat limited. A study done by Arai (2006) indicates that Japanese adults’ perceptions toward elder abuse is relatively skewed. Physical aggression was the most frequently offered example of abusive behaviours, along with extreme neglect, such as providing no food and care. However, emotional, psychological, financial, and verbal abuse were viewed as either moderate or mild form of elder maltreatment. Victim blame was also identified among
Korean American (Arai, 2006). Thought provoking findings from Arai’s (2006) study revealed that verbal abuse and psychological neglect (e.g. avoid talking to elderly) are distinguished from psychological/emotional abuse and are rated as only mild level of abuse.

**Summary.** Perceptions of family violence among Asian ethnic communities appeared to be limited. Overtly physically aggressive actions and incidents are considered as violent and abusive behaviors, while psychological, emotional, and sexual abuse seems less so. Further there are particular circumstances when physical aggression is justified; corporal punishment is accepted as a mean to control and discipline the spouse and children when they disobey or are disrespectful toward the father and husband. Cultural beliefs and values reinforce East Asian minority group’s perspectives and attitudes toward domestic violence.

Perceptions, attitudes and interpretation of domestic violence are shaped by social norms and cultural value (Harris, Firestone, & Vega, 2005). Researchers are increasingly becoming aware that cultural beliefs and values play a greater role of understanding and intervening family violence. Thus, cultural differences among ethnic and racial groups have been paid close attention among ethnic and racial groups in the last decade (Malley-Morrison & Hines, 2004). Although emphasis and aims of studies may vary among researches, similarities between ethnic and cultural groups help us dissect family violence among ethnic populations. Deepening on understanding of cultural/ethnic differences of family violence will inform social work practice and support the development of culturally sensitive policy and programs (de Anda & Becerra, 2000). This is a demonstrable need to better understand cultural variability in perceptive of family violence. One single program and practice do not fit all.
CHAPTER THREE: THE STUDY DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

A qualitative research method was utilized to explore the perspectives and understanding of family violence among Japanese Canadian participants. Semi-structured, open-ended and in-depth focus groups and individual interviews were employed as a method of data collection. This chapter includes: study design, descriptions of research procedure, the research setting, participants and recruitment, data collection procedures and analysis, and rigour of the study.

No studies have inquired into Japanese Canadian’s perceptions of family violence to date. Given the need for research that explores the meaning and perception of family violence in the Japanese community, this study utilizes qualitative descriptive method (Brink & Wood, 1978; Sandelowski, 2000, 2010; Sandelowski & Corson Jones, 1996; Seaman, 1987; Sullivan-Bolyai, Bova, & Harper, 2005). This thesis intends to gather information, explore, and acquire knowledge of how Japanese communities’ understand family violence in order assist professionals to formulate culturally sensitive practice. In addition, this study aimed to investigate cultural factors that may influence perceptions, in order to better inform prevention and intervention approaches. Finally, this thesis intends to provide a foundation for development and exploration of knowledge specific to this culture. Without this knowledge it will be difficult to develop culturally appropriate preventative and educational material to reduce the incidence of family violence in this community.

Theoretical Framework: Perceptions and Actions are Socially Constructed

A methodology should be congruent with other elements of the research design such as method, theoretical perspective, ontology and epistemology (Crotty, 1998). Ontology is the philosophical theory of reality, including “what exists?” (Jacquette, 2002, p. 1) and “what it is to be?” (p. 13). On the other hand, epistemology concerned with the nature of knowledge and
knowing. Epistemology addresses these questions including “what is knowledge?” and “how is knowledge acquired?” (Audi, 2011, p. 247). Regarding ontology, some researchers position in a universal reality, and others believe in multiple realities (Raines, 2008). Likewise, with respect to epistemology, some scholars accept only one best way to conduct research, whereas others believe in multiple methods (Raines, 2008).

Hartman (1990) asserted, “these assumption must be explicit, because knowledge and truths can be understood and evaluated only in the context of framing assumptions” (p. 4). Thus, my study was built on philosophical assumptions that there is no absolute truth, and there are multiple ways of knowing. This study utilizes focus groups as the method of data collection, subjectivism – personal experiences are the foundation of factual knowledge and that the only valid judgments are those of the individual - as the epistemological base, and social constructionism as the theoretical framework.

A theory to understand social phenomenon, concepts, customs and practices within their social contexts is known as Social Constructivism. Social constructivism is strongly influenced by postmodernism, which believes in the existence of multiple socially produced realities (Guba & Lincoln, 2005). Epistemology in social construction assumes that knowledge and actions are socially constructed, and human interaction is critical to create realities (Bredo, 2000; Guba & Lincoln, 2005). Truths are “constructed under particular conditions” (Charmaz, 2008, p. 402), where experiences, spiritual beliefs, gender experiences or a collective unconsciousness become “intrinsically the common property of a group or else nothing at all” (Kuhn, 1970, p. 210). Social truths are also constructed as Bredo (2000) says, “society is not just an environmental variable or a content that one learns about. Rather, modern life creates the very form of modern minds” (Bredo, 2000, p. 133). Collective knowing and seeing shape the perspectives of the
public, professionals, and social institutions in which they are engaged (Mizrahi, Humphreys, & Torres, 2009). Thus, perceptions, unconscious beliefs and actions of family violence among Japanese communities in Canada can be seen as constructed, learned, reinforced, and affirmed through members experience within the Japanese cultural group implicitly and explicitly.

**Qualitative Description**

A qualitative research methodology was selected for this study for three main reasons. First, qualitative study methods seek to uncover meaning, unveil phenomenon, human behaviours and understanding, rather than hypothesizing outcomes prior to the analysis of data (Creswell, 2007; Denzin, 2008; Patton, 2002). Since there is little information in the literature on this topic, qualitative method is appropriate to explore Japanese Canadian cultural group perspective of family violence. The exploratory nature of qualitative research allows for responses from the participants perspective that reflects their thoughts, feelings, and perceptions about the phenomenon under study. The researcher’s task is to listen to their responses and to understand and describe their opinions (Creswell, 2007; Denzin, 2008; Patton, 2002). The task for the researcher according to Patton (2002) is “to understand the world as it unfolds, be true to complexities and multiple perspectives as they emerge, and be balanced in reporting both confirmatory and disconfirming evident with regarding to any conclusions offered” (p. 51).

Secondly, interviewing is at the center of social work practice and is the most consistently and frequently employed technique (Gochros, 2008). My social work education and practice have assisted me to become more comfortable interviewing participants as a method of collecting data from research. In addition, qualitative interviews allow investigators to be more flexibly than, for example, survey questionnaires and scales. Areas that might be difficult to frame in specific question can be explored, and probing questions can be used to give responses
greater depths (Gochros, 2008). In addition, interviewers can also adapt the sequence and timing of questions, modify the way questions are phrased, and decide which questions can be eliminated (Gochros, 2008).

Thirdly, qualitative research is considered a humanitarian research approach that is enlightening through people’s narratives (Patton, 2002). A humanitarian approach can add depth, meaning, and purpose to research, if it includes the notion of “empathic neutrality” (Patton, 2002, p. 50). Empathy in this context is said to develop from personal contact between an interviewer and interviewees, and enables interviewers to better understand participants’ experiences, views, perceptions, feelings and worldviews (Carey, 2009; Patton, 2002).

This qualitative and humanitarian approach to research recognizes and values the complexity of human nature, rather than attempting to simply measure or compartmentalize human nature. Humanitarian qualitative research fits this study and social work perspective in general, as the approach respects each participant’s real voice. Open-ended interview questions, for example, encourage participants to reflect and explore their own thoughts and feelings (Creswell, 2007; Denzin, 2008; Patton, 2002). In addition, a humanitarian research method is harmonious with social work values and practices, which stress the dignity of every individual and the importance of acknowledging and respecting individual narratives, while at the same time attempting to understand their meanings and being thoughtful. The real strength of qualitative methods, according to Morse (2001), depends on the researcher rather than the method and the strategies; “It is the researcher’s ability to sensitively perceive and conceptualize, balancing the grounding in the literature, the data, and the cultural context, that ultimately produces an excellent study” (p. 722).
**Descriptive qualitative research.** The choice of a qualitative descriptive approach was driven by the purpose of this research. Since there is little available information or even description of Japanese communities in Canada, this method is appropriate to illustrate Japanese Canadians’ perspectives of family violence. Sandelowski (2000) indicates that qualitative research methods offers a fundamental, comprehensive summary of an event in everyday terms and is suitable when straight description of phenomena is preferred. In addition, Patton (2002) voiced that, “qualitative data describe…they capture and communicate someone else’s experience of the world in his or her own words. Qualitative data tell a story” (p. 47). A qualitative descriptive approach also provides for “rich subject information regarding health-related concerns and issues” (Sullivan-Bolyai et al., 2005, p. 129), and is a mean for identifying “critical information for crafting new or refining existing interventions, and for furthering program development” (Sullivan-Bolyai et al., 2005, p. 129). Thus, rich descriptions by in-depth interviews of participants’ cultural worldview play an important role in revealing hidden realities and raising awareness of under-studied people and families, in this case those of Japanese descent.

A qualitative descriptive research design (Sandelowski, 2000, 2010; Sandelowski & Corson Jones, 1996; Sullivan-Bolyai et al., 2005) differs from other qualitative research methodologies, such as phenomenological study, grounded theory, and ethnographic research. For instance, it does not seek to build theory as in grounded theory, nor to uncover the essence of a phenomenon as with phenomenology. Qualitative descriptive studies are less interpretive and investigators stay close to the experiences and feelings and voices of the participants. This means that in qualitative descriptive studies, “researchers seeking to describe an experience or event select what they [participants] will describe and, in the process of featuring certain aspects
of it, begin to transform that experience or event” (Sandelowski, 2000, p. 335), and studies “allow the target phenomenon to present itself as it would if it were not under study” (Sandelowski, 2000, p. 337).

A number of researchers have supported the use of descriptive research to describe the characteristics of people, situations, or groups (Brink & Wood, 1978; Sandelowski, 2000; Seaman, 1987). Sandelowski (2000) cautioned that many researchers in the field of humanity, health and social science, have mislabelled their research methods, such as phenomenology, ethnography, or grounded theory, as they felt obliged to use well-recognized and prestigious approaches, traditional methodologies and frameworks in order to defend their efforts, credibility, validity and rigorousness of the studies. Sandelowski (2000) further claims that these researchers’ findings are, in fact, mere description of data, rather than indicating the essences of participant’s lived experiences, generating a theory, or examining shared patterns of behaviour in specific cultural groups.

**Study Design and Data Collection**

Data collection involved semi-structured, open-ended, and in-depth focus group interviews as well as individual interviews in participants’ first language (Japanese or English) in order to respect their comfortableness and to enhance more immediate and honest experiences.

**Focus groups.** Focus group method of data gathering is particularly useful when uncovering, exploring and creating awareness of a specific topic, facilitating participant’s framework of understanding, and clarifying meanings of the topic through group interaction and discussions (Krueger, 2009; Stewart, Shamdasani, & Rook, 2007), even if the topic is a sensitive subject (Streubert & Carpenter, 1999). Focus groups can also shed light on the unexpressed meaning and normative understanding that lie behind the group (Bloor, Frankland, Thomas, &
Robson, 2001). Group discussions allow a researcher to observe how groups came to their collective judgments (Bloor et al., 2001).

Focus groups have been utilized to provide in-depth data; group discussions can elicit emotions, associations, and motivations, and facilitate the reporting of subjective perspectives and experiences (Morgan, 1997; Stewart & Shamdasani, 1990). Moreover, focus groups may be considered humanistic interviews, since empathy, openness, active listening and various types of interactions among participants can be empowering for the participants and validate their views and experiences (Stewart et al., 2007). Focus groups have been used with a wide range of research topics including domestic violence (Davis & Srinvasan, 1994) and among diverse populations (Ahmad, Driver, McNally, & Stewart, 2009; Kaye, Mirembe, Ekstrom, Bantebya, & Johansson, 2005; Sullivan, Senturia, Negash, Shiu-Thornton, & Giday, 2005; Walsh et al., 2007), including Asia communities in North America (Ho, 1990; Shiu-Thornton, Senturia, & Sullivan, 2005; Siewert & Flanagan, 2000).

However, caution is warned when mixing men and women within focus groups when the topic is gender sensitive, since in some circumstances men may to be more aggressive and powerful than women, and women may be sensitive, anxious, and conform more to group pressure (Ekblad & Bffirnhielm, 2002; Frieze, 1980; Swim & Campbell, 2003). Focus groups in this study were divided by gender.

Krueger (2009) and Mack, Woodsong, McQueen, Guest and Namey (2005) recommended including a note-taker who is responsible for taking detailed notes of the discussion and observation. However, I decided not to include a note-taker in these focus groups, since the size of the focus groups were relatively small. I felt that the presence of a note-take could lead to uneasiness in the groups, intimidate participants, and possibly hinder
participants’ willingness to disclose their honest feelings. I took all notes and wrote down my observations to the best of my ability. These notes were later used as supplementary documentation during the focus group discussion, and as a tool to generate key concepts, themes, and ideas that emerged from the discussions (Krueger, 2009; Mack et al., 2005).

**Photo elicitation.** Using photographs to provoke response from participants is known as photo elicitation (Bommersbach, 2008; Heisley & Levy, 1991). This technique was used in order to evoke conversations among participants and to gain participants’ authentic views, opinions and interactions in this study. Photo elicitation has been widely employed to understand human behaviours in the area of human and social science, such as psychology, medical and nursing, education, sociology, and marketing (Entin, 1979). It is utilized as a communication tool to encourage participants to discuss more difficult and abstract concepts (Close, 2007). Images allow participants to be involved in the interview discussions more actively and to gain control over the process, rather than being passive participants (Liebenberg, 2009). Materials used for elicitation can be either taken by participants or collected by researchers (Banks, 2001). Although there is little guidance as to how to select images in research interviews, intangible and ambiguous photos are recommended in order to enter “a different part of human consciousness” than able to with words alone (Harper, 2002, p. 22) and also to encourage creative interpretations (Hewson, 1991).

The recommended number of photos used in any one research study varies widely (5 to 90 photos). However, most frequently researchers recommend using between six and twelve photos (Berg, 2001; Morgan, 1997; Stewart & Shamdasani, 1990). This researcher introduced 12 illustrations related to family violence found on Japanese and Canadian publicly accessed websites (Appendix I). Photos and images selected were suggestive of unhealthy interactions
and actions that may or may not be viewed as family violence, as well as photos that could trigger participants’ feelings and curiosity behind the scenes. In addition, some pictures were taken from the websites created by local police, law offices, newspapers, and governments, since I felt that those photos and illustrations reflect a societal view of family violence.

**Study Procedures**

**Participant recruitment criteria and procedures.** Eligibility criteria of this study included Edmonton and Calgary residence who self-identified as Japanese descent, were interested in discussing family violence, spoke English or Japanese, and were over 18 years old.

After obtaining ethics approval from the University of Calgary, I placed advertisements written in both English and Japanese at the Edmonton Japanese Community Association Centre and the University of Alberta (the International Centre, and the newsletters ran by the International Centre and Japanese Graduate Student Association) in June to October 2011 (Appendix A). Only one potential participant responded, and later cancelled due to a change in her schedule. I then decided to expand recruitment to include the city of Calgary, where the Japanese population is approximately 4,700 people; twice as large as Edmonton (Statistics Canada, 2006). As soon as the amendment of the ethics application was approved in the end of July, I contacted the Calgary Japanese Community Association (CJCA) and received permission to post advertisements at the Centre and in their newsletter. I also ran an advertisement in the Calgary Japanese newspapers. I posted the advertisements at the University of Calgary main campus as well.

Meanwhile, I purposefully sampled two individuals in Edmonton who showed interests in participating in this research as outlined in my ethics application. Two individuals spread word to their friends and gathered three other participants. This technique is called the snowball
sampling technique (Pattern, 2002). Two separate focus groups (two and three participants, respectively) were completed in Edmonton in July, 2011. I reposted the second advertisement to inform the Japanese community in Calgary regarding the time and date of focus group in September (September 24th, 25th). However, only one participant was able to attend the meeting on above dates, despite of the fact that the Calgary Japanese Community Association had advertised to all members in the community.

In the beginning of September 2011, I once again posted a flyer at the University of Alberta inviting respondents. Three people responded; however, two interview groups (one group with two participants and one person interview) were scheduled due to a difficulty in matching schedules with three responders.

In total, three focus groups (two groups of two participants, one group of three, and three individual interviews) were conducted with a total of 10 participants. It has been reported that focus groups can range in size from as small as two to three participants to fourteen (Fern, 2001; Morgan, 2011; Pugsley, 1996). In fact, small groups can be desirable depending on research topics and types of participants (Morgan, 1992). Small group size focus group have found to be used in studies of sensitive behavior (Maxwell & Boyle, 1995) and are favoured by some researchers (Barbour & Kitzinger, 1999). A specific topic with particular small group may facilitate greater discussion (Bloor et al., 2001), since small groups create intimacy among members which allows discussion to be not too personal nor too impersonal (Fern, 2001).

The focus group interviews. Semi-structured interview questions were prepared in the way that this interviewer could cover necessary topics and areas of my research questions. A semi-structured interview is appropriate when the researcher hopes to engage with the participants in order to better understand their meanings, in a style that is “somewhat
conversational” (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 27). Harrell and Bradley (2009) asserted that three types of interviews - unstructured, semi-structured, and structured – can be placed on a continuum of how much “control” the interviewer desires to have over the interaction with interviewees (p. 25). With unstructured interviews, the researcher has minimum control over how and what respondent answer within researcher’s plan, allowing stories to emerge freely (Harrell & Bradley, 2009). At the other end of the continuum, structured interviews weed out irrelevant responses (Fowler, 2002) and increase compliance with the interview plan (Patton, 2002) through strict control by interviewers (Harrell & Bradley, 2009). However, in semi-structured interviewing, placed at the midpoint between structured and unstructured, the interviewer has some discretion about the order and coverage of materials guided by research questions (Harrell & Bradley, 2009).

Each focus group was distinct from one another as the participants’ experiences, views, and the unique group dynamics contributed to differences in interviews. Although I remained open to the participants’ directions for the discussion, I brought the discussions into focus on key questions of my research: How do Japanese people see family violence? What influence does Japanese culture have on perceptions? What are barriers might prevent individuals from speaking up or seeking help in Japanese communities? What are the effective strategies for interventions?

**The setting.** Focus group interviews were conducted at the Japanese Community Centre in Edmonton and Calgary, in an office of the Faculty of Social Work, University of Calgary Edmonton site, and a group room in the University of Alberta library. Except the focus group in Calgary, the date and time of interviews were scheduled at the convenience of the participants. The interviews were informal and conversational, and the discussions sometimes extended beyond the research questions. Interviews lasted between 80 to 120 minutes.
After receiving emails (and one phone call) from potential participants indicating interests in participating focus groups, I emailed each participant the detailed information sheet of this project (Appendix B). The information sheet briefly described the purpose and process of the research, confidential issues, and management of personal information. In addition, upon meeting, participants were given consent forms and a detailed explanation and then asked to sign the form (Appendix E). The consent form explained the process of protecting personal information and managing confidentiality, including demographic data, recorded interviews, transcripts and email addresses. In addition participants were assured that there would be no repercussions should they chose to withdraw at anytime from the research process. However, participants were notified that their contributions to the point of withdrawal would remain as a part of the data. The consent form also requested permission for the interviews to be audio-recorded. None of the participants refused to be audio-recorded, nor withdrew from this research.

A general interview guide was utilized to inquire about the major points of the research (Appendix H). The first interview was slightly rigid and inflexible, since the interview guide was followed closely. The interview flow was sometimes broken as I was a novice researcher. After reflecting on the first interview, I made some adjustments: I modified the timing of introducing illustrations in the focus groups. The illustrations had been shown before the interview questions in first two interviews; however, I decided to introduce illustrations after I encouraged participants to share their perceptions of family violence in the beginning of the interview. This was in order to avoid any contamination of their initial views of family violence by the illustrations (memo, July, 2011). Subsequent interviews progressed in a more natural and
conversational manner and some of the prepared questions were discussed naturally without being prompted.

The interview guide was used in all interviews in order to maintain consistency (Krueger, 2009). However, Krueger (2009) suggests reconsidering questions if there is “silence and participants look baffled, participants tell that they don’t understand the questions, and participants talk but they aren't answering the questions” (p. 61). After conducting two focus groups, I was able to identify which questions were confusing for participants. One question was eliminated, and two more questions were added after consulting with my supervisor. Interview questions became encouragements and prompts for discussion and reflection rather than interrogative as the research process progresses.

**Qualitative software.** The qualitative software program, NVIVO 9 (QSR, 2010), was utilized for managing and organizing the interview data. This qualitative software is useful to organize and analyze unstructured information such as audio, surveys, pictures, and video. This software also helps researchers to work systematically and to justify findings with evidence (QSR, 2010). In addition, NVIVO enables researchers to code, sort, categorize, compare, and revise easily, and assists researchers to analyze within and across the interviews easily on the computer screen.

**Data analysis.** Interviews were conducted in either Japanese or English, and all six interviews were audiotaped. When Japanese was used, I transcribed and analyzed in Japanese in order to minimize the loss of cultural meaning and nuances that were specific to Japanese expressions (Maynard, 1999). Then I translated these results from Japanese into English, so that I could share the results with my advisor. Translations were verified by two Japanese-speaking students after removing confidential and private information. Each translation was then
reviewed by a native English speaking volunteer, and I reviewed the translations for any discrepancies between translations and original transcripts (Brislin, 1986). When the interview was conducted in English, I transcribed the interviews from audio recording and analyzed in English.

Qualitative descriptive approach is different from other qualitative methods, such as ethnography, grounded theory, and phenomenology, in terms of the focus of analysis. Qualitative descriptive approach aims to report a rich, natural, contextual, and straight description of an experience of an event with a low level of inference to interpret data (Sandelowski, 2000), instead of providing thick description of a culture-sharing group as with ethnography, generating or discovering a theory as with ground theory and interpreting meanings of an experience as with phenomenology (Creswell, 2007). Analytic strategies described by Miles and Huberman (1994) were used to guide analysis of the collected data, described in Table 1. In addition, conducting within-case and across-case approaches suggested by Ayres, and Kavaugh, and Knafl (2003) combined in the process of analysis in order to stay close to the participants’ voices suggested by Taylor (2011).

