CHALLENGES AND STRENGTHS INFLUENCING ADJUSTMENT
AND MARITAL SATISFACTION FOR IMMIGRANT WOMEN WHO
MARRIED KOREAN MEN IN KOREA

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to identify challenges and strengths influencing adjustment and marital satisfaction of immigrant women who married Korean men in Korea. This study, by identifying immigrant women’s strengths, could help them to find greater enjoyment in their lives and have the ability to achieve a better life. This research uses three theoretical perspectives, acculturation phenomena, family relationships, and social environment, to provide a better understanding of immigrant women’s adjustment and their married life. With this purpose, sixteen immigrant women and two of their husbands were interviewed in depth. The marriage period of all participants ranged from three to twelve years. In their marital experience, participants identified four stages: first, they may find themselves isolated; second, they realized and accepted the reality of their situation; third, they felt stable and settled; fourth, their life improved, and they were optimistic and hopeful about their future. The results of the study showed the following strengths for these immigrant women that have enabled them to sustain their married life and acculturation to Korea: 1) their self-esteem as an emotional and individual resource seemed to have a positive impact on their marriage and life; 2) these women seemed to have cultural advantages that made the acculturation to the Korean society easier; 3) most of the women exhibited characteristics such as dedication, patience, and acceptance after experiencing confusion and conflicts in the beginning; 4) the familial, social, and governmental support system served as a great help in that they discovered a breakthrough or a resolution for their problems; 5) the positive attitude of these women towards their lives in Korea was one of their strengths; 6) their willingness and desire for social participation was another advantage; 7) these women had a future-oriented attitude, allowing them to dream about the future.
despite their difficulties; and finally 8) these immigrant women seemed to be future workers full of the potential to raise multicultural families and to become positive role models for other immigrant women.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .............................................................................................................. ii  
ABSTRACT .................................................................................................................................. v  
LIST OF TABLES .......................................................................................................................... x  
LIST OF FIGURES ....................................................................................................................... xi  
CHAPTER 1 .................................................................................................................................... 1  
INTRODUCTION ............................................................................................................................ 1  
  Background of the Study .......................................................................................................... 1  
  Statement of the Problem ........................................................................................................ 4  
  Importance of the Problem ...................................................................................................... 10  
  Research Questions ................................................................................................................ 13  
  Immigrant Women’s Marital Satisfaction ............................................................................. 13  
  Immigrant Women and Policy, the “Grand Plan” ................................................................. 15  
CHAPTER 2 CONCEPTUAL APPROACHES AND THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES ........ 22  
  Introduction ............................................................................................................................ 22  
  A Perspective on the Acculturation Phenomenon ................................................................ 22  
  A Perspective on Multicultural Family Relationships ........................................................ 25  
  A Perspective on Person-in-Social Environment .................................................................. 31  
CHAPTER 3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY .............................................................................. 35  
  Introduction ............................................................................................................................ 35  
  The Qualitative Paradigm ...................................................................................................... 35  
  Rationale for Grounded Theory ............................................................................................ 37  
  Research Design .................................................................................................................... 40  
  Sampling .................................................................................................................................. 43  
  Sample Size and Description ................................................................................................. 46  
  Strategy for Recruitment of Participants ............................................................................. 48  
  Data Collection ..................................................................................................................... 50  
    Interviews ............................................................................................................................. 51  
    Document Review ................................................................................................................ 53  
    Participant Observation ...................................................................................................... 54  
    Audio-visual Materials ........................................................................................................ 55  
  Data Analysis .......................................................................................................................... 57
CHAPTER 4 RESEARCH FINDINGS AND THEORY DEVELOPMENT ............................................. 78

Introduction.................................................................................................................. 78

Demographic Characteristics of the Research Participants ........................................... 78

Stories of the Participants ............................................................................................. 80

Axial Coding Model ....................................................................................................... 95

Findings ............................................................................................................................ 95

International Marriage for a New Life ........................................................................... 95

Pre-Achieved Information on International Marriage .................................................... 101

Self-Construal ................................................................................................................ 103

Cultural Similarity ......................................................................................................... 105

Cultural Differences ..................................................................................................... 108

A Sense of Isolation and Fear ....................................................................................... 112

Challenges in Married Life ........................................................................................... 114

Support from Family Members .................................................................................... 120

Social Support .............................................................................................................. 125

Governmental Support ............................................................................................... 127

Devotion and Consideration ......................................................................................... 132

Positive Attitudes towards Life ...................................................................................... 135

Satisfaction at Being a Member of a Family ................................................................. 138

Social Participation ...................................................................................................... 141

Future Plans ................................................................................................................... 143

Category Analysis with a Paradigm ............................................................................... 147
Stages of the Immigrant Women’s Experience in Marriage ........................................ 152
Core Category ............................................................................................................. 161
Hypothetical Standardization & Hypothetical Relational Statement ......................... 163
An Analysis of the Patterns of the Immigrant Women .............................................. 167
An Analysis of the TV program Love in Asia .......................................................... 172
CHAPTER 5 DISCUSSION ......................................................................................... 178
Introduction .............................................................................................................. 178
Summary .................................................................................................................. 178
Challenges of Married Immigrant Women .................................................................. 183
Strengths and Potentials of Immigrant Women ......................................................... 186
"Discovering Her Strengths”: At an Individual Level .................................................. 192
"Discovering Her Strengths”: At a Family Level ......................................................... 194
"Discovering Her Strengths”: At a Social Level ........................................................ 196
"Discovering Her Strengths”: At a Governmental Level ............................................ 198
Theoretical Implications ........................................................................................... 201
Practical Implications ............................................................................................... 205
Implications for Policy .............................................................................................. 211
Strengths and Limitations of the Study ..................................................................... 227
Suggestions for Future Research .............................................................................. 230
Conclusion ................................................................................................................ 234
APPENDIX A: Informed Consent Form (English Version) .......................................... 236
APPENDIX B: Informed Consent Form (Korean Version: 면접동의서) ............................ 238
APPENDIX C: CHS Approval of the Study as Exempt .............................................. 240
APPENDIX D: Interview Questions .......................................................................... 241
REFERENCES .......................................................................................................... 243
LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of the Research Participants ...........................................80
Table 2. Properties and Dimensions of Central Phenomenon ......................................................149
Table 3. Properties and Dimensions of Contextual Conditions ....................................................150
Table 4. Properties and Dimensions of Intervening Conditions ...................................................151
Table 5. Properties and Dimensions of Action/Interactional Strategies ........................................152
Table 6. Hypothetical Standardization ............................................................................................164
Table 7. An Analysis of the Patterns of the Immigrant Women .....................................................167
LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Paradigm Model ................................................................. 148

Figure 2. The Process of Immigrant Woman’s Adjustment Experience ..................... 154

Figure 3. Future-Oriented Success Pursuers .................................................. 169

Figure 4. Pliable Adapters ......................................................................... 170

Figure 5. Skeptical Persons who Endure ....................................................... 172

Figure 6. Strengths of Marriage Immigrant Women ........................................... 192
CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Traditionally, Koreans are likely to believe that Koreans are ethnically homogeneous and that Korea is a unified nation with a single language and history. Shin (2006) claims that Korea is considered a nation that is an “organic body with its own life” based on “common blood” and “shared ancestry” (p.39). On the other hand, this belief in a unified nation has been challenged by globalism and an increasing influx of foreigners. Shin also introduces Koizumi’s (1993) argument regarding national identity in response to globalism. According to Koizumi (1993), there exists no nation with a sense of national identity based on one land, one language, or one race (Shin, 2006). Moreover, many researchers argue that Korean society is rapidly becoming a multicultural society and that this process is inevitable and irreversible. In the case of Korea, emerging multicultural groups of immigrant workers, marriage immigrants, North Korean refugees, and Korean Chinese have stimulated multicultural discourses in Korea (Jang & Hwang, 2009). In particular, foreign brides play important roles in changing the family structure and relations (Yoon et al., 2008). From the mid-1990s, the number of international marriages has dramatically increased between Korean men and foreign brides from China, the Philippines, Vietnam, Thailand, Mongolia, Japan and Cambodia. Between 1990 and 2007, the number of immigrant women marrying Korean men totaled 273, 638. In 1990, international marriages between Korean men and foreign women represented 0. 2 % of the total marriages in Korea; however, the number increased to 8.4 % of total marriages in 2007 (Korean National Statistics, 2007).

Historical Background of International Marriage in Korea
Readers’ understanding of the immigrant women’s identity in Korea must be based on knowledge of Korean historical background. This paradigm helps us view these minority people’s positions in the context of the history of international marriage in Korea and the perceptions of Koreans toward international marriages. On the other hand, an understanding of the historical background of international marriage also shows how immigrant women’s marriages in the present are different from the past international marriages.

Although the earliest international marriage in Korea is mentioned in a prehistoric myth “during the period 42 BC to 532 BC in which the king’s first wife ‘KumKwan Kaya’ came from India” (Lee, 2008, p.3), international marriages have been infrequent throughout Korean history. Rather, “most international marriages were associated with the invasion of Korea by neighboring countries, such as China and, later, Japan” (Lee, 2008, p.3). For instance, during the Chung Dynasty in China, some Korean women became hostages as spoils of war, and when they returned to Korea, a number of these victims were treated poorly as humiliated outcasts and forced to move to isolated areas (Lee, 2008). Also, during the Japanese colonial period, a great number of Korean women were victimized as sexual slaves (Comfort Women) of Japanese soldiers. Moreover, Koreans have maintained the biased perception about international marriage that began following marriage of Korean women with U.S. soldiers. A lot of these marriages took place in the context of the Korean War and the following marriages of American military men with some prostitutes or poor women (Lee et al., 2006). Similarly, children from these marriages who are half Korean and half American often have confronted social prejudice and discrimination since soldiers of the US army settled down with Korean women (Lee, 2008). For these reasons, Korean people have avoided international marriage in the past.
Although there were some international marriages before the 1990s, traditionally, Korea was generally a homogeneous country until immigrant foreign spouses began settling in Korea together with an even larger group of immigrant laborers beginning in 1990 (Lee et al., 2006). The number of international marriages increased in the 1990s because of local governments that supported the campaign with slogans of “offering rural bachelors a chance to marry” (Kim, 2007). Since that time, Korea, like Japan and Taiwan, has begun to actively recruit foreign brides from countries such as China, the Philippines, Vietnam, Cambodia, Thailand and Mongo for farmers in rural areas (Kim, 2007). As a result, international marriages have proliferated and thus are more common in Korea. In general, for most research and analysis, immigrant women are classified into five groups; 1) Korean Chinese women from China, 2) Ethnic Korean women from all other countries including the former Soviet Union Republics, 3) Southeast Asian women, 4) Women from other countries, such as China, the former USSR, Japan and Mongolia, and 5) Women who are members of the Unification Church (Lee et al., 2006).

**Globalization and Social Environments in the Marriage Market**

In Asia, the numbers of international marriages have been growing over the past few decades (Jones & Shen, 2008). This research project focuses on the contemporary international marriage trend in which women from developing countries such as China, Vietnam, the Philippines, Thailand, and Cambodia are unified with men from better-off nations such as Japan, South Korea and Taiwan. This trend has attracted media and academic attention since the late 1990s (Hugo, 2007). Particularly, in rural areas of Japan, Taiwan and Korea, where there is a shortage of young women, rural bachelors or incompetent men may find it more difficult to locate potential spouses. Thus, they are more
likely to look for foreign women, primarily those from East Asian and Southeast Asian countries, as indicated by current marriage patterns (Morgan & Hoffmann, 2007).

In order to clarify how these immigrant women come to Korea, it is necessary to explain the marriage market system and process. In developing countries with desperate economies, many women dream of an international marriage in Japan, Korea or Taiwan, wishing to achieve a higher social status (Seol, 2006). In a survey of foreign wives conducted in South Korea in 2005, of the women studied, 73% indicated an “economic reason” as the most predominant reason for their marriage (Seol et al., 2005). Some immigrant women were sent to other countries in order to play the significant role of breadwinner for their families in their home countries (Seol, 2006). A more direct and rapid expansion of international marriages has been encouraged by the institutionalization of matchmaking agencies (Han & Seol, 2005). Matchmaking agencies bring Korean men to a prearranged overseas location where potential brides gather and live (Lee et al., 2006). In general, it takes a week or more for a bridegroom to select the bride, and then the bridegroom comes back to Korea alone and applies for a visa on behalf of his wife after a simple wedding ceremony (Chosun.com, 2006). Most arranged marriages occur with Southeast Asian women such as Vietnamese, Filipinas, Cambodians and Thai women (Ryu, 2010). In addition, most Chinese Korean women are introduced to Korean men by relatives and friends, and most Japanese women who marry Korean men are members of the Unification Churches (Ryu, 2010).

Statement of the Problem

Between 2000 and 2007, international marriages between Korean men and foreign women increased approximately four times (Korean National Statistics, 2007). The
emerging problem is not because of the remarkable numbers of international marriages but because of immigrant women’s difficulties with communication, status, economic difficulties, cultural adjustment, family relations, age gap, discrimination and violence (Kim, 2008). Immigrant women are faced with these stressful conditions.

One of the greatest difficulties in these marriages is the use of different languages which contributes to the lack of communication abilities. Kim’s (2007) findings show that lack of communication between husband and wife has a negative impact, increasing the level of unhappiness among couples. According to a survey of the National Statistical Office (2005), although most immigrant brides attempt to use the Korean language to communicate with family members, 30% of Vietnamese brides and 41% of Filipina brides face communication barriers in using the Korean language properly. In the worst situations, some immigrant brides never talk with their husbands because of a lack of ability to speak in Korean. Moreover, very few Korean husbands are able to speak the language of their wives.

The next problem is the instability of the legal status of these foreign women. In some situations, when the husbands of immigrant wives are not satisfied with the marriage, the husbands are likely to cancel their certificate of status; in those cases, immigrant spouses are always in danger of becoming illegal aliens (Yu, 2007). In particular, in the case of divorced women, they have to leave their children and return to their home country if the divorce happens within the first two years of marriage (Lee, 2008). According to Kim (2010), only one third of immigrant women’s husbands and families are supportive in helping the brides get Korean citizenship. In addition, immigrant housewives’ marital conflicts can also be attributed to financial difficulties due to their husbands’ unstable job situation and low income (Kim, 2010). Yu (2010) estimates that 50% of multicultural
households were below the national poverty line whereas only 0.5% received supplementary living allowances from the government. To make things worse, the majority of the children who reside with immigrant mothers are at the minimum standard of living in Korea. Moreover, the employment opportunities for immigrant women are limited due to language barriers, lack of support for childcare, and discrimination (Yu, 2010).

Although international marriage is one solution for finding spouses for Korean men, immigrant women may be disappointed in their husbands and their new living environments in Korea. Because of fraudulent marriages or lack of information about their husbands, immigrant women seem to experience a great deal of stress (Hwang, 2007). When the brides come to Korea and have to adjust to Korean culture, the matchmaking brokers who are paid by the bridegroom play significant roles and, in the process of marriage, some fraudulent brokers give false information about Korea and the bridegroom (Kim, 2007). Contrary to their expectations, immigrant women find out that their husbands are likely of low financial status, not well educated and divorced with their own children (Kim, 2007). In addition, many of these women come to Korea with a high expectation of Korean culture (based on the glamorous image of Hallyu\(^1\) and the increased popularity of South Korean culture within Asian countries), which is far from the reality of Korean rural communities or their husbands’ surroundings (Kim & Shin, 2007). Contemporary farming communities consist mostly of the elderly, and there are very few cultural facilities such as theaters, museums and art galleries (Kim & Shin, 2007). Approximately 24% of the female respondents reported that they were dissatisfied with their housing conditions, including basic amenities such as bathrooms, in rural areas (Seol, 2006).

\(^1\) Korea’s recent surge in the entertainment industry has sparked tremendous interest from abroad, particularly from South East Asia.
Immigrant brides also face cultural differences in areas such as family relations and values and unfamiliar food cultures, including the unique food culture associated with Korean national holidays. Relocation in Korea inevitably forces foreign wives to be highly dependent on their extended families and their Korean husbands. Such a power imbalance between spouses may be one reason for marital conflicts (Lee et al., 2006). The extended family systems are very common in rural areas in Korea, and immigrant women are forced to obey their parents-in-law and their husbands due to the hierarchical family and social system. The majority of immigrant women report that they experience hardships in their relationships with their parents-in-law (Seol, 2006). Not surprisingly, many mothers-in-law extensively control their daughters-in-laws’ eating habits, etiquette, working styles, attitudes toward raising children, and even sexual behaviors (Kim, 2007). In addition, Korean men in rural areas tend to be more “antidemocratic” or “authoritative” than men in urban areas (Kim & Shin, 2007). Those tendencies may be a contributing factor for domestic violence, and sometimes they result in divorce. According to Seol’s (2006) survey, 31% of the respondents reported being verbally abused by their husbands within a year of when the survey was administered, and 10% to 14% reported being physically abused. In 2009, the rate of international marriage represented about 10% of total marriages in Korea, and the divorce rate among international marriages was approximately 11% (Korean National Statistics, 2007). Divorced couples (Korean men and immigrant women) have a 3.2 years average length of marriage, compared to Korean couples with an average of 11.8 years (Seol, 2006). These statistics show that marriage stability among those with international marriages warrants attention in order to decrease the divorce rate of couples in international marriages. Adjusting to Korean foods and national holiday cultures are also big challenges. These
immigrant women, often, are not familiar with hot and spicy Korean foods, and they have to learn how to cook Korean foods. On particular days, Korean housewives are expected to cook special foods when Korean families celebrate big holidays such as lunar New Year and Full Moon Day (Kim & Shin, 2007). Therefore, Korean traditions make immigrant brides feel nervous, and they face special burdens during big holidays.