Miles and Huberman (1994) outlined strategies for qualitative data analysis; a) Coding of data from notes, observations and interviews, b) Recording insights and reflections on the data, c) Sorting through the data to identify similar phrases, patterns, themes, sequences and important features, d) Identifying commonalities and differences among the data and extracting them for further consideration and analysis, e) Gradually deciding on a small group or generalization that hold true for the data, and f) Examining these generalizations in the light of existing knowledge.
### Table 1 Analytic strategies

Suggested by Miles and Hubberman (1994) and Ayres, et al. (2003)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategies</th>
<th>Analytic Steps in this study</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| a) Coding of data from notes, observations and interviews | • Created contact summary and notes  
• Recorded assumptions, reflections and thoughts of interviewer |
| b) Recording insights and reflections on the data | • Read each interview to acquire whole picture of the interview  
• Review and identify concepts |
| Analytic immersions in all interviews | • Discover significant statements, patterns or phrases |
| Immersion in each interviews (within-analysis) | • Discovered significant statements, patterns or phrases |
| c) Sorting through the data to identify similar phrases, patterns, themes, sequences on the data, | • Looked for commonalities and differences across cases  
• Organized across-case findings into preliminary themes related to the research questions. |
| d) Looking for commonalities and differences among the data and extracting them for further consideration and analysis | | |
| e) Gradually deciding on a small group or generalization that hold true for the data | • Reconnection of significant statements to interviews |
| Reconnection of significant statements to interviews | • Asked myself, “What is the significance of my data?”  
• "What are the frequently said perceptions, cultural values, interventions that professionals and scholars haven't known yet?" |
| Intuiting, critical reflection | | |
| Free writing | | |
All six interviews were transcribed and compared. Insights and reflections of the data for each interviews were recorded on *Contact Summary Sheets* (Miles & Huberman, 1994), which the main issues of the interviews, including what was not asked, what could have been discussed further or changed, and what other salient and interesting were observed, were noted. After notes and insights were coded into the transcriptions, the researcher read each transcribed interviews multiple times to acquire the whole picture of the interview. Errors and omissions were also checked during this process. Second, I immersed myself in the interviews by first transcribing and then rereading the transcripts to familiarize myself with the data. Then, I focused on each interview by conducting a within-case analysis (Ayres et al., 2003) to discover main concepts and areas frequently raised in each interview. During this process, significant statements, patterns, and phrases, salient issues, and concepts were identified and grouped together into thematic folders created in the NVIVO.

After within-case analysis, I turned to across-case analysis. I compared the significant statements from each individual and focus group interviews by concentrating on searching for
commonalities and differences across interviews. Common statements and expressions were categorized into similar concepts. This across-case analysis assisted the researcher to identify categories of commonly expressed statements. These groups of categories and concepts were, then, organized into preliminary themes related to the research questions that aim to capture a description of perceptions of family violence, cultural values, and potential prevention and intervention strategies.

At this point, translated transcripts and preliminary themes in Japanese were checked again by the Japanese-speaking students for the accuracy as peer review. This researcher reviewed the coded transcripts to determine emerging themes independently. Re-examination and discussions of the data with my supervisor provided an opportunity to obtain another views and to identify interconnection between research questions, coding categories, themes from the raw data.

After the completion of categorizing and organizing data, I continued conducting across and within-case comparison to examine emerging themes through critical reflection on each steps. Free writing, recommended by Ayres et al. (2003), involves writing a brief summary of each interview while questioning myself. These questions were: What is the significance of my data?, What are the things that professionals and scholars have not known yet?, What should professionals know about Japanese Community in Canada? This stage facilitated this researcher setting aside some insignificant data, identifying concepts specific to within and across interviews, linking to other groups, such as Chinese and Korean, and formulating potential social work practice approaches.

The last step involved in gradually developing main themes and groups of sub-themes under each research question. This procedure consists of grouping significant statements re-
emerged from data analysis. A descriptive final report was written, and findings were linked or compared to existing studies.

**Study Rigour**

The issue of validity in qualitative studies has been the target of much discourse in the past several decades (Atkinson, Coffey, & Delamont, 2003; Whittemore, Chase, & Mandle, 2001). Many of the arguments have centred on the differences in assumptions of ontology and epistemology, reflected in approaches and strategies (Davies & Dodd, 2002; Milne & Oberle, 2005; Tobin & Begley, 2004; Whittemore et al., 2001). In a qualitative paradigm, some researchers reject the notion of absolute truth in the world, and assume multiple realities and subjectivism; qualitative research focuses on discovering the realities that are meaningful rather than finding a universal truth (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Patton, 2002). Guba and Lincoln (1985) suggested the following criteria to establish rigour of qualitative research - credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability. However, Guba and Lincoln’s (1985) classic work have been criticized, since their criteria were strongly influenced by the positivism tradition, which assumes that there is a tangible and unchanging reality.

Since postmodernists believe that there are multiple realities and “no one can step into the same stream twice” (Raines, 2008, p. 456), transferability and dependability are not the best way to prove reliability of the qualitative study. Therefore, I am more comfortable with the approach suggested by Whittemore, Chase, and Mandle (2001) in order to enhance the rigour of this study: (1) **authenticity**, or attention to the voices of participants, (2) **credibility**, a reflection of how believable results are, (3) **criticality**, the critical appraisal of every decision made throughout the research process, and (4) **integrity**, demonstrated by on-going reflection and self-criticality of the research (Table 2).
Table 2 Criteria and Procedures to Ensure Rigor of the Study
by Whittemore et al. (2001)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria of Rigour</th>
<th>Steps</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Authenticity</strong> - attention to the voices of participants</td>
<td>• Planned recruitment strategies, focus group size and types&lt;br&gt;• Carefully balanced between being in the background and the foreground of conversation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Participants have the freedom to speak&lt;br&gt;• Participants’ voices are heard</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Credibility</strong> - a reflection of how believable results are</td>
<td>• Checked transcription and translation multiple times&lt;br&gt;• Conducted peer debriefing&lt;br&gt;• Provides both the context and complete sentences of verbatim quotes to justify themes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Participants’ perceptions are accurately represented</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Criticality</strong> - the critical appraisal of every decision made throughout the research process</td>
<td>• Used variety of appropriate methods to check the findings&lt;br&gt;• Supervisor and colleague reviewed codes thought the analysis&lt;br&gt;• Researcher was open to different perspectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Be critical in the process of decision making, findings, negative instance, and own biases&lt;br&gt;• Peer review</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Integrity</strong> - on-going reflection and self-criticality of the research</td>
<td>• Reflection and journaling were kept&lt;br&gt;• Critically analyzed if the findings were distorted or assumed due to researcher’s bias&lt;br&gt;• Went back to participants to review the findings when the data analysis was completed&lt;br&gt;• Discussed codes and themes with peers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Reflecting on researcher bias&lt;br&gt;• Respondent validation&lt;br&gt;• Peer review</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Authenticity* means that participants have the freedom to speak, and their voices are heard (Milne & Oberle, 2005; Whittemore et al., 2001). In this study, sampling technique, the small group sizes and attention to gender mix created an environment that allowed participants’
freedom to speak. I closely and respectfully attended to participants’ statements and encouraged further clarifications and discussions. I also attempted to maintain a balance between the role of moderator and that of a listener to enhance depth and breadth of data.

*Creditability* is closely linked to authenticity. It requires the accurate analysis and presentation of participants’ perceptions, without distorting, adding biases, and inadequate portrayal (Milne & Oberle, 2005; Whittemore et al., 2001). The credibility of the qualitative research must be directly related to its study purpose, and must capture and portray a truly insider perspective (Milne & Oberle, 2005). Therefore, the researcher’s ability to capture and portray a truly emic or insider (participants’) perspective is key to achieve rigour or the study (Neergaard, Olesen, Andersen, & Sondergaard, 2009), while critically analyzing researchers’ biases, which will be discussed in the next section. For this study, credibility was arrived at through various strategies and steps. This researcher probed transcriptions and translations multiple times, conducted thorough content analysis and peer debriefing, and provided both context and complete sentences of verbatim quotes to justify themes in the final report.

*Criticality* in a qualitative study is the constant critical evaluation of every decision made throughout the research process; it is to detach from personal interpretations, assumptions, and knowledge background biases (Whittemore et al., 2001). In the current study, the majority of decisions were made through consulting with my supervisor. As for generating findings, I utilized a variety of methods to ascertain the accuracy and authenticity discussed above. In addition, NVIVO was utilized to analyze translated transcriptions to examine if the findings generated in Japanese were accurate. Throughout the data analysis process, my supervisor and colleagues reviewed and provided insight to coding and themes.
Integrity, which is achieved with constant reflection on potential sources of bias (Whittemore et al., 2001), was carried out in this study. Integrity and criticality are constituted through recursive and repetitive reviews (Ambert, Adler, Adler, & Detzner, 1995). Reflection and journaling, in which feelings and thoughts at the time were written, assisted me to become aware of my biases and assumptions. Reflection of my personal background and experiences as a Japanese woman living in Canada is described in Appendix J. For instance, the researcher’s journals allowed me to objectify emotional reactions and opinions towards the issue. I also occasionally debriefed with a colleague to process my emotional reactions (for example, sadness, anger, frustration, disgust and despair) and biased views (feminist perspective and feeling of inferiority being a member of minority group) towards the issue to bring it to personal recognition. These procedures helped me to identify and withhold my personal biased and related feelings and to stay as open as possible throughout the research. In addition, in order to obtain integrity, all participants were asked to review the summaries of interviews in order to verify, if this researcher had captured their views correctly. I also relied on peer-review to check personal biases and prejudged opinions.

This study was conducted based on the qualitative descriptive research method and analysis. I employed focus group interviews with open-ended and semi-structured interviews and with an aid of the photo elicitation technique as participants’ communication tool. I also used thematic analysis to describe themes and categories. Through within and across interview analysis, I identified groups of meaningful statements, coded, categorized and identified themes and subgroups. Information about the demographic characteristics of participants and findings from the interviews will be presented in the next chapter.
CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

This study explores and describes how Japanese Canadian participants in Edmonton and Calgary view family violence, how Japanese culture impacts their perceptions and cope with family, and what their perceived prevention and intervention strategies are. A rich and varied understanding of the issues, risk factors, attitudes, as well as strategies for dealing with family violence were articulated by participants. This chapter presents the demographic characteristics of participants, followed by the findings addressing each of the categories of research questions.

Participants

As seen in the Table 3, ten self-identified Japanese (nine females and two males) participated in this study: nine participants were from Edmonton and one male participant was from Calgary. The participants’ age ranged from 20s to 60s; eight of whom were between 30 and 40 years of age, and all participants reported that they are married or in a long-term relationship. Participants’ length of residence in Canada varied from five months to 18 years; however, half of participants’ lengths of stay were clustered around less than two years. Participants’ educational background ranged from a high school diploma to master’s degree, and occupational backgrounds were reported as homemakers, students, and a professional. Although experience of family violence was not included as participant recruitment criteria, three participants revealed that they have experienced or witnessed family violence.

Descriptive Themes Emerged from the Data

The seven steps of qualitative descriptive analysis discussed in the earlier chapter provided a formative guide for reviewing and organizing date into small groups, which were common and similar in meanings. Consistent with within-case and across-case approaches to qualitative data analyses (Ayres et al., 2003), this researcher compared participant statements
Table 3. Demographic data of participants

(n=10)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Gender &amp; Age</th>
<th>Immigration status</th>
<th>Length of residence in Canada</th>
<th>Experiences of family violence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>P 1</td>
<td>F 38</td>
<td>Permanent Resident</td>
<td>5 years</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>P 2</td>
<td>F 68</td>
<td>Temporary permit</td>
<td>5 months</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>P 3</td>
<td>F 36</td>
<td>Permanent Resident</td>
<td>5 years</td>
<td>Yes (her grandmother in Japan - emotional)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>P 4</td>
<td>F 35</td>
<td>Permanent Resident</td>
<td>3 1/2 months</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>P 5</td>
<td>F 36</td>
<td>Permanent Resident</td>
<td>6 months</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>P 6</td>
<td>M 31</td>
<td>Canadian Citizen</td>
<td>31 years</td>
<td>Yes (as a child in Canada – physical and emotional)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(born in Canada)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>P 7</td>
<td>M 31</td>
<td>temporary Permit</td>
<td>2 years</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>P 8</td>
<td>F 21</td>
<td>Canadian (Dual citizen)- born in Japan</td>
<td>2 years</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>P 9</td>
<td>F 38</td>
<td>Permanent Resident</td>
<td>18 years</td>
<td>Yes (her mother in Japan – physical and emotional)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>P10</td>
<td>F 29</td>
<td>Temporary Permit</td>
<td>2 years</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

related to the four overarching research questions: 1) How the participants perceive and understand family violence, 2) How Japanese culture is seen as contributing to these perceptions, 3) What perceived barriers exist in discussing and increasing awareness of family violence within Japanese communities, and 4) What strategies for intervention and prevention might participants suggest. These questions directed this researcher through the analyzing process with the low levels of interpretation.

Perceptions of Family Violence

After the content analysis, two themes regarding perceptions of family violence were revealed: a bounded view of family violence and attitudes toward family violence and victims. Table 4.1 illustrates brief descriptions of the themes following detailed and extensive elaborations on findings.
Table 4.1 Perceptions of Family Violence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A bounded view of family</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>violence</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family violence is</td>
<td></td>
<td>Family violence doesn’t happen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>uncommon</td>
<td></td>
<td>around me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surprised to hear when</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>family violence occur</td>
<td></td>
<td>close to them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specific properties of</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>family violence</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct form of violence is</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>family violence indirect</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>forms are not</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Unless it is extreme,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>others are bullying and</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mean behaviours</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violence is legitimate…</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• when disciplining</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• degree, intensity, and</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>frequency are managed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Views of risk factors and</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>causes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A lack of ability to solve</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>problems and manage stress</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual characteristics</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discipline</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power balance in a family</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elder Abuse</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of recognition on</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>elder abuse</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitudes toward family</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>violence and victims</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victims’ and his/ her</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>family’s responsibility</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People are uncooperative</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>because getting involved in</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>private issue is</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>troublesome</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poking someone’s nose is</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>not appropriate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victim blaming</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speak No Evil</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**A bounded view of family violence.**

*Family violence is not common.* Participants appeared to have a bounded view toward family violence. A bounded view means that there seemed to be a clear boundary around the definition and what constitutes family violence among participants. A commonly expressed impression regarding family violence was that family violence is not common. Responders frequently asserted that family violence does not happen around them. A majority of participants
articulated that they felt surprised when their friends had asked for help. Some participants indicted, “Oh no, it’s unbelievable” or “It was very surprising” to hear family violence from close acquaintances and friends. A male participant said:

ファミリーバイオレンスがリアルじゃない、自分の中では余り存在しているんですけれども、存在していない様に思っている。実感が湧かないというか、知ってているんですけどね、こういうの（イラスト）見ると…。テレビでは見た事有るし、ドラマの中でも見た事あるし、ニュースでもたまに出るけれども、（日本人一般は）自分には関係ない事だと思っていると思います。

Family violence seems very unrealistic to me. I guess it exists, but I feel there is not. It’s not real to me. I know the issue if I see them (illustrations) …. I have seen on dramas, and sometimes on News, but they (Japanese people in general) think they have little to do with it. (Participant 7)

**Specific properties of family violence.** Participants identified properties when it came to determining whether behaviours would be considered family violence or not including direct, physical, legitimacy, intensity and frequency (Figure 2). Participants attempted to evaluate behaviours and actions through comparing their own specific views of the properties of family violence.

**Direct.** The most commonly identified property of violence was the direction of the behaviours; in other words, where the violent behaviours are directed was a clear indication of violence. Responders considered behaviours to be family violence when violent actions were one-directional. Many participants articulated that abusive behaviors are always a one-way
traffic - from perpetrator to victim. If abused person fights back, it is not considered family violence. One participant indicated, “言い合いしているだったら良いんだけど、一方的に言われるんだったら、そうじゃない？って思う。It’s o.k., when a couple is having a quarrel. If one person is yelled at all the time, like one-way, I might say to her that is abusive, isn’t it?” (P 3).

Another property was the notion of direct, which refers to how direct and apparent the behaviours are and how the impact of behaviours is directly visible; in other words, whether the actions are direct or indirect, with directly visible as a strong indication behaviours to be

**Figure 2 Properties of family violence.**

Shaded area indicates participants’ perception of what is considered to be family violence.
considered as family violence. One participant praised a male perpetrator (in the discussion) who intentionally avoided throwing an object at his wife. The participant indicated, “でも、ちゃんと考えて、人に当たらない様にしたんでしょ。But, he thought about her and avoided throwing things at her” (P 2). Another participant expressed, “絶対に、indirect ではなく、direct なもの。絶対こう、手を出して、足を出しているのがバイオレンス。Violence is absolutely direct, not indirect. When people hit and kick. That is absolutely violence” (P 8). As a result, verbal and psychological abuse may not be recognized as another form of violence. One participant clearly articulated that verbal abuse was not part of what she considered to be domestic violence. Her response to the illustration depicting verbal abuse was, “直接手を出していないから、言葉だから、あまりそういう(ドメスティックバイオレンス)のイメージが無い。I don’t get an impression that (the illustration of verbal abuse) is domestic violence, because that’s just words. He is not hitting her husband directly” (P 5). In addition, other participant indicated unfamiliarly of emotional abuse, when he saw the picture of child who may see parents arguing or fighting at home:

家庭内暴力とは思わないですね。家庭暴力の一部ではあるかも知れないで すけれど、直接的に、彼に対するものだとは思わないですね。家庭内暴力を 見ている人、という感じですかね。I don’t think that is family violence. It may be a part of domestic violence (violence between couples), but I don’t think that is violence to the child. I guess the child is an observer of the domestic violence. (Participant 7)

Neglect is rarely considered as a form of family violence, since family violence is, “肉体か、なにか言葉を浴びせる。その、何もしないっていう事よりは、家庭内暴力って聞くと、何かする。physical or maybe verbal abuse ... When I hear family violence, I imagine that it is
addition of actions, rather than omission of actions.” (P 7). In addition, some participants explained that some actions are often interpreted differently compared to mainstream Canadian society. Participants indicated that some form of abuse could be considered as bullying, harassment, or mean behaviours among Japanese people, unless actions are extreme, such as causing injuries, bruises, or other physical symptoms. One participant expressed:

In Japan, this (the picture illustrating verbal abuse from a wife to her husband) is close to bullying, rather than abuse?.... Like this picture too, if a woman says to her husband, it would become belittled, more like bullying. (Participant 1)

Legitimacy. Another property of family violence, the legitimacy of the behaviour associated with disciplining children’s misbehaviours, was commonly raised. Physical punishment was considered a valid form of discipline for children. One participant pointed out:

To me, when I see parents spanking their children, I’d think, “Oh that parent is disciplining their child very well.” For example, when I took a train (in Japan), I saw a child went wild and were loud. Their parents warned the child many times, but the child didn’t listen to his/her parents. So the dad took the child and went down to the platform, and started spanking his child. And I guess people
りしているなって日本だと思う。その、顔を叩くとか、そういうのはダメですけど、すごい暴力だと駄目ですけど。in Japan in general would be impressed, “Oh, those parents are very disciplinarian.” Of course, slapping their face is not O.K, or hitting very violently. (Participant 7)

Another participant expressed that, regardless of the types of punishment, children usually understand punishments as their consequences of misbehaviours, and they would not question the consequence as child abuse:

それ（子供が罰として外に出されている）が別に虐待って言う風には。自分が悪い事したから、こうなるだろうって言うのは分かっているから、別に虐待って言う程でもない。I don’t think that’s (parents placed the child to stay outside as a punishment) child abuse. Because, children understand that when they misbehaved, there are consequences of misbehaviours. It’s not necessarily abuse. You know, nothing happens after that. (Participant 3)

Likewise, other participants justified parents’ love as legitimizing scolding. She said, “愛情のある怒り方だなって思ったら、笑って通り過ぎるけど、これはちょっとおかしいなって思ったら、私は（警察に）電話ししょうかも。If I feel that the parents are scolding children with love, I would smile and pass them. But if I feel something wrong with their scolding, I would phone to the police” (P 4). Others felt similarly, “その違い（悪い怒り方とよい怒り方）は、まだ愛情が有って、やっている。だから、怒られている方も、違和感が無かった。The difference (between abusive and normal scolding) is that whether the scolding, because parents love their children. So, those children who were scolded didn’t really feel abused” (P 5).
Intensity and frequency. Participants suggested that intensity and frequency are other properties to consider when evaluating behavior as family violence or not. The intensity, or the how hard the power and force is, appeared to be the best predictor of family violence among informants. Participants repeatedly indicated that the degree of force should be considered when parents spank their children. Informants also pointed out the importance of determining a boundary where the actions become very violent and dangerous:

If the actions, like violent behaviours, or verbal abuse are getting sever than usual, so then that would get more dangerous, would it. The actions could escalate.... So, a husband who is used to avoid throwing at his spouse, but he may start throwing bigger things at her eventually, and that may hit her. I guess that could happen, and that’s considered as family violence. (Participant 2)

Members also stressed frequency of abuse and violence; if the action happened only once or twice, it would not be considered as family violence. Behaviours have to be continuous in order to be considered as abuse. One participant said: その後（罰として子供を外に出したり、叩いたりする）何があるかって言った何も無いし。それが頻繁だともね、有るかもしれないけど、一回きりとか。But if it (putting children outside or spanking children) happens frequently, it may be abuse, but if it happens just once, it’s not (child abuse). Similar, other participant indicated: "程度、限度が有りますね。何回も何回もやると、幼児虐待ってなりますよね？ It’s
depending on frequency. There is a limit in terms of the degree and frequency. If people do the same actions again and again, it becomes child abuse, right?” (P 9).

**Views of risk factors and causes.**

**Problem solving skills and stress management.** Themes emerged regarding participants’ views of risk factors; informants considered that perpetrator’s lack of problem solving skills, individual characteristics, disciplining techniques, and power in a family were the cause of family violence. The most frequently mentioned source of family violence was an abuser’s lack of ability to resolve personal problems issues and interpersonal conflicts. Many participants stated that Japanese people are not assertive, and are hesitant to express their feelings and thoughts to other people; thus, they are unable to find healthy ways of solving individual conflicts. Frustrations, stresses, and other feelings accumulated by unresolved conflicts, which abusers are no longer able to suppress, eventually erupt into violence at home. For instance, a lack of communication in relationships (in and outside of the family) contributes to stress in their lives and may lead to family violence. Many participants indicated that “日本人はその違い(意見、性格や価値観の違い)を黙って黙って、でもどんどん積み重なっていて、爆発する。They (Japanese people) are silent about the differences (in opinions, personal characteristics and values), and don’t discuss about it. They stack up, and finally they unleash their frustration” (P 8). Another person noted that the cause of family violence is when abusers bring home their unsolved conflicts at work:

もし外で、対等に喧嘩してくれば、発散するだろうけど、それが出来ない訳でしょう。だからむしろ、ヤクシャして帰って来て、奥さん comes back home from work in a bad mood,
Some pointed out that Japanese men, who are usually shy and quiet, use alcohol as their method of releasing their stress and frustrations at home. Another participant pointed out, “もし言ったら、話合って解決するのでは？と思うのを、言わずに回りくねってとか。If (Japanese) people are more vocal, they would be able to discuss and solve problems, wouldn’t they? But they don’t, or say in a roundabout sort of way” (P 4).

Individual characteristics. Participants perceived that individual characteristics contributed to family violence such as mental health issues, addiction, and personality disorders. Participants believed an abuser may have mental illness, violent and unhealthy personality or temperament, or an alcohol addiction. Some participants attributed abuse to unconscious desires and attractions toward certain populations; it was pointed out that perpetrators were searching for women who can be easily controlled. One participant stated that basically, some people, “誰か下にいると安心するみたいな。 (People) may feel safe and secure when there is someone beneath them” and to look down on. In addition, another participant pointed out that some men are selective; they tend to look for women who “抵抗しない、逆らわないっていう。wouldn’t resist or disobey.” Another participant described many abusive cases among couples of Canadian husbands and Japanese wives; Japanese women were often targeted of abuse because there is a strong stereotypical image that a Japanese woman is “静か。quiet” and raised as “良妻賢母。A dutiful wife and devoted mother.” Participants indicated that there are some family violence cases among international couples of Canadian husbands and Japanese wives. Some Canadian
husbands are not cooperative obtaining permanent resident visa for their spouses in order to maintain control over their wives.

Moreover, another commonly discussed risk factor for family violence was pressure, stress and lack of flexibility in people’s lives:

I think a lack of flexibility, that’s a big thing. In terms of time and financial.

People are becoming self-occupied, and they take their frustrations on others... If the frustration were directed onto their children, it would become child abuse, and if it directs to husbands, it would become violence between couples. The person might have been able to suppress their frustration until a certain point.. but I think people having less room to breath in their lives, I guess. (Participant 7)

Similarly, participants pointed out that some Japanese immigrant families face enormous stresses and pressure, while they are in a process of relocating and integration to a new country. Some participants confessed that they had seen many Japanese new immigrant families who struggled to make ends meet in new cities. In addition, wives put too much pressure on their husbands, as Japanese wives usually become homemakers and relied on their husbands’ income as soon as they have children:
You cannot do that in here, it’s probably very hard for someone who doesn’t speak English properly, doesn’t have credentials to get a good job, right?

I think that only problem with Japanese people is that in Japan and here (Canada) is...they just don’t know how to deal with environment around them. I think they (Japanese people) have too much to deal with it (the new environment) and they don’t know how to deal with their emotions, they don’t know how to cope with their emotions. They don’t know how to cope with stress. (Participant 6)

Disciplining. Another risk factor of family violence is related to the method of disciplining children. Some Japanese parents still impose corporal punishment and humiliation on their children as the form of their discipline. For example, participants observed cases recently in Japan that “例えばですね、故意に身ぐるみは意で、外に出す。それは、虐待ですね。良く有りますよ。服を脱がせて、下着姿で子供を外に出すとか。Parents intentionally make their children naked and put them outside (of the fence or by entrance door when children misbehaved). That’s abuse. It happens all the time. Put them outside with just underwear” (P 9). The same participant also observed a Japanese mother in Edmonton spanked her child when her child did not pay attention to an instructor at the Japanese community school. The participant attempted to convince the mother to stop spanking.

The participant indicated:

As long as the actions are considered as the purpose of discipline, nobody reports it. I think people feel that’s appropriate. If that’s the way of disciplining, it’s o.k. I feel a lot of people think that way.
Power and hierarchy. Power within a family was also considered as a contributing factor to family violence. For instance, the traditional, hierarchical, patriarchal family style and strict gender role allow a husband to have control over his wife. Controlling behaviors include treating his wife as “a slave,” and his house, wife, and children as “his property,” limiting wives outing, and releasing stress upon his wife and children. In addition, participants pointed out the typical case the cause of elder abuse in Japan; elder abuse occurs when adult children gain power over their parents (in-law parents), as their parents age and lose authority. When parents are younger and healthy, the parents controlled the house. However, once parents started becoming aged, immobile and require assistance, it is now the adult children who are in power and taking charge the house. Children, who may have had a bad relationship with their parents, start paying off their old grudge when their parents became weaker and powerless.

Elder abuse. Although the spousal violence and child abuse were frequently raised during focus group discussions, participants less frequently identified the issue of elder abuse. Some participants indicated, “高齢者に対しての暴力はバッて出てこなかったですね。確かにね、家庭内暴力ですもんね。Elder abuse didn’t come off the top of my head. It is surely family violence” (P 7). In addition, participants believed that elder abuse might not be happening in Japanese communities in Edmonton and Calgary, because “our elderly are very active within the community. They got a good network” (P 6).”

Attitudes toward family violence.

Troublesome. A majority of participants indicated that Japanese people in general are not enthusiastic about becoming involved with families experiencing family violence. Some related that many are uncooperative because dealing with family violence is a bothersome affair. One
participant described an incident in Japan where her friend was run over by her husband. Although construction workers witnessed the incident, those workers did not rescue her and were uncooperative providing reports to the police. Another participant expressed that even Edmonton Japanese people would avoid becoming involved with the case of family violence, because “面倒くさい。なんか足を入れたら、首を突っこんだら。It is troublesome. Once we step into ...get involved.” Another participant remarked that people tend to keep away from getting involved with family violence cases, since “自分の生活で、手一杯だから。People are busy with their lives.” Another participant confessed that she might not assist her friend, if her friend comes to seek for advice. She explained, “私がめちゃめちゃや、その子のために離婚させた所で、その後の生活とか、責任が取れない。No matter how hard I try to make them (the couple) divorced, I cannot take all responsibilities of her life after divorce” (P 4).

**Insiders and outsiders.** Another reason why general public in Japan is reluctant to interfere in family violence is out of respect for family’s privacy. Family matters should be dealt with inside of the family, not by outsiders. If a person in a community, especially who is not blood related, attempts to intervene, the person would be considered as “nosey” and strange person who “pokes his/her nose into others’ family business.” Most participants expressed that they would be hesitated to cross the boundary of insiders and outsiders, even for friends who seek help. It is because “あまり、人の家の領域に入りたくない。I don’t want to invade some family’s territory” (P 7).

**Blaming the victim.** Participants also suggested the existence of negative attitudes toward victims. Victims are frequently seen as responsible or deserving of the abuse, and should act accordingly to the abuser in order to not to be abused next time. For example, some participants indicated that victims are blamed, even by their own parents, rather than provided with supports.
It is usually female victims who were accused of causing the husband abusive. A participant indicated that her own mother was blamed by her mother (participant’s grandmother): “あんた、何かしたんでしょ? You must have done something wrong!”, “あんた、何か悪い事いったんでしょ？You must have said something wrong to your husband”, and “ちゃんとうまくやりなさい。You should do better.” Because of these comments, victims blame themselves for their lack of abilities to manage the situation. One participant’s shared an example of a friend who felt the violence was her fault and that she was deserved to be hit.

In addition, another participant shared her experience of assisting another woman escape from an abusive husband. The two women (one of whom had just arrived at Edmonton) became acquainted through the Internet as both were from the same hometown. The acquaintance explained that her husband had confiscated her passport and belongings soon after she arrived from Japan, at her husband’s house. In addition, she was confined in the basement, beaten, strangled, and sent to a psychiatric hospital after falsely being accused by her husband of trying to hurt their children. Although these difficult circumstances persisted for many months no one from the Edmonton Japanese community offered any help to either the participant or her acquaintance. According to the participant, a majority of people in the community advised the participant to “ほっとけばいいじゃない。it’s better leave her alone” because “それは彼女の責任じゃないの？That’s Mrs.XX’s responsibility, isn’t it?” Some people even questioned the act of helping: “ 何で私が、助けなきゃいけないの？そういう風にだまされたのは、自分が悪いんじゃないんですか？自己責任。Why should I help her? It is Mrs. XX’s fault. Mrs. XX wasn’t able to see through and protect her self. That’s why she was tricked like that. That’s her responsibility” (P 9).
*Speak no evil.* Not only among Japanese immigrants, but also among Japanese Canadians, the issue of family violence is considered as a taboo. Participants referred saying, “*Speak no evil, see no evil, hear no evil.*” Many participants indicated that people in Japanese community do not want to talk about family violence, because speaking about negative topics depresses them. The Japanese Canadian shared his thoughts:

*I think some people... a lot people chose to ignore it (family violence)... Some Japanese people only want to see the good things. A lot of people want to see good things. I don’t want to hear about the bad thing. They don’t want to hear about either, because it affects your emotions, and get sad... Because Japanese people live day-by-day, it’s hard to control emotions. I think that’s way they always try to stay positive. They try to stay positive is to just shut down so many other things and only one that they want to see.*

(Participant 6)
Japanese Cultural Influence on Perceptions

Participants were asked to reflect on the connection between their culture and their perception of family violence. Four major themes emerged from the analysis: *expressions*, *traditional family structure*, and *child rearing styles*. Table 4.2 includes tables for lists to assist further understanding, and these themes will be discussed separately below.

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<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
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<td>The term “暴力(Violence)” implies extreme form</td>
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**Japanese language: Labels and terms.** The expression of concepts such as family violence within the Japanese language may have shaped participants’ understanding of family violence. Participants pointed out that there are two Japanese words to represent the term
domestic violence: “家庭内暴力” (Kateinai bouryoku) and “ドメスティックバイオレンス” (Domestic Violence). The term expresses a particular view of family violence; the first term connotes juvenile violence towards parents, and the latter term implies spousal violence.

One participant indicated that the word “暴力（Violence)” in Japanese implies forceful power and “肉体的、身体的な感じ。Physical or bodily impression.” Participants commented that there is a lack of terms and words in Japanese to express types of violence other than physical. Verbal abuse, neglect and other behaviors were not incorporated into a perception of family violence among newcomer participants. One participant pointed out, “psychological abuse って言うのは、パッとイメージがわからないですね。The word, ‘Psychological abuse’ I cannot really imagine what’s like” (P 7). This participant also struggled to understand the concept of ‘neglect’ because there is no applicable Japanese word to relate to this form of family violence. He pointed out that he had heard problems in Japan of adult children ignoring their elders, such as avoid talking, eating meals, and spending time together, despite living under the same roof. However, he was not sure how to describe this maltreatment in Japanese:

After seeing this picture (an elder is treated as a burden), ignoring and disregarding the elderly is also... I am not sure that the term violence is the right word or not. But would it also a form of abuse? ...Ignoring a family member at home... we don’t have words...there is no words for describing that. (Participant 7)

Traditional family structure.
Patriarchy. The second theme, traditional family structure and beliefs, may have influenced participants’ view of family violence. The cultural value of patriarchy and filial piety regulates Japanese familial structure and function. A belief in patriarchy allows a husband to maintain privileges and control over his wife and children and to expect his wife to obey. One participant pointed out that she had a friend who was concerned about going out without her husband’s permission. When the participant and her friends were arranging the time to meet over coffee next time, the participant’s friend said, “ちょっと主人に聞いてみないと (行ってても いいか分からない)。I have to ask my husband (if I can go or not)’” when her husband was in a good mood. The participant was surprised to hear, because “何も夜中じゅう遊ぶ訳じゃないんだよ。We are not planning to go out for all night long” (P 2). Another participant said that a husband is the master of the house, “家は自分の世界だから、自分が君臨しても良い。だから自分の思い通りにならなかったら、発散させる。His home (inside of his house) is his world, so he can dominate the house. So, if things don’t go as he wants, he can release his anger” (P 9).

Moreover, a wife in Japan is expected to “shut up and obey to their husbands,” and be a “slave” of her husband. The participant whose mother was abused by her husband (participant’s father) questioned this cultural belief:

どこまで従順であるべきなのか、制限  
無いですね。うちの母なんて、靴下  
も履かせていましたからね。朝起きた  
ら、一式そろっていなきゃ行けないん ですよ、上から下まで。。で、しかも  
も、ネクタイの色とか、そのスーツに  

How obedient a wife should be to her husband…there is no limitation. My mother used to put on his socks. When he was up in the morning, there should be a set of clothes ready, from the top to the bottom. What’s more, my father
She confessed that it was not until she came to Canada 18 years ago, when she realized that her parents were in an abusive relationship.

*Filial piety.* It is not only wives, but also children are expected to be obedient and loyal to their parents, especially to fathers. One participant indicated, “父親って言うのが、大黒柱で君主みたい。父親に従順に従うみたいな感じで、子供も父親に迷惑かけないようにする。*A father is the breadwinner and the lord in the house, and then children have to obey their fathers. They work hard not make their fathers upset*”(P 4). In addition, participants still see a hierarchical relationship within a Japanese family, and children have to follow their father.

The concept of filial piety is demonstrated by participants who expressed sadness regarding elder abuse and that the perpetrators are often adult children or son/daughter in-laws: “*自分が育てられただって事、すっかり忘れているよね。People forget that they were raised by their parents.*” Other participants indicated that living arrangements based on filial piety has influenced their view of elder abuse. Because of the value of filial piety, adult children live with their parents and take care of their aging parents. However, living with their parents often creates conflicts and disagreements, and these unsolved issues could cause elder abuse. The conflicts become out of control, and participants view that this is the typical cause of elder abuse in Japan. Furthermore, participants attributed that not having the value and obligation of filial
piety encourages Japanese Canadian elders to be more “independent and active in the community”, because “子供が親の面倒を見る見たい事が無いですからね。日本はそれが善で、当たり前な事。In here, there is no obligation for children to take care (and live in the same house) with their parents.. But in Japan, it is valued and expected” (P 9).

Child rearing practice. The third theme related to Japanese culture that has impacted participants’ views of family violence is that of Japanese-specific child rearing styles. Many participants pointed out that Japanese parents were often strict with their children. This Japanese Canadian participant recalled his childhood:

I speak pretty good Japanese, but I think all that is because my parents are strict on me.
So I was forced to study...I had to go to 日本語学校 (Japanese language school) as a young kid and even after school, I wasn’t allowed to go play with other kids. I had to go home. Finish my 塾 (a private tutoring school) and finish all my homework.... It was traumatizing. My mom set a rule that I had to be home before the sun went down. But you know, after school and winter, the sun was already down before 5 or 6 o’clock. So I had to stay home. But when I was at home, I’d had to always study and there were a lot of pressure. The way they made me study was affecting my self-esteem... it’s probably affected me emotionally too.

Other male participant expressed his fear toward his father:

例えば、親父に殴られたとか、そういうのを、友達と一緒に言い合っていた。「親父は昔怖かった」
My friends and I used to chat about own father, for example, we both used to be spanked by father, and ‘My father was used to be very frightening.’ I heard quite often from my friends saying, ‘when I behaved
ツンとっと言うのは、良く聞きませ ね。でも、それを聞いて、「あっ、君のところは、家庭内暴力だったんだね」って思った事は、少々も、一度も無かったです。

But hearing that, I would have never imagined, ‘Oh that was domestic violence.’

(Participant 7)

In relation to a strict parenting style, how parents punish their children in Japan also influences participants’ views on violence. A majority of participants expressed that physical punishment and public humiliation are still frequently used strategies to teach the consequences of misbehaviours in Japan. For instance, a participant described a time when she and her Canadian boyfriend went to Japan in the summer of 2010, and they witnessed participant’s friends spanking their children in the head in front of them. Her boyfriend was upset when not only seeing the father spanking on his child’s head and arms, but also seeing no other adult friends (when they were together at that time) attempted stopping him. While their visit in Japan, the participant and her Canadian boyfriend frequently observed parents spanking children’s head in malls and streets. The participant indicated that her boyfriend was very surprised to see that many parents often spank or hit their children as their way of directing children towards proper behaviour.

Another punishment strategy, public humiliation, is also used in Japan. For example, participants frequently observed that children standing outside of their houses as a punishment. Some participants recalled seeing parents yelling at their children, throwing children’s backpack, pens, notebooks from the windows, tying children around a tree, and putting children outside with just underwear. A majority of participants said, “It happens all the time.” Another participant shared a story when she was a junior high school (approximately 4 years ago). Her
friend came to the school with a cap, and other classmates teased him. Her friend explained with
teary eyes that he was forced to have his head shaved, because he had received bad marks on his
exams. Participants pointed out, “親が厳しくやるのは、逆に甘やかすよりは良いと思う。と思われている。Japanese people in general think that it is better for the children if parents are
strict, rather than spoiling their children” (P 8).

Cultural differences exist between Japanese and Canadian’s view regarding children’s
supervision. Participants, especially newcomers, indicated their surprise when they heard that
parents cannot leave their children at home alone until a certain age in Canada. Participants
voiced that Japanese parents still leave children alone at home, even if children are as young as
kindergarten age. It is common in Japan that elementary school children carry their house keys,
come back and stay home alone until their parents return from work. Those children are called “鍵っ子。A latchkey children.” Participants who were mothers said that they still sees children
in Japan playing in parks, riding bikes, and going to their friends’ house by themselves without
any accompaniment. Participants also discussed the occurrence of accidents in Japan, such as
child death and fire caused by children using lighter; cases in which young children left
unattended at home over a month and starved to death recently.

The other cultural differences related to parent rearing style related to encouragement and
praises to children. Informants perceived that Japanese parents did not give encouragement to
their children, because Japanese culture values humbleness. A Canadian born participant
described the time when his mother, who was born and raised in Japan, did not give him positive
encouragements. He confessed that parents’ lack of encouragement affected on his self-worth
and confidence greatly:
Normal is never good enough. Like there were goals.. and see how you have to get 100% (on exams). It’s just hard to get 100% all the time, right? It’s just impossible. So, it’s not even a good pressure, you should be mentoring the kids. Doesn’t matter what grades you get, and you build on it. And encouragement. You see what are the strong points are, and then, you focus on that. And you work on that. You have to be like that (strengths base). (Participant 7)
What Barriers Might Exist When Discussing Family Violence

Two themes, *collectivistic cultural values* and *a lack of accessibility*, were revealed as barriers for Japanese communities when seeking help in case of family violence. Table 4.3 on below includes diagrams of categories and code.

**Table 4.3 Barriers**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cultural values</td>
<td>Collectivistic values</td>
<td>Shame/Embarrassment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Face saving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Small community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Poking one’s nose is not appropriate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spiritual value</td>
<td>Endurance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accessibility</td>
<td>Difficulties in obtaining knowledge and supports</td>
<td>Language barrier and lack of education lead</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• limited job opportunities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• barrier in acquiring services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• lack of knowledge about community resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Isolation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lack of social support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Immigration status</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Cultural values.**

*Shame.* Many participants pointed out that because of the feeling of “恥, Shame”, Japanese community members seldom speak out about family violence and discourage help seeking. People feel ashamed or embarrassed, if one’s family deviates from a standard and ideal
family that Japanese society has created. Japanese people make effort to keep up appearances and pretend nothing bad happens within the family. A participant expressed:

家庭内暴力は恥ずかしいことだと、絶対思っていると思います。だから、日本人は、こういう風（夫婦間の虐待）にされなくても、やられて本人も、恥ずかしいから言いたくない。なんとか自分たちだけで解決しよう見たいな事を言っているような気がします。（中略）理想の夫婦でいる事が、価値のあることなので。

I'm sure that Japanese people feel that family violence is shameful. So even if Japanese people are abused like this (pointing spousal violence photo), they don’t want to say because that’s embarrassing. I think they want solve the problem by themselves...I think maintaining an ideal couple is highly valued. (Participant 7)

Another participant indicated, “a lot of people wouldn’t talk because too scared of other people. 人の事、周りの事を気にしつつて、(People care about what others think of you). They don’t want to say. I think because they are scared (P 6).”  Other married participants provided insight into the strong stigma attached to divorce, and unable to return parent’s home after divorce.

Another barrier related to shame and embarrassment is the size of the Japanese community in Edmonton and Calgary. Japanese communities in both cities tend to be small; therefor, people have fear about their private family matters being spread in the community. A participant confessed:

It’s because the community is very small, many people tend to keep their secrets. They are very secretive. They don’t really
Because it is a small community, participants indicated that individuals in Japanese community fear being the target of gossips and rumors. However, not only the victims, but also the helpers of family violence fear gossip and rumors in the community. People are reluctant to intervene in family violence:

「あの人が、この家族に文句行ったのよ、親の事ちょっとっかいでして来たのよー」なんて言われたら、評判が悪くなるから、そういう事をしたくない、と思うのもある。 People don’t want a rumour or gossip to be speared, like, ‘Did you hear that so and so poked one’s nose into XXX’s family’s business, even in their way of disciplining their child. If this kind of rumour spread, the person gets a bad reputation, so they don’t really want to do that. (Participant 8)

Indeed, the participant who shared experiences of helping abused Japanese women in Edmonton revealed that she came across so many such voices in her community, “変わった人。良くやるね。You are weird (or nosey) person. ‘I don’t know why you do that’” (P 9). Others fear being blamed or making enemies in the small community, where people have to survive in the same community for a long time.
The spiritual value of *endurance* was perceived as preventing people from seeking help. Often time, Japanese women endure physical and emotional pains because they were taught to; one participant shared that her Japanese friend was told by her parents, when she decided to marry and move to Canada, “一回嫁に行ったら、それくらい辛抱しなさいって言われたから、親にも言われたし、帰れない。 ‘Once you belong to other family, you must endure things in the family.’ I was told by my parents. So I cannot go back home.”