Members of multicultural families also face social prejudices and even discrimination because of poor language ability as well as their appearance based on skin color and facial features (Jang & Hwang, 2009). Language ability and appearance are the essential factors for developing national identity for immigrants in a country like Korea, where only one language is used and all people look similar (Lee et al., 2008). In some cases, immigrant women and their mixed-race children are likely to be discriminated against and treated unfairly by other peers since they have different facial features and skin color (Lee et al., 2008). Moreover, children in multicultural families may not be fluent in Korean compared to native Korean children. Surprisingly, multiculturalism is a relatively new concept in Korea, and the reasons can be found in racism and nationalism (Lee et al., 2008). Korea has taken pride in the fact that it is racially homogenous and everything is divided into Koreans and “the other” (Lee et al., 2008). This attitude has likely caused some prejudice and discrimination against multicultural families.

Childbearing and rearing is also an important issue. Childbirth may positively increase the level of marital satisfaction of the couples because childbirth not only provides a husband the assurance that his wife will not leave, but also leads a wife to gain power in the family system (Kim, 2007). However, the opposite situation, abortion, occurs because the couples are cautious about having a “mixed blood child” (Kim, 2007). If the couple does
have children, one serious problem is that immigrant women confront the responsibility of
the high cost of after-school programs and childcare in raising their children in Korea (Lee
et al., 2006). Discipline of their children is also problematic because of their lack of ability
to speak Korean (Jang & Hwang, 2009). Seol (2006) reports that although immigrant
women are more satisfied with the conversations with their children than with the children’s
attitudes or achievements at school, only 64.3% of immigrant women have conversations
with their children about daily matters.

The exploration of immigrant women’s issues and ways to address these issues is
relevant research in the social work field. Since 2005, various academic institutions in Korea
have been providing greater knowledge and information for researchers, social workers and
other professionals who work with immigrant women to enable them to better understand
immigrant women’s lives. In order to adapt to increasing multicultural environments, the
government, social welfare agencies, and the mass media have started to help immigrant
women adjust to Korean life and enhance their overall quality of life. Likewise, there has
been some research on international marriage, multicultural families, and immigrant women.

The discussions about current issues and the difficulties of this group of women in
Korea are also meaningful because these discussions encourage both Koreans and immigrant
women to acknowledge the challenges facing multicultural families in order to increase the
ability of these women to adjust to the society and also to increase their own well-being in
Korea. Accordingly, with the growing diversity of international marriages in Korea, much
more research on immigrant women is needed to explore what experiences immigrant
women confront in Korea, and how they maintain their marriage lives.

Most previous studies on this subject have explored the problematic factors that
make adjustment for immigrant women difficult. Such factors already have been mentioned above. In addition, it is relevant to examine the way society portrays immigrant women, especially in the media, because most Koreans become aware of the status of multicultural families through mass media. According to Song (2006), some TV programs simply emphasize sensational subjects, for instance, showing a scene from a blind date, arranged marriage for money and family violence. Accordingly, Moon (2007) insists that we may have formed negative perceptions of international marriages because the dark side of multicultural family issues is strongly emphasized by mass media. Song (2006) argues that mass media has played a significant role in contributing to the exploration of immigrant women’s human rights issues. After watching TV documentaries on foreign brides and their families, Koreans, as well as multicultural families, might assume that international marriages between Korean men and foreign wives are more likely to fall apart compared to other Korean marriages. Due to reproduction of distorted knowledge about international marriages through mass media, Song (2006) suggests that the mass media need to change the way they portray immigrant women. In addition, Moon (2007) argues that some Korean couples exhibit problems similar to those experienced by multicultural couples in Korea such as divorce, conflict, and communication problems. Consequently, these immigrant women, however vulnerable, should not be viewed as problematic.

**Importance of the Problem**

The purpose of this study is to identify challenges and strengths influencing adjustment and marital satisfaction of immigrant women who married Korean men in Korea. This study uses the strengths-based approach to identify the strengths of immigrant women that may contribute to their adjustment and marital satisfaction. Strengths may also have the
potential to positively affect their ability to become members of their new families, communities, and national lives in Korea.

Most previous studies have viewed immigrant women as victims (Cha, 2008; Jeong, 2007; Kim, 2008; Lee, 2008). Maluccio (1979) indicates that social workers who emphasized diagnosis of the “problem” tended to underestimate clients’ strengths and had more pessimistic perceptions of clients than clients had of themselves (Rapp & Goscha, 2006). From this perspective, social workers may believe that the clients have deficits, problems, weaknesses, pathologies, and diseases (Saleebey, 1992). Within this limited perspective, social work research, theory, and practice on these immigrant women may ignore the strengths and potential abilities of these women. According to Saleebey (1992) people have a tendency to be more motivated to change when their strengths are supported. Saleebey (2002) goes further to suggest that research based on a strengths approach can be a valuable resource for solving immigrant women’s issues if the research thoroughly focuses on their positive power and strengths. This study agrees that even though immigrant women face several limitations and challenges as already discussed above, these women have positive attributes and abilities, talents and resources, desires and aspirations just as other people. In addition, it is assumed that each of these women is best known as “someone who knows something, who has learned lessons from experience, who has ideas, who has energies of all kinds, and who can do something quite well” (Saleebey, 1992, p.6). Therefore, this research encourages these women, who already have a number of competencies and resources from their experience in Korea, to improve their situation by following the suggestions of Steve de Shazer (1985, 1988), one of the developers of focused solution development. According to Steve de Shazer (1985, 1988), in almost every case, individuals
and families are already doing something about the situation in order to improve or solve their problems or challenges (Saleebey, 1992). This study also proposes that identifying immigrant women’s strengths will help them to find greater enjoyment in their lives by devoting themselves to their families, leaning about Korean culture, and focusing on their achievements.

This study also embraces the advent of a multicultural society in Korea. Because of the growing number of immigrants and multicultural couples, many have regarded Korea as becoming an international society:

“Until 2000, only 34 foreigners became naturalized Korean citizens each year. But since 2001, the number soared to 9,800. Most of them are ethnic Koreans from China and foreign women who married Korean men. Some 79,163 Chinese women, 9,207 from Vietnam, 5,233 from the Philippines, 2,093 from Taiwan and 785 from Mongolia gained Korean citizenship through marriage. This indicates how urgent it is to help some 200,000 immigrant wives and their children and ethnic Koreans from China who are leading a difficult life here (http://english.chosun.com/site/data/html_dir/2011/01/25/2011012501090.html).”

Moreover, the low birthrate and the increasingly aging population have become a main social concern (Kim, 2007). To solve the crisis of low birthrates and an aging Korean society, the Korean government sees immigrant women’s multicultural families as one of the solutions and encourages international marriages. Therefore, it is time to think about whether harmonious multicultural and multiethnic Korean families are possible.

It is not helpful for immigrant women to minimize or deny problems. Consequently, interviewing the women themselves in order to obtain their point of view is crucial. This research fits with the social work tradition of hearing the voices of the consumers as they are in the best position as persons who have first-hand knowledge, have learned lessons from experience, have the ability to solve their problems, and are the ones who make their own decisions on a daily basis (Saleebey, 1992). Additionally, the strengths perspective emphasizes recovery, which does not mean that no longer will immigrant women, for
example, experience negative symptoms (Rapp & Goscha, 2006). Rather, recovery is “about how a person lives life in the midst of experiencing symptoms, facing stigma or trauma, and other setbacks” (Rapp & Goscha, 2006, p.15).

Therefore, this study attempts to illustrate the social issues faced by foreign wives who married Korean men in South Korea not only to determine their needs and challenges, but also to examine women’s strengths and potential for maintaining their marriage, and to determine the various factors that affect these women’s marital satisfaction. First of all, it is important and meaningful to focus on immigrant women and their families as potentially powerful and positive Korean citizens as well as a minority group who needs support in the global era.

**Research Questions**

This dissertation proposes to address the following research questions:

1) What is the adjustment experience of foreign wives in Korea?

2) What are the strengths of these women in maintaining a marriage in Korea?

3) What factors affect these women’s adjustment?

4) What factors contribute to these women’s marital satisfaction?

Previous research has explored the problems or conflicts experienced by international couples, and media has shown the fragile and negative images of immigrant women. However, the focus of this study is the positive and potential strengths of immigrant women relative to their marital satisfaction.

**Immigrant Women’s Marital Satisfaction**

Satisfaction refers to the state of happiness over pain (Collard, 2006; Ward et al., 2009). Each of us decides his or her own level of satisfaction because each individual
independently chooses his or her criteria for satisfaction (Ward et al., 2009). Regardless of factors, marital satisfaction has received widespread attention as a subjective type of satisfaction (Ward et al., 2009). In describing marital satisfaction, researchers have used the terms “success,” “quality,” “adjustment,” “lack of distress” and “integration” (Knox & Schacht, 2005). Marital satisfaction is measured in terms of marital stability and marital happiness (Knox & Schacht, 2005). Stability refers to how long the marriage has been maintained and whether the couple view their relationship as permanent; marital happiness refers to more personal opinions and aspects of the relationship (Knox & Schacht, 2005).

In spite of the high hopes for satisfaction that many couples undoubtedly bring to the marriage, more than half of couples are dissatisfied with their relationship on some level (Chibucos et al., 2005). Marital satisfaction, as distinguished from love, is based primarily on the pleasure or sense of fulfillment that spouses gain from their marriage (Vangelisti & Huston, 1994). Accordingly, marital satisfaction may swing according to the spouses’ positive and negative behaviors, regardless of whether those behaviors are due to their partner’s personality or due to external factors (Vangelisti & Huston, 1994).

One of the most challenging experiences for international couples is a mixed culture. This mix can be seen as differing habits, beliefs, values, and customs and institutional racism (Bhugra & Silva, 2000). Other areas are also heavily influenced by cultural differences include differing sex-role expectations, parenting practices, attitudes toward work and leisure, holiday traditions, expressions of affection, problem-solving strategies, and little common ground in the relationship (Biever et al., 1998).

Wong (2009) argues that despite the challenges international couples may face, one should not assume international marriages are unhappier or less satisfying than ethnically
homogenous marriages. Furthermore, Seol’s (2006) research shows that the level of marital satisfaction of international marriage couples, including cohabiting couples, is higher than that of Korean couples. Some authors insist that international marriage couples seem to contribute to a greater degree of commitment, tolerance, respect, acceptance of differences, and broader opportunity for learning and growth (Bhugra & Silva, 2000). Furthermore, children of international marriage may learn a greater degree of acceptance and tolerance (Wong, 2009).

**Immigrant Women and Policy, the “Grand Plan”**

*Background*

Even though immigrant women try to overcome their difficulties in order to maintain a successful married life, there are still problems that they are not able to resolve. Public policies and various efforts in the social welfare program are necessary to help those who are underprivileged. In 2000, the Korean government began to pay attention to the formulation of policies for immigrant females for the first time (Kim, 2010). Moreover, in recent times, the government initiated development of policies for the purpose of improving situations among married immigrant women and multicultural families, with several ministries such as the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Health and Welfare and the Ministry of Gender Equality, pursuing various projects under the auspices of the Korean Ministry of Gender Equality Family (KMOGEF) (Kim, 2008). To be exact, in April 2006, the “Grand Plan” (GP), which is described as a “Policy Plan to Support the Social Integration of International Marriage Female Immigrants, their Families and Children” was to be implemented by the KMOGEF, other ministries and various other local and central governmental departments (Lee, 2008).
Prior to the GP of 2006, which integrated various policies, the previous policies had responded to the needs and issues concerning international marriages in a somewhat independent fashion. The policies focused on four primary issues faced by immigrant wives prior to the GP: 1) Protection of the Marriage Process; 2) Legal Status and Citizenship; 3) Social Security System; and 4) Medical Care. To examine the GP’s foundations, a review of the background on these four issues and their responsive policies is necessary.

1) Protection of the Marriage Process

The marriage issues surrounding international marriage brokers or matchmaking agencies can be summarized as unfair advertisement, false information regarding potential husbands, violation of the wives’ right to self-determination, patterns of forced arrangements, and excessive requirement for profit that had to be monitored to protect the immigrant women (Kim, 2007; Kim 2009; Lee, 2008). Thus, it was time for several women’s associations, such as NGOs for immigrant women and the foreign wives’ self-support organizations, to criticize the process and the advertisements of international marriage agencies. As the result of their efforts, “a law to regulate marriage agencies” was submitted to the National Assembly on February 1, 2005, and after that, all subsequent administrations tried to improve the situation until the 2006 GP (Lee, 2008). Finally, the 2006 GP played an important role in improving the situation for foreign brides in Korea (Lee, 2008).

2) Legal Status and Citizenship

The notion of legal status and citizenship under Korea law has changed several times in the past few decades. Until 1998, the previous law permitted the nationality of a child to follow only a paternal line (Lee, 2008). Since the 1998 Act, foreign spouses have been able to obtain Korean nationality through the process of receiving Visiting and Joining Family (F-1)
visas before obtaining legal status (Lee, 2008). But prior to May 2002, the F-1 visa holders could not apply for permission to work in Korea (Lee, 2008). According to the Korean Nationality Act of 2002, immigrant women can become citizens after a minimum of at least 2 years of residency, along with the spouse’s consent (Kim, 2010). After December 2003, to solve the illegal status of divorced women, the divorced foreign wife was allowed to apply for naturalization in the following cases: (1) if one’s husband died, or is missing, (2) if the woman lives apart or is divorced due to husband’s imputation, and (3) if the woman has to take care of children (Lee, 2008). The GP made allowances for exceptional cases of divorced women.

3) Social Security System

   Most foreign female spouses cannot maintain a basic subsistence level. One of the main reasons for their poverty is that the social security system for minimum standard of living did not provide for the needy families of married immigrant women. This reflects the lack of an adequate social welfare system in Korean society. In 2005, several researchers were asked by the Ministry of Social Welfare and Health to investigate the economic status of immigrant women and their families (Kim, 2010). A survey of these women found that more than half were not aware of a social security system, and their nationality disqualified them from seeking benefits (Seol, 2006).

4) Medical Care

   Researchers also found that one third of foreign wives were considered non-eligible patients in the medical security system. Indeed, many of them did not even know if they were medical insurance subscribers or not (Lee, 2008). Furthermore, some newcomers reported that they were not confident enough in their language skills to seek medical help, while others
just assumed that foreigners are not likely to be eligible for medical insurance (Kim, 2010; Lee, 2008).

Framework of the GP

In response to the needs of immigrant women and their families, the GP includes the following major goals that intend to solve social issues in international marriage:

“The GP included seven major goals: (1) the regulation of international marriage agencies and the protection of foreign wives before their entry into Korea; (2) increased support for victims of domestic violence; (3) increased support and orientation for newly arrived foreign wives; (4) schooling support for the children from international marriage families; (5) provision of social welfare and healthcare to foreign wives; (6) increased social awareness of multicultural issues; and (7) the initiation of a comprehensive project for creating policies aimed at international marriage immigrants and their families (Lee, p.116, 2008).”

For the first goal, the GP implemented the regulation of international marriage agencies and the protection of foreign wives before their entry into Korea. Due to these solutions, international matchmaking agencies and brokers were forced to make efforts to improve the transparency of their processes and to prevent the abuse of human rights (Kim, 2010). In addition, the GP stipulated that foreign brides should be provided legal and truthful information on their potential husbands by international matchmaking agencies and brokers before their first meeting (Kim, 2010). This goal developed into the Marriage Brokerage Management Act 2008 that began to stipulate penalties including sentences of up to three years’ imprisonment or fines for fake matchmaking agencies and brokers (Human Rights Report, 2009).

Next, the GP provided support for the victims of domestic violence by providing more hotlines including interpretation services and shelters (Kim, 2010). In addition, this policy’s intention was to protect foreign wives against becoming undocumented immigrants (Kim, 2010). Under the old law, these non-Korean spouses remained undocumented
immigrants if they got divorced within 2 years or had their identification guarantees withdrawn after divorce (Kim, 2010). However, under the GP, in the cases of divorce and legal separation, immigrant wives may stay in Korea as long as they want if their divorce was found to be the husbands’ fault (Lee, 2008).

Regarding the third goal of increased support and orientation for newly arrived foreign wives, the law is supposed to provide a social support program such as “a host family” and “mentoring” programs to teach information and skills as well as various language programs and cultural programs (Kim, 2010). In particular, service programs on Korean language, food, traditional culture and customs have been provided by local governments, NGOs, religious groups, and the private sector.

To achieve the fourth goal of school support for the children from international families, the Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development made plans to revise textbooks that contain racial discrimination, to develop special programs for biracial children, and to enact new strategies aimed at non-discriminatory education (Kim, 2010). This GP policy aimed at protecting the minor children of the society is of primary importance.

Fifth, in order to provide social welfare and health care to foreign wives adequately, the government considered a client-oriented policy design in the policy-making process and began extending basic state aid, including social welfare and medical care, to noncitizens who were married to Korean men (Kim, 2010). The outcomes of some research were reflected in the social security program and medical plans of the GP (Seol et al., 2007).

To develop a plan that would increase social awareness of multicultural issues, the government seriously considered a law banning prejudice against the children of international marriages and replacing potentially discriminatory terms such as “mixed blood” and
“biracial” with more socially correct terms (Kim, 2010). However, research has found that Koreans are not as exclusive in their response to foreigners as we often thought according to a Korean Consciousness and Value Survey that examined Koreans’ attitudes toward foreigners (Koreans’ Conflict Consciousness Survey data, 2009). This research also finds that Koreans are more likely to think that immigrants are beneficial to the Korean economy and society rather than dangerous and burdensome. Such positive ideas and attitudes may be helpful in incorporating the sixth goal of the GP.