Other participants also mentioned:

> I guess the difference between Japanese and Canadians in terms of family violence... It is not likely to happen in Canada because Canadians have more time to spare (with their lives) than Japanese, and Canadian women wouldn’t ‘Gaman’ (bear with) the situation. Women in here, flee from their husbands right away.

(Participant 4)

One participant observed her grandmother enduring abuse and maltreatment from grandmother’s adult children and grandchildren, because she had nowhere to go. Another participant also reported that her mother in Japan endured abuse and stayed with her husband until death, despite her children’s suggestion to divorce.

**Accessibility barriers.** The second theme is accessibility barriers which limit victims’ ability to comprehend, take actions, and utilize community resources in the community in case of family violence. One barrier identified by newcomer participants is that immigrants are often
treated as the second-class citizens, because of language barrier and other. Many participants pointed out:

There is a language barrier, and there is a difference in social status (between Canadian born and newcomers'). Newcomers are having hard time getting a job. Even if they can, they’re usually in Japanese restaurants… Except those who have graduated from universities in Canada.. Others are like.. they are kept alive by their husbands. (Participant 9)

Language barrier restricts individuals’ ability to search and understand policies, laws, legal processes and the community resources. For instance, one participant recalled that her acquaintance was treated unfairly by the police, because she was unable to explain her circumstances in English. Moreover, a lack of knowledge about community resources prevents victims’ help seeking behaviors. Participants acknowledged that members of the Japanese community in both cities are not fully aware of agencies and support services within their municipalities. Some participants complained that there are no social programs in Japanese communities, which provide information, support and enhance Japanese community’s well beings.

Another barrier is the physical and emotional obstacles that restrain Japanese community from accessing resources. For instance, newcomers often face isolation and insufficient natural social supports due to being spatially distant from their families and friends. A Japanese Canadian participant said, “I hear this lots, some of my friends saying that… Sometimes they
(Japanese newcomers) just cry, because they just get lonely, because none of the family is here” (P 7). Other participant said, “どう考えたって、不利だもんね、こっちに来ている嫁の方が。友達も最初はいないし、家族だっていないし、やっぱり話をするべきだろうな。お互いにね。It is obvious that women coming from Japan have disadvantages. They don’t really have friends and families in here. So couples should communicate and discuss each other (to make wives less isolated and lonely)” (P4).

Not only physical distance, but also husbands’ intentional controlling behaviours often lead to victims to become isolated from the community. One participant who has been residing in Edmonton for 18 years noticed:

結局、虐待とか、DVとか問題を抱えている人たって、日本のコミュニティに入っていない、外の人なんですよ。で、そういう人たちって、やっぱり旦那さんが、「日本人コミュニティと関わりを持つな」って。それはDVですよ。かこしてしまう。まあ、そういう人多いですよ。コントロールですよね。そういう人、まあ、多いんですよね。あと、自分の子供に、わけの分からない言葉を教えるなと。日本語教育に対して、否定的。

Well, after all, families, who are suffering from abuse or domestic violence, are not in this Japanese community. They are outside of the community. Then, those families are like.. Husbands tell their wives, “Don’t get involved with Japanese community.” Well, that’s domestic violence too. They fence their wives. Yes, it is controlling. There are actually quite a lot of husbands like that. And, some are also dismissive toward teaching Japanese language to their children. They say not to teach the gibberish language.
Lastly, immigration status prevents certain victims from seeking help. Japanese people who are holding temporary permits are vulnerable, since they are not able to access to social services and resources in the community. The participant who made efforts to help a victim of family violence in Edmonton expressed her disappointment toward social services and social workers, who showed no interests in helping non-permanent residence. No one in social services, the hospital, and the Children’s Services attempted to help the victim. The victim was not even allowed to enter women’s shelters because of the immigration status. According to the participant, those who were not able to seek help often have unfortunate endings. A few participants referred to incidents that occurred in Calgary and Vancouver recently, which Japanese mothers killed her children:

They (Japanese women) cannot go back to Japan because their father (in Japan) denied that marriage in the first place. So they stuck in the situation where either stuck (stay) with the husband (or leave)….They don’t want to be a single mom. They don’t know where to survive, where to go. Well, see what happens was that there was one girl, actually, killed her children. (Participant 9)

Another participant revealed an incident that a Japanese international student with temporary permit holder became pregnant while being abused and committed suicide in Edmonton a few years ago.
Prevention and Intervention Strategies

Three themes, *increase of literacy, accessibility, and community supports* were perceived by participants’ as effective and culturally appropriate prevention and intervention tactics for combating family violence. Table 4.4 illustrates the brief description of strategies and the themes.

Table 4.4 Prevention and Intervention Strategies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increase Literacy and Awareness</td>
<td>Information and Education</td>
<td>Information in Japanese language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Public presentations and advertisement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Websites and brochures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Workshops and lectures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Newsletters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Education and connecting recourses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easy Access</td>
<td>Anonymity</td>
<td>Services in Japanese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>A Hot-line and website</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• People able to ask question through Internet without being seen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Strict confidentiality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enhance Community Supports</td>
<td>Creation of community support</td>
<td>Needs for social program due to a lack of supports for Japanese communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Difficulties in outreach outside of the community</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Increase of literacy and awareness of family violence.

Provision of information and education are perceived to increase awareness of family violence within Japanese communities. The first theme is the importance of increasing literacy and awareness of family violence through providing information and education. Information and supports should be accessible to all members in Japanese communities in their language and strict confidentiality. Especially newcomers, Japanese immigrants feel more comfortable obtaining information and seeking assistance and supports in Japanese language rather than English. Lack of official publications and information written in Japanese is definitely a barrier for obtaining necessary support.

Information and Education. Most participants identified the significance of public presentations and educational sessions in Japanese communities in order to educate about family violence. It was suggested that information should include a clear definition of what is considered family violence in Alberta, where to find assistance, and possible options for victims and perpetrators. Information could be spread through community workshops and information sessions, brochures, and newsletters. The most frequently mentioned strategy was to launch a website which contains all information, including the definition of family violence, example cases of family violence, community resources, and the process to receive help. Participants indicated that the website’s link should be posted on the websites of Japanese community association centre, the Japanese community schools, and other social network sites, which new immigrants frequently visit and utilize.

In addition, launching a website has another advantage for potential newcomers, who are thinking to move to Canada. Prospective residents are more likely to research about cities and communities in Canada, while they are in Japan. Therefore, providing example cases on a
website could help potential victims (exploitation by visa status) to realize their situations. They may find their circumstances are similar to family violence cases on the website, may re-evaluate their relationships and moving plan, which could prevent family violence. In addition, holding workshops and lectures in the community including at the Japanese association centres and the Japanese community schools may be beneficial. Participants suggested short presentations in ESL classes in order to raise awareness among international students and newcomers, held at the beginning of classes or during breaks. Moreover, the participants also suggested creating a checklist and questionnaire of family violence as well as brochures, so that participants could acquire knowledge and start to recognize family violence. Additional ideas included inserting articles, columns, and advertisements about family violence in newsletters run by the Japanese association centres and schools.

**Communication.** Educational information should not only focus on elements of family violence, but also focus on communication skills. Specifically communication skills are required in order to teach newcomers how to deal with emotions and to encourage open and healthy communications within a family. Participants voiced that individual, couple or family counselling may be beneficial for families to foster environments within which family members can express their feelings, opinions, and thoughts openly and respectfully without fear. Participants raised a concern about a lack of communication in Japanese families;

*A Japanese communication line within the family is hierarchy. … I notice that… this is even the second generation… Caucasians have better relationship with their children than Japanese kids (with Japanese parents), because they have open mind communication. So that’s another problem too, that you see a lot of Japanese kids are getting into a lot of troubles.*  (Participant 6)
Participants provided insight into the importance of communication and discussion with family members, which was seen as less likely to take place in traditional Japanese families.

Perhaps, it could be better to discuss this in my family and with my wife at dinner time or something. I guess, I don’t really have the knowledge about family violence, so we wouldn’t normally discuss about family violence unless we have an opportunity like this. (Participant 7)

Anonymity. Another theme regarding the question of strategy was overcoming the feelings of “shame and embarrassment.” The importance of “anonymity” was frequently mentioned among participants. Participants pointed out that it could be a difficult to gather attendance for workshops and lectures due to the cultural belief of “shame and embarrassment.” People may be embarrassed being labeled as having troubles at home, when being seen attending workshops. In order to solve this problem, participants have suggested short presentations and information sessions can be provided along with other activities in the community centres, such as senior clubs, kids club, and other clubs.

Anonymity also includes establishing anonymous contact and a counselling office, including a hot line, websites, and email address in Japanese language, so that Japanese people can consult with specialists without showing his/her identity. Another participant indicated that individual or couple counselling rather than group counselling could be beneficial for Japanese descent, since they fear about being judged by other group members and spread rumours in the community. Individual and couple sessions could include providing information, linking to
community resources, teaching communication, management, and coping skills with their feelings.

**Creation of community support.** Participants indicated a strong sense of community may assist to establish and enhance community supports. Participants pointed out a lack of social supports and social programs targeting Japanese newcomers in Edmonton and Calgary. A Japanese Canadian participant expressed the needs of unity in the Japanese community and create a sense of community in order to establish solid supports. Two participants indicated newcomers might not necessary be aware of the existence of Japanese community association centres in both Edmonton and Calgary; some even avoid being together with other Japanese people, but they are yearning in the bottom of their heart. The participant who is deeply involved with Japanese community association centre said:

**Summary.** Participants’ perceptions towards family violence appeared to be bounded and specific attitudes towards family violence was found. Family violence was seen as uncommon and certain properties around what was considered as violence. Individual factors, disciplining techniques, and power difference in a family were viewed were seen as risk factors of family violence. Participants’ view of Japanese people attitudes towards family violence included that some Japanese were uncooperative and tended to blame the victims.

Informants’ reflections on how Japanese culture impacts on understanding family violence included expressions, traditional family structure, and child rearing practice. Japanese words used to describe family violence appeared to limit participants’ view of family violence as physical, resulting difficulties recognizing other forms and types of family violence. Traditional family structure comprises of patriarchy and filial piety allows a husband to have privileges over his wife, and impose the gender role that a wife has to be obedient and dutiful. Filial piety also
affects the relationship within a family, such as children are expected to be obedient and to take care their parents. Japanese authoritative child rearing style viewed as affecting participants’ understanding of family violence.

Perceived barriers when seeking help and intervening family violence were cultural/spiritual values, and accessibility. Japanese often feel ashamed and embarrassed about acknowledging family violence and seeking help outside of their own family. Community members are reluctant to help victims because of the fear of losing their reputation in the community. Participants viewed that endurance is the virtue in their culture. Language proficiency affects obtaining employment and educational opportunity, as well as literacy on acquiring community resources. Victims are often isolated, and their social supports are limited. Immigration status is also the barrier for some victims; especially victims who hold temporary visa are vulnerable, since there is no support exist for temporary residents.

Perceived effective prevention and intervention were to increase literacy and awareness, to provide easy access, and to enhance community supports in the Japanese communities. Provision of information and education for the public was thought to increase knowledge and awareness of family violence through websites, brochures, newsletters, and workshops and lectures in Japanese, while considering anonymity. Information and supports can be provided through a hot line, websites, individual or couple counselling. Enhancing community supports and programs, building a sense of community, and outreaching are perceived to be necessity for people in Japanese community.
CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

Perceptions of family violence within the Japanese community in Canada have rarely been investigated. This study supplements this critical omission of knowledge in current literature with descriptive data; this study examines the relationship between cultural values and perceptions. Increasing understanding of the perception of family violence within the Japanese Canadian community may better prepare professionals to provide suitable prevention and intervention activities for Japanese Canadians who may be affected by family violence. Social workers and other helping professionals should be aware that differences in perceptions exist regarding family violence among not only those from the Japanese community, but also among other minority communities. Investigating those differences may play a significant role in increasing awareness of family violence, providing better access to more appropriate services, and eventually reducing family violence within ethnic communities. This chapter includes discussions of the major findings, including an ecological analysis of family violence within, and implications and recommendations to educators, researchers and policy makers.

Major Findings

Participants in this study described particular perceptions of family violence. This view can be described as a bounded view in terms of the occurrence, properties, and risk factors of family violence. Participants in this study perceived family violence as related to direct and observable physical violence. Other forms of abusive behaviours, such as emotional or verbal abuse and neglect, were viewed, in comparison, as insignificant minor acts of bullying and mean behaviours, and not aspects of family violence. This bounded perception of family violence, which tends to under-recognize non-physical forms of violence, such as verbal or emotional abuse, is shared by other immigrant and minority ethnic groups in North America (Agbayani-
Siewert, 2004; Kwok, 2005; Leung, & Cheung, 2008; Midlarsky et al., 2006; Shim & Nelson-Becker, 2009; Yick, 2000; Yoshihama, 2005; Yoshioka et al., 2001). In addition, this study found that participants were not cognizant of the concept of neglect. This lack of familiarity with neglect is also found in other East Asian communities such as Korean and Chinese (Lee & Shin, Kwok, 2005; 2010).

Findings of this study suggested that other harmful behaviours, including verbal and psychological abuse and neglect, are often dismissed or toned down as unremarkable actions by victims themselves and others. These findings bring to the forefront the concerning matter that possible family violence victims among Japanese Canadians, newcomers, and minority ethnic groups in North America may not necessarily recognize and identify ambiguous, invisible, indirect, infrequent, and mild forms of family violence other than physical violence; therefore, they may continue to suffer. The consequence of having a bounded view could be result in confusion, uncertainty, or ambivalence when to seek help or when the violence is intolerable, since the definition of Alberta’s family violence law is rather broadly defined. There is a wide gap between North American and newcomers, or minority ethnic group. Regrettably, countless of victims have fallen into the gap and entrapped for a long period of time (Ahmad et al., 2009; Barrett & St Pierre, 2011; Chiu, 2004; Dussich, 2001; Yoshihama, 2002b). A bounded view of family violence in new Canadians may also lead to some confusion or be misinterpreted by those in a helping position.

In addition, participants’ subjective accounts in this lead one to speculate traditional cultural values and beliefs impact respondents’ views on family violence. For instance, traditional gender and parental roles, as well as child rearing beliefs and practice based on patriarchal beliefs support the perceptions of some behaviours as normal and common. The
reason for participants having a bounded view could be mainly because family violence is still considered as a private, domestic matter, and believed to be as simply a normal part of family life, which is embedded in specific cultural values (Loske et al., 2005, p. x). Thus, family violence had been invisible, ignored, and denied, or minimized into something that had been tolerated or sanctioned for a long period of time (Yoshihama, 2002a).

Moreover, cultural values and spirituality, such as endurance, shame, and face-saving, are perceived to be obstacles to seek outside help by some participants in this study. This is also congruent with reported findings regarding family violence and help seeking in other ethnic groups, including Chinese, Korean, Southeast Asian, Japanese, Cambodian, and African communities (Bhuyan, Mell, Senturia, Sullivan, & Shiu-Thornton, 2005; Chan, 2009; Kozu, 1999; Rittman, Kzmeskus, & Flum, 1999; Ting, 2010; Ting & Panchanadeswaran, 2009; Tomita, 1994; Yoshihama, 2000).

Of particular interest to this study were participants’ view of community member’s attitudes related family violence and victims. In general, interviewees reported that a common response to family violence within the Japanese community included victim blaming and a disinterest in intervening. Findings in this study revealed that bystanders are often hesitant to intervene in family violence, because they fear being negatively labeled as inquisitive about others’ private matters. In addition, respondents in this a study perceived that family violence rarely occur; when it did, participants perceived that Japanese community members were reluctant to get involved or offer help towards victims and their families. The tendency toward victim blaming is confirmed by studies that investigated domestic violence among Chinese Americans and Korean Americans (Chan, Chun, & Chung, 2008; Moon, Tomita, & Jung, 2001).
However, this study contradicts an earlier study by Moon, et al., (2001) who found that Japanese Americans were less likely to blame victims and more favourable toward reporting mistreatment. The significant difference between Moon, et al., (2001) and this study is that Moon, et al., (2001) excluded the first-generation Japanese, whereas participants in this study were mainly first generation and newcomers.

This suggests that acculturation level in Canada may have influenced on immigrants’ perceptions and attitudes toward family violence in a positive way. This finding also corresponds with findings in other investigations, which have studied the relationship between acculturation level, perceptions, and attitudes towards family violence among immigrants and minority groups. It has been noted that the higher the level of acculturation achieved among immigrants and minority ethnic groups in North America, the lesser they are acceptable of spousal abuse (Bhanot & Senn, 2007; Hyman, Forte, Mont, Romans, & Cohen, 2006; Wallach, Weingram, & Avitan, 2010).

Furthermore, the findings of this study suggested that the language, or how culture may be expressed through language, appeared to have informed how participants’ conceptualization of family violence as physical and forceful violence. This results in a bounded perceptions that excludes other types of harmful actions and behaviours as violent. Some interviewees in this study struggled to understand less intensive, indirect, and invisible form of family violence, because the Japanese word, violence (暴力) implies physical, uncontrollable and forceful power.

Finally, a majority of participants indicated that newcomers from Japan face numerous challenges during the process of emigration, which is consistent with findings from others (Moon, Tomita, & Jung, 2001; Takano, 2002, 2006; Yoshihama, 2000, 2002c). It is unfortunate that refugee and immigrant populations in Canada, regardless of culture and ethnic backgrounds,
often encounter barriers and hardships when they try to survive from abuse and family violence (Ahmad et al., 2009; Barrett & St Pierre, 2011; Brownridge & Halli, 2002, 2003; Lai, 2011; Merali, 2009).

Although a few participants in this study had direct knowledge of incidents of family violence, it is not clear the prevalence of family violence in Japanese communities in Alberta. This study emphasized several difficulties identified by participants; if victims are immigrants, family violence is more likely to happen within a context of the immigration and acculturation processes. For instance, stresses and tension of immigration, low levels of family and social supports, employment difficulties, and acculturation process may exacerbate family violence among immigrants from Japan. In addition, language barrier, lack of knowledge of the legal system and unfamiliarity of community service were found to limit newcomers’ ability to acquire support services and to seek help from outside. Regardless of cultural and ethnic background, these barriers and difficulties experienced by immigrants are congruent with the finding of this study (Banerjee, 2000; Crandall, Senturia, Sullivan, & Shiu-Thornton, 2005; Sullivan et al., 2005).

**Conceptual Framework**

At what point researchers should consult the literature remains controversial among qualitative researchers (McGhee, Marland, & Atkinson, 2007). Some believe that initial review enables the researcher to discover previous knowledge with respect to the research questions, to provide a rational for conducting the research, and to be able to meet the requirement of research ethics committees (Antle, 1986; McGhee et al., 2007). On the other hand, reviewing the literature in the early process may inhibit the researcher from generating a focus from the emerging data rather than from the literature (Glaser, 1992; McGhee et al., 2007; Strauss &
Corbin, 1998). McGhee et al., (2007) asserted, “the debate really concerns the need to stay open-minded and the staging of the literature review is a means to this end and not an end in itself” (p. 341). McGhee, et al., (2007) and Glaser (1992) claimed that several levels of literature review are required within grounded theory. This stance should not be limited to grounded theory, but other post-positivist qualitative research methods in order to avoid becoming fixated on particular assumptions, biases, and expectations. Thus, I, once again, consult with the literature to deepen and expand my findings.

**Theoretical implications.** The knowledge of how Japanese Canadians perceive and understand family violence has not been well explored. It is because the major empirical studies of family violence have developed mainly in western society without much consideration to broader environmental and cultural contexts, which are inherently relevant to people with different cultural and ethnic backgrounds when considering family violence. Thus, Heise’s (1998) work was beneficial in that it assisted me to organize my findings and existing literature on factors associated with domestic violence into social ecological model. In this section, guided by the ecological framework, I have expanded factors within the layers of ecological model that are associated with perceptions and understanding of family violence among Japanese Canadian participants. The remainder of the section is organized as follows. I describe the key features at 1) foundation level, such as worldview, religion, and spirituality, 2) societal level, such as patriarchy and gender role, filial piety, and language, 3) family/community level, including hierarchical clan family structure, conflict avoidance, conformity, shame and embarrassment, and authoritarian parenting and 4) individual level which consists spiritual teaching, such as endurance, reserve, and self-reliance. These four essential parts, foundation level, societal level, family/community level, and the individual level, often intertwine and may be seen as
contributing family violence (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Heise, 1998; Sitaker, 2007; WHO, 2002, 2007). This ecological systems approach can facilitate analysis and increase understanding and to expand our understanding when we think of family violence (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

Findings from this study contribute to and expand further the development of a conceptual framework, explicating the occurrence of family violence (Figure 3). In this model, we see that specific worldviews, cultural, political, religious and spiritual beliefs and values, which I called the foundation level, envelopes community, family, and individual circles. Those three circles, overwraps each other and facilitate and maintain social norms, social order/status, and social structures (Dunbar, 2003). As the theory of social construction indicated, social norms embedded in culture interacts with individuals’ cognitions, such as perceptions, feelings, emotions (Vaughan, 2010), motivations (Mascareno, 2008), and personal values, and defines a socially acceptable human life (Tomasello, 2011). As a result, individuals and families behave, communicate, and interact in a certain way (Sercombe & Young, 2011), including the power dynamics within a family, and maintain certain family values, child rearing practice and family function. Those norms, beliefs and values, influence personality development, family history, and personal values. In addition, small groups, such as communities or neighbourhoods often reinforce social norms by interacting with families and individuals (Sharifian, 2003).

Worldviews, cultural values and beliefs form structures and hierarchies in the society, for example, by gender, age, status, and power, encourage or discourage potential attitudes and initiative for tackling family violence. A bounded view of family violence as described in this study may be the resulted of a number of complex factors. It is more likely to be rooted in societal norms and perceptions, which in turn can limit recognition and awareness of family
violence, and pose a barrier to individuals as they attempt to access information and community resources.

Figure 3 Conceptual framework of family violence. The influence of cultural values and spiritual beliefs.
**Foundation level.** The outer circle, foundation level, which include world views, religion, historical context, and cultural views, has been considered a framework or schema that helps to establish constitutions, rules, and activities (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). In Japan, the blend of Buddhism, Confucian, and Shitonist’s philosophy, spirituality teaching, and doctrines are the foundation of governmental policies from medieval era to this day, and have influenced human relations, governance, family structure, social hierarchy, status, role, and expectation in a family and society to this date (Kitano & Kikumura, 1976; Lee & Hadeed, 2009; Locke, 1998; Mokuau & Tomioka, 2010).

Buddhism and Confucians values closely tie to the family system and shape the standard of society and social behaviours that dictates respect and obedience for authority based on gender and age (Hong, Kim, Yoshihama, & Byoun, 2010; Kitano & Kikumura, 1976; Locke, 1998; Mokuau & Tomioka, 2010). Spirituality and religion teach Japanese people moral principles including the importance of group goals, rather than individual satisfaction (Locke, 1998; Mokuau & Tomioka, 2010).

**Societal level.**

**Patriarchy and gender role.** The current study suggested the widespread patriarchal belief was perceived by participants. This is consistent with previous studies which investigated among immigrant population (Agbayani-Siewert, 2004; Ahmad, Riaz, Barata, & Stewart, 2004; Bhanot & Senn, 2007; Liao, 2006; Yick & Oomen-Early, 2008; Yoshihama, 2005). The interviewees in this study expressed a strong traditional societal preconception often endorse and approve of husband exerting power over wife in Japanese families.

Patriarchal value, embedded in Confucian and Buddhist philosophy, has shaped the traditional structure of the family, the role of each family member, and social structure (Ahmad
et al., 2004; Ishii-Kuntz & Maryanski, 2003; Nagae & Dancy, 2010; Namba, 2000; Weingourt et al., 2001; Yoshihama, 2000; Yoshihama & Sorenson, 1994). An example of traditional patriarchal Asian cultural norms, including Japan, Korea, and China, for women is the rule of the three obedience: Girls must obey their fathers, wives must obey their husbands, and widows must obey their eldest son after the husband’s death (Hsu, 1967, as cited in Chin, 1994; Shim & Nelson-Becker, 2009).

Feminist theorists have argued that patriarchal society, which directly and indirectly allows men to dominate and control their partners, often results in abuse against women (Adams, 1988; Dobash & Dobash, 1979). Carden (1994) emphasizes that cultural norms reinforce a man’s belief that violence toward women is acceptable and is an effective way to solve interpersonal conflicts. According to this cultural norm, a man is allowed, entitled, and expected to control his wife; men receive no (or few) social consequences when using violence against a wife (Carden, 1994). This approach has been criticized for ignoring the impact of other societal variables including age, income, unemployment (Anderson, 1997), personality traits, mental health, and skills, such as anger management or conflict resolutions (Holtzworth-Munroe & Stuart, 1994). Although patriarchal values do not necessarily encourage males to mistreat or abuse their spouses, the values and beliefs are more likely to permit men to subjugate, control, and abuse women and wives (Nagae, 2007; Tran & Des Jardins, 2000).

Traditional patriarchal power structure, ideologies, and male privileges espoused in Asian societies has influenced the use of violence against women (Bui & Morash, 1999; Kim & Sung, 2000; Shim & Nelson-Becker, 2009; Yoshihama, 2002b, 2005; Yoshioka et al., 2001). A direct relation between patriarchal value and intimate partner violence has been found in many Asian communities. A partner violence study done in South Korea indicated that the incidence of
physical assault toward Korean wives from their husband was higher in couples with male-dominant marital power types than couples with equalitarian types (Kim & Emery, 2003; Kim & Sung, 2003). Physical assaults toward wives were four times higher in male-dominant Korean American couples in comparison with egalitarians Korean couples (Kim & Sung, 2000).

Similarly, the orthodox view of a Japanese family is still a heterosexual couple with a wife dependent on her husband financially and devoted to childrearing and housekeeping, although roles of a husband and wife have been gradually shifting to more egalitarian as Japanese society changes (Holloway, Suzuki, Yamamoto, & Mindnich, 2006; Raymo & Iwasawa, 2008). The couples with strongly segregated conjugal roles (clear gender role division of roles between husband and wife) and traditional (symmetrical) marital relationship have a male-dominant structure, and may increase the risk for intimate partner violence (Nagae, 2007). On the other hand, a joint conjugal (egalitarian) marital type, which has a structure where the male and female were equal in status may promote equal power distribution, decreased likelihood of intimate partner violence (Nagae, 2007).

Participants in this study emphasized that many Japanese women are taught to be devoted to the family and dutiful in their marriage. Personal sacrifice and devotion to their children and the whole family are expected for a traditional wife after marrying and joining with her husband’s family (Berge & Jaya, 1993; Hong & Hong, 1991; Locke, 1998). However, this traditional mother’s roles and parenting norms appeared to be contributing to child abuse in Japan. A high incidence of child abuse perpetrated by mothers (approximately 90%) also correlated with the findings that mother’s stress from child rearing has been suggested as a cause of child abuse (Fukatsu, 1993; Ohiga, 1996; Sasaki, 1988). According to the longitudinal study investigating the prevalence of fatal child abuse in Japan, mothers were the abusers of 32% of
child abuse reported to the police, 30% was by fathers, 18% and 15% were committed by adoptive fathers and common-law husbands respectively (Yasumi & Kageyama, 2009). It is not an exaggeration to say that traditional patriarchy and rigid gender role norms and values may contribute to the occurrence of family violence within Asian communities.

Considering these circumstances and findings of this study, this concerns professionals that many of female newcomers are vulnerable and in need of extra supports. They could be prone to be victims and abusers due to stress, gender role expectations, barriers and obstacles. According to participants in this study, female immigrants are more likely to become homemakers and full-time caregivers of their children, which may limit their ability to seek help.

*Filial piety.* The concept of understanding filial piety is important, since how respondents in this research formulate their understanding of risk factors of family violence directly influences on prevention and intervention.

Many traditional East Asian cultures share the value of filial piety, which originated from Buddhist and Confucian doctrine – emphasizing an obligation for younger generations to respect, obey, and care for elderly parents (Malley-Morrison & Hines, 2004; Ng, 2002; Ng, Loong, Liu, & Weatherall, 2000). The strong belief of filial piety often bound the family relationships in East Asian cultures. Many children are repeatedly taught and reminded of their responsibilities toward their aging parents and family members (Wangmo, 2010) and filial piety is particular the obligation of elder sons (Arai, 2006). Typically, parents live with their adult children (and grandchildren), and the adult children strongly believe that it is their moral duty to provide care for their aging parents. Elder sons, and mainly their wives provide supports to ageing parents; in return, the parents assist with care for their grandchildren and household tasks by giving advices (Gupta & Pillai, 2002). Filial piety as a value is seen as preventing care-givers from perceiving

Despite the fact that many people in Japanese society still preserve filial piety, this traditional norm is losing strength as young generations appear to under-appreciate this value (Yan, Tang, & Yeung, 2002). Due to social changes brought by industrialization, modernization, westernization and individualization, this traditional value is challenged and weakened; Japanese families are under pressure to adjust to the changes (Arai, 2006). The traditional multi-generational Japanese family style is becoming the nuclear family, and Japanese elderly are no longer guaranteed prestige, power and care within the family (Yan et al., 2002). Filial piety is breaking down in home countries (Cheung & Kwan, 2009; Wangmo, 2010; Yan & Tang, 2003) as well as in destination countries including North America (Koehn, 2009; Moon, 2000b). The diminishment of this traditional value contributes to family conflict and aging parents’ disappointment (Moon, 2000a) and to an increase the risk for family violence in Japanese cultural group in North America (Malley-Morrison & Hines, 2004).

However, responders in this study had the opposite view. Filial piety may contribute to elder abuse in some cases, due to the societal pressure for adult children to take care of aging parents. Participants noted that a poor parent-child relationship or conflicts accumulated over the time by living together could contribute adult children to abuse elder out of revenge for the conflicts. In fact, participants in this study suggested that the breakdown of filial piety allows elders to become more independent from their adult children and to create self-help groups and support.

**Language.** The findings of this study emphasize that certain words used to convey the concept of family violence are loaded with other meanings. Certain features of culture and
society are reflected in words. One cannot fully understand the culture without understanding the concepts captured in these words (Wierzbicka, 1991); in other word, the words we have are not always the words we need, if the culture does not define a concept (Ashcraft, 2000). This coincides with the findings in this study that there were noticeable absence in the words and terms associated with family violence in Japanese language.

In many cultures and language, the word ‘domestic violence’ do not exist and are not readily translatable (Gill, 2004; Mason et al., 2008). As participants in this study noted that the concept of domestic violence in Japanese (家庭内暴力, pronounced as kateinai bouryoku, literally means violence at home) was first introduced to and sensationalized in the Japanese public in early 1980, when an actor published books, which disclosed his experiences of filial violence from his teenage children. These books later became popular television dramas and movies (Kozu, 1999; Kumagai, 1980). ‘Kateinai bouryoku’ often implies children’s physical and emotional violence against their parents (Kozu, 1999; Kumagai, 1980), especially to those who were exposed to the media coverage in 1980s.

On the other hand, spousal violence has gradually become recognized as a social issue in Japan coinciding with the rise of international movements against gender-based violence initiated by the United Nation and grassroots efforts by women’s organization against domestic violence (Hatashita, Hirao, et al., 2006; Kozu, 1999; Sugimoto, 1997; Yoshihama, 2002a). The word, ‘ドメステックバイオレンス’ (Domestic Violence, pronounced as domestchikku baiorensu), short for DV, had become widely known to the Japanese public to indicate spousal violence (Yoshihama, 2002a). As mentioned in previous chapter, the significance between the first word (家庭内暴力) and latter word (ドメステックバイオレンス) written in Katakana is the difference in writing system. The カタカナ (Katakana) syllabary are usually used of
foreign languages words and loan words into Japanese writing; thus, words written in katakana can be said that the word did not exist in Japan or there were no suitable translations in Japanese. This also means that the words of spousal violence did not exist until the word ‘domestic violence’ was directly imported from English speaking countries (Kainou et al., 2002). In addition, the direct translation of the words, ‘psychological abuse’, ‘emotional abuse’, ‘maltreatment,’ or ‘neglect’ from English do not fit well in Japanese, and Japanese people are not familiar with those terms (Ike, 2010). It is observed that Japanese people borrowed the word, ‘neglect’ from English and depicts in katakana, ‘ネグレクト’ (pronounced as ‘negurekuto’) (Nakamura, 2002).

Nevertheless, Locke et al., (2005) articulated that naming the problem changes the public attitudes of family violence from a private trouble to a social issue. Advocates and researchers did not refer to violence acts as discipline or martial discord, but rather called the violence “abuse” (Locke et al., 2005, p. x). The term, abuse, implies that the behaviour is not tolerable, nor acceptable, and should be intervened (Loske et al., 2005). Although how to name the problem affect the public perceptions, it should be emphasized to people in Japanese community that other forms of family violence, including psychological, verbal, and financial abuse as equally violent, hurtful, and harmful as physical violence.

Moreover, as participants in current study expressed, patriarchy and filial piety are also expressed in languages. Language socialization plays a significant role in constructing and reinforcing gender roles (Brice-Heath, 1983; Corson, 1993). Many languages have familiar and formal forms of address; in Tamil, women are permitted to use certain words to express respect for men and husbands when addressing them in public (Mason et al., 2008). In addition, Chinese, Korean and Japanese, the word for husband literally means “supporter,” whereas the
word for wife means, “subordinate”; wives call husbands “the master of our house” and husbands call their wife a “house person” (Chen, 1971, as cited in Chin, 1994, p. 57). In Japan, the word for wife also means, “domestic” or “in the house”. Moreover, filial piety in Japanese writes as “acts that are dutiful to one’s parents.” It is considered moral for children to obey, respect, and do as best children can do to avoid making parents worry, and sad, since parents and ancestors brought them to life.

Furthermore, language and words contain certain ideology as a form of metaphor (Goatly, 2006). Certain ideology is expressed in language which restricts one’s rights, blames victims, and legitimize violence (Yang, 2007). As Nelson (2002) said, “Human conflict begins and ends via talk and text. We generate, shape, implement, remember and forget violent behaviour – between individuals, communities or state – through a specific discourse. It is discourse that prepares for sacrifice, justifies inhumanity, absolves from guilt, and demonizes the enemy” (p. 4). Indeed, when it comes to domestic violence, particular populations are exempted from being accused from domestic violence. For instance, in Chinese, the word, “zuiqian,” implies that “deficient mouth” and blame women’s mouths and deviant speaking styles (Yang, 2007). This expression individualize the seriousness of domestic violence as a social problem and downplays and legitimatizes male violence (Yang, 2007, p.109). In Japanese, as one of the participants in this study pointed out, girls are raised to be a “良妻賢母” (pronounced as ‘ryousai kenbo’). This word literally means ‘a good wife and wise mother’. However, this word often implies that women should be the dutiful wife and devoted mother who is obedient and supportive to her husband.

In North America, the language used to describe children and children’s experiences has a significant impact on children’s rights and their position in society; language may be used as a
vehicle to disregard children, denying them personhood, dignity, and respect (Saunders & Goddard, 2001). For instance, language may degrade children by using the word ‘kid’, which denotes a belief that the child is goat-like, ‘unwise or stupid’ (Saunders & Goddard, 2001). Also, historically, children were referred to as ‘it’ or ‘he,’ reflecting the society’s perspective of the child as less than human and disregard for females (Saunders & Goddard, 2001).

**Family and community level.** Attitudes, views, and responses to family violence are also influenced on variety of levels by such factors as family history, family norms, as well as extra cultural stressors (Malley-Morrison & Hines, 2004) including Japanese specific communication styles.

**Clan system in Japan.** Consistent with findings of others, this study suggested that family violence is embedded in Japanese familial and social structure: the clan system (Ferguson, 2000; Ishii-Kuntz & Maryanski, 2003; Namba, 2000; Weingourt et al., 2001; Yoshihama, 2005; Yoshihama & Sorenson, 1994). Participants in this study expressed that hierarchical rank and order still exist in Japanese families. Participants viewed that the hierarchy often creates natural power difference in the family, which was perceived as the risk factor of family violence. The current study also suggested that a tight-knit clan system would prevent someone from interfering familial disputes or private problems by creating clear-cut boundaries that distinguish from inside and outside of family circle. Japanese people in general respect family privacy and believe that the clan/family has the responsibility to resolve issues, such as violence in a family.

The clan system is the policy that was created by the government in medieval (early 17th century) and modern era (early 20th centrally) in Japan (Locke, 1998). Again, this policy was build on the bases Buddhist, Confucian, and Shintonist philosophy, and governs Japanese family structure; the male is the head of the household, is the authority and is the primary and only
decision maker. Age determines the male dominance and rank in the family, with the senior male at the highest of the hierarchy. Females are subordinate to males. Females are ranked by age, and older females are senior to younger females.

**Conflict avoidance.** The findings in this study suggested that complex Japanese characteristics could contribute to the risk of family violence. Informants in this study voiced that some abusers may lack skills to solve problems and manage stress. Participants perceived that stress, frustration, and irritation accumulated by masking their opinions and feelings in order to avoid direct confrontation, eventually could erupt into violence in a family.

Among other behaviours particular to the Japanese culture, avoiding conflict is considered to be “Japaneseness” (Yoshihama, 2000, p. 222). An avoidance strategy is characterized by passive, indirect behaviors; one avoids the issue or person, avoids talking about the issues, engages in submissive behaviors, or yields to the other party (Sillars, 1980). Confrontation is often avoided because it is putting someone on the spot and embarrassment, which is considered disrespectful (Ikoma, 1997). In traditional families, it is preferred to suppress one’s feelings rather than to control or dispute others (Doi, 1973). Japanese interviewees in Yoshihama’s (2000) study suggested Japanese people are expected or tend to avoid direct confrontation and conflicts with others. Her participants described their ways to avoid conflict by holding feelings in or “going with flow” (Yoshihama, 2000, p. 214).

This traditional “Japaneseness” of conflict avoidance can be observed both outside of family, such as workplace, community, and life circle and inside of family. Typical Japanese people have been described as passive and patient, waiting for their needs to be fulfilled rather than insisting on it. The norm is to give consideration to others and to hold back one’s needs for the sake of others (Doi, 1973, 1994). Consistent with the findings of this study, the Shearman
and Dumlao (2008) concluded that self-expression and explicit communication styles are not appreciated in Japanese culture. The style of the Japanese family is one that emphasizes harmony and connection (Bell, Bell, Nakata, & Bell, 1996; Rothbaum, Pott, Azuma, Miyake, & Weisz, 2000; Shearman, Dumlao, & Kagawa, 2011). In addition, Tomita (1994) claims that the balance between dependency among family members and the ability to hold back one’s own needs successfully can be a source of conflict in the family.

These findings concern for professionals because some Japanese families may have fewer communication and conversations at homes in order to avoid direct confrontation, because conversations or dialogues could turn into arguments and fights. This may result in unsolved conflicts, negative feelings, discord, and the source of family violence.

**Conformity.** Participants felt strong necessity to fit into the Japanese communities in their cities in order to survive in the small communities. Conformity is considered as the importance of fitting in or conforming to familial and social expectations. Japanese people in general are taught not to deviate from familial and social norms, gender expectation, family hierarchy, and birth order of one’s family, and not to bring disgrace to one’s family reputation (Kim, Yang, Atkinson, Wolfe, & Hong, 2001; Leung & Cheung, 2008; Moore, 1999). The notion of yielding and succumbing to others is highly approved. A Japanese proverb, ‘A nail sticking up ready to be hammered – Those who break from traditional social rule will be punished,’ illustrates the above principle.

**Shame, embarrassment, and face saving.** Consistent with other studies with Japanese (Asai & Kameoka, 2007; Tsukada & Saito, 2006; Yoshihama, 2002b) and other Asian and immigrant populations (Baker et al., 1999; Chan, 2009; Crandall et al., 2005; Enander, 2010; Lee & Eaton, 2009; Lee, 2004), the present study documents the notion of shame, embarrassment and
face saving. Conformity is directly related to the feeling of shame, embarrassment and the behaviour of face saving of the family matter. The sense of shame can be emerged through comparing and referring their thoughts, actions, and feelings with their internalized criteria or frame of reference (Sakuta, 1964, cited in Nagae, 2007).

As the participants in this study noted, the strong stigma against divorce, single parent, and family violence still exist in Japan. Some Japanese people feel shame and embarrassment when they divorce and return to their parents’ home. They feel they are deviant from the public, norms, and expectation. In case of Japanese women, informants in this study noted that they are taught to be self-sacrificial and dutiful in their marriage, and family’s success and failure (for instance, family violence) depends on wives’ dutifulness (Nagae & Dancy, 2010; Yoshihama, 2000).

In addition, shame is expressed in Japanese language. The term, ‘世間体 (Sekentei)’ (keeping up appearance) was repeatedly expressed by respondents in this study. It is a concept that causes an individuals to worry about other people’s observations and evaluations of his or her behaviours (Asai & Kameoka, 2005). This concept commonly refers to an individual’s concerns about behaving in a socially acceptable manner as judged by other, and the eyes of other people who observe an individual’s behaviours (Miyake & Yamazaki, 1995). Therefore, people in Japan are usually extremely careful not to bring any disgrace or shame on oneself and one’s family name (Takano, 2002). In relation to intimate spousal abuse, sekentei refers to people watching how well a husband manages his wife’s behaviours; if a wife leaves the house or if neighbours have evidence of an unsuccessful family life, the family would be judged as and loose face and their good reputation.
This thought is of concern to helping professionals, since it could directly reinforce concealment of family violence, become obstacles to seek help, and delay intervention (Nagae, 2007; Yoshihama, 2000).

**Authoritarian parenting style.** Participants in this study acknowledged the frequency of an authoritarian parenting style and physical punishment among some Japanese families. Participants in this study indicated that the dynamics of traditional Japanese parents were characterized by the father as the unquestioned authority and head of the family, which was seen in traditional Asian families (Locke, 1998; Shon & Ja, 1992; Yoshioka et al., 2001). Although positive outcomes were found to be beneficial in some cases, authoritarian parenting style has acquired a negative connotation in North American literature and parenting practice because negative child and adolescent outcome frequently associated with it (Ang & Goh, 2006).

Authoritarian parents usually expect obedience, and are demanding, controlling, and lacking flexibility or compromising with their children (Ang & Goh, 2006; Dornbush, Ritter, & Leiderman, 1987). Children with authoritarian parents are reported to be less likely to think for themselves or to understand why their parents are requesting certain behaviours (Su & Hynie, 2011). They tend to be withdrawn, obedient, and fearful of new situations, and to have low self-esteem (Chen, Dong, & Zhou, 1997). This parenting style may hinder communication between the parents and children and undermine the importance of moral reasoning (Rasmussen, 2006). For instance, a study comparing family communication patterns and conflict between Japanese and American showed that American families are more likely to be involved with verbal communication compared with Japanese families (Shearman & Dumlaо, 2008).

Another study by Sue and Hynie (2011) investigated the effects of life stress, social support, and cultural beliefs on parenting styles among Mainland Chinese, Chinese Canadian,
and European Canadian mothers. Their findings suggested that traditional childrearing belief were positively associated with endorsement of authoritarian parenting (Su & Hynie, 2011). In addition, life stress increases the level of authoritarian parenting regardless of mother’s cultural backgrounds (Su & Hynie, 2011).

These findings raise concerns about many immigrant families with traditional parenting beliefs, who face tremendous stress when adjusting into a new environment. As the participants in this study indicated, parents’ stress to provide basic needs and to care for their families could leave no space to respond calmly and positively to their children.

**Individual level.** The interaction within the micro system constantly shapes the individuals. Particular social and symbolic characteristics shared in immediate environment, such as family and home environment, would invite, enable, or sometimes force and inhibit certain cognition, motivation, personal values, and experiences. The individual level includes personal experiences and characteristics, which are learned and shaped through a pattern of activities, social roles, and interpersonal relationships experienced by the individual in a given setting (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

Shintoism and Buddhism teaching creates mentality that is often described “the essence of being Japanese” (Thal, 2006, p. 145). Locke (1998) explained that the Shintoist background of the Japanese culture endorse suppression of self, promote inner discipline and stoicism, and encourage concealing frustrations and disappointments. Through Buddhist, Confucian, and Shintonism, traditional Japanese are expected to submerge individual concerns, to recognize filial piety and moral obligations to others as superior to personal desires, and to persist in their tasks in the face of unhappiness despite the probability of failure or defeat (Locke, 1998).
Individual level factors that found to be significantly impacting on family violence include endurance, reserve, and self-reliance.