Finally, in support of the seventh goal, the initiation of a comprehensive project to support the creation of policies aimed at international marriages and their families, the government required several administrations such as the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family and the Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development to investigate the status of multicultural families (Kim, 2010). As a result, the GP suggested that networks need to gradually develop among various administrations, the central government, and local governments (Lee, 2008). Moreover, under the direction of the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family, the number of centers that offer services for multicultural families also have been increased (Kim, 2010).

Significance of the GP

This study will discuss several important aspects of the GP in terms of policy shifts. The first aspect of the GP is the new direction of its immigration policy, which has started to integrate all immigrants under one all-encompassing umbrella framework (Lee, 2008). Until 2006, different issues regarding foreigners visiting and staying in Korea were dealt with separately and provided programs competitively, under the central government and diverse departments such as the Ministries of Justice, Labor, Social Welfare and Health, and Gender
Equality and Family (Kim & Shin, 2007; Lee, 2008). For example, language classes were simultaneously offered by several government departments and local governments (Kim & Shin, 2007). Moreover, private sector organizations such as NGOs and religious organizations also offered language programs, competing with government programs. A systematic delivery system through the GP of KMOGEF may provide an effective solution to this problem (Kim & Shin, 2007).

The second aspect of the GP can be described as a shift in policy from focusing on “immigration” to focusing on “population” (Lee, 2008). In other words, the policy makers made efforts to view immigrant woman as members or potential members of Korean society rather than as guests. Although many immigrant brides show a low-level sense of belonging to the Korean communities where a homogenous culture has been preserved, the GP intends to assist immigrant brides who confront social exclusion in becoming members of a diverse community (Seol, 2006). One example of this assistance is the systematic change that occurred in the current social security net and medical plan so that immigrant women are eligible for benefits if they are poor.

Finally, the GP reflected a shift from a policy focusing on “women” to a policy focusing on “family” (Lee, 2008). Simultaneously, the leading government office for the GP, the Ministry of Gender was replaced with the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family after it received a budget increase (Lee, 2008). Before the GP, almost all policies on international marriage merely targeted immigrant brides (Kim & Shin, 2007). The GP implemented policies not only for immigrant brides but also for their husbands and their children. However, the overemphasis on “family focused policy” may place a heavy burden on immigrant women who play their roles as “wives” and “daughters-in-law” (Lee, 2008).
CHAPTER 2
CONCEPTUAL APPROACHES AND THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

Introduction

The conceptual framework will be based on a research agenda focused on immigrant women involved in international marriage issues and their marital satisfaction. Traditionally, several theoretical approaches have attempted to explain the relationship between international marriage adjustment and marital satisfaction. Among them, this study will explore both Davis (1941) and Merton (1941), who initially approached research on international marriage based on the classic Social Exchange Theory framework (Thibault & Kelly, 1959; Herr, 2009). In addition, according to Kerkmann et al. (2000), the concept of marital satisfaction also has its roots in Social Exchange Theory. Other approaches to international marriage adjustment and marital satisfaction that are heavily influenced by cultural factors are Acculturation Theory (Berry, 1997) and Family Systems Theory (Bowen, 1978), which can be used to describe the experiences of immigrant spouses’ acculturation strategies in Korea through stress and mediating factors (Van Oudenhoven, 2006). Moreover, this research also borrows from the Eco-Systems Theory, which develops predictors of adjustment and marital satisfaction for immigrant wives (Wong, 2009). In summary, this research uses three theoretical perspectives that examine acculturation phenomena, family relationships, and social environment to provide a better understanding of immigrant women’s adjustment and their marriage lives.

A Perspective on the Acculturation Phenomenon

The acculturation process of immigrant women may influence the quality of their marriage. Every person experiences a certain culture and survives in a specific culture. Culture is explained as a social group that organizes patterns of values, develops beliefs and
Acculturation is defined as a change in cultural contact (Berry & Kim, 1993). Acculturation can occur on two levels: the individual level and the group level. At the individual level, acculturation occurs in an individual who adapts to a new cultural context on a smaller scale with less visible impact, while at the group level acculturation occurs between two distinct cultural groups on a larger scale with more visibility (Berry & Arnis, 1987). In other words, individual beliefs, identity, values, behaviors, and attitudes can change as a result of an individual group member’s interactions with members of a new host country. Groups (Immigrants) level involves social structure, political, economic, demographic, and cultural changes to which the entire population must adapt in order to modify to correspond with the experiences of dominant groups (Berry et al., 1992). In the case of immigrant wives in Korea, they usually adapt to the host culture of Korea when they settle down.

As a result of acculturation, four kinds of changes may occur (Berry et al., 1988). Physical changes may be the first kind: when people move to live in a new place, they encounter a new type of housing, increased population density, more population, and so on, all common to acculturation (Berry et al., 1988). The second kind of changes may be biological: in the new environment, people meet new foods and nutritional status, and new diseases (Berry et al., 1988). Third, social changes may occur when original political, economic, technical, linguistic, religious, and social institutions become altered and new ones take their place (Berry et al., 1988). Finally, psychological changes, including changes in mental health status, almost always occur as people attempt to adjust to their new situation (Berry et al., 1988). Among these four kinds of changes, psychological changes have the most to do with acculturative stress. Immigrants who move from one cultural or
national situation to another, who do so voluntarily, may experience psychological acculturation from changes resulting from the process of acculturation based on their immigration experience (Berry et al., 1992). In the process of acculturation, new immigrants often face a particular set of stressors such as “lowered mental health status, feeling of marginalization and alienation, heightened psychosomatic symptoms and identity confusion” (Berry & Arnis, 1987, p.48). Usually, once people immigrate to a new country, they encounter some dramatic and sometimes overwhelming contact experiences followed by reactions to such challenges due to differences in language, weather, work habits, religion, and dress (Berry, 1992). These cultural differences may be accepted, interpreted, or denied (Berry et al., 1992). Many immigrant wives experience social isolation and communication difficulties because they do not fully understand their husband’s culture and are not fluent in their husband’s language (Yoo, 2008). Kim (2005) reported that acculturative stress and a lack of language proficiency are factors in marriage conflicts between Korean men and foreign wives. In some cases, the women’s husbands and parents-in-law force immigrant women to convert to their husband’s religion (Yoo, 2008).

Berry (1987) identified four mutually exclusive acculturation strategies: assimilation, integration, separation and marginalization (Berry et al., 1992). First, assimilation can be explained in the way the immigrant takes on the customs, values and social attributes of the host society. In other words, a non-dominant group is likely to be absorbed into an established “mainstream,” by a dominant group and will gradually gain the cultural norms and values of the host society (Berry et al., 1988). Integration may be defined by how the immigrant takes part in mainstream culture as an active member of the host society while, at the same time, preserving her distinct ethnic identity (Berry et al., 1992).
Separation occurs when the immigrant does not want to be an active member of the host society, seeking to maintain her ethnic identity. Finally, the immigrant may experience marginalization as she remains in the highly stressful situation of not being able to identify with her original cultural background or with that of the host society (Berry, 1997).

Examination of the cultural orientation of each strategy in terms of immigrant women in Korea suggests that assimilation among immigrant women tends to be oriented toward adaptation to Korean culture; integration is likely to focus on multicultural values; separation is defined in terms of the immigrant’s own cultural orientation; and marginalization seems to be the maladjustment to Korean culture and their own (Hwang, 2009).

**A Perspective on Multicultural Family Relationships**

To understand immigrant women’s adjustment and marital satisfaction, this study uses the Family Systems model as one of the predominant theoretical perspectives (Broderick, 1993; Hanson & Lynch, 2004; Klein & White, 1996; Whitchurch & Constantine, 1993). The perspective of the Family Systems model as an interactive system of individuals helps us to understand the roles and relationships among family members as they care for a family member with disabilities or developmental risks (Hanson & Lynch, 2004; Turnbull et al., 1984; Turnbull & Turnbull, 1990).

The Family Systems approach is based on several primary assumptions (Hanson & Lynch, 2004; Klein & White, 1996). First, it is assumed that the parts of the system are interrelated. As such, all family members interact with one another, show rational behaviors, and share some degree of interdependence (Chibucos et al., 2005; Hanson & Lynch, 2004). When an engine requires operating, it needs meaningful inputs, and its parts must all be
properly connected: “a family functions in ways that reflect both inputs received by the family and patterns of interaction among members of the family” (Chibucos et al., 2005, p. 279).

The second assumption is that the family as a system is recognized in its entirety rather than in terms of its individual parts (Hanson & Lynch, 2004). In Family Systems Theory, Bowen suggests that individuals cannot be understood in isolation, but rather as a part of their family, as the family is an emotional unit (Chibucos et al., 2005). This system theory is rooted in a biological theory that proposes that “all organisms are systems, composed of subsystems, and are in turn part of super-system” (Payne, 1991, p.137). In this manner, from a family systems theory perspective, a family is like a body, comprising a set of interconnected parts that together make a coherent whole (Chibucos et al., 2005).

The last assumption is that the family system simultaneously affects and is affected by its environment (Hanson & Lynch, 2004). This assumption is relies on the concept of feedback, which suggests that all systems are likely to respond to a form of feedback in their operation (Klein & White, 1996). In other words, in a specific operating system, the input is transformed into the output, and the output brings about either positive or negative feedback (Klein & White, 1996). Therefore, family system theory is supposes that families are influenced by feedback from outside influences (Hanson & Lynch, 2004). For instance, immigrant women and their families are likely to develop patterns of social life and a way of adjusting through social feedback such as social norms and instructions to behave or conform in particular ways (Hanson & Lynch, 2004). In addition, individuals are nested in families; families are nested in communities. In this view, the family is seen as a part of other systems in the community, so change in one family will bring new transformation and
affect other systems that surround that family (Powell & Cassidy, 2009). In the case of immigrant women, they and their multicultural family may make an effort to respond the expectations of their extended family and their local community about their adjustment and well-being in Korea where the ethnically homogeneous family still is strong. In this case, community and society may view these women and their family as a new family type and help them maintain balance among other Korean homogenous families. As such, the environment within the family system is “viewed as an open system and a component of the larger community and society, with the assumption that families benefit from and contribute to the network of relationships and resources in the community” (McCubbin & McCubbin, 1989, p. 6).

Family Systems Theory may help to explain the particular values of traditional Korean families. These values and traditions are most apparent in rural areas where the traditional extended family and kinship system are still valued due to the influence of Confucian philosophy and a hierarchy of systems. Confucianism delineates a specific role for each person in the family system. This implies that the elders have more authority than young people and women have a secondary role to men (Arms et al., 1992). This hierarchal system may contribute to the immigrant women’s maladjustment and marital dissatisfaction in a new environment.

Another issue is that “the son-centered” value system among traditional Korean families often produces conflict between the “daughter-in-law” and “mother-in-law.” In contemporary Korean society, an obvious conflict seems to exist between the mothers-in-law who are likely to have traditional Confucian ethics and the daughters-in-law who have been educated and have mainly lived in societies in which western values have been adapted
Traditionally, mothers-in-law often feel anger and anxiety if their sons pay too much attention to daughters-in-law (Cheong, 1992). This may be explained as a triangulated relationship among family members, according to the Family Systems Theory. In addition, some Korean mothers-in-law demand obedience and sacrifice from their daughters-in-law for their families. Recently, research studies have examined the relationship between immigrant women and their mothers-in-law (Kim, 2010; Lee, 2012; Park; 2011). Compared to other family members, these women have the most hardship with their mothers-in-law. According to Lee (2012), since the relationship between a mother-in-law and a local Korean daughter-in-law also has many problems despite their having the same language and the same cultural background, the conflict in relationship among multicultural families may be even more anticipated. Kim’s (2010) study shows that among various factors affecting the degree of foreign female immigrants’ life satisfaction, relationship with their mothers-in-law was an important factor. If both these women and their mothers-in-law make efforts to understand each other, they may get along well. Generally, it may not be easy for the elderly to understand cultural differences in a multicultural family. Therefore, immigrant women are unilaterally required to adjust to Korean culture. In this situation, those who are familiar with similar traditional values and practices or customs have some advantages for family adjustment in Korea.

The next framework, Social Exchange Theory, focuses on the exchange of a kind of behavior that offers both spouses a mutually rewarding relationship (Knox & Schacht, 2005). When people have the desire to have and develop relationships, in these relationships individuals are likely to maximize their rewards while minimizing their costs (Wodarski & Dziegielewski, 2002). Homans (1961) originally introduced the concept of social
interactions by referring to the knowledge that people feel most comfortable while they perceive they are receiving (Chibucos et al., 2005). Yet, to attain rewards, individuals must offer something in exchange (Wodarski & Dziegielewski, 2002). Rewards are described as any benefits such as merchandise, properties, and skills that may or may not be a tangible exchange in personal relationships (Chibucos, Leite & Weis, 2005). Generally speaking, Social Exchange Theory proposes that people are encouraged to gain rewards in social exchanges (Chibucos et al., 2005). Consequently, Social Exchange Theory implies the concept of equity and reciprocity (Chibucos et al., 2005). In the nature of a couple’s relationship, each partner almost equally expects to be rewarded for what he or she is putting into the relationship (Chibucos et al., 2005). When the couples exchange positive behaviors at a high rate, they are more likely to be satisfied with their marriages than those couples who experience a high-frequency exchange of negative behaviors (Knox & Schacht, 2005). Social Exchange Theory suggests that the couples who perceive equity and reciprocity in their relationships are more likely to feel satisfied with and to maintain their marriage relationships (Chibucos et al., 2005).

Previous research examined how the Social Exchange framework operates in mate selection in international marriage (Choi, 2009; Koo, 2007; Kim, 2009). Both men and women marry because they may recognize more benefits than costs. From a Social Exchange perspective, it may be true that immigrant women’s behaviors are related to seeking rewards and avoiding potential costs from their decisions (Chibucos et al., 2005). Immigrant women want to marry Korean men because they anticipate that Korean husbands will provide a better life and take responsibility for the family (Koo, 2007). In general, immigrant women’s families in their homelands expect their daughters to send remittances
to their parents, particularly if the parents are in great need of support; marital satisfaction in this case might be associated with both the immigrant women and their husbands sending these remittances (Vanwey, 2004; Belanger & Pendakis, 2009). Kim (2009) also indicated that one of the factors influencing marriage happiness is the husband’s understanding and support in sending these remittances. The Korean husbands also recognize a main benefit from their marriages that it may be impossible to marry Korean women and therefore decide to enter into international marriages (Koo, 2007). On the other hand, both foreign brides and Korean grooms have to pay costs for their international marriages. In the case of arranged marriages, a Korean husband pays a lot of costs to meet a bride, and sometimes he needs to avoid the criticism from his friends, relatives and neighbors that he has married a young foreign woman (Choi, 2009). Immigrant women also pay costs as they have to leave their home, family, friends, and relatives, and move to a place where the language, culture, foods, climate, etc. are different. In this respect, it is assumed that such couples generally exist as both rational actors and reactors by calculating costs and benefits in social exchanges (Chibucos et al., 2005).

The assumptions of Social Exchange Theory, as related to marital power, continue to be challenged (Chibucos et al., 2005). Marital satisfaction can be influenced by factors including cooperative reproduction, sexual satisfaction, managing family finances, making major decisions, cultivating relationships with in-laws, quality of life, and other cultural factors involved with balancing rewards and costs (Blau, 1964; Daly & Wilson, 1996). According to Social Exchange Theory, when individuals are in any competitive situation, individuals are also goal-oriented, which leads to differentiation of power and privilege in social groups (Chibucos et al., 2005). As a result, “those with more resources hold more
power and, ultimately, are in a better position to benefit from the exchange” (Chibucos et al., 2005. p.137). As mentioned earlier, marital satisfaction is dependent upon the balance between rewards and costs in a couple’s interaction (Choi & Harwood, 2004). Conversely, power imbalances brought on by oppression and control of women (including the lack of equality and lack of shared responsibility) usually lead to marital conflict (Noller & Fitzpatrick, 1993; Sarandakos, 2002).

A Social Exchange view on marital roles emphasizes that spouses negotiate the division of labor on the basis of exchange (Knox & Schacht, 2005). For example, the husband participates in childcare in exchange for the wife’s earning an income, which relieves him of some financial responsibility. In some cases of immigrant families, gender role is also one of the factors that contribute to marital satisfaction. When the husband shows a positive attitude toward equal gender roles, the couple’s marital satisfaction is higher (Oh, 2010). Contrary to immigrant women’s expectations, most Korean rural men are unfamiliar with doing household chores. Because each individual within a society will have diverse values, each individual will expect different kinds of rewards (Robbins et al., 1998). Thus, Social Exchange Theory suggests that individuals, who can negotiate what they want in their social relationships, are more likely to feel satisfied with and maintain those relationships (Chibucos et al., 2005).

**A Perspective on Person-in-Social Environment**

Individuals and their families do not exist in a social vacuum, but, rather, they are placed in their communities and within the broader societal network (Hanson & Lynch, 2004). An Eco-Systems perspective provides a model for understanding the relations between the developing person and the environment (Hanson & Lynch, 2004). An Eco-
Systems perspective recognizes that the dynamics between immigrant women and their interactions may differ with their environmental systems. The Eco-Systems model views people as constantly adapting in an interchange with many different aspects of their environment (Payne, 1997). In addition, settling into a new physical setting or a new or modified environment within the system will require that these immigrant women adjust and adapt to their new environment (Wodarski & Dziegielewski, 2002). People change and are changed by the environment (Payne, 1997). Eco-Systems Theory encourages reflection on the different demands in immigrant women’s lives and their coping responses as well as the resources for those demands (Wong, 2009). In this framework, people are viewed not as reacting passively to their environment but rather as involved in active and reciprocal interactions with the environment (Hepworth & Larsen, 1982). Although the mainstream media portray these immigrant women either as victims of poor conditions or as women who married only for money, the women have a desire to seek a better life, are able to make plans for their future, and seem to deal with their difficulties even under harsh and limited conditions (Kim, 2009). In addition, social workers emphasize strengths and coping skills, aiming to improve the confidence of these women by enabling self-help and empowerment (Payne, 1997). Therefore, problem-solving efforts may be focused on assisting people to adapt to their environment in addition to assisting the system to better help and meet the needs of immigrants (Hepworth & Larsen, 1982).

In this Eco-System framework, the interaction between the person and his or her environment creates support systems whose effects should not be underestimated (Wodarski & Dziegielewski, 2002). Companionship networks can be very significant when people are socially isolated or stigmatized (Payne, 1997). The family, particularly, is the primary
support system for its members who are nurtured and cared for in the family (Hanson & Lynch, 2004). As a family member, an individual interacts with other Microsystems such as schools, community programs, childcare programs, and health care systems (Hanson & Lynch, 2004). Nearly all of these systems are also influenced by the broader policies and structures of other systems such as the workplace, the medical care system, the education system, insurance programs, and so forth (Hanson & Lynch, 2004).

Specht (1986) shows that social support applies to a wide a range of social relationships and organizations, whereas social networks refer to a specific set of interrelated people (Payne, 1997). An important development of Eco-System Theory encourages networking in social support systems (Payne, 1997). In the case of these immigrant women, considerable efforts have been made to understand and build up informal networks of neighbors to support such people in need (Payne, 1997). After migrating to Korea, immigrant women lack a sense of belonging, which often leads them to participate in an immigrant women’s self-support group based on common experiences (Kim, 2009). Through this fellowship, immigrant women collectively accomplish what they could not accomplish as isolated beings (Kim, 2009). Kim’s (2009) study shows that these group meetings strongly help marginalized women to develop positive identities and to empower themselves. Kim (2010) suggests that local governments and multicultural family support centers should establish cooperative systems to help the couples with multicultural marriages to achieve stable family lives and to adapt to society. Kim (2010) also adds that, social support systems should be established for job training and job offerings for married migrant women. For migrant women, economic status such as woman's employment, average monthly income, and economic assistance to their original families are very
important factors that have an effect on their marital satisfaction (Kim, 2010).

As discussed above, some current researchers propose that some factors of these women’s adjustment and marital quality could be organized according to an Eco-Systemic perspective, which integrates the role of the individual, the couple, the family and the socio-cultural context. Therefore, Eco-Systems Theory can be useful in helping us understand the multiple contexts that influence international marriages because it explains several environmental factors or levels that influence the quality of marriage for international couples.
CHAPTER 3
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss why qualitative methods are appropriate for this study. In addition to finding the factors that contribute to the successful adjustment of immigrant women in Korea, this study has selected a grounded theory approach as the research design for discovering and generating a theory. This chapter also includes the research design, participant selection, data collection, data analysis, the researcher’s roles, establishing trustworthiness, and ethical considerations.

The Qualitative Paradigm

To understand and explain social life, all social researchers carefully attempt to employ a variety of research paradigms and corresponding methods based on the purpose of the inquiry. Although both qualitative and quantitative research provides research paradigms in a similar way, they differ in many ways as two kinds of main research paradigms (Neuman, 2000). To appreciate the strengths of each style, one must be aware of the distinct difference of each paradigm. The quantitative methods approach is based on a positivist paradigm, while qualitative inquiries can take root in a naturalistic frame of reference (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In general, quantitative methods can be used to gain a broad understanding of a phenomenon and then focus on precisely measuring variables and testing hypotheses that are related to general causal explanations (Neuman, 2000). In contrast, qualitative inquiry can be employed to explore those findings in a more in-depth manner and emphasizes conducting detailed examinations of cases that arise in a natural flow of social life (Neuman, 2000). According to this view, qualitative methods may be more appropriate when a researcher desires to understand the complex lives of people, their culture, context,
lived experiences, and the possibilities of a specific case (Yegidis & Weinbach, 2006).

In this study, qualitative methods examine much more complicated personal meanings of the participants and descriptive data that could not be collected from quantitative measures. Many qualitative researchers believe that this method explores the meaning of individuals or groups based on description, narrative, and experience (Creswell, 2009; Merriam, 1998). Bogdan & Biklen (1992) precisely discuss five characteristics of the qualitative research method: a) qualitative research has the natural setting as the direct source of data, and the researcher is the key instrument; b) qualitative research is descriptive; c) qualitative researchers are concerned with process rather than simply with outcomes or products; d) qualitative researchers tend to analyze their data inductively; and 5) “meaning” is of essential concern to the qualitative approach.

As qualitative research helps the reader to understand people’s lives, stories, and behaviors through interviews, observation, and immersion, this research develops a rich, thick description and understanding of the subject matter (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). In this manner, qualitative data provide deeper insights for researchers who want to gain more rich information about personal experiences and values in specific settings (Neuman, 2000). This study intends to gain a crucial comprehension of immigrant women’s experiences, beliefs, opinions, and strengths that has developed from personal involvement and empathic understanding by the researcher. Considering the inherent purpose of qualitative inquiry as discussed above, it is necessary to realize that the same events or behaviors can have different meanings in different cultures (Neuman, 2000).

For the reasons cited previously, the qualitative approach is most appropriate for this particular study. In some cases, each of these immigrant women faces a similar situation
of adjustment in Korea, but, in general, all immigrant women have diverse situations in their marriage lives, different strengths, different personal and professional goals, and different strategies for integrating work and family into a meaningful life experience. Through qualitative methodological strategies including deep and rich data collection, this study helps the reader to understand the lives of these women and their unique situations and provides empirical data and practical implications for practitioners in the social work field working with multicultural families.

**Rationale for Grounded Theory**

In order to provide a fresh look at its subject, this study utilizes the methods of grounded theory. The grounded theory approach, first introduced by Glaser and Strauss (1967), is a particularly appropriate method for research in social work (Sherman & Reid, 1994). Grounded theorists employ a constructivist philosophical framework that is relativist, reflexive, and dialectic (Chamaz, 2006). Grounded theory is “best understood as fundamentally realist and objectivist in orientation, emphasizing disciplined and procedural ways of getting the research’s biases out of the way but adding healthy doses of creativity to the analytic process” (Patton, 2002, p.128). Grounded theory involves an inductive and exploratory approach to conducting research about a phenomenon (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). The goal of grounded theory is building a theory rather than proving or disproving a hypothesis and testing a theory (Patton, 2002; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Developing a theory can be strength because it makes qualitative research flexible and data and theory interact (Neuman, 2000). In other words, grounded theory is a systematic strategy of inquiry that focuses on the process of generating theory, action, or interaction grounded in a point of view of participants and their patterns of behavior and social problems (Sherman & Reid,
A grounded theory is “discovered, developed, and provisionally verified through systematic data collection and analysis of data pertaining to that phenomenon” (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p.23). The researcher enthusiastically becomes involved, using various stages of data collection and the alteration and interrelationship of categories of information (Creswell, 2009; Charmaz, 2006; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The steps and procedures of grounded theory for connecting induction and deduction are generally achieved through “the constant comparison across social situations that is faithful to the evidence, comparing research sites, doing theoretical sampling, and testing emergent concepts with additional fieldwork” (Patton, 2002, p.127). Its steps and procedures involve specific sampling techniques, coding and constant comparative data analysis, simultaneous data collection and analysis (Charmaz, 2006; Patton, 2002). To be specific, when data collection and data analysis are conducted simultaneously, new data is persistently coded and compared with previously developed codes to support a developing theory (Neuman, 2000). In this process, new data are adapted to answer more theoretical questions that come from thinking about prior data (Neuman, 2000). The consequential analysis is a foundation for deciding which data should be collected next (Berg, 2007). Once categories and themes emerge and no more new themes are identifiable, a model is proposed from these associations, and the study is considered to be complete. Creswell (2009) points out that the most important process of the core characteristics of the design is not only the constant comparison of data with emerging categories, but theoretical sampling to maximize the similarities and differences of information from each participant. Theoretical sampling is the procedure used to select study participants. According to Strauss & Corbin (2007), the purpose of theoretical sampling is
“to collect data from places, people, and events that will maximize opportunities to develop concepts in terms of their properties and dimensions, uncover variations, and identify relationships between concepts” (p. 143).

Grounded theory naturally depends on the concept of emergent themes that are exposed through analysis of the data, which is gathered and analyzed directly after collection. Grounded theory generates theory that is likely to be a reflection of the evidence that is accurate and rigorous, capable of replication, and generalizable (Neuman, 2000). This theory approach provides an in-depth description of what a participant’s worldview trulyportrays (Neuman, 2000). From this perspective, the researcher is interested in how respondents recognize and perceive their own behaviors and their lives (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Consequently, with this “emic” or “insider” perspective of research inquiry, the categories and themes in the data of grounded theory emerge and develop from the voices of the participants (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). In addition to this “emic” perspective, Padgett (2008) emphasizes that integrity and academic clarification of its interpretations are essential parts of qualitative research. Hence, theoretical sensitivity in grounded theory is vital to the formulation of new theory because the generation of theory from the data depends on the theoretical sensitivity of the researcher’s ability. Theoretical sensitivity refers to “the researcher’s attribute of having insight, the ability to give meaning to data, the capacity to understand, and capability to separate the pertinent from that which isn’t” (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p.42). The level of theoretical sensitivity of the researcher is determined by the researcher’s reading of literature, his or her experience and expertise in the field, as well as his or her ability and techniques for collecting data (Glaser, 1978).

Since there are very few existing studies about the development of the strength-
focused approach to immigrant women who married Korean men in Korea, grounded theory allows this study to create an emergent theory and model. It was the goal of this researcher to explore the recognition and perspective of immigrant women about their difficulties and strengths. In addition, it is to be hoped that the researcher would be able to contribute to the generation of a theory and a model that are well grounded, conceptually rich and well integrated with the emergent categories and applicable to the goal of this study (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

**Research Design**

In planning a research project, the researcher must determine whether to employ a qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods design. Decisions about choosing a research design are influenced by the research problem or issue, a paradigm or assumptions about the research, the specific strategies of inquiry, and research method (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). A qualitative research design is most appropriate for answering the questions of this study for several reasons. One reason that has been thoroughly noted throughout the literature is that the experiences and natural voices of immigrant women have not been explored in-depth. In this situation, the researcher seeks to establish the meaning of a phenomenon from the views of participants (Creswell, 2009). As Walcott (2001) states, “qualitative inquiry is more than method, and method is more than fieldwork techniques” (p.93), and qualitative inquiry refers to “any kind of research that produces findings not arrived at by any means of statistical procedures or other means of quantification” (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 17). Furthermore, Denzin & Lincoln (2000) write that “qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them” (p. 3). This means that qualitative research is research that
generates narrative interviews and observed behaviors (Sherman & Reid, 1994). For that reason, this qualitative research project is meaningful because the researcher is interested in the respondents’ own interpretation and wording with respect to their behavior, motives, emotions and experiences in the past and the present (Heyink & Tymstra, 1993). The use of a qualitative research design enables this researcher to examine how immigrant women talk about, interpret and understand their difficulties and find the strengths in their lives. More importantly, understanding the meanings of the immigrant women’s wording leads the researcher to view more fully the various aspects of their information, their emotions, experiences and the motives of their marriage lives in Korea.

In addition, very few studies have actually examined the potential abilities of immigrant women’s adjustment in Korea, and few studies have examined the emotional, social, contextual, and cultural influences on the positive behavior of this population. The literature reveals that many studies have been conducted with underprivileged immigrant women in an attempt to understand their stress and difficulties in the context of risk. Although immigrant women and their multicultural families have increased in incredible numbers within a couple of decades in Korea, there is no relevant and constant theory or model explaining immigrant women’s positive attitudes and efforts. Because defining immigrant women’s problems and difficulties has been considered, in general, a research priority during the last decade, there has been very little prior research or literature utilizing a strengths-focused approach to the study of immigrant women and the social, cultural, and contextual influences on their behavior. Since a strengths-based approach to immigrant women is rarely studied, this qualitative methodology empowers these women to share their stories and allows for their voices to be heard (Creswell, 2007).
Also, generally, this qualitative method utilizes the researcher as the primary instrument for collecting data, and the role of the researcher is to understand what is happening in a specific setting and how the participants manage their lives. In the process of research, the researcher naturally is involved in emerging questions and procedures, collecting data from the participants, analyzing data, and making interpretations of the meaning of the data (Creswell, 2009). As a result, the qualitative method focuses on the close relationship between the researcher and what is being studied (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). This research design enables the participants to explore their issues and strengths only to the extent that they feel comfortable and responsive.

During the data collection and data analysis phase, this study utilized grounded theory, which obtains from a holistic picture of the sample of study and focuses on describing the everyday experiences of the participants (Creswell, 2009). The study method of qualitative data collection and analysis can include interviewing, content analysis of files and records, and participant observation. The researcher collected primarily interview data from the field, simultaneously analyzing and coding the data into prevalent themes using a constant comparative method. One of the key elements of collecting data in this way is to observe participants’ behaviors by engaging in their activities (Creswell, 2009). In this study, in-depth interviews and ongoing participant observation of a situation were used as the main sources of information that was developed into a theory as recommended by Creswell (2009). Interviews were conducted in a semi-structured interview format with open-ended questions developed by the researcher and tested with a peer reviewer. Clearly, as is discussed later, grounded theorists argue that possible hypotheses can be developed and then tested with the same sample (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Over time the researcher found
herself becoming overwhelmed by the research process. Nevertheless, the researcher used several-step processes. These steps led the researcher to develop the working hypotheses and to generate an emergent theory.

The research design for this study was a grounded theory study with the purpose of verifying and generating a theory that produced a conceptual model through continuous interaction with the data from the study (Strauss & Corbin, 1990; Charmaz, 2006; Creswell, 2007). In grounded theory research, the constant comparison method is to compare themes and concepts within and across cases so that these themes reflect the reality of the participants’ situations (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Most grounded theorists agree that the theory does not come from outside but emerges from the data. According to Creswell (2007), a grounded theory approach explains how the participants behave or respond to the phenomena that refer to “a specific situation” in which the participants interact and engage. One of the strengths of the grounded theory method is that the research can start where the respondent is and examine the participants in their own environment (Creswell, 2007). The other strength is that the final written report has a flexible structure (Creswell, 2009). Therefore, grounded theorists commonly seek an inductive research style, emphasizing individual meaning and the importance of interpretation of the complicated data (Creswell, 2007).

**Sampling**

Just as the qualitative and quantitative research methods are distinctive in research design, the sampling of each method is differently approached as well (Neuman, 2000). The quantitative method typically emphasizes random sampling from larger samples (Patton, 2002) because this method employs a representative sample from a much larger collection or
population for the purpose of being able to generalize with the study’s sample (Neuman, 2000). On the other hand, the qualitative method does not focus much on a sample’s representativeness. Rather, qualitative researchers focus on detailed techniques using an in-depth and relatively small sample, and even a single case (Neuman, 2000; Patton, 2002). In qualitative research sampling, a purposive sampling approach is generally used (Patton, 2002).

This study recruited the participants using common purposive sampling approaches of network and criterion sampling. Traditionally, purposive sampling can be used to identify cases in qualitative research. The purpose is less to generalize to a larger population than it is to gain a deeper understanding of types (Neuman, 2000, p. 198). The researcher employed a purposive sample of sixteen immigrant women and two husbands in order to better understand the strengths-based approach to these immigrant women. Purposive sampling is sometimes called “purposeful” or “judgment” sampling that “focuses on selecting information-rich cases, which are described as those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the inquiry” (Patton, 2002, p.230).

According to Neuman (2000), purposive sampling is an acceptable kind of sampling for special situations because this method is used when a researcher wants to select unique cases that are particularly informative, choose members of a difficult-to-reach or specialized population, and identify particular types of cases for in-depth investigation (Neuman, 2000). Once a group of appropriate candidates was set up, purposive sampling was designed to identify the most variable cases. Merriam (2001) observes that “purposive sampling is based on the assumption that the investigator wants to discover, understand, and gain insight and therefore must select a sample from which the most can be learned” (p. 61). This sampling
technique intends to facilitate the development and the emerging of theory during interviews or after interviews (Creswell, 2007).

Network sampling also called “snowball sampling” and refers to a type of “purposive sampling,” “chain referral” or “reputational sampling” (Neuman, 2000). This sampling may be appropriate for situations when the researcher can access an isolated or hidden population whose members are not likely to be found (Bernard, 2000). Network sampling is an approach for “location of information-rich key informants or critical cases” (Patton, 2002, p.237). Even though the population of immigrant women in Kyoung-gi province in Korea is large enough to construct a “sampling frame,” the researcher had anticipated difficulty in accessing participants especially since the researcher is not an immigrant woman and did not have contacts in the community in the beginning. Immigrant married women used for this study were both difficult to access and were somewhat of a hidden population in the majority of communities. The researcher asked some faculty members and social workers working with multicultural families to recruit immigrant women who fit the criteria. After initially conducting interviews with a few women, the researcher asked recruits for this study to refer other women to be screened for inclusion. Finally, the research experienced that snowball sampling “is based on an analogy to a snowball, which begins small but becomes larger as it is rolled on wet snow and picks up additional snow” (Neuman, 2000. p. 199).