**Endurance.** The Japanese cultural value of endurance was repeatedly expressed by participants in this study and viewed as suppressing one’s motivations to seek help. This finding is supported by literature investigated in Chinese, Korean, Japanese, Vietnamese communities (Hatashita, Brykczyński, & Anderson, 2006; Malley-Morrison & Hines, 2004; Nagae & Dancy, 2010; Shiu-Thornton et al., 2005; Yoshihama, 2000).

Buddhist spiritually sees endurance and suffering as a path to test one’s strength, resilience, to gain inner capacity to accept social and shared responsibilities, and to attain maturity, better life, self-transcendence, and self-realization (Leung & Chan, 2010; Msaki & Wong, 1997). In addition, this value of endurance seemed to have been passed down generation after generation. Yoshihama (2001) compared the perceptions of partner violence among four generations of Japanese-Americans, and found that all four generations endorsed the value of endurance. The value of endurance was described by a participant’s remarks, “As a Japanese, I ‘gaman’ – just like a habit, I endure” (p. 216).

Similarly, other immigrant women from Asian countries such as Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese, Filipino, and Cambodian were raised to endure; battered women’s narratives indicated that enduring and tolerating life’s hardships and sacrificing themselves are considered as grace (Hatashita, Brykczyński, et al., 2006; Malley-Morrison & Hines, 2004; Nagae & Dancy, 2010; Shiu-Thornton et al., 2005; Yoshihama, 2000). In addition, Cambodian female participants in Bhuyan, Mell, Senturia, Sulivan, and Shi-Thornton’s (2005) study stated, “they [people in general] say if I can endure for 15 years why can I not endure for another 15 years?” (p. 910). Furthermore, elderly Korean women expected hardships in their life, and may tolerate
hardship and suffering in order to maintain harmonious interpersonal relationships (Rittman et al., 1999).

**Reserve.** The concept of reserve, called ‘遠慮 (enryo)’ (Wierzbicka, 1991, p. 346) seems to be a related cultural value to endurance. Enryo means reserved and constraint and it is greatly respected and accepted in Japanese culture. This characteristic may be displayed as a hesitancy to speak up, lack of verbal participation, lack of eye contact, or a reluctance to ask or request anything. By restraining one’s speaking and one’s thoughts, opinion and emotions, individual is showing their respect and modesty (Ikoma, 1997; Wierzbicka, 1991). These interaction rules, are learned from childhood, and taught and reinforced by other’s reactions (Wierzbicka, 1991). If one is not sensitive to other’s reactions, the person is punished for boastful, aggressive, and self-centered behaviour (Locke, 1998); as a consequence, Japanese people often reserve not only personal opinions, but also their desire, their preference, and their wishes (Smith, 1983). As Smith pointed out, to show enryo, Japanese people are expected to “sidestep choices when they were offered” (Smith, 1983, p. 87).

**Self-reliance.** Because of Japanese culture of reserve and endurance, Japanese people are usually expected to be self-reliance. The observed tendency for blaming victims and bystanders hesitant to offer helping hands in current study could be due to this culture of self-reliance. Self-reliance is inner mental self-control acquired “through discipline and adversity a person achieves self-development and, crucially, self-mastery” (Smith, 1983, p. 99). In addition to the value of endurance and perseverance, traditional Japanese people are generally expected to have a strong will, spiritual and mental strengths that could conquer physical illness and selfish desire (Morsbach, 1980). For example, a quantitative study conducted by Stephan, Stephan, Saito and Barnett (1998) indicated that Japanese undergraduate students scored higher on the Self-
Reliance/Competition scale compared with undergraduate students in the U.S. This result was confusing to Stephan, Stephan, Saito and Barnett (1998), and led these authors to conclude that Japanese students were more individualists than American students. However, these authors did not consider the cultural value of self-reliance and reserve that lead Japanese people to avoid seeking others’ help. Japanese students may feel embarrassed by help seeking behaviour and disrupting harmony.

Similarly, studies conducted in the neighbour country, Hon Kong, have shown that self-reliance is treasured in Chinese culture, even if the problem that one faces is beyond the limits of one’s capacity to cope (Chiu, 2002, 2004; Shek, 1998). Victims of dating violence among Taiwanese women participants did not seek help in part because of the cultural expectation of self-reliance (Shen, 2011). A participant in Shen’s (2011) study said, “The reason I had to rely on myself was because I was responsible too. I wasn’t cautious enough. I let somebody have the chance to take advantage of me” (Shen, 2011, p. 1352).

These teaching and spirituality can endorse Japanese descents to internalize problems, or to expect individual to solve own problem. As a result, seeking outside help is rarely an option for many Japanese victims and families, and other Asian communities, unless issues becomes worse or out of control (Nguyen, 2005). This is consistent with findings of this study including victim blaming.

This study’s findings underscore the importance of considering cultural specific spiritual guidance, teaching, and values at each level. Professionals need to recognize that many factors, including culture and spiritual beliefs, which are not discussed in western literature, are closely intertwined with each other. Ikoma (1997) warned that above mentioned Japanese characteristic are remarkable virtues; however, due to the lack of aggressiveness, it could hinder an
individual’s strengths and uniqueness within North American culture and be misinterpreted as quiet, shy, passive, or reflection of low self-confidence in Western society. These characteristics may not always be accurate descriptions of Japanese; many Japanese are, in fact, resilient. As feminist scholars and activists, it is vital to incorporate and develop strength-base intervention, rather than deficit-based public discourses of domestic, which often pathologies and disempower survivors of violence (Barrett & St Pierre, 2011).

This framework, therefore, provides an ample lens that allows the analytical eyes not only to focus on components that could trigger family violence, such as patriarchal ideology, stress and tension during the process of migration, and barriers to access information, but also to consider specific cultural values, beliefs, spiritual teaching, communication norms, and interaction styles. This ecological framework encourages professionals to enlarge one’s scope how we understand, intervene, and practice to assist creating a family violence free community.

**Implications for Practice**

The findings of the current study highlight the complex interplay between the sociocultural contexts, such as cultural values, spiritual beliefs, and circumstances, and participants’ perceptions of family violence. This study informs the importance of development of outreach and intervention strategies targeting Japanese community. It is widely accepted that culturally sensitive practice and strategies would help professionals to provide appropriate assistance and to intervene more effectively in cultural communities experiencing family violence. As such, it is crucial to understand and acknowledge the culturally specific core values and views held toward family violence among different populations. Intervention strategies can then be tailored to multiple levels; not only the individual and the families, but also the community level as well. Practice at each level must acknowledge cultural specific beliefs and values. Psycho-educational
approaches should be used to increase awareness of family violence without inadvertently insulting or demeaning others. In addition, healing processes might need to be provided bilingually in order to capture and convey meaning accurately (Mckenze, Hansson, Tuck, & Jackson, 2009; Sullivan et al., 2005).

Individual practice with cultural communities such as the Japanese must recognize the importance of cultural values and expressions including shame, embarrassment, endurance and conformity. Without this knowledge, these may pose insurmountable barriers for Japanese Canadians when seeking help. For instance, the policy of complete anonymity and strict confidentiality should be widely advertised in order for clients to feel safe and secure revealing their private issues (Asai & Kameoka, 2005). Practitioners appreciate and respect the value of feeling shame, patience and endurance as client’s greatest strengths. It is also important for practitioners to embrace clients’ silence and endurance as view these as resiliency and strengths (Tomita, 2000; Yoshihama, 2000), rather than categorize or dismiss them negatively. It may be easy to be frustrated with clients who appear dependent or passive and to blame them for not seeking help earlier. Negative attitudes by service providers impede the development of trust from clients. Since seeking help is often disapproved of and not common within the Japanese communities, practitioners must appreciate and honour their bravery for coming forward (Yoshihama, 2000).

In order to assist individuals in Japanese community to increase awareness of family violence, cultural sensitive assessment and psych-education approaches are needed. As seen in the findings, not all individuals agree on what constitutes family violence. Thus, practitioners can directly inquire how clients view about situations of family violence. For example, asking questions such as, “What is family violence?”, “Did you view that behaviours are family
violence?”, “What does that mean to you?”, and “Did feel you were abused when your spouse did XXX?” may shed light on how they view and make sense of family violence.

In addition, clinician’s words and expressions should be carefully chosen. Tomita (2000) discouraged using words, such as “psychological abuse” and “neglect,” since many Asians are unfamiliar with those terms. Instead, ambiguous questions, including “Do you feel any moment that you feel suffocated in your daily live? Stressed? Feel hurt? Do you get enough sleep or eat? Do your family treat you with respect?” (Tomita, 2000, p. 315). Psycho-educational approaches employ non-accusatory statements and re-label behaviours as victims may not identify behaviours as abusive, such as “If that happened to me, I would be frightened,” or “I am wondering if you believe that kind of behaviour is wrong?” and “Are you aware that others may consider you to be a victim of abuse?” (Tomita, 2000, p. 316).

Cultural norms and values can be used as an educational tool to learn and acquire knowledge and skills. For instance, collectivistic cultures often identify insiders or outsiders of the group. A practitioner may be categorized as an outsider, who will never be able to obtain the emic (clients’) point of view. However, being an outsider also has an advantage; clinicians can educate families. A neutral outsider can provide a different perceptive and assist by relabeling actions that clients and their families may not have recognized as abusive (Tomita, 2000). In addition, since Japanese clients are more likely to see professional therapists and counsellors as authority figure and a source of guidance (Tomita, 2000), clients may unconsciously attempt to maintain harmony in front of authoritative figure. Clinicians, in turn, can encourage them to be more assertive or support them to challenge therapists (Singhal & Nagao, 1993), which could assist in acquiring skills to become more assertive in their daily lives.
Moreover, as it was suggested in the findings of the study, intervention for this population must also consider the psychosocial impacts on individuals who have experienced the immigration process. This might include stress of relocation, mental and physical health challenges, acculturation and relational stress, social status, social contact and oppression (Yakushko, Watson, & Thompson, 2008). Other supports such as obtaining housing, finance and employment opportunities, are also necessary to prepare individuals for independence from abuser (Ting & Panchanadeswaran, 2009).

Finally, empowering individuals of Japanese descents can be achieved through enhancing their self-efficacy and self-worth (Holloway, Suzuki, Yamamoto, Mindnich, 2006). For instance, Tomita (2000) indicated that Japanese women’s life satisfaction can be obtained through job satisfaction, community involvement, feeling of acceptance and belonging. Thus, coaching, language education, and job training for new immigrants and members of Japanese community could enable vulnerable population to gain control over their lives, rather than becoming too much dependent on family members.

The major challenge viewed by the participants in this study was the accessibility of acquiring appropriate community resources. Similar to findings of other studies that investigated immigrant communities (Ahmad et al., 2009; Crandall et al., 2005; Shen, 2011; Sullivan et al., 2005), participants in this study expressed difficulty identifying available social supports for individuals and families in their communities. A lack of available support in these communities should be treated as a concerning issue and be dealt with urgently. Establishing a social service organization and structured supporting system in Japanese communities to assist not only victims of family violence, but also both newcomers and long-term residents is strongly recommended in order for children, youths, parents, men, women and elder of Japanese descent to be able to
maximize their well-being. Programs and services for abusers are as important as for victims; however, establishing victim support services must be the priority in Japanese community, since there has be no services exist for victims of family in the province of Alberta. A service organization should focus on establishing a hot line, website and email address for easier access, and outreach programs.

**Implications for Research**

The current research is the first to explore Japanese Canadian’s perspectives on the issue family violence. Several of the major themes highlighted by the respondents could be investigated in future research. For instance, since interviewees in this study struggled to grasp the concept of family violence other than physical form, instruments or aids, such as visual tools to represent the concept of family violence, should be created and evaluated by Japanese communities to assist understanding the function, concept and meaning of family violence. In addition, researchers need to develop and test assessment tools that are suitable for Japanese communities in order to maximize appropriateness and effectiveness of programs and services. On going research including examining types of questions and abuse that victims feel comfortable answering should be conducted. Researchers and clinicians need to investigate terms or choice of words Japanese individuals are familiar with, but are able to convey the essence of family violence.

In addition, more systematic investigation with multiple approaches should be conducted in order to reveal realities of this largely ignored cultural/ethnic group. Inquiries investigating which of these socio cultural values and expectations are unique, common, stronger, or weaker among other cultures, can be helpful when incorporating and forming prevention and intervention practice. Clinicians can also assess, test, and evaluate strategies and programs in
terms of how to facilitate Japanese communities, especially newcomers, to conceptualize family violence as a matter of human rights and human dignity.

Moreover, strategies for effective outreach methods focusing on how to encourage bystanders to report or refer family violence to professions and how to encourage help seeking behaviours, should be investigated in order to extend the aids and supports to those of whom professionals might not be able to reach out easily.

Furthermore, more research is needed to investigate Japanese immigrants, victims of family violence, and abusers, such as investigating lived experiences of newcomers, victims, and abusers. Surprisingly, Japanese ethnic group had the highest proportion of marrying or partnering outside of their visible minority group in Canada due to the long duration of residence and low overall population of Japanese (Milan, Maheux, & Chui, 2010). Indeed, a majority of female participants in this study came to Canada after marring with Canadian husbands. Given the fact that research investigating the nature and phenomenon of inter-ethnic/racial or inter-cultural couples and its’ impact on family dynamics, on children who are raised under the bicultural (or triple cultural) environment, and on the process of negotiating their traditional cultural values and beliefs could also provide insight into family violence among racial/ethnic blended families.

**Implications for Education**

As participants in this study suggested, the important dimension for making a change for family violence prevention and intervention should be an increased emphasis on information and education. Education regarding the many contributing factors and signs of family violence can facilitate individuals, including children, adults, and elders to understand a broader perspective of family violence and to recognize that violence can affect anyone. I suggest that educators
working in professional fields including social work, nursing and community builders together with schoolteachers and health care providers should provide education at earlier age, including teaching gender equality, healthy family communication skills, and human rights to children and youths. Social work educators are expected to teach not only the dynamics of family violence, but also the impact of cultural values and beliefs on family violence. In addition, school instructors, educators, health professionals should actively provide information to their clients regarding community resources, such as shelters, legal assistance, and help-lines in order to increase knowledge and awareness of support services and program in the area.

Implications for Policy

Canadian family sponsorship immigration policies have been criticized for placing sponsored spouses, usually wives, at risk for spousal violence prior to 2002 (Merali, 2009). Two important Canadian research studies investigated sponsored women’s experience in early 2000 by Husaini (2001) and Cote, Kerist, & Cote (2001). Both studies interviewed immigrant women who have been sponsored by their husbands after marriage in foreign country or arranged marriages. Sponsored wives report serious instances of abuse including being forbidden to take ESL class, seek employment, leave the home, and the threat of deportation, of being cut-off from financial support (Husaini, 2001). In addition, wives reported being forced to repay the cost of sponsorship (Cote et al., 2001; Husaini, 2001).

These alarming findings led the Citizenship and Immigration Canada to re-examine and amend family sponsorship policies in order to eliminate sponsors’ power over sponsored spouses in 2002 (CIC, 2002). Changes in the immigration policy have included a mandate submission of sponsoring person’ criminal records as well as the history of domestic violence. In addition, the amended policy has added documents, which explain and clarify the sponsored spouses’ rights
and sponsoring husbands’ duties in order to prevent sponsored spouses’ believing faulty threats (CIC, 2002). The most significant change was the length of time that sponsored spouse is dependent on their sponsors; it has been reduced from ten years to three years (CIC, 2002). However, immigration policies for sponsoring parents still maintains the lengths as ten years, and sponsoring person is not required to submit criminal record and history of domestic violence (CIC 2002). This policy could potentially contribute to elder abuse among newcomers.

Victims of family violence are not only limited to sponsored immigrant spouses. Temporary permit holders are also at risk of becoming victims of family violence. They may not be able to access and utilize community resources because temporary permit holders may not be entitled to social services. From a humanitarian perspective, I strongly recommend the government establish a system and create policies that assist victims of non-permanent residence in acquiring necessary social services. I believe that sponsored seniors and temporary permit holders are as vulnerable as wives in the studies by Cote, et al., (2001) and Husaini (2001) due to lack of language proficiency and other barriers that arise during the process of emigrating to this country.

Moreover, prevention and intervention of family violence among different ethnic group should be incorporated into the existing national prevention plan for ending violence in a family. The policy direction should emphasize collaboration and referrals between immigrants supporting agencies, ESL schools, colleges, universities, health care agencies, and family support community agencies in an effort to address diverse needs of individuals and families. I also recommend that the Alberta government actively participate in the role of developing curriculum and designing effective and practical strategies for family violence prevention among minority cultural groups. In order to enhance services and programs, funding opportunities should be
created and available for further research on family violence among minority groups. Agencies should also modify their policies to provide opportunities for service providers to increase the culturally informed knowledge of family violence and to be able to assist clients in a timely manner.

Limitations

In considering the result of this study, certain limitations should be noted. First, the findings of my study have limited generalizability due to the nature of the research design. This is a qualitative study and I was interested in hearing the stories and attempting to understand and discover the perceptions and experiences of the participants. Qualitative research by nature is not designed to generalize but rather to develop understanding. Participants were not chosen with the aim of representing all Japanese communities in Canada, because the purpose of this research design is neither to find causations, but rather to explore and understand details of participants lives (Creswell, 2007). Since this study employed a convenient sampling technique with a certain criteria for recruiting participants, participants were limited to self-identified Japanese descendent individuals in Edmonton and Calgary. Individuals who do not acknowledge themselves as Japanese heritage were not included in this study.

In addition, participants in this study were voluntary and only participants who were motivated and willing to disclose their experiences and thoughts were included. Moreover, the sample of this study was relatively small to adequately understand Japanese communities’ understanding of family violence. Except for one participant, all other nine participants were Japanese born. Participants’ age was also clustered around thirty-five years old, and gender was mostly female (8 out of 10). Participants in this study do not include voices from senior Japanese-Canadian individuals, especially from males. Moreover, a majority of participants
were in long-term relationships or had families with young children. Individuals of Japanese
descent may have been reluctant to participate because of the focus group setting instead of
individual interviews, due to the feelings of shame and embarrassment speaking in front of the
public. As such, their perceptions of family violence must be understood within this context.

Another important consideration is the size of the focus groups. Although a small group
size is beneficial and preferred when discussing sensitive and emotional charged topics that
generate high levels of participations (Barbour & Kitzinger, 1999; Maxwell & Boyle, 1995;
Morgan, 1992), responders’ thoughts and opinions in the current study may have been influenced
by a dominant or opinionated member, and discussions may have been yielded to main opinions
due to the value of conformity.

Moreover, another limitation is the use of photo elicitation. Photo elicitation is useful to
evoke participants’ feelings and to encourage their honest responses. I have modified the timing
of presenting photos from the beginning of the interviews to the point, where most of
participants’ opinions and views appeared to be voiced. However, the illustrations used in this
study may have defined participants’ view of family violence during the rest of the interviews,
rather than encouraging reflective thinking (Crilly, Blackwell, & Clarkson, 2006).

Finally, there are some limitations resulted in translating participants’ account from
Japanese to English. I had one research assistant who is fluent in Japanese proofread the
English, translated transcript shown in this thesis from Japanese. However, literal translations of
Japanese words to English were sometimes avoided because they may not necessarily capture the
meanings and content. It is due to the fact that some Japanese words and phrases were often
understood within the context of Japanese culture.
Conclusion

Cultural values, beliefs and norms are a double-edged sword when it comes to the phenomenon of family violence. Those beliefs encourage family members to support and nurture family well-being, over that of the individual. Mutual respect, interdependence, honour, and harmony within the group are highly valued among collective cultures. As a result family members may sometimes use force or coercion to obtain compliance with the group norm.

A family should be the place where one feels safe, secure, healthy and cherished. No one, regardless of the gender, ethnicity, culture, and age, should be ignored, unreached, or denied supports because of any barriers, including language, cultural values, and a limited of knowledge. Perceptions of Japanese Canadians toward family violence were explored in this study. Japanese specific cultural values and beliefs, which may have influenced participants’ perceptions, were also investigated. This study further provided a practice framework to assist practitioners to construct practice strategies suitable for this population.

Although these findings are preliminary and exploratory, this research confirms the importance of providing support services that are orientated and sensitive to culture and language when tackling family violence in a community. This research has illustrated the urgent need for support services in Japanese communities in Alberta. Establishing a foundation of social service agency which provides services and programs including outreach, educational programs, and intervention services to overcome social and cultural barriers faced by Japanese Canadians, especially newcomers may ensure that individuals and families suffering from family violence can receive help.

This study offers insight into understanding Japanese minority group’s experiences and views regarding family violence. Japan has become economically, intellectually, and
technologically advanced country; however, with respect to human rights and dignity, policies and attitudes are still in the process of development. Newcomers from Japan may feel confused as what extent their actions may be considered as abusive or violent. Thus, social workers can play an active role bridging the gap between ethnic minority groups and health and welfare services to increase literacy of family violence and related resources.

This study has suggested that there is still much work to be done in the area of research with regards to family violence within Japanese communities. Many participants expressed that discussing family violence in focus group was a valuable learning opportunity. Participants indicated that they were able to learn from others, to reflect on their actions and perceptions, and to deepen their knowledge and understanding of family violence. Participants felt better equipped to make suggestions to help others. One participant confessed that they had not thought of the issue of family violence before and expressed satisfaction participating this research:

Through this focus group discussion

today...until today, I thought I haven’t done any family violence, in my mind. But to be honest, there were things that ring a bell.

Perhaps, there are few situations that may have been family violence. So if I haven’t attended this session, I would have continued doing that forever without noticing it. I think, in that sense, it is very important to have an opportunity to know
る機会って言うのは、非常に重要だと思います。もしかしたら、家庭内で食事しているとき、きとかに話したらいかもしれないですね。こういう、知識が無いっていうか、こういう事でもない限り、話さないですよね。

about the issue of family violence... Perhaps, it could be better to discuss this in my family and with my partner at dinner time or something. I guess, I don’t really have the knowledge about family violence, so we wouldn’t normally discuss about family violence unless we have an opportunity like this. (Participant 7)

**Epilogue.** Although it was not because of my experience of family violence that motivated me to research family violence, this research process has definitely given me an opportunity to reflect on my family, my parents, my new family, my parenting styles, and my future senior age. I feel I better understand my own parents actions and reactions as well as those of my sister and I. I thought family violence occurred among specific families with specific issues; in fact, it is myth. I have become more conscious about what could be healthy and unhealthy interactions in relationship, methods of resolving conflicts, child rearing styles, and my own actions that may have been rooted in certain cultural values.