The method of criterion sampling was set in an effort to engage participants best capable of contributing understandings related to the study’s research questions. Criterion sampling ensures that participants meet certain defined attributes for inclusion (Jones, 2002; Patton, 2002). One of the first and most important criteria was whether the participants
really fit into the demographic criteria. In the second stage, criterion sampling sought to ensure that the participants met the defined criteria for inclusion. Seventeen women were contacted by phone to explain the study and confirm their demographic profiles, and sixteen of those fit the demographic profile. With the goal of recruiting a purposive sampling (Patton, 2002), inclusion criteria for participating in this study were the following:

- Participants must have been living with Korean husbands and have at least one to four children under the age of eighteen living at home.
- Participants were aged between ages of 21 and 49 years old.
- Participants have been residing in Korea at least three years at the time of the interviews.
- Length of participants’ marriage ranged from 3 years to 15 years at the time of the interviews.
- Participants were able to speak Korean or English.

**Sample Size and Description**

According to Patton (2002), it does not matter how large a sample size the researcher gets in qualitative inquiry. Clearly, “the size of the sample depends on what you want to find out, why you want to find it out, how the findings will be used, and what resources you have for the study” (Patton, 2002, p.244). Lincoln and Guba (1985) also suggest sample selection to the point of redundancy. In grounded theory, the important consideration for deciding sample size is to reach the point of redundancy when saturation has occurred (Creswell, 2007; Strauss & Corbin, 1994). If the purpose is to maximize information, the sampling is terminated when no new information is forthcoming from new sampled units; thus redundancy is the primary criterion (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p.202).
Likewise, qualitative sampling requires far fewer participants than random sampling in quantitative research because this qualitative inquiry will not generalize findings, but rather gather extensive detail about each individual studied (Creswell, 2007).

Patton (2002) also commented, however, that those planning for budgeting or proposing dissertation research are often required to indicate a plan for sampling size a priori. This research planned to have ten to twenty participants in the proposal. In order to attain an information-rich sample, sixteen participants were interviewed who met the criteria listed earlier. After conducting multiple interviews with these sixteen participants, the researcher determined that this was a suitable sample size for achieving the study’s purpose. Additionally, to figure out these women’s strengths in terms of how they became contributing members of the family and of Korean society, two husbands were included in the sample through in-depth interviews. With the data from these eighteen participants, duplicate data was exposed and no new information leading to a better awareness of the phenomena emerged (Strauss & Corbin, 1994). The value of qualitative research is not based on how many cases are examined, but based on how much information-rich data is gathered in each case (Jones, 2002). No additional cases were necessary, and thus no theoretical sampling occurred. Study participants were women between the ages of twenty and fifty years, self-identified as married immigrant women; each was classified as a wife and had at least one child with a Korean male husband. The interviewed women came from the Philippines, Vietnam, China, Mongolia and Cambodia. These women referred to themselves by their sub-ethnic, regional, religious, and cultural identities and backgrounds as well. The interviewees also represented a diverse choice of academic backgrounds. All interviewees either came to Korea as single workers who married Korean men later, or
immigrated to Korea after marriage with Korean men for the purpose of establishing their own families in Korean society.

**Strategy for Recruitment of Participants**

Initially, a pilot study was conducted with two immigrant women. This pilot study allowed for viewing the interview protocol and also evaluating whether or not the interview protocol generated answers relevant to the research questions. Through this process, the researcher came to have confidence about the interview protocol and also developed selection criteria to generate the “purposive sample” population to be interviewed. After the pilot test, the researcher began to recruit participants. In order to recruit participants for this study, this researcher employed three approaches, some successful and others less so. My first approach to recruiting participants occurred through some professors and social workers working with multicultural families in multicultural welfare agencies in several cities such as Pyoungtaek, Anseoung and Paju in Kyoung-gi province, which has the largest population of immigrant women. The recruitment of participants was not an easy step in the research project although these professors and social workers made efforts for the researcher. When the researcher was introduced to the potential participants, the researcher briefly described the project to them, asked if they were interested in participating, and inquired if they knew other immigrant women who met the study criteria.

Another method used to recruit participants was to request faculty members in the Department of Social Work at Pyoungtaek University who were teaching graduate courses to make an announcement in their classes and to alumni. One main reason that this way was successful was that those who chose to participate in the study had also chosen to take social work courses and so were interested in the process of social science research. This university
encourages immigrant women to study social work in order to develop their careers as social workers in Korea. These students and alumni were good samples because among the participants they are people who are most likely to be developing their strengths.

Lastly, other potential participants were introduced by key informants, who invited the researcher to the immigrant women’s gatherings. Denzin and Lincoln (2003) argue that a key informant should be a member of the group under study and be willing to be “an informant and act as a guide and a translator of cultural mores and, at times, jargon or language” (p. 77). The researcher made an appearance at these gatherings, giving a brief description of the study and explaining what participation would involve. The researcher was able to get the contact information of the potential participants who expressed interest in the study, and asked about their willingness to participate.

All of the participants were individually contacted and questioned about their willingness to be participants. This occurred via a personal phone call from the researcher. During this phone conversation, the researcher spent some time exploring the involvement level of the participants and explaining confidentiality and the purpose of the study. Fortunately, neither the women nor the two husbands expressed any doubt or concern about their involvement. In fact, the male participants were not initially meant to be included. However, the researcher came to believe that the best person who could share about these women’s strengths might be their husbands. In addition, the male participants were easier to recruit than the female participants because they were husbands of two of the participants. As a result, all sixteen women and two men were asked to participate, and they all agreed.

All of the participants signed the research consent form at the initial interview. At this time the consent form was given at the initial interview, and the researcher provided a
more detailed description of the study. To make sure, the researcher conducted a preliminary screening to determine whether the eligibility criteria were met. Once each of the eligibility criteria of the women appeared to fit into the study’s maximum variation sampling strategy, the person was invited as a participant to be involved in the study. However, each of the participants was also notified that he or she was free to withdraw from participation at any time during the duration of the project with no penalty or loss of benefit to which the participant would otherwise be entitled. After contracting with the participants, there was no attrition among participants in this study. This researcher collected participants’ contact information including an email address and phone number. They were provided a telephone number and email address so that participants can reach the researcher with questions and concerns. At each interview, the researcher connected with participants the day before a scheduled interview to confirm appointments on the phone. All of the participants received $20 in appreciation for each interview. In addition, in some cases, a small present was given when visiting the participant as a way of preserving the traditional custom. The individual signed two copies of the consent form. One was for the participant’s protection and concern, and the other stayed within the researcher’s possession (see Appendix A & B). All participants agreed to be audiotaped and for field notes to be taken.

**Data Collection**

In collecting the data, interviews are the primary data collection method in grounded theory research. This allows researchers to collect extensive amounts of rich, thick, personal data. Moreover, in order to answer the research questions, this researcher gathered qualitative data from interviews, media, and documents including blogs and personal writings, and observations of immigrant women. The research was finished when the
information was obtained. The goal of data collection in grounded theory research is to employ a constant comparative method (Strauss & Corbin, 1994). The study was approved by the University of Hawaii Committee on Human Studies (CHS) on February 3, 2011 (see Appendix C). The whole research data collection process took place in the spring and summer of 2011.

**Interviews**

As Creswell (2007) states, one of the major data collection methods in a grounded theory study is interviews, and accordingly, the interviews in this study conveyed various important data and were critical for collecting personal information from the participating women. Gubrium and Holstein (1998) describe the interview as a means of current storytelling with the particular intention of exploring the participants’ experiences and placing them in context in response to interview questions. Creswell (2007) also claims that researchers need to rely on in-depth interviewing, which provides the meaning people make of their experience in context and access to understanding their actions.

As a part of preliminary protocol, a provisional interview guide was created and then was presented to members of the researcher’s doctoral committee for part of the doctoral dissertation proposal defense. Based on the committee’s feedback, modifications were made to the interview guide. The next step was to pilot test the interview guide with a person who met the criteria. Once the pilot test was completed, the initial questions were adjusted appropriately. As a result, the researcher was able to receive valuable feedback about the order of the questions and ways to improve the interview guide. Finally, revisions to the guide were completed so that it could be used during the interviews with study participants. The interview questions are in the Appendix D.
The researcher conducted two in-depth interviews with each participant. Semi-structured interview guides with a completely open-ended format were used during all interviews. This choice of interviewing style, significantly, enables the participants to express their perspectives on the topic in a conventional manner, and it encourages flexibility and spontaneity of the participants (Bernard, 2000; Moustakas, 1994). Initial interviews with participants took from 60 to 90 minutes, while follow-up interviews generally lasted between 60 to 75 minutes. All interviews took place at participants’ homes or in a private room at the campus location of the interviewees or at multicultural-family welfare agencies that were conducive to trust, based on the comfort level and convenience of the participants. The researcher began the initial stage of each interview with warming-up conversation such as thanking the participants, talking about their favorite food, and introducing herself. This also helped to establish rapport between a researcher and an interviewee as one part of the warming up. The intention of the first interview was to put the participant’s experience in context by exploring the past and present experiences of the interviewee. These initial interviews led the researcher to acquire an understanding of what was important to investigate for further details (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The focus of the second interview was reflection on the meaning of participants’ experiences and collecting additional information when there were gaps identified from the initial interview. The second interview occurred approximately six weeks later, which enabled the researcher to spend time analyzing the first interview and developing themes. Most of the interviews were finished during the second time, but three of them were conducted further, due to fact that participants needed to identify additional information.

With the permission of the respondents, all interviews were audio-recorded. Glaser
(1992) also encourages the researcher, after each of the data collection sessions, to note down the key issues. The researcher needs to take research notes during the interviews as well as summary notes following each session. This is often referred to as “note-taking.” In this study, while the researcher used a voice recorder during the interviews, “note-taking” was also part of the procedure. After each session, the researcher compiled the notes into an interview summary. The data was triangulated by exploring the information through these different ways. The voice recordings and transcribed recordings were exact representations of what each participant said. The research and summary notes included the reports on environment and nonverbal expressions of participants, and general feeling and thoughts about how the interview went. When the recorded interviews were transcribed, the participants checked each of the typed interviews in order to verify or correct them. Because the participants were not fluent in reading the Korean language, the researcher had to read or explain the typed interviews to them in Korean. This technique of member checking increased the trustworthiness of the data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

To ensure the quality of the interview conclusion, the researcher invited the participants to an optional group interview conducted to help identify and explore the emerging themes and categories. All of the participants were interested in attending this group interview, but only two-thirds of them were able to attend. For convenience, two groups were designated to meet, based on location. Gratefully, these women provided meaningful feedback about the emerging theory and commented on categories. As a result, the researcher learned how to more accurately and honestly portray these women’s voices during the data collection.

*Document Review*
As a secondary data source, documents were also reviewed. During the process of research, the researcher collected qualitative documents. “These may be public documents such as newspapers, minutes of meetings, and official reports or private documents such as personal journals and diaries, letters, and e-mails” (Creswell, 2007, p. 181). In this study, first and foremost, autobiographies were particularly used to support the information gathered by the interviews and to provide context. Harper (2005) also agrees that “visual documentation becomes a part of research triangulation, confirming theories using different forms of data” (p. 748). In this study, the policy documents for multicultural families, an autobiographical book, newspapers, internet blogs, photographs, and the research journals were used. In particular, the autobiographical book also conveyed personal letters, diaries and photographs. Reviewing these documents helped to support and supplement the information provided in the interviews. Also, the researcher was able to develop follow-up questions for later interviews through concurrent data collection and analysis of these documents.

**Participant Observation**

According to Patton (2002), participant observation is the most comprehensive of all types of resources of data collection. For this study, the researcher participated in the setting that was observed (Patton, 2002). The researcher was invited to immigrant women’s gatherings for fellowship. One meeting was for several Filipinas gathered to chat and have a snack at the home of one of the members. The other was a Vietnamese women’s gathering for cooking and eating the foods of their homeland. Although they often spoke their languages at these times, the researcher observed and recognized how the dynamics of these fellowships were likely to be and engaged in their meetings naturally. One of the advantages of the participant-observation was that “as a technique of research, participant observation
distinguishes itself by breaking down the barriers between observer and participant, between those who study and those who are studied” (Burawoy, 1991, p. 291). Since the researcher had been in the Philippines for one and a half years and also was familiar with their foods, the researcher seemed to be accepted as a member of the participants’ group. Clearly, observational data must have depth and detail, resulting in sufficient description (Patton, 2002). In order for the reader to understand what occurred and how it occurred in observation, the researchers should take field notes on the behavior and activities of individuals (Creswell, 2007; Patton, 2002). It was very impressive to see the participants partaking of their food in their own ways. In such research, the researcher realized that it is very important for a qualitative observer to play a variety of roles from a non-participant to a complete participant (Creswell, 2007).

**Audio-visual Materials**

A final category of qualitative data consists of qualitative audio and visual materials (Creswell, 2007). This research also focused on a television program called *Love in Asia* (*LIA*) by the Korean Broadcasting system (KBS) as a supplemental source of data that was used by this researcher to examine immigrant women’s strengths. *LIA* is a weekly one-hour program that started in November 2005 in Korea. In addition, this program is also shown in some other Asian countries and European countries through KBS World that televisions Korea’s latest and most popular programs on a 24-hour-a-day basis. *LIA* has shown about 300 episodes, and more than 500 multicultural families have been invited to share their lives. *LIA* unfolds the stories of multicultural families and their love which transcends borders. The program tells the stories about the wives from foreign countries that came to Korea in search of the “Korean Dream.” It raises awareness of our foreign neighbors’ strengths and
reflects on the true meaning of family. *LIA* is a link between people and countries and connects Korea and other Asian countries. *LIA* enhances the public’s understanding of multicultural families, and presents necessary means and supports for them to settle down in Korea. Therefore, such contents may help to prepare Korean society to respect and appreciate racial and cultural diversity in Korea (Lee & Kim, 2008).

Askew and Wilk (2002) point out that learning is one advantage of watching TV. Accordingly, TV brings political and moral issues together in a new and powerful way, expanding the notion of discourse and involving people from different classes and ethnic groups (Askew & Wilk, 2002). Where the issues once were concerned mostly with the individual and the communities, the issues of this new agenda are concerned with cultural identity and influence. McLuhan (1994) also agrees that TV has changed our sensivities and our mental processes.

In this program, two main announcers lead the program, and eight immigrant women are shown as a support group to encourage the guests. Ordinary Koreans also participate in this program, but they are typically silent during the program. The most important people are the multicultural couples who are invited as guests. Every episode consists of similar contents and includes three sections: 1) In the first section, “We are making a wedding album,” *LIA* provides a chance to take pictures for one multicultural marriage couple who were not able to have a marriage ceremony (10 minutes); 2) In the second section, one couple is introduced on the video, usually including how the immigrant woman has been adjusting and making efforts to become a good wife, mother and a future Korean citizen (20 minutes); 3) In the last section, the video shows the couple visiting the wife’s family, which helps Koreans understand immigrant women’s families and their
situations (20 minutes). This programming will, in particular, contain immigrant women’s stories and include visiting their homeland during each episode, as well as comments of this program’s audience on the website.

These data provide an opportunity for participants to directly share their reality with an audience (Creswell, 2007). However, this also has limitations. One of limitations is that the data are difficult to interpret (Creswell, 2007). For the analysis of the data, this study selected approximately two episodes and thirty comments of the TV audience that are reflections on these episodes. This study analyzed each of the episodes showing multicultural families’ lives in Korea and visiting the wife’s homeland as well as comments by the audience that are posted on the website.

**Data Analysis**

Neuman (2007) states that qualitative researchers rarely know the specifics of data analysis at the initial stage. This statement encouraged the researcher to begin with a vague status. Neuman (2007) also says that qualitative research is likely to show a theory, generalization and interpretation and that this analysis is less abstract than statistical analysis and closer to raw data. In the process of data analysis, researchers become involved with the data for analysis through conducting different analyses, moving deeper and deeper into an understanding of the data, representing the data, and making an interpretation of the larger meaning of the data (Creswell, 2007). In particular, when data analysis occurs simultaneously along with coding the themes identified during the interviews in categories in grounded theory methodology, the most important style consideration involves the theoretical comparative method (Brown et al., 2002). The theoretical comparative method is a dynamic process. It is a common fact that most people are persistently thinking
comparatively and making use of metaphors and images when they express themselves (Corbin & Strauss, 2007). Because of this phenomenon the researcher used theoretical comparison techniques to clarify and to increase understanding (Corbin & Strauss, 2007). In addition to making classification, “this approach, which requires examining concepts in terms of their properties or dimensions, leads us to rich thick description, concept analysis and theory development” (Corbin & Strauss, 2007, p.75). According to Corbin & Strauss’s (2007) explanation, people are likely to draw upon what they know to try to understand what they do not know. To summarize briefly, comparisons at the property and dimensional level provide people with a way of knowing or understanding the world around them (Corbin & Strauss, 2007, p.75). The researcher followed five steps that are suggested by Creswell (2007): (a) organizing and preparing the data for analysis, (b) reading through all the integrated categories and their properties, (c) coding the data, (d) using the coding process to generate a description, and (e) interpreting the meaning of themes or description. It is normally suggested that gathering and analyzing data continue until theoretical saturation has been reached (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). In this study, theoretical saturation emerged while the researcher was coding the second round of interviews.

In the first step of data analysis, the researcher transcribed the interviews, typed up field notes, and sorted and arranged the data into different types of information sources (Creswell, 2007). When the audio-recorded interviews were transcribed, the researcher checked for accuracy by listening carefully to each audio-recorded interview. In addition, writing field notes helped to uncover properties of the categories and other information such as biographic stories, sayings, and observations from LIV into memos that were organized into written text. (The observational notes, often termed memos in the qualitative literature,
are attached to the interview transcriptions as part of the text to be analyzed. Memos are also produced during the analysis of data to capture ideas and thoughts of researchers as they come to mind.) This process also allowed the researcher to enter deeply into participants’ lived experiences and to prepare the data for analysis.

In the next step, Creswell (2007) encouraged the researcher to read through all the data. This may be the first attempt to gain an overall impression of the information and to reflect on its general meaning (Creswell, 2007). This reflection on each interview and memo helped to prepare the researcher for coding. The researcher often tried to write notes in margins about the data at this stage (Creswell, 2007).

The third step involved detailed analysis with a coding process. Engaging coding in this process allowed the researcher to organize materials into chunks or segments of text before bringing meaning to information (Creswell, 2007). It involves taking text data or pictures gathered during data collection, segmenting sentences or images into categories, and labeling those categories with a term, often a term based in the actual language of the participant (Creswell, 2007, p. 186). The researcher began an initial coding of the first interviews and then coded the remaining transcripts according to the first theme categories. This initial coding was inevitable because the total of collected data was too large an amount to manage at one time. Three approaches were discussed when the researcher reviewed the transcripts (Van Manen, 1990): (a) holistic/sententious, (b) selective/highlighting, and (c) detailed/line by line. This coding process was reviewed with a combination of these three ways according to the following explanation. The researcher attempted to understand the reality of the participants’ stories relying on a holistic/sententious approach. At the same time, the researcher focused on the highlighting and the line by line approaches that were
principally used for initial coding. In this manner, the transcripts of the interviews were reviewed simultaneously in chunks and line by line, coloring to highlight the codes across all the transcripts. All interview notes and audiotape transcriptions were reviewed and coded using the theoretical comparison method. The researcher made progress by arranging data into broad-theme categories in order to create each category separately during later analytic steps.

In the fourth step, the researcher utilized the coding process to generate not only categories or themes but also a description including detailed information about people, places, or events in a setting for analysis (Creswell, 2007). The researcher developed several main categories that are the description of the stories of the immigrant women in Korea. The most important consideration was that the researcher needed to show how the emergent themes generated analytic sub-categories within each of the main categories and how they were related to one another. This investigation took time and required concentration (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). The researcher, finally, engaged in “building conceptual models,” which refers to examining how the sub-categories and the main categories are associated together (Bernard, 2000; Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). In this process, using the coding allowed for generating a number of themes or categories that reflected major findings and helped to generate headings for the findings of this study (Creswell, 2007). One of the greatest advantages of the qualitative method is that themes are analyzed for each individual case and across different cases or shaped into a general description (Creswell, 2007). Therefore, the researcher could make efforts to display multiple perspectives from individuals and be supported by diverse quotations and specific evidence (Creswell, 2007). The researcher theoretically compared incidents within the data, which led to initial themes and theory
development. When the researcher developed the association between sub-categories and categories, she used memos as a part of the data analysis process to help generate belongings and rules for categories and documented thoughts or ideas about the data that may be used in future research (Corbin & Strauss, 2007). The researcher used memos that focused primarily on exploring the difficulties and strengths of the immigrant women. Through all the process at this stage, the analysis was completed when theoretical saturation was achieved.

Finally, the researcher decided how the description and themes would be represented and interpreted in the qualitative narrative (Creswell, 2007). Creswell (2007) recommends a narrative passage to convey the findings of the analysis as the most popular approach, whereas the visuals, figures, or tables would be adjuncts to the discussion (Creswell, 2007). As explained, writing in qualitative research can take numerous forms and is likely to be flexible. These suggestions were useful to apply to this study so that as many forms as possible were used. The final stage of writing findings involved not only delineating relationships between categories and identifying themes, but also member checking (Corbin & Strauss, 2007). Also, member checking helps to increase the credibility of the research findings with the participants in order to check interpretive accuracy as well as to provide evidence of trustworthiness (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In this study, the member checking provided the insight that may affect suggestions for further revisions and corrections. In the stage of making an interpretation or meaning of the data, the researchers may show whether the findings agree or disagree with previous information (Creswell, 2007). Another role of the findings is “to suggest new questions that need to be asked-questions raised by the data and analysis that the inquirer had not foreseen earlier in the study” (Creswell, 2007, p.189). This suggestion may be helpful for the future researchers
who will be interested in the same study area, but from different perspectives. Accordingly, the researcher considered thoroughly how to represent and interpret well the findings. For this consideration, the researcher reviewed some qualitative books and qualitative research journals, and the committee members and peer groups were good coaches and helpers.

**Coding**

Data analysis in the qualitative method involves a coding process in which a researcher places raw data into conceptual categories and creates themes or concepts (Neuman, 2000; Corbin & Strauss, 2007). Coding is composed of posing the research questions and often leads to new questions, while moving the researcher toward theory and generalization (Neuman, 2000). Corbin & Strauss (2007) claim that the coding process refers to disassembling, reordering, and reorganizing the data according to specific procedures. It involves interacting with data analysis using techniques such as asking about the data, making comparisons between data, and so on, and in doing so, deriving concepts to stand for those data, then developing those concepts in terms of their properties and dimensions (Corbin & Strauss, 2007, p. 66). In the coding process, the researcher performs two simultaneous activities: 1) mechanical data reduction and analytic categorization of data into themes, and 2) making a large mass of data manageable (Neuman, 2000). This researcher reduced mountains of raw data into manageable piles and quickly retrieved parts of it (Neuman, 2000). Three stages of data analysis are involved in grounded theory. Strauss and Corbin (1998) suggest that these stages are open, axial, and selective coding. The data was organized and placed into categories from the analysis of the data through open coding and then axial coding, which involved explaining and refining relationships between categories in order to understand the inter-relatedness of the thematic categories (Strauss &
As a final coding process, the researcher used selective coding that involves integrating and refining the core category and systematically relating it to other categories (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The three coding procedures will be explained in detail as follows:

**Open Coding**

In order to achieve the data analysis, grounded theorists attempt to begin analyzing with open coding. Open coding refers to breaking data apart and identifying concepts for blocks of raw data and simultaneously qualifying conceptualizing data in terms of their properties and dimensions (Corbin & Strauss, 2007). Because all potentials and possibilities need to be considered in the beginning of analysis, the brainstorming approach is the first step in the initial stage (Corbin & Strauss, 2007). Brainstorming may help the researcher to put interpretive conceptual labels on the data appropriately (Corbin & Strauss, 2007). The primary goals of conceptualizing data are providing a language for talking about the data as well as reducing the amount of data the research has (Corbin & Strauss, 2007). Open coding moves themes to the surface from deep inside the data (Neuman, 2000). The themes are at a low level of abstraction and come from the researcher’s initial research question, concepts in the literature, terms used by participants in the social setting, or new thoughts stimulated by immersion in the data (Neuman, 2000, p. 422).

In this study, open coding was performed to begin the concept labeling process. To be specific, transcriptions of the collection of in-depth interviews and memos were read for the purpose of determining open coding and then locating themes and assigning to them relevant concepts, and comparing them to other relevant data (Neuman, 2000). During this process, the researcher also thoroughly contributed her thoughts, ideas, insights and feelings
on conceptualizing data and generating the categories. Once the categories were shaped, they were flushed out to clarify their properties and dimensions (Strauss & Corbin, 2007). As a result, 1535 unique concepts were identified from about 550 pages of interview transcriptions, and 46 abstract categories were sorted from each concept.

**Axial Coding**

The second passage through data analysis is axial coding, which refers to crosscutting or relating concepts between categories to their subcategories (Corbin & Strauss, 2007). Once open coding had focused on the actual data and assigned preliminary concepts for themes, the researcher began to develop a set of initial codes, relationships and linkages between subcategories and categories in axial coding (Neuman, 2000). The axial coding utilizes four analytical processes that are discussed as (1) continually relating subcategories to categories, (2) comparing categories with the collected data, (3) expanding the density of the categories by detailing their properties and dimensions, and (4) exploring variations in the phenomena (Brown et al., 2002). During axial coding, the researcher was stimulated to think about relations between concepts or themes and also to develop new questions (Neuman, 2000). Axial coding suggested the examination of concepts in more depth or deleting some themes if necessary, in addition to reinforcing the linkages between evidence and themes (Neuman, 2000). In grounded theory multiple cases of empirical evidence help to strengthen the connection between a theme and the data (Neuman, 2000).

Also, these processes involve the use of six coding paradigms of axial coding including phenomena, contextual conditions, intervening conditions, action/interaction and consequences (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Contextual conditions are the specific set between causal and intervening conditions and organize some problems or circumstances that require
a response through actions and interactions (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Intervening conditions, similar to contextual conditions, call up the factors that may moderate or affect influence the phenomena (Strauss & Corbin, 1998); actions and interactions are planned or regular reactions that are done by groups or persons to happenings, events, problems or issues that occur under certain conditions (Strauss & Corbin, 1998; Goede & Villers, 2003). Lastly, consequences are the outcome of the action strategies and need to be identified in order to understand the phenomena (Brown et al., 2002; Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

Selective Coding

Selective coding was the final stage of data analysis in the grounded theory method. Selective coding involves the process of selecting a core category or core categories and relating, and validating those relationships, and supplementing with other categories (Creswell, 1998). The whole phenomenon may be explained by relating the major categories and subcategories to each other at the property and dimensional levels (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). For selective coding, the researcher reviewed selectively for data that generated themes and made comparisons and contrasts after most or all data collection was completed (Neuman, 2000). Through this coding procedure, a key aspect or “story” is produced when developing the grounded theory. Attention to the process is a critical issue because the selective coding method can change conditions that impact action and interaction over time. In addition, the resulting consequences and subsequent interaction and action progressions may be noticed (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Once the researcher had well-developed concepts and had started to organize the overall analysis around several core generalizations or ideas, the researcher began to recognize major themes or concepts and elaborated more than one major theme (Neuman, 2000). All factors were accounted for, and theoretical saturation was
reached when no new data emerged regarding a category, when the category was dense enough to cover variations, and the related categories were defined obviously (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). When all of these processes were achieved, a completed theory for this study appeared. The theory can be judged on its ability to explain the phenomena with the fewest possible concepts and the greatest possible scope to describe the problem being examined (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Glaser (1992) suggested that the theory can be judged by two main criteria: whether it can explain the phenomena or the situation and whether it has the ability to help the people in the situation to describe being examined and to manage the situation better.

**Establishing Trustworthiness**

Qualitative researchers place criteria that have priority within the tradition for judging the quality of their research (Patton, 2002). This is normally referred to as “trustworthiness,” which is defined as “conceptual soundness” from which the research value can be determined and judged (Marshall & Rossman, 1995). This term of trustworthiness is similar to the quantitative concepts of “reliability” and “validity” and is developed to establish a level of rigor and provide credibility to qualitative findings (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). According to Lincoln & Guba (1985), the explanations of the trustworthiness of qualitative data include triangulation of data, explanations of researcher bias, and length of time spent with the data. Lincoln and Guba (1986) also suggest “replacing the traditional mandate to be objective with an emphasis on trustworthiness and authenticity by being balanced, fair, and conscientious in taking account of multiple perspectives, multiple interests, and multiple realities” (Patton, 2002, p.584). Thus, typically, trustworthiness in qualitative research is operationalized by the satisfactory
attainment in four specific criteria: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. The following section, therefore, will address each of these as part of the researcher’s criteria for establishing trustworthiness to enhance the quality of this study.

Credibility

According to Lincoln and Guba (1986), credibility refers to internal validity, defined as how much the data precisely reflected the multiple dimensions of the topic under study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). It is clearly determined to the extent that there is a correspondence between the way the participants view their experiences and the way the researcher describes those experiences (Martens, 1997). In qualitative inquiry, credibility can be achieved through several strategies. Those employed strategies for establishing credibility include triangulation, member checking, peer debriefing, and provision of an audit trail (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

The first method of increasing credibility is triangulation. Triangulation involves using multiple sources or various data collection methods to ensure that there is consistency from the various sources (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). “Triangulation has been generally considered as a process of using multiple perceptions to clarify meaning, verifying the repeatability of an observation or interpretation” (Stake, 2000, p. 443). In this study, the researcher incorporated the data including in-depth interview, participant observation, documents review, and group discussion for credibility. Accordingly, the combined processes of all of these data collection methods were used to ensure the reliability for this study. This researcher particularly used the autobiographies of the women that may be a thick description to provide a rich and accurate portrait of the women’s experiences in Korea. Overall, the data collection process for establishing trustworthiness was designed to increase
credibility as much as possible.

The second way to enhance the credibility of a qualitative study is to use member checking. Lincoln and Guba (1985) considered member checking the most important step for establishing credibility because the purpose of the member checking process is to help to decrease researcher’s bias and to increase the accuracy of the raw data by allowing the participants the opportunity to correct errors, to clarify meaning, and to provide additional information (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Member checking processes were conducted twice in the study. The initial member checking occurred by sending electronic copies of the participants’ interview transcripts to them to validate and to make clear the researcher’s understandings through e-mail or mailing. Another member checking was conducted to listen to participants’ illuminations and feedback at the initial stage of data analysis to bring in the results of initial coding. Their feedback and agreement on the concepts and themes exactly involved generating initial coding to develop theory.

Peer debriefing is another strategy for establishing credibility. Peer debriefing strategy offers diverse feedback and ideas regarding methodological, substantive, or ethical considerations (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Also, the purpose of peer debriefing is to discuss the emotional issues related to qualitative research, to provide an external check of the inquirer’s biases and preconceived notions, and to use the development of themes and concepts in the study (Creswell, 2007; Padgett, 2008). A neutral peer also served in this role during the course of my dissertation project. As the researcher stayed in Korea during the dissertation project, the three peer debriefers were selected from among multicultural family professionals and supervisors at the research institution in Korea. Personal meetings and e-mail contacts helped the researcher to progress including reviewing data collection, analysis,
and interpretation, and checking the influence of pre-existing notions and biases and dilemmas.

The final way to establish credibility is accomplished by keeping a continuous audit trail. An audit trail is intended to be used by other researchers if it is required to clarify and confirm the findings, documenting each step taken in data collection and analysis (Padgett, 2008). Unlike the peer debriefer, “this auditor is not familiar with the research or the project and can provide an objective assessment of the project throughout the process of the researcher or at the conclusion of the study” (Creswell, 2007, 192). An audit trail was attempted and sustained by this researcher through the various research activities such as pre-entry conceptualizations, an accuracy of transcriptions, initial coding efforts, and analytic activities from the raw data through interpretation (Creswell, 2007). This attempt also included recorded materials of the research procedures consisting of copies of all recorded interviews, memos from the interviews, and hard copies of all transcriptions.

**Transferability**

Transferability is the second of the four components of trustworthiness. Transferability refers to the level in which findings and conclusions are applicable to another setting (Marshall & Rossman, 1995). In other words, the results of a study can be applied to new cases if the generalization occurs (Mertens, 1997). To improve transferability, the researcher provided very thorough descriptions of the setting, participants, researcher, the methodology, the results, and the emerging theory that allows further researchers to make judgments about whether the results can be generalized in other settings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Therefore, the researcher actively made efforts to keep a detailed description of the participants’ experiences, organizing an analysis, and continuously monitoring observations.
and records for evidence of personal bias or prejudice (Creswell, 2002). At last, transferability was achieved by writing up a final report with a rich descriptive portrait to allow the possibility that information created and lessons from the results potentially have meaning and usefulness for other researchers (Rodwell, 1998).

**Dependability**

In grounded theory research, dependability shows that the findings are accurately consistent and could be repeated as dependability relates to the reliability (Mertens, 1997; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Dependability ensures that the data represent and describe the changing conditions of the phenomena under investigation, which is the foundation of grounded theory research. To achieve dependability in a qualitative inquiry, the researcher focused on shaping the undertaking that is performed with the processes of data collection, analysis, and interpretation. This guidance essentially ensures that ideological and methodological insecurity will be avoided (Rodwell, 1998). A key strategy for establishing dependability is the provision of an audit trail, which has already been discussed above. The provision of an audit trail led the researcher to acknowledge the emerging theory, coding, and themes for developing a dependable theory (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The researcher also addressed methodological issues including why a specific methodology was chosen, why certain sampling choices were made, and how codes and activity rules were created (Rodwell, 1998). Overall, the entirety of the materials, such as the research proposal, interview guides, raw data records, analysis of documents, process notes, and final report, were reviewed by the dependability audit for this study.

**Confirmability**

Confirmability is the final way to enhance the quality of a qualitative research study.
Confirmability refers to showing that a degree of neutrality, which is discussed as the derived conclusions, is directly linked to data by the respondents and not researcher bias, prejudice, motivation, or interest (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Interestingly, confirmability relates to objectivity in a qualitative research study as inquiry findings and interpretations indicate reasonable and logical verification (Rodwell, 1998). From this view, confirmability can be accomplished if another person is able to confirm the study with the same data the original researcher used. This does not mean that another researcher would automatically reach the same conclusion (Rodwell, 1998). Instead, this new researcher can understand and agree with the reflective processes employed to reach conclusions (Rodwell, 1998). An inquiry auditor follows an audit trail to establish confirmability, quite similar to dependability, as a best way (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Procedures for developing an audit trail for the current study have already been described above.