One of the most unexpected finding in this research was the participants’ perception of Japanese people’s attitudes toward family violence. I initially felt surprised that some Japanese members seemed somewhat hardhearted and unwilling to give a helping hand. Now I realize that newcomers have experienced many hardships attempting to thrive in a foreign country; and have conquered hardships through hard work and a strong will, to achieved success. I have to confess that I myself once felt it would not benefit other young Japanese international students, if I helped them too much when they first arrive in Canada. I felt they should be independent and
learn the skills to be self-efficient. They should grow and learn from mistakes, pain, and hardships, as I did. I myself experienced overt and covert forms of racial discrimination, as well as pains and hardship. I felt, “If I can do it, you can do it too. So you should find out by yourself.” I now feel guilty and ashamed by the fact I once was cold-hearted and admired the values self-reliance and independent, over mutual help and caregiving. I have realized that even adults need support, direction, clues, and guidance, especially when we are overwhelmed by emotions, stress, and challenges.

On the other hand, I greatly appreciate and felt warmth through many people who truly care about people in Japanese community. There are, in fact, a lot of good people in the communities who try to help others as best they can. One participant for example assisted an acquaintance experiencing abuse to go to the police, write affidavits for obtaining child custody, and successfully attained a court order, so that the victim could go back to Japan with her child. There was another participant who was born and raised in Canada suffered from emotional abuse. This participant related his struggles during adolescent, such as having low self-esteem and self-worth, and identity crisis regarding whether he was Japanese or Canadian?. He left his home early age and lived independent; since then, he has gradually gained his confidence. He approached me hoping to establish a social service agency and programs for Japanese community in the community.

The proverb, “Better is a neighbour that is near than a brother far off”, adds meaning to immigrants who live separately and at a distance from their own families and relatives like me. I feel I am obligated to research, provide insight, and assist Japanese community with my skills, knowledge, and education as a social worker. I have started believing that it is my mission and life work to enhance wellbeing of Japanese heritage group living in this province. Through this
research project, I have become acquainted with several people who are interested in assisting
new Japanese families and creating social services specific for Japanese community. We are
planning to start discussing possible foundation of social services in fall 2012.
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Recruitment of Study Participants

Prospective Title: Understanding and Perception of Family Violence by a Japanese community in Edmonton

Are you interested in discussing the issue of family violence in a focus group? This research is to learn from people of Japanese descent how Japanese community in Edmonton understand, perceive, and make sense of family violence.

You are invited to participate in this study if you are:
- Japanese descent (Japanese-Canadian, Immigrants, and Japanese who hold temporary permits)
- 18 years and over
- willing to participate in one 90 min to 2 hours focus group (or a fact-to-face individual interview) English or Japanese
- Location: Edmonton Japanese Community Association
- Date: TBA Time: 9am or 1pm (6:30pm if there are enough participants)

Your participation in this study would be of great help for Japanese communities in Canada to understand their perceptions of family violence and to develop support system for those who are experiencing family violence but in silence.

*Your privacy is important to us. Focus groups will be held with strict confidentiality. The researcher will ensure that your privacy in the group and individual interview will not be disclosed to others.

The focus will last approximately 2 hours.

If you are interested in participating in this research, please contact Maki Sakata at 780-966-xxxx or msakata@ucalgary on Phone: Monday through Saturday: 9 am – 9 pm.

Maki Sakata, Bsc, BSW, RSW, MSW candidate
If you do not reach me on your call, please leave me a message. I’ll return your call.
Appendix A: Recruitment of Study Participants (Japanese)

カルガリー大学、ソーシャルワーク部

研究参 加 者 募 集

予定研究題名：エドモントンの日系コミュニティーから見た
家庭内暴力
フォーカスグループにて、家庭内の暴力について話し合ってみませんか？

この研究は、日系人から見た家庭内暴力、どのように家庭内暴力を定義、理解している
のかを、エドモントンに住む日系人の方に伺います。あなたの研究参加は、カナダ国内
において家庭内暴力に悩む日系家族を助けることに繋がっています。

研究に参加してみませんか？

● 日系人であること（日系カナダ人、移住者、就労ビザをお持ちの方）
● 18歳以上
● 2時間ほどフォーカスグループに参加（一回のみ）に参加出来る方。（言語
  は英語又は日本語好きな方）
● 場所：日系会館。
● 日時：未定 午前9時、午後1時（午後6時半～参加者希望があれば）

＊あなたのプライバシーを守ることは、私たちにとって、とても大切なことです。フォーカス
グループ又は個人インタビューでは、機密保持を保証いたします。フォーカスグループが始ま
る前に、グループ内で守秘義務であることをおさらいいたします。

フォーカスグループ、インタビューの所要時間は2時間ほどです。

この研究に興味をお持ちでしたら、Maki Sakata、
電話番号 780-966-xxxx 又は msakata@ucalgary までご連絡ください

電話受付時間は 月曜日—土曜日 9 am – 9pm.

坂田真紀：アルバータ州認定ソーシャルワーカー、ソーシャルワーク大学院生
電話が繋がらなかった場合は、お手数ですが、留守電にメッセージを残していただ
ければ、折り返しお電話差し上げます。
APPENDIX B: DETAILED INFORMATION SHEET

| Investigator: Maki Sakata, Master of Social Work student, Faculty of Social Work, University of Calgary. This research constitutes partial fulfillment of the requirements for my MSW in the Faculty of Social Work at the University of Calgary. A graduate Social Work student at the University of Calgary is looking for adult Japanese descent volunteers (Japanese Canadian, Immigrants, and temporary permits) to conduct a research on family violence. Striking numbers of domestic violence and abuse against Japanese women living in both Los Angeles and home country, Japan has been revealed (60 – 70%) in recent studies. However, little empirical evidence and research exists that explore the Japanese cultural perspective of family violence. By conducting potentially 4 focus groups (5-6 participants per group: Male-English speaking, Female-English speaking, Male-Japanese speaking, Female-Japanese speaking) or individual interviews, we may be able to learn from people of Japanese descent how Japanese community in Edmonton understand, perceive, and make sense of family violence, in order to explore and deepen understanding of family violence related to Japanese culture, and to create a description of family violence in a Japanese community. The research requires approximately 2 hours in-depth audio-recorded focus group or interviews of with strict confidentiality (you only need to participate one focus group). The location of the focus group will one of the meeting room at the Edmonton Japanese Community Association in Edmonton, and the date and time will be scheduled (9am, 1pm, or 6:30pm) after asking each participant’s availability. Focus groups will consist of 5-6 participants, a group facilitator (this researcher), and a note-taker who observe and take notes during the group (but will not participate in the discussion). Informed consent form and confidentiality agreement will be initially obtained prior to the focus group and in the beginning of the groups. You may feel upset when participating in the focus group, since it could provoke your past experiences. |

| Information to Participants |
| Project Title: Understanding and Perception of Family Violence by a Japanese community in Edmonton |

| Information to Participants | Investigator: Maki Sakata, Master of Social Work student, Faculty of Social Work, University of Calgary. This research constitutes partial fulfillment of the requirements for my MSW in the Faculty of Social Work at the University of Calgary. A graduate Social Work student at the University of Calgary is looking for adult Japanese descent volunteers (Japanese Canadian, Immigrants, and temporary permits) to conduct a research on family violence. Striking numbers of domestic violence and abuse against Japanese women living in both Los Angeles and home country, Japan has been revealed (60 – 70%) in recent studies. However, little empirical evidence and research exists that explore the Japanese cultural perspective of family violence. By conducting potentially 4 focus groups (5-6 participants per group: Male-English speaking, Female-English speaking, Male-Japanese speaking, Female-Japanese speaking) or individual interviews, we may be able to learn from people of Japanese descent how Japanese community in Edmonton understand, perceive, and make sense of family violence, in order to explore and deepen understanding of family violence related to Japanese culture, and to create a description of family violence in a Japanese community. The research requires approximately 2 hours in-depth audio-recorded focus group or interviews of with strict confidentiality (you only need to participate one focus group). The location of the focus group will one of the meeting room at the Edmonton Japanese Community Association in Edmonton, and the date and time will be scheduled (9am, 1pm, or 6:30pm) after asking each participant’s availability. Focus groups will consist of 5-6 participants, a group facilitator (this researcher), and a note-taker who observe and take notes during the group (but will not participate in the discussion). Informed consent form and confidentiality agreement will be initially obtained prior to the focus group and in the beginning of the groups. You may feel upset when participating in the focus group, since it could provoke your past experiences. |
and emotions. Some participants may be identified as distressed by other participants while in a focus group. If you are upset by the questions asked, the researcher will be available to you and we will seek additional supports. Participants are encouraged to ask questions and seek clarification throughout the research process. Although you agree to participate in this research process, you retain the right to withdraw that agreement at any time. But your contributions to the point of your withdrawal may remain as a part of the data.

Names of people, organizations, and geographic locations in the transcribed text will be deleted or replaced with pseudonyms. Interviews and data collected through research process will be gathered and analyzed by this principle investigator only. However, themes and concepts arisen while analyzing data may be shared with my supervisor and faculty members.

Audio recording files will be password protected and stored in my computer which also password protected. Transcribed interview data will be kept in a locked cabinet. Audio files will be destroyed three years after the completion of this research. Reports produced as a result of the research will not identify individuals name or the individual organization. Participants will have the option to include their identifying information (at minimum level) on a separate sheet if they wish to be notified the progress and research findings.

If you have any question or concerns regarding this project please contact Maki Sakata at msakata@ucalgary.ca (both English and Japanese compatible) or by phone 1-780-966-xxxx or feel free to contact Dr. Anne Marie McLaughlin, Ph.D at Anne-Marie McLaughlin, amclaugh@ucalgary.ca (English only) or by phone at 1-780-492-1478.
Appendix B: Detailed Information Sheet (Japanese)

詳しい研究案内

研究者：坂田真紀

卡尔ガリー大学、ソーシャルワーク大学院生と申します。この研究は、ソーシャルワーク、修士課程を取得する上の課題です。

卡尔ガリー大学のソーシャルワーク大学院生が、エドモントン在中日本人（日系カナダ人、永住権保持者、又は一時的なビザをお持ちの方）から見た家庭内暴力を研究しており、参加者を募集しております。

近年、ロサンジェルスや日本国内にて、数多くのパートナーからの人々に対する虐待などの家庭内暴力が報告されております（6割から7割）。しかしながら、カナダ国内、特にアルバータ州での家庭内暴力についての研究が過去に行われておらず、そのため、この研究はエドモントン市に居住されておられる日系人対象に、フォーカスグループ（男性女性別のグループ、移住者、カナダ生まれの方、そして言語は日本語又は英語で行われます）を行い、1）日系人から見た家庭内暴力、どのように家庭内暴力を定義、理解しているのか、2）日本文化どのように家庭内暴力の存在に関わっているか、3）日本人文化に適切なよう予防策介人策を皆さんのご意見を伺いたいと思います。

参加にはエドモントンお住まいで、2時間ほどのフォーカスグループ（5，6人）又は、ご希望により個人インターヴьюに参加いただきます（一回のみ）。フォーカスグループは、5，6人の参加者、グループ行進役（研究者）、そして書記で構成されます。書記はグループを観察したり、メモを取ったりします（議論には参加致しません）。時間は参加者のご希望の時間帯（9時、1時、午後6時半）をえらんで頂きます、それにより日程を決めさせて頂きます。参加同意書と、秘密保持契約書は、フォーカスグループが始まる前に署名して頂きます。内容は録音されますが、秘密厳守のもと行います。言語は英語と日本語、ご都合のよい言語にて行われます。フォーカスグループに参加の際、もしかしたらあなたの過去の経験などを思い出させ、気分を悪くする可能性があります。また、フォーカスグループ参加者の中で、苦痛やとお感じになられることが分かりになることもあるかもしれません。もし、そうなりましたら、研究者が適切な対処をいたしますし、カウンセリングなど他のサポートへも
紹介いたします。詳しい研究内容は、フォーカスグループ（又は個人インタビュー）の前に説明させて頂き参加者の了解の上で、同意書にサインをして頂きます。研究途中、いつでも研究者に質問し、明確な説明を求めることが出来ます。また、参加同意された後、いつでも研究参加を取りやめることが出来ます。

インタビュー後、転写した文面には、人名、組織名、そして地名などの名前は消去又は、仮名といたします。インタビュー、転写そして、データの分析は、私、研究者のみ行います。しかしながら、分析最中にテーマや概念など確認いたしましたら、私の教授などと話し合います。

録音したデジタルファイルは、暗証番号にて保護され、私のコンピューターに保存され、そのコンピューターも暗証番号にて私以外アクセス出来ないように保護されます。転写されたインタビューの文面は、鍵のかかったキャビネットにて保存されます。録音されたデジタルファイルは、転写完了後、そして正確さを確認した後、消去されます。この研究発表である論文には、個人の名前や関連する団体などは、個人を確認出来るような名前を載せることは有りません。もし、研究結果をお知りになりたい方は、最低限度の個人情報（例えば、メールアドレスのみ）を用意した別紙に記入されることをお勧めいたします。

この研究のご質問などございましたら、Maki Sakata、msakata@ucalgary.ca (英語、日本語可能)、又は電話 1-780-966-xxxx へご連絡ください。または、私の教授、アナーマリエ、マクラフリン博士、Anne-Marie McLaughlin, amclaugh@ucalgary.ca,(英語のみ) 又は電話 1-780-492-147 へご連絡ください。
APPENDIX C: TELEPHONE SCRIPT

Introduction
My name is Maki Sakata, a master’s student at the Faculty of Social Work, University of Calgary. Thank you for being interested in this study. This research is partial fulfillment of the requirements for my MSW, and the purpose of this research is to learn from people of Japanese descent how Japanese community in Edmonton understand, perceive, and make sense of family violence, in order to explore and deepen understanding of family violence related to Japanese culture, and to create a description of family violence in a Japanese community.

You are asked to participate in an audio-recorded focus group (5-6 people) interview of approximately 2 hours. We will discuss about your thoughts about awareness, views, understanding of family violence, as well as approaches to the issue of family violence from Japanese community, and possible prevention and intervention of family violence.

Process you involved as a participant
If you agree to be in this research, you will be participating in a focus group once, and the focus group will last 90 min – 2 hours.

• You will be asked background information of you such as age, gender, length of residency, citizenship, living arrangement, employment status, income, and educational status.
• You will be asked to talk about your feelings and thoughts about awareness, views, understanding of family violence within a family, as well as approaches to the issue of family violence from Japanese community, and possible prevention and intervention of family violence.
• There will be 5-6 participants, a group facilitator (this researcher, and a note-taker during the groups who will observe and take notes during the groups, but will not participate to the discussion.
• Group participants, facilitator, and the note-taker will be asked to sign an agreement not to disclose to others about the contents of the group.
• We will debrief at the end of the group at the end of the study. You are encouraged to correct, add, revise and rephrase the themes and concepts that researcher identified, and encouraged to speak their feelings, reflections.
• The focus group will be recorded using a digital voice recorder. To protect confidentiality, the interview will be transferred from the digital voice recorder to a digital folder in this researcher’s computer that will be password protected. The focus group interview will be transcribed by the investigator.
• You may feel emotional stress or discomfort from talking about family violence for those who have experienced family violence in the past. Some participants may be identified as distressed by other participants while in a focus group. A list of available resources such as shelters, agencies, mental health clinic, counseling and other services related to family violence in Edmonton will be provided.
• You may withdraw the focus group interview at any time or may refuse to answer specific question. But your contributions to the point of your withdrawal may remain as a part of the data.
• Transcribed interview data will be kept in a locked cabinet. Audio files will be destroyed three years after the completion of this research. Reports produced as a result of the research will not identify individuals name or the individual organization.

• There are no direct benefits to participants. The long-term benefit is that the information will help in the development and improvements of effective intervention program to Japanese Canadians who experience family violence.

• Do you have any questions?
Do you agree to participate in this study?
   If “NO”: Thank you very much for interested in this study and listening about the idea. If you find further question about this study, please don’t hesitate to call me at the telephone number. Thank you. Good-bye.
   If “YES”: I would like to ask dates and time you preferred.

**Scheduling Interview**
Thank you very much for agreeing to participate in a focus group.

• We are asking participants their available the date and time in order to arrange the focus group interview. What time (9am, 1pm, or 6:30pm) and date (of the week) is convenient for you?

• The location is a room in the Edmonton Japanese Community Association.

I will contact you as soon as the focus interview date is scheduled.
Thank you.
Appendix C: Telephone Script (Japanese)

紹介
お電話があがったらございます。私は、カルガリー大学にて、ソーシャルワーク大学院正の坂田真紀と申します。この研究は、興味を持って頂き、ありがとうございます。この研究は、修士課程の終了する上で必要な課題であり、この研究の目的は、日本人から見た家庭内暴力、どのように家庭内暴力を定義、理解しているのかを、エドモントンに住む日系人の方に伺い、日本文化に結びついた家庭内暴力を調査し理解を深めるもののです。

2時間程、録音したフォーカスグループ（5、6人）に参加して頂きます。フォーカスグループでは、家庭内暴力の認識、考え、理解、そして家庭内暴力という問題に対して日系人の姿勢や、可能な予防や介入策を話し合います。

研究参加のプロセスについて
もしこの研究参加に同意された場合、90分から2時間のフォーカスグループに参加して頂きます（一回のみ）。そして、

・予備知識として、年齢、性別、滞在年数、国籍、家族形成、職業、収入、雇用形態などを伺います。
・家庭内での暴力についての気づいたこと、理解や見解について意見や印象などを話合い、また、日系コミュニティでの家庭内暴力という問題への姿勢や、考えられる予防や介入方法を伺います。
・フォーカスグループには、5、6人の参加者、グループ行進役、書記がおります。しかしながら、書記はフォーカスグループに参加致しません。グループ中に観察したり、メモを取ります。
・グループ参加者、司会役、書記すべてが参加同意書と、機密保持契約書に署名するよう求められます。
・フォーカスグループの最後に、話し合い自体の感想を伺います。参加者は研究者が、グループ内で特定したテーマや概念などを校正、訂正や修正などを命、また、振り返って参加者の印象や意見など述べるよう勧めます。
・フォーカスグループは、デジタルレコーダーにて録音されます。機密を保持するため、録音されたインタビューはレコーダーから、研究者のコンピュータ内のデジタルフォルダーへ転送され、パスワードで保護されます。
・過去に家庭内暴力を受けた経験がある参加者には、情緒的ストレスや不快に思われるかもしれません。フォーカスグループ内で、他の参加者から苦悩していると分かるかもしれません。地域の情報や福祉サポート、例えば家庭内暴力に関連したシェルター、エージェンシー、精神保健クリニック、カウンセリングなどのリストを提供いたします。
・フォーカスグループ中、参加を辞退したり、ご都合の悪い特定の質問に答えなかったりもよろしいです。しかしながら、参加辞退された時点までの参加、貢献された内容は研究結果の一部となります。
・録音されたインタビューは、文章に起こし、そのデータは鍵のかかったキャビネットに保存されます。録音されたオーディオファイルは、この研究終了3年後に破棄されます。
の研究結果に基づいたレポートには、個人名や団体の名前など、身元を識別されるような固有名詞は含まれません。

• 参加者には直接的・利益はありません。しかしながら、この研究によって明らかになった情報は、家庭内暴力に悩むカナダ国内の日系家族への支援や援助プログラムの開発や、向上する為に役立つこととなります。

• ご質問はありますか？
参加のご意思はおありですか？

“無し”の場合：お忙しいところ、この研究に興味を持って頂き、お話を聞いて頂いてありがとうございます。もし、この研究に対してさらにご質問があれば、ご遠慮なくお電話ください。ありがとうございます。失礼致します。
“有り”の場合：ご都合のよい日にちと、時間帯（朝9時、1時、午後6時半）を教えてください。

インタビューを予定する
この研究に参加同意して頂きまして、ありがとうございます。

• フォーカスグループの日時を設定するため、参加者の皆さんにご都合のよい日にちと時間帯を伺っております。一週間のうち、どの曜日と時間帯がご都合よろしいですか？場所は、日系会館の一室です。

フォーカスグループの日程が決まり次第、ご連絡致します。
ありがとうございました。
APPENDIX D: EMAIL SCRIPT

(English and Japanese)

Thank you. Then we will meet:

____________________ (room number at EJCA)

____________________ (date and time)

If you need to contact me to cancel the interview, or ask questions, please call at Maki, 780-966-xxxx on Monday through Friday 9 a.m. – 9 p.m or email me msakata@ucalgary.ca anytime. If I am unable to answer your call, please leave a message.

Thank you.

ありがとうございます。では、下記の日時と部屋で行われます:

____________________ (日系会館の部屋番号)

____________________ (日時)

もし、キャンセル又は、ご質問などございましたら、Maki sakata, 780-966-xxxx に月曜から金曜、午前9時—午後9時の間にお電話、又は msakata@ucalgary.ca に、いつでもメール頂ければ幸いです。私が電話に出ることが出来なければ、留守電にメッセージを残してください。

ありがとうございました。
APPENDIX E: INFORMED CONSENT

Information and Consent Form

Name of Researcher, Faculty, Department, Telephone & Email:  
Maki Sakata, BSW, RSW, Master of Social Work student 780-966-xxxx  
Faculty of Social Work, University of Calgary msakata@ucalgary.ca  
Supervisor: Anne-Marie McLaughlin, PhD.  
Faculty of Social Work, University of Calgary 780-492-1478  
Title of Project:  
Understanding and Perception of Family Violence by the Japanese Community in Edmonton  
Sponsor: n/a

This consent form, a copy of which has been given to you, is only part of the process of informed consent. If you want more details about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information.

The University of Calgary Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board has approved this research study. You are being invited to take part in this research study because you care about families of Japanese descent. This form provides you with the information to make an informed decision on participating in this research.

Purpose of the Study:

This research thesis constitutes partial fulfillment of the requirements for my Master of Social Work degree in the Faculty of Social Work at the University of Calgary. The purpose of this study is to obtain insight from the Japanese community how the Japanese community makes sense of the issue of family violence, how Japanese culture contributes to the views, why family violence has not been discussed, and what are the effective intervention and supports suitable for the Japanese community.

What Will I Be Asked To Do?

You will be asked to participate in an in-depth audio-recorded focus group (5-6 participants, group facilitator (this researcher), and a note-taker of the group) interview of approximately 2 hours. This researcher will present images related to family violence. We will discuss about your thoughts about awareness, views, understanding of violence within a family, as well as approaches to the issue of family violence from Japanese community, and possible prevention and intervention of family violence.

Voluntary Participation

Your participation is completely voluntary. It is your choice to take part in this study. You do not have to answer any questions that you don’t want to answer. You are free to discontinue at any time during the study by informing to the researcher, but your contributions to the point of withdraw will remain as a part of the data.
What Type of Personal Information Will Be Collected?

Should you agree to participate, you will be asked to provide your gender, age, family structure, education, employment, yours and parents’ place of birth, religious affiliation, immigration status, and years in Canada as a questionnaire.

There are several options for you to consider if you decide to take part in this research. You can choose all, some or none of them. Please put a check mark on the corresponding line(s) that grants me your permission to

I grant permission to be audio taped: Yes: ___ No: ___
The pseudonym I choose for myself is: (____) (____)
I would like to obtain the research findings: Yes: ___ No:___

Are there Risks or Benefits if I Participate?

Possible Risks: You may feel upsetting while in the focus group, since it could provoke your past experiences and feelings. Some participants may be identified as distressed by others while in a focus group. If you are upset by the questions asked or want further supports, the researcher will be available to you and we will seek additional supports.

Benefit: You may find it helpful to share your opinions, thoughts, and experiences through focus groups. Should this study lead to greater support program for families and persons of Japanese descent affected by family violence, you may benefit directly from participating this study. Your taking part in this study will help us to better understand the family violence from Japanese cultural perspectives and to support needs of families and people who experienced family violence. This will help us to deepen understanding, recommend and advocate support services and programs for increase awareness, prevention and intervention strategies.

What Happens to the Information I Provide?

Confidentiality

No identifying information will be attached to audiotapes or other research materials and documentation. All participants will remain anonymous in the final reporting of data. Threats of harm, or reports of abuse, to child must be reported to the appropriate legal authorities.
The group facilitator (this researcher) will review confidentiality at the beginning of the group, and all participants, the facilitator, and the note-taker will be asked to sign an agreement that he/she will not speak or share information discussed during the group with others, including participants and contents once the group finishes.

No one except the researcher and her supervisor will be allowed to see or hear any of the answers to the questionnaire or the interview tape. Research staff (this researcher, her supervisor, research assistant) may see the transcriptions and summary of results.

There are no names on the questionnaire. Only group information will be summarized for any presentation or publication of results. All research materials and documents are kept in a locked location only accessible by the researcher and her supervisor. The data will be stored for three years on a computer disk folder after a completion of the research study, at which time, it will be permanently erased. While data collection will be aggregate or summarized according to themes, quotes may be
included in final reports, articles or other forms of dissemination. However, any direct quotes will be referenced solely by the participant-created pseudonym or researcher-created unique identifier code.

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**Signatures (written consent)**

Your signature on this form indicates that you 1) understand to your satisfaction the information provided to you about your participation in this research project, and 2) agree to participate as a research subject. In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the investigators, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from this research project at any time. You should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation.

Participant’s Name: (please print) ______________________

Participant’s Signature ______________________ Date: ______________

Researcher’s Name: (please print) ______________________

Researcher’s Signature: ______________________ Date: ______________

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**Questions/Concerns**

If you have any further questions or want clarification regarding this research and/or your participation, please contact:

- Maki Sakata, MSW Student
- Dr. Anne-Marie McLaughlin, Supervisor, Assistant Professor
- Faculty of Social Work, University of Calgary
- (780) 966-xxxx, (780) 492-1478
- msakata@ucalgary.ca, amclaugh@ucalgary.ca

If you have any concerns about the way you’ve been treated as a participant, please contact the Senior Ethics Resource Officer, Research Services Office, University of Calgary at (403) 220-3782; email rburrows@ucalgary.ca.

A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference. The investigator has kept a copy of the consent form.
Appendix E: Informed Consent (Japanese)

研究参加同意書

研究者の名前、部、電話番号、Emailアドレス
Maki Sakata, BSW, RSW, MSW 生徒 780-966-xxxx
カルガリー大学ソーシャルワーク部
教授: Anne-Marie McLaughlin 博士
カルガリー大学ソーシャルワーク部 780-492-1478
msakata@ucalgary.ca

研究題名: 日系人文化から見た家庭内暴力：エドモントン在中日本人コミュニティによる家庭内暴力の定義、理解、認識について

スポンサー：無し

この研究論文は、カルガリー大学、ソーシャルワーク大学院修士課程において必修課題です。
こちらの案内書、研究参加に同意されるもの、必要な過程です。どんな研究内容や参加内容などがお分かりになると思います。もし、この研究に対して詳細がお知りになりたい方、又は、こちらに述べられていない情報などがございましたら、ご質問ください。お時間を使って読みになっていただければ幸いです。

この研究は、カルガリー大学の連合研究倫理審議会はこの研究を承認いたしました。

あなたは、カナダに住む日系家族を大事に思っているため、この研究参加に招待されました。この同意書は、研究に参加される上で、情報に基づいた参加決定をされる為に用意されました。

研究目的
エドモントン/カルガリーに居住の日系人（日系カナダ人、永住権保持者、又は一時的なビザをお持ちの方）を対象に、家庭内暴力とは何か、どのように理解、認識しているのか研究する目的です。また、日本文化がどのように家庭内暴力への理解に一因となっているかを、また日本文化に適したより効果的な予防介入策を伺います。

何をするのですか？
90分から2時間半ほどのフォーカスグループ、又は個人インタビューに参加していただきます。フォーカスグループインタビューには、5、6人の参加者、グループの司会役（この研究者）として記録がおります。録音されます。まず、この研究者が家庭内暴力に関するイメージや写真を紹介します。その絵や写真に着いてあなたの思ったこと、意見、理解について話合い、そして日本人文化から取り組みや、可能な予防や介入策を話し合いたいと思います。グループの最後に、皆さんからご意見を伺います。

任意による参加
研究参加は、任意によるものです。いつでも参加中止や、撤回をすることが出来ます。質問のご回答も拒否することも出来ます。
研究参加に同意されますと、あなたの性別、お年、家族構成、最終歴年、職業、そしてあなたのご両親の出生地、宗教、滞在期間、滞在ビザの種類などお伺いします。

研究参加される上で、いくつかのオプションがございます。すべて又は、いくつかをお選びすることが出来ます。同意される事柄のラインに、チェックマークをお入れください。

録音されることに同意いたします。: Yes: ______ No: ______

その偽名は

研究結果を知りたいです。 Yes:_____ No:____

研究に参加する上で、リスクや利益が有りますか？

リスクの可能性：フォーカスグループに参加の際、もしかしたらあなたの過去の経験などを考え起こさせ、気分を悪くする可能性があります。また、フォーカスグループ参加者の中で、苦痛や悲しんでいると分かりになることも有りかもしれません。もし、そうなりましたら、研究者が適切な対処をいたしますし、カウンセリングなど他のサポートへも紹介いたします。

利益: 他の参加者の方と意見や考えを話し合うことが、助けになることになるかも知れません。もし、この研究が将来、カナダに住む、家庭内暴力に悩む日系家族や日系人の方によりよいサポートプログラム作りに役立つことに繋がることになりますと、この研究に参加されること自体が有益なこととなります。あなたの研究参加が、日本文化からみた家庭内暴力の理解を深め、そして、家庭内暴力を経験した日系家族や人々を助ける手助けとなります。この研究は家庭内暴力の理解を深め、意識を向上させ、よりよい予防策や介入策をもととした、サポートサービスやプログラムを推奨したり主張することに繋がります。

提供した情報はどうなりますか？

秘密厳守

研究参加は任意で、研究目的以外は含まれません。研究参加中、いつでも参加辞退することが出来ます。あなたのプライバシーを尊重いたします。研究発表の段階では参加者はすべて匿名となります。もし、他人を傷つけたり、虐待の可能性、また児童虐待などを示唆するようなことがありましたら、警察、児童福祉など適切な公的な機関へ届けます。

この研究者は、フォーカスグループの最初に、機密事項をおさらい致しますそして、参加者、研究者、そして書記は、機密保持契約書、グループ中に議論されたこと、個人情報や、誰が何と言ったかを、グループが終わった後に、誰にも言わないという契約書に署名するよう求められます。

この研究者と研究者のスーパーバイザー以外は、参加者の質問回答、インタビューのテープを見たり聞いたりすることは出来ません。研究スタッフ（研究者、スーパーバイザー、文法などを編集する英語を母国語とするアシスタント）が転写や結果の要約を見することがあります。

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こちらに署名していただけることにより、①）上記の情報、研究目的、内容などをご理解され、②）研究に参加同意されること、を確認いたします。

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お名前：(ご記入ください)  末尾文字列

署名  末尾文字列  日付：  末尾文字列

研究者の名前 (ご記入ください)  末尾文字列

研究者の署名：  末尾文字列  日付：  末尾文字列

ご質問などは
ご質問又は、研究や参加に対するご説明など有りましたら、こちらへご連絡ください。

サカタマキ  アナマリエ、マクラフリン博士
ソーシャルワーク大学院生  スーパーバイザー、アシスタント教授
カールガリー大学  カルガリー大学ソーシャルワーク部
780-966-xxxx  780-492-1478
msakata@ucalgary.ca

もし、研究参加者として参加した際、不正な取り扱いをお受けになったとお感じでしたら、カールガリー大学倫理管理部主任、電話番号 403-220-3782、メールアドレス、rburstows@ucalgary.ca までご連絡ください。

この同意書の複写は、あなたへの記録とご参考として保管してくださいます。研究者が同意書を保管いたします。
If you are interested in receiving a summary of research findings, please indicate below. This researcher will provide the summary report to participants while maintaining strict levels of confidentiality and protecting participants’ anonymity.

Research Findings Request Form

I wish to receive a summary of the research findings for the project, please include your email or postal address below (whichever you prefer that we use).

Email Address:

Postal Address:
APPENDIX F: CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

for participants, the researcher, and a research assistant/a note-taker (English)

Confidentiality Agreement for Research Participants, the Researcher, and the Research Assistant

I, the undersigned, understand that information disclosed during the focus group, including other participants’ personal information, and contents of the discussion during the focus group is confidential.

I will not share information with others (including my own family members) once the group ends. For instance, I will not reveal identities of other participants, and indicating who made specific comments during the discussion. It is to protect confidentiality of myself and other participants, to respect individuals, and to encourage nonthreatening and permissive environment for open communication.

Name: (please print) __________________________________________________________

Signature: ___________________________ Date: __________________
Appendix F: Confidentiality Agreement for participants, the researcher, and a research assistant/a note-taker (Japanese)

参加者、研究者、研究助手のための
機密保持契約書

下記に署名致しました私は、フォーカスグループ中にて公にされた個人情報又は、論議された内容は、機密であることを理解します。

フォーカスグループ終了後、これらの情報を他言（自分の家族にも）しません。例えば、参加者の身元や、議論中に誰か何を言ったかということを公開致しません。それは、私を含めた個人情報を守るため、参加者一人一人を尊敬するため、そして安全でリラックスし、開かれた会話を促進するためです。

名前:(活字で書いてください) __________________________________________
署名: ___________________________________________ Date: ________________
**APPENDIX G: DEMOGRAPHIC SURVEY**

**Demographics:** Please read and answer each question carefully. Provide the appropriate answer (check or numbers) in the brackets accompanying the question.

1. **Age** [ ]
   - Gender: Male [ ]  Female [ ]

2. **Family Structure** (x or numbers)
   - Nuclear Family [ ]
   - Lone Parent family [ ]
   - Numbers of Children [ ]
   - Age of Child/Children [ ]
   - Children have left home [ ]
   - Living with parent(s) [ ]
   - Age of Parent(s) [ ]
   - Living with other family members
     - Relationship [ ]
     - Divorced [ ]

3. **Education level**
   - Less than high school [ ]
   - Some high school [ ]
   - Some college [ ]
   - University degree [ ]
   - Completed graduate school [ ]

4. **Employment**
   - Employed
     - Full-time [ ]  Part-time [ ]
     - Retired [ ]
     - Homemaker [ ]

5. **Were you born in Canada?**
   - Yes [ ]
   - Which city? [ ]
   - No [ ]
   - Are you Canadian citizen? [ ]

6. **Religious Affiliation**
   - Catholic [ ]
   - Christian [ ]
   - Buddhist [ ]
   - Shinto [ ]
   - Protestant [ ]
   - No religious affiliation [ ]
   - Other (please specify) [ ]

7. **Were your parents born in Canada?**
   - Yes [ ]
   - No [ ]
   - where? [ ]

8. **Immigration Status**
   - [ ]
   - Years in Canada [ ]
Appendix G: Demographic Survey (Japanese)

統計: 下記をよくお読みになり、カッコの中にご回答をご記入ください。

| 1. 年齢 [ ] | 5. カナダ生まれですか？  
性別: 男性 [ ]  
女性 [ ] | はい [ ] |
| Which city? [ ] |
| いいえ [ ] |
| カナダ市民ですか？ [ ] |
| 2. 現在の家族構成 (チェック又は数)  
核家族 [ ]  
一人親家族[ ]  
子供の数[ ]  
子供の年齢 [ ]  
夫婦だけの家族 [ ]  
両親と同居 [ ]  
両親の年齢[ ]  
他の家族と住んでいる関係 [ ] | 6. 宗教 |
| カトリック [ ]  
クリスチャン [ ] |
| 仏教 [ ]  
神道 [ ] |
| プロテスタント [ ]  
無宗教 [ ] |
| その他（具体的に） [ ] |
| 3. 学歴  
高校未卒業 [ ]  
高校卒業 [ ]  
短大／専門学校 [ ]  
大学[ ]  
修士／博士号 [ ] | 7. ご両親はカナダでお生まれですか？  
はい [ ]  
いいえ [ ] |
| どちらから？ [ ] |
| 4. 職業  
就業 フルタイム [ ]  
パートタイム[ ] | 8. 満在ビザ、又はステータス  
カナダに住んで何年目？ |
| 引退 [ ] | [ ] |
| 主婦(夫) [ ] | [ ] |
APPENDIX H: INTERVIEW GUIDE

Perception, understanding, and conceptualization of family violence
- What is the first thing that comes to mind when you hear the word “family violence” and/or “abuse”??
- What is your understanding of “family violence” and/or “abuse”?
- What do you consider as acceptable and unacceptable forms of family interactions?
- How do you make sense (interpret) when family violence occurs?
- Why do you think family violence happens?
- In terms of family violence, what made you surprised when you came to Canada? (Added)

Japanese cultural influence
- How does the Japanese culture view family violence?
- How do Japanese people cope with family violence?
- What are the positive and negative experiences being Japanese descents with respect to family interactions, which may lead (prevent) family violence?
- Imagine if you are not Japanese decent, how things would be different (dealing with family violence)?

Concealment
- Have you ever heard someone experience family violence? What did you do? How did you feel? How did you react it?
- Do you have confidence in recognizing family violence when you hear someone experiencing family violence? How so? (Added)
- Have you tried to speak to someone about family violence? What were their responses? Why?
- What would you do if you hear, experience, suspect family violence in your community, or if someone shares his/her experiences of family violence with you?
- How does being Japanese descent prevent from speaking family violence? Why is that?
- How important is it to discuss family violence in Japanese community?
- What is unique about family violence in Japanese community and how can that best be addressed?

Perceived Strategies, Intervention, Supports
- What are factors might protect someone from family violence?
- What are risk factors for family violence? What makes it worse?
- What information with regard to family violence is helpful for you?
- How do you think those information should be delivered so that Japanese people have better understanding and awareness of family violence?
- What kind of supports do you think Japanese community needs?
Appendix H: Interview Guide (Japanese)

ファミリーバイオレンスに対する認識、理解、概念。
● ファミリーバイオレンスと聞いて、あなたは何を最初に思い浮かべますか？
● あなたはファミリーバイオレンスや、虐待に対して、どのように理解されていますか？
● 家族間の会話ややり取りの中で、どんなのがふさわしかったり、ふさわしくないと思いますか？
● ファミリーバイオレンスをどのように解釈していらっしゃいますか？
● なぜ、ファミリーバイオレンスはおこると思いますか？
● ファミリーバイオレンスに関して、カナダに来て、びっくりしたことなどありますか？

日本文化の影響
● 日本文化からみて、ファミリーバイオレンスは何だと思いますか？（日本人特有のファミリーバイオレンスに対しての印象や、考えなどありますか？）
● 日本人はファミリーバイオレンスが起きたときに、どの用に対処、対応したりしていると思いますか。
● 日系人であることで、日本文化独特の家族間のやり取りや、家族ということの概念のなかで、どんなことがファミリーバイオレンスに繋がりますか？また反対に、どんなことがファミリーバイオレンスを防ぐと思いますか？
● もし日本人でなかったら、または日本文化とは違う文化に生まれていたら、ファミリーバイオレンスに対して、何が、違うと思いますか？

潜伏
● お知り合いから、ファミリーバイオレンスを経験したと、告白された経験はありますか？あなたは、どのような対処をされましたがか？また、どうお感じになりましたか？聞いたときのリアクションはどうでしたか？
● どなたから聞いたとき、ファミリーバイオレンスだと認識できる自信はありますか？どのように？
● もし、ファミリーバイオレンスを経験したとして、あなたは誰かに告白したことはありますか？告白された人の反応はどうですか？なぜでしょう？
● もし、お友達やコミュニティ内で、ファミリーバイオレンスがおこっていると聞いたり、疑念を抱いたら、または、誰かがあなたに告白したら、あなたはどうしますか？
● どのように日本人であることが、ファミリーバイオレンスを話すことを妨げているのでしょうか。なぜでしょう。
● 日本人コミュニティの中で、起こりうるファミリーバイオレンスについて、話し合うという重要さはどうお感じになりますか？
日本文化独特ファミリーバイオレンスというのはあると思いますか？どうやって人々に働きかけると良いでしょうか？

対策、政策、サポート

どういう要素が、ファミリーバイオレンスの予防に役立つと思いますか？
何がリスク要因だと思いますか？何が悪化させていると思いますか？
ファミリーバイオレンスに関して、どんな情報があったら、役に立つと思いますか？
どうやって、その情報を日系コミュニティーに投げかけると、よりよいファミリーバイオレンスの理解と意識が向上されると思いますか？
どんなサポートが、日系コミュニティーに必要だと思いますか？
APPENDIX I: FAMILY VIOLENCE IMAGES

Despite this author’s several attempts to obtain copyright permissions of images from the Government of Alberta and other website owners, this author was not able obtain permissions by the time of submitting this thesis. Therefore, twelve images related to family violence have been removed due to copyright restrictions. Links of these images are provided as below.


http://www.child.alberta.ca/home/593.cfm (banner)


http://sanda93i.com/violence.html


http://blog-imgs-43.fc2.com/c/l/o/clovercare/20111207113808cbc.jpg


http://www.rights-create.com/labor/index.shtml


http://www.j15.org/failure/Picturebook-Nondrinking/2.htm

APPENDIX J: REFLECTION OF PERSONAL BACKGROUND

I am a 3X years old female who is originally from Japan, but now a Canadian citizen, living in Canada for 11 years. I came to Canada in 2001 as an international student (and now a Canadian citizen), after working for 10 years in two small size companies in rural Japan. I was very frustrated and angry how Japanese society and companies treated women. Women’s jobs were technically chores. Women at working places assisted things men should not do; women, especially young women, serve beverages to male employees, guests, and older female employees; women typed and photocopied documents and letters; women cleaned washrooms, kitchens, and dining areas during working hours; women were not given responsible tasks and business cards. If women marry or become pregnant, the pressure to terminate the employment was felt strongly from supervisors and co-workers. Thus, I was very tired of living in Japan and planned to obtain university degrees, a professional career, and to be independent as a human being rather than being a woman.

All of my family members are still in Japan. But I have been married with a husband who is from Hong Kong, was granted as a permanent residence status, and became a Canadian citizen together with me. While living in Canada, I have become consciously aware of my level of acculturation and growth; for instance, I have obtained and learned the social issues of ‘-ism’ that I did not have words and knowledge to describe them while I was in Japan. After coming to Canada, I strongly realized that the frustration came from the struggle was actually expressed as ‘sexism’. This concept and word was an eye-opener for me.

In addition, among other things that I have become gradually aware of during the acculturation process, I came to realize that my father was abusive towards my mother. My childhood was rather bittersweet. I recall seeing my father ‘lecturing’ and saying ‘nonsense’ to
my mother, my sister, and me whenever he was drunk. I also remember he flipped our dining
table at supper, wasted all meals, broke plates and cups, and through things at her when my
father was upset. But, he was perceived as a very nice and hardworking man in the community.

When my mother argued with him, he became more upset and angry to the point that he told her,
“Get out from this house!” However, she did not leave the house, because she had young
children (my mother later confessed that she was actually planning to leave the house but she did
not, because she felt unbearable leaving two young children) and she did not have a driver’s
license. Eventually, my mother coped with his behaviours by leaving the dinner table and went
her room, as soon as he finished drinking a bottle of Sake and appeared to be drunk. I also
remember I closely monitored my father’s winkles around his eyes, which gave me an idea that
my father was in good mood or bad mood. But I still loved him and I was a daddy’s girl. When
I did not see winkles, it meant that I should finish eating very fast and go to my safe place, so
that I did not hear my father saying something hard on his wife. As I become older (12-15 years
old) or as he became older (in his mid 40s), things became calmer than used to be; he drank less
(because of doctor’s order) and lectured us less. I eventually buried the memories of my father’s
bad behaviours deep in my heart, and forgot about it for a long time.

In all my life, I thought he was a normal father and I never questioned about his
behaviours, but I secretly vowed to myself that I would make my father apologize for what he
had done to his wife. It was recent when I fully understood that was abuse towards my mother,
my sister, and me, as well as factors that could made him to act like that and barriers or factors
that kept my mother to stay with my father. Coming to Canada provided me an opportunity to
distance myself from my family and the motherland, to see Japanese society objectively and to
acquire knowledge of gender equality and other societal issue.