**Role of the Researcher**

It is significant to be aware of the roles of the researcher in qualitative inquiry. Because of the involvement based on subjective thoughts and opinions of the researcher during investigation, it is necessary to minimize and account for researcher bias that can impact the process of a study (Creswell, 1998). Qualitative research relies heavily on interpretative inquiry, with the researcher intimately involved and extensively spending time with the participants (Creswell, 2007). With these concerns in mind, “researchers explicitly identify reflexively their biases, values, and personal background such as gender, history, culture, and socioeconomic status, that may shape their interpretations formed during a study” (Creswell, 2007, p.196). The researcher must be able to put him or herself in the role of the respondents and attempt to see the situation from the perspective of the participants so
that information from the participants reflects their own views and not the researcher’s, and rather than forcing the world of academia and preconceptions upon the participants (Fontana & Frey, 1994). When this research was conducted, the researcher needed to be aware of personal experiences of immigrant women. Since prior to conducting this dissertation project the researcher had been working or studying with Filipina, Vietnamese, Korean Chinese, and Mongolians overseas, the researcher separated out her preconceptions about these women under study. As the primary instrument for collecting and analyzing data, therefore, in order to avoid subjective interpretation and bias, the researcher made efforts to increase validity through using some different strategies. As described in the section on establishing trustworthiness, the researcher engaged the ways of triangulation and member checking, peer debriefing and provision of an audit trail. Because the researcher is a young woman who has experienced staying in another country as a missionary and a social worker, the researcher tried to separate out those feelings about cross-cultural experience and prejudice against immigrant women. Nevertheless, personal opinion, bias, and prejudice, human error, and subjective interpretation might be inevitable to some degree.

Another role of the researcher is establishing rapport between the researcher and participants because building trusting relationships is essential to an interviewer’s success. There are some factors that influence the building of rapport between the investigator and the respondents. To communicate appropriately, the researcher must be able to communicate fluently with the respondents. In this study, the researcher encountered the difficult task of asking questions cross-culturally. Fortunately, all of the respondents were fluent in the language of the interviewer, but there were different ways of saying things, and indeed, certain words seemed to need the researcher’s sensitivity in understanding (Fontana & Frey,
Next, the researcher needed to make respondents feel comfortable by listening carefully, which is a good way to facilitate the sharing of respondents’ voices. During the interview sessions, the researcher focused on women’s responses to interview questions. Thus, the researcher did not discuss, judge or criticize their views or concerns. On the other hand, a close relationship may also create problems. Close rapport with respondents straightforwardly opens doors to more informed research, but “the researcher may become a spokesperson for the groups studied, losing his or her distance and objectivity, or may ‘go native’ and become a member of the group and forgo the academic group” (Fontana & Frey, 1994, p.60). An additional key factor of building rapport is that the researcher-participant relationship involves equity. This challenge of establishing equity with the participants in the interviewing relationship is not a simple task because differences and similarities such as gender, age, ethnicity, and social class might exist between the researcher and the participant (Vincent & Warren, 2001). Even though the researcher was not be able to put herself in a participant’s place in every situation the participant had gone through, the researcher was committed to participating with trust and rapport. In addition, Merriam (1998) encourages the qualitative researcher to be flexible when unexpected events take place. In this case, sensitive ethical issues may be raised (Creswell, 2007). For some cases, the researcher had to follow the consent form by the approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) to protect the rights of human participants (Creswell, 2007). These issues require discussion that will be addressed in the next section. For the most part, flexibility of the researcher made the participants feel free and comfortable in their involvement.

**Ethical Considerations**
All types of researchers face ethical issues, and there is no exception for qualitative researchers (Adler & Adler, 1998). In particular, a number of ethical questions have been raised and debated among researchers who study human beings as a “subject” (Adler & Adler, 1998). The direct personal involvement of a researcher may be more cautious (Neuman, 2000). Although the researcher may be aware of general ethical issues and deal with them in advance, unpredicted dilemmas can occur at any time unexpectedly in the course of a qualitative inquiry. In this study, the researcher had to deal with several ethical issues.

This research involving human subjects requires an informed consent form because it is not enough simply to get permission from the subjects. Ethical practice requires that subjects need to know what they are being asked to participate in so that they can make an informed decision (Neuman, 2000). For this reason, informed consent is a necessary prelude to beginning the relationship (Adler & Adler, 1998). Informed consent statements usually contain the following elements: a) A brief description of the purpose of the study and its procedures in which participants will be involved, b) Full identification of the researcher’s identity and information, including an address or telephone member for future contacts, c) An assurance that participation is voluntary and that the respondents can terminate their participation at any time without penalty, d) An assurance of confidentiality and anonymity, e) A statement of any risks or discomfort or benefits associated with participation in the study, and f) A statement of alternative procedures that may be used (Adler & Adler, 1998; Newman, 2000, p.96). In February 2011, the University of Hawaii (UH) Committee on Human Studies (CHS) provided approval for this study as exempt from federal regulations pertaining to protection of human research participants. The researcher got permission from
the participants before interviews. Each respondent was able to understand the informed consent statement that he or she read. All respondents agreed and signed two copies of the consent form in Korean or in English, one for the researcher and the other left with the respondent. The researcher had a copy of the signed informed consent form, which would be stored in a locked file in the researcher’s desk. The investigator also noted that with the participant’s permission, the interview would be voice recorded for the purpose of transcription. All participants agreed to be audio recorded for the study. The researcher described and explained all the consent statements including the above six elements in order to protect the participants’ identities and to assure confidentiality of the information they provided.

For this study, confidentiality and privacy of the participant must be the most critical ethical issue. This researcher continues to have the obligation to uphold the confidentiality and the privacy of the participants (Padgett, 2008; Neuman, 2000). Confidentiality means that “information may have names attached to it, but the researcher holds it in confidence or keeps it secret from the public” (Neuman, 2000, p. 99). The researcher should make every effort to ensure that the identities of the respondents are concealed using self-selected pseudonyms for them (Adler & Adler, 1998). By permitting this procedure, the participants may have their rights to maintain ownership of their voices and exert their independence in making decisions (Creswell, 2007). Once data is analyzed, the files need to be kept for a reasonable period of time (Creswell, 2007). Investigation should then determine how to discard the data so that it does not fall into the hands of other researchers who might misappropriate it (Creswell, 2007, p. 91). To ensure confidentiality, during data collection code numbers of pseudonyms were assigned to each transcript rather
than names on all notes and recordings. That information would be destroyed at the end of
the study. Once transcription had been completed, the audio files were destroyed. Once the
audio files had been destroyed, no participant’s name or voice was likely to be connected to
the data in any way. Audio files and digitally recorded tapes were destroyed following
transcription. Transcripts were kept until the project was finished, and they were destroyed
at the conclusion of the study. All other research records were destroyed upon completion of
the project. For the final report, the researcher also used pseudonyms or code numbers that
would allow the identity of participants to remain unknown (Adler & Adler, 1998).

The participants must be protected against not only physical harm, but also
psychological abuse or stress (Padgett, 2008). Even though the risk of physical harm is
infrequent, the most pressing concern for qualitative inquiry is emotional because the
participants may face stressful, embarrassing, anxiety-producing, or unpleasant situations
(Neuman, 2000). Some participants seem to find it impossible to avoid experiencing their
emotional ups and downs during their interviews when they discuss painful life events such
as divorce, death of a family member, and domestic abuse (Adler & Adler, 1998; Neuman,
2000). In such cases, social work researchers may unintentionally create high levels of
anxiety or discomfort (Neuman, 2000). A sensitive researcher is also aware of harm to a
subject’s self-esteem (Neuman, 2000). Feelings of closeness and intimacy may create
situations of strength while at the same time the situation could be one of limitations in a
qualitative study. Researchers must make efforts to lessen unnecessary stress. This issue has
been important to researchers in the social work field when they are interviewing vulnerable
populations, including those who are immigrants. Furthermore, this researcher recognized
that marriage issues can be a sensitive topic for those in contemporary Korean society.
Therefore, several strategies were considered for the purpose of protecting participants in this study. A main strategy for protecting participants from emotional harm involved recruiting participants who have met the criteria for joining the study. A part of this criterion was met when participants were not in a serious emotional or mental state. Another ethical strategy is to ensure participants’ rights to autonomy. At the beginning, the investigator believed there would be minimal or no risk for participating in this research project. However, the researcher recognized that there might be some possible risks from being in this study since answering some of the questions about emotional issues might make the participants uncomfortable or upset. The participants were informed that it was their right to refrain from answering any questions that they would not want to answer and to stop the individual interview.

The issue of whether and how to compensate interviewees involve questions of both ethics and data quality (Patton, 2002, p. 412). In a qualitative study, modest payments and gifts encourage participation and compensate participants for their time (Adler & Adler, 1998). However, this can be a difficult and ethical issue that requires a decision about how much to pay each participant. If the participant is compensated too little, the incentive value is lost and he or she might feel a sense of insult, but if the compensation is too much, he or she might feel uncomfortable and feel one’s cooperation has been purchased (Adler & Adler, 1998). In the case of this project, in appreciation for the time spent participating in the research project, each participant received 20 dollars and small gifts in appreciation for their time and information.
CHAPTER 4
RESEARCH FINDINGS AND THEORY DEVELOPMENT

Introduction

This study, with the aim of developing a theory, followed the process of Grounded Theory Research developed by Strauss & Corbin (1998), the methods of which include open, axial, and selective coding. As a result, this chapter discusses findings from the analysis as well as the process of the theory development. First of all, the researcher described demographic characteristics and participants’ stories in order to enhance the reader’s understanding of the participants. Next the researcher discussed the Axial Coding Model with the categories found in the open coding stage, which investigated the structural relationship among contextual condition, intervening condition, action/interaction condition, and the consequences surrounding the main phenomenon. Then the researcher explained the findings concerning the experiences of the female immigrants. During this process, the researcher often applied the “In Vivo Code,” which directly quotes the spoken language of the participants, because the In Vivo Code preserves and delivers the participants’ opinions or the genuine meanings of their behaviors so well in the process of coding that it can be a symbolic mark (Charmaz, 2006). In addition, the researcher proceeded chronologically with an analysis of the paradigmatic categories as well as the experiences of the female immigrants. Aiming for theory development, the researcher defined the core category that was derived by analysis from selective coding. Also, hypothetical standardization and hypothetical relational statement are discussed. Finally, the researcher elaborated the analysis of the patterns of the female immigrants by considering the nature and characteristics of each category.

Demographic Characteristics of the Research Participants
Participants in this research project included sixteen female immigrants in international marriages whose marriage period had lasted more than three years. They had had various living experiences in Korea, were fluent in Korean, and were trying to adapt to Korean culture. Also, two husbands of those sixteen females were included to understand the participants’ lives from a spouse’s perspective. Those participants’ nationalities varied: seven Vietnamese, five Filipinas, two Chinese, one Cambodian, and one Mongolian. Their ages varied from 22 to 41, and the average was 31.4. Their husbands’ ages varied from 36 to 49 with an average of 44.6. The mean age gap between husbands and wives was approximately 13. Their levels of education also varied: one elementary school graduate, one dropout from high school, eight high school graduates, one dropout from college, two college graduates, two graduate students, and one postgraduate-school graduate. According to assessment of their marital status, all women and 14 husbands were in their first marriage, while two of their husbands were in their second marriage. Their marital period differed from three to twelve years, and the average was six years and two months. The number of their children varied from 1 to 3 and the average number was 1.7. Their occupations included ten housewives, two social workers, one Chinese language instructor, one NGO staff for multicultural development, one volunteer interpreter and lecturer, and one resident factory laborer. Their husbands’ occupations included eight office workers, two engineers, two drivers, one farmer, one security guard, one business owner, and one factory owner. Concerning their religious backgrounds, there were six atheists, four Protestants, three Buddhists, one Unification Church member, one Seventh-Day Adventist Church member, and one Catholic. Among them, six were living with their parents-in-law, and three among the others had an experience of living with their in-laws. Participant A, Participant K, and
Participant P had already lived and worked in Korea before their marriage. The husbands of Participant K and Participant O were married for the second time, and the husband of Participant P had three children from his ex-wife. These participants’ general demographic characteristics are illustrated in table 1.

Table 1

Demographic Characteristics of the Research Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Education Level</th>
<th>Marital Status</th>
<th>Marital Period</th>
<th>Job</th>
<th>No. of Child</th>
<th>Religion</th>
<th>Husb’s Age</th>
<th>Husb’s Occupation</th>
<th>Live w/ in-law</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A Vietnam</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>Undergrad</td>
<td>1st</td>
<td>7yrs</td>
<td>Social org staff</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>Own business</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B China</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>Post-grad complete</td>
<td>1st</td>
<td>5yrs</td>
<td>Chinese teacher</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>Office work</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C Vietnam</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>Post-grad</td>
<td>1st</td>
<td>10yrs</td>
<td>Social org staff</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Protestant</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>Office work</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D Philippines</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>College grad</td>
<td>1st</td>
<td>12yrs</td>
<td>Volunteer</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Unification Church</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>Office work</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E Philippines</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>High school</td>
<td>1st</td>
<td>5yrs</td>
<td>Housewife</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Seventh Adventist</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>Laborer</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F Philippines</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>High school</td>
<td>1st</td>
<td>3yrs</td>
<td>Housewife</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>Office work</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G Mongolia</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>Post-grad</td>
<td>1st</td>
<td>6yrs</td>
<td>Social org staff</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Protestant</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>Driver</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H Philippines</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>High school</td>
<td>1st</td>
<td>4yrs</td>
<td>Housewife</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Protestant</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I Philippines</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>College drop-out</td>
<td>1st</td>
<td>5yrs</td>
<td>Housewife</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Catholic</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>Security Guard+Farmer</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J Vietnam</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>High school</td>
<td>1st</td>
<td>5yrs</td>
<td>Housewife</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>Factory owner</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K Vietnam</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>High school</td>
<td>1st</td>
<td>5yrs</td>
<td>Housewife</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>Construction Laborer</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L China</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>High school</td>
<td>1st</td>
<td>10yrs</td>
<td>Housewife</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Protestant</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>Office work</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M Vietnam</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>High school</td>
<td>1st</td>
<td>4yrs</td>
<td>Housewife</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>Office work</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N Vietnam</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>College grad</td>
<td>1st</td>
<td>5yrs</td>
<td>Housewife</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Buddhist</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>Office work</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O Cambodia</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Element grad</td>
<td>1st</td>
<td>3yrs</td>
<td>Factory worker</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Buddhist</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>Bus Driver</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P Vietnam</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>High school</td>
<td>1st</td>
<td>3yrs</td>
<td>Housewife</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Buddhist</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>Office work</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’s Husb Korea</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>High school</td>
<td>1st</td>
<td>5yrs</td>
<td>Security guard &amp;farmer</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>none</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K’s Husb Korea</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>High school</td>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>5yrs</td>
<td>Security guard &amp;farmer</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>none</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Stories of the Participants

Following is general information on individual participants as well as stories about
their married life and adaptation to Korean culture.

**Participant A**

A is from Vietnam, 29 years old, a second daughter among three sisters, a high school graduate, and married for the first time. For eight years she has lived with her husband, who is 41 years old and also a high school graduate, and with her 7-year-old daughter and 5-year-old son. Now she works at a social welfare organization as an interpreter for multicultural families.

Participant A came to Korea in 2002 to make money after her father’s business failure. She worked so hard at a factory that she was able to clear the debt. While she was working there, the owner of her favorite restaurant introduced her to her current husband. At the age of 21, after her future husband’s impassioned advances to her, she lived one year with him and then got married to him. She did not speak Korean back then but was very enthusiastic about learning it; starting from a language class for old Korean women, she completed courses in Korean language instruction and is majoring in Korean language at an online university at the moment. Moreover, she prefers working to staying at home and thus has worked at a factory, a restaurant, and a department store in Korea. Although working at a department store is challenging even for natives, she said she enjoyed it. Since last year, she has been working at a center for multicultural families as an interpreter for female immigrants.

When it comes to her married life, she has gone through many tough times. She had trouble understanding her husband, who rarely helped with chores and often came home late. These days, he cleans the house from time to time, and she is thankful for his change. Also, she had difficulty with her husband because he did not understand her desire to continue her work or study due to his belief that women should stay at home rather than have a job. When she gets stressed, she either goes shopping or goes out for a drink with her friends. She is
also doing her best to be with her children, who are 7 and 5 years old, playing and spending time with them.

Participant A expressed disappointment about Koreans’ prejudice against international marriage. On the other hand, she is sometimes encouraged when Koreans praise her passionate life. Since 2007 when she gained Korean citizenship, she has felt more stable and has become happier because she has the benefit of a better job. If possible, she hopes to study translation and interpretation at a graduate school. She already holds a third grade license for interpreter and translator, and further hopes to take an exam to be a policewoman, a public officer, or a professional translator/interpreter.

**Participant B**

B is from China. She is 32 years old, has an older brother, and graduated from a postgraduate school. Five years ago, she got married for the first time to a Korean man. Her husband is a 36-year-old office worker. Currently she works as a language teacher and lives with her 4-year-old son and her mother-in-law.

Although Participant B’s undergraduate major was law, she ran a Chinese language institute in Qingdao in China because becoming a lawyer or a prosecutor was not easy. It was at this institute where her current sister-in-law and spouse learned Chinese when they were stationed in China as resident officers. B was introduced to her future husband by her sister-in-law, and B’s husband’s soft-hearted manner made her choose this man as her spouse. After he had visited China four times and she had visited his place in Korea once, she finally decided to get married. It was not only because of her husband but also because of B’s sister-in-law and mother-in-law, who were very kind to her, that she risked the challenges of international marriage. B showed elitism and was proud of herself because she had graduated from a prestigious law school in China, and her father and brother were both
doctors, and her family was well off.

B lives with her mother-in-law at her house and is very thankful for her mother-in-law, who takes care of her child. With her experience of running a language institute, B is teaching Chinese to Koreans from various backgrounds at language institutes, schools, and social welfare organizations. In addition, she is giving private lessons to some students that were arranged by her sister-in-law’s active support. Besides, B has recently completed her master’s degree in multicultural families’ social welfare studies with her tuition aided by her mother-in-law. According to her, her husband and her mother-in-law were so proud of her studying at a Korean graduate school.

B showed a high degree of satisfaction in her prosperous life in Korea and in her family relationships. However, she was not without any difficulty; in the beginning, B had some trouble with her mother-in-law. Although she had been aware of and prepared for the challenges from a relationship between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law, B had conflict with her mother-in-law from time to time because she was not pliable enough to suit her mother-in-law. Nonetheless, the issues were solved by her mother-in-law’s effort in conversation as well as her sister-in-law’s intervention. Because she majored in multicultural families’ social welfare studies, B’s vision as a counselor is to give professional aid to the people around her.

**Participant C**

C is from Vietnam, 38 years old, and the youngest among her two brothers and three sisters. She is a postgraduate student and married for the first time. Ten years ago, she got married to a Korean man. He is a 49-year-old office worker. She has two sons, 10 years old and 5 years old, and is taking a break from her volunteer interpretation at a multicultural social welfare organization.

Participant C was an earnest English teacher in Vietnam. Then C’s close friend, who
was living in Korea after getting married to a Korean man, asked her if she was also interested in getting married to a Korean man. Her answer was “no” in the beginning; however, her friend kept sending photos of her future husband and persuaded her to meet him. Furthermore, with his elder brother, who was an English teacher, he paid a visit to Vietnam to see her. It was her future brother-in-law who helped their communication by interpreting their conversation. She liked her future husband’s honesty and decided to get married.

When C was told by her husband that she would live with her mother-in-law, she looked forward to doing so because she had thought she would be happy and would regard her mother-in-law as her own mother. However, the reality was a far cry from her expectation. Her mother-in-law was a typical Korean authoritarian who interfered with her daughter-in-law in every single matter; for example, she disliked her ways of doing dishes, cleaning, and even taking a shower. Her mother-in-law only favored and was concerned only for her son. Participant C had a difficult time with her mother-in-law until she passed away from a chronic disease in 2009.

Despite her difficulties, she has endeavored in every way to keep her family together. In particular, she studied the science of statistics and social welfare at a university with aid from a local social work center for multicultural families. While she was studying, she developed a dream of helping other female immigrants like herself. In order to achieve her dream, she devoted herself to working as an interpreter at a local community center for multicultural families as well as to completing a postgraduate course on multicultural social welfare studies last year. Currently she is taking a break from her work and study because of childcare.
Participant D

D is from the Philippines, 37 years old, a university graduate, and married for the first time. Her husband is a 44-year-old office worker. They have been married for 12 years. She has a 10-year-old daughter and volunteers for interpreting as well as teaching English.

D is a devout member of the Unification Church just like her husband. Her marriage was arranged by the Church, and that is how she came to Korea. D’s husband’s impression of kindness motivated her to choose him, and she has not been disappointed with her choice; they never argued after their marriage because her husband is positive about doing chores and helping her to visit her home country. She did not find it difficult to adapt to Korean life because she took cultural adjustment training and language lessons from the Unification Church in the beginning for one month. She lived with her parents-in-law until her father-in-law passed away.

D has many friends because of her bright and positive attitude toward people. Many of her Filipina friends regularly gather at her house and spend time together, making and enjoying foods. Also, she is an active volunteer; to illustrate, she teaches English to Korean children and old ladies at a local community center and serves at a local soup kitchen. In addition, she is a volunteer interpreter at the Office of Immigration.

Participant E

E is from the Philippines, 35 years old, a high school graduate, and married for the first time. It has been 12 years since she married her husband, a 43-year-old factory worker. She is a full-time housewife, taking care of three sons aged 12, 10, and 1 year old respectively.

Prior to her marriage, E had been working at a department store in her country, wishing for an international marriage due to her family’s financial difficulty. An internationally married couple whom she met at her work introduced her to the Unification Church, and at the church she attended a meeting, the aim of which was to make marriage arrangements. At this event, she met her husband, and that was how she came to Korea. In
the early days of her marriage, her husband would drink so much that she was greatly disappointed in him. However, her affection toward him increased as they had babies together and her husband gradually reduced the amount of his drinking.

Although her financial status was not good and her recently-born youngest boy prevented her from getting a job, she was positive about and satisfied with her life in Korea. Lately, she has been enjoying a cordial relationship with Korean friends since she began to attend the Seventh Day Adventist Church. Raising three boys is truly demanding, but she feels it is worthwhile because the boys are so charming. When the youngest grows older, she hopes to go back to the factory where she worked before.

Participant F

F is from the Philippines, 26 years old, and a high school graduate. She is married for the first time, and for four years she has been living with her husband, a 44-year-old office worker. Currently, she is a full-time housewife taking care of her 3-year-old daughter.

Participant F met her husband by chance in the Philippines while he was traveling. When he asked her out, she hesitated, but his gentle and thoughtful manners led her to her marriage with him. Following her move to Korea, she had lived with her mother-in-law for a year and six months until she passed away. The most difficult challenge for her was fixing breakfast every day, but she was able to adapt to it as she learned from her husband. Also, the morning sickness she suffered during her pregnancy was another challenge.

She said she was happy because her husband did not smoke or drink but put priority on his family. Besides, she no longer found difficulties about living in Korea because she had adjusted to Korean foods. She feels that when her child grows up, she will have a career. Another future plan is to go back to the Philippines with her husband after retirement and spend the rest of their lives there since they purchased land in the Philippines.

Participant G
Participant G had wished for an international marriage out of her curiosity about the unknown world. For this reason, she was introduced to her husband through the network of a matchmaking agency that was run by her acquaintance. Three days after the first meeting with her husband, she decided to get married, to register her marriage with the Mongolian bureau, and to come to Korea after waiting for a while for her visa to be issued. Afterwards, she lived with her parents-in-law, who are farmers in the countryside. Living in the country was a disappointment to her because she was a city girl who had fantasies about Korean life as depicted in Korean TV dramas. Not only that, her parents-in-law were also a challenge to her due to their blunt manners and sudden irritations.

Despite these difficulties, her active characteristics kept her committed to self-development. While learning Korean in a language course, she was introduced to a graduate school professor by a social worker there, and the professor recommended to her a graduate school of multicultural social welfare studies. After a discussion with her husband, she began to study at the school and became a staff member of an NGO for multicultural social issues. Since then, she has given lectures on raising multicultural awareness to elementary, middle, and high school students. Her dream is to continue her study and to become a more professional lecturer who can give interesting lectures to reach the people who do not care about multicultural issues.

Participant H
Participant H met her husband through her friend who was working at a matchmaking agency. Prior to getting married, she had worked at a department store in the Philippines and had seen many Korean women spending a good amount of money. She concluded that all Koreans were well off. In addition, Korean TV dramas instilled in her fantasies about Korean life and suggested to her that if she went to Korea she would live in a house as fine as the ones in the dramas that she watched. On the contrary, the reality she faced was far from her fantasies. The fact that she was to live in the countryside with her mother-in-law was a great disappointment to her because she grew up in the city, Manila. As a result, she lived in tears for a year.

Along with her shattered expectations, she has come to hold a few grudges against her husband. First of all, their communication was unsatisfactory mainly because her husband would not face their difficulties and avoided solving the problems when she told him about them. Moreover, he was still financially dependent on his mother and was suffering from a loss of money in the stock market. What was worse, he had a fixation about cleanliness that greatly bothered her in daily life. On top of that, he demanded that she stay at home with the children, ignoring her desire to learn and to follow after her interests. For these reasons, she was considering a divorce although she has two children with him.

Participant I

I is from the Philippines, 33 years old, the eldest daughter among ten siblings. She dropped out of college and got married for the first time. It has been five years since she married her husband, currently a 48-year-old apartment guard. Currently, she is taking care of her home and her two daughters aged 4 years and 3 years respectively.

Participant I met her husband through her cousin who had gotten married to a
Korean man also. As she was the oldest daughter, she carried family responsibilities on her shoulders, and the cousin persuaded her to marry a Korean man saying that she could earn money for her family if she lived in Korea. Participant I’s husband was informed about her in Korea and then visited her in the Philippines. Twenty days after their first meeting, they got married, and she waited for a while for her visa to be issued. Then she moved to Korea and found that her husband’s life there was a disappointment. She had to live with her parents-in-law in addition to the elder brother of her husband who is still single. It was very difficult for her to adjust to the environment in the countryside; her place was an old shabby house with an outdoor toilet.

Her husband made a bare living as an apartment guard, and she was frustrated with their difficult financial status that seemed to get no better. She was given an allowance from her husband, but it was not enough. Because she had dropped out of college, she hoped to continue her study and find a job in Korea to earn money. Also she wanted to move to the city where she could live with her husband and children only. Nonetheless, her conservative husband did not understand her ideas and made her feel even lonelier.

**Participant J**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>J is from Vietnam, 27 years old, the third daughter among four, and a high school graduate. She is married for the first time. It has been five years since she got married to her husband, who owns a factory and is 49 years old. Currently, she is a full-time housewife taking care of her 4-year-old son and 3-year-old daughter.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Participant J was motivated to marry a Korean man as she saw her elder sister living happily with her Korean husband. So she contacted an international matchmaking agency in Vietnam and was introduced to her current husband. In spite of the twenty years of age difference, she did not feel any generation gap with him. Rather, he was so thoughtful and caring that she said she could not be happier. Besides, taking care of her little children
was a pleasure that meant a lot to her.

However, J did have difficulty with the wife of her husband’s elder brother, Song. As J’s husband was running the factory with Song, J’s family was living downstairs from Song’s family in a building that belonged to Song. What was bothering J was that Song seemed to mistrust J as well as to look down on her. For this reason, J dreamed of becoming independent and having her own house and opening a hair salon by the time her children grew up.

**Participant K**

K is from Vietnam, 41 years old, second among seven siblings, and a high school graduate. She is married for the first time. It has been five years since she got married to her husband, a 47-year-old construction laborer. Currently she is a full-time housewife taking care of her 4-year-old son and 3-year-old daughter.

Participant K’s reason for coming to Korea ten years ago was to financially aid her family in Vietnam. After several years of working, her hand got hurt, and she was hospitalized. Her sister-in-law, who was her roommate then, introduced her brother to K, and they began dating. Despite the fact that it was his second marriage, she decided to marry him because of his kindness and trustworthiness. Her trust in him turned out to be rewarded because her husband has been as considerate and loving as to support her family in Vietnam.

Participant K mainly stayed at home with her children, but she would help her neighbor immigrant women with her leadership by inviting them to her place and sharing information. She found it meaningful to help other immigrant women in that way. Also she felt spending time with her children at home was very enjoyable. For the future, she hopes to have her own business and spend her old age in Vietnam since she had purchased some land and a house there with her earnings prior to getting married.

**Participant L**
L is a 34-year-old Korean-Chinese woman who has a younger brother. She dropped out of high school, and this is her first marriage. It has been ten years since she got married to a Korean man, a 46-year-old office worker. Currently she is taking care of her home and her two sons aged 9 years and 6 years old.

Participant L met her husband through her aunt’s matchmaking. He had already been married before to a Korean. When her future husband visited China to meet L, she developed a crush on him and made up her mind to marry him. Therefore, on his second trip to China, he brought all documents for marriage registration as well as her visa and began the procedure. However, paperwork and other parts of the process took such a long time that L was even tempted to give up. Because she was Korean-Chinese and fluent in the Korean language and because her parents had been living in Korea, she did not find it too difficult to adjust to life in Korea. At that time she was a commuter and was a little discontent with her husband because he was a typical Korean man who did not talk much and did not do the chores.

She was so fluent in Korean that natives did not recognize that she was a foreign immigrant. While she was staying in Korea, the most difficult challenge for her was her children’s education. She did not know what to do with other Korean mothers’ craze for private lessons and the too-competitive educational environment. Despite these troubles, she was trying her best for her children with the help of her neighbors, who gave advice and shared information. Also she was in financial distress due to her husband’s meager wages. Although she wanted to earn some money by teaching Chinese, she felt an obstacle because she had not finished high school.

Participant M
M is from Vietnam, 24 years old, a high school graduate, and married for the first time. She has a younger brother as well as a sister. It has been four years since she got married to her husband, a 45-year-old office worker. Currently, she is a full-time housewife taking care of her 4-year-old daughter and 2-year-old son.

Participant M met her husband through matchmaking set up by her cousin who was already married to a Korean man and was living in Korea. Earlier on, her parents had been greatly concerned about her living abroad; however, they were happy these days as they were told that her husband was kind enough and that he would provide them financial aid. M said that her main reason for getting married to a Korean man was her financial need. When she first came to Korea, everything was new and unfamiliar to her; however, she managed to adjust to the new environment by learning the Korean language as well as Korean cuisine from her tutor at the language center.

M was satisfied with her husband, who was caring and willing to help with the chores. Also she felt sorry for her mother-in-law, who was working at a local marketplace despite her old age. She wanted to be good to her. Besides, she found her life stable, and she was busy with her children and was happy about it. She wished to learn with her children how to play the piano and wanted to have a part-time job when they grew more. On top of that, she desired to be a better mother and wife to her children and husband.

Participant N

N is from Vietnam, 36 years old, a college graduate, and married for the first time. She has two older brothers. It has been five years since she got married to her husband, a 45-year-old office worker. Currently she is pregnant and has a 4-year-old daughter.

When N was visiting Korea as a tourist, her Vietnamese friend, who had been living in Korea, introduced her to her husband. She had a crush on him after the first meeting, and they went out for two years before getting married. During those days, he visited Vietnam three times, and they mainly kept in contact via telephone and the mail. After her marriage,
she released her stress by talking to her mother or close friends. She was thankful and happy about her husband because he was kind and caring enough to take care of their baby, to clean the house, and to take her out for meals. Besides, he stopped smoking even though he had been a heavy smoker prior to marriage. When Participant N had her first baby, her mother-in-law took care of her; therefore, she felt relieved as her mother-in-law promised to look after her again during her coming second delivery.

Participant N was highly interested in Korean cuisine and wished to learn to prepare it in a more professional way. She also showed an interest in baking. She planned to move back to Vietnam in the future and open a restaurant with her husband because he had learned Japanese cuisine in Japan earlier on. Due to her plan to move to Vietnam, she had hesitated to become naturalized in Korea; however, the new immigration policy changed her mind and encouraged her to begin the naturalization procedure.

Participant O

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>O is from Cambodia, 22 years old, the third among six siblings. She graduated from elementary school and was married for the first time. It has been three years since she got married to her husband, a 47-year-old bus driver. He was married for the second time and had three children with his ex-wife. He also had a son with O, and the baby is now 3 years old.</th>
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</table>

Among other participants, O was in the most challenging situation. Her motive in marrying a Korean man was to financially aid her family. Although she had liked him and had chosen him as her husband by looking at his pictures, O had many troubles. What had been the worst was her mother-in-law. From the beginning, O’s mother-in-law disliked O and would abruptly raise her voice at O, who barely spoke the Korean language. For example, she yelled out to O to fix meals when O had only been married for two weeks. She did not mind using abusive language to O and threatened to make her get out. What was worse, O had to get a part-time job as her husband gave most of his earnings to his mother.
When her mother-in-law found out that O had earned some money, she would ask for an allowance. O’s husband did not find this situation problematic. Additionally, O had difficulty in relating to the three daughters her husband had with his ex-wife. They were around O’s age and were unwilling to open their minds to O.

Despite all these troubles, O felt unconditional love toward her husband, who was her first love. Also, she found that living in Korea was not bad as long as she could handle financial issues by herself. As such independence seemed very unlikely, she was looking for a job. When the researcher made a call to her after the research, she was working at a factory and feeling more stable.

**Participant P**

P is from Vietnam, 32 years old, and the youngest among three daughters. She is a high school graduate and married for the first time. It has been three years since she got married to her Korean husband, a 40-year-old office worker. They have a 3-year-old daughter.

Participant P came to Korea seven years ago in search of a job. She learned the Korean language and improved by herself through conversing with factory coworkers and watching television. She was introduced to her husband by her friend and married him after two years of dating. When she first told her parents that she wanted to marry a foreigner, they were greatly worried about it. So she assured her parents by showing them some pictures of him, and they eventually were relieved after meeting him in person because he made a good impression on them.

P was quite satisfied with her husband and parents-in-law because they were very nice to her. Also she felt sorry for her husband due to his restless schedule and tried to comfort him by making his favorite Korean dishes. When she felt tired, she met her Vietnamese immigrant friends and spent time with them. P was so talented in drawing that she wanted to learn it more professionally and to become a teacher at an art institute or to
hold an exhibition.

**Axial Coding Model**

In this research, concepts gained from the participants’ personal information and interviews were defined by constant inquiries and comparison analyses. Also, similar concepts were grouped, more abstracted, and categorized. As a consequence, 147 concepts and 45 subcategories were developed in this research. Following the final abstraction process, 15 superordinate categories were drawn out.

Axial coding is a process in which those disintegrated resources in the open coding are reassembled. At this level, the characteristics of categories and levels are continuously developed; connections between main categories and subcategories are created, depending on those characteristics and levels; and finally, each category reveals that it intersects and connects by using the form of paradigms (Strauss & Corbin, 2000). This research discusses the summary of the concept categorization results derived from the open coding.

**Findings**

*International Marriage for a New Life*

Most of the participants came to Korea for the purpose of marrying a Korean man or getting a job in Korea. Also, one participant was introduced to her husband by her acquaintances while travelling in Korea, and she settled down. These immigrant women’s motives in marrying Korean men varied: some were just curious, some were persuaded by neighbors, some met their spouse by chance, some wanted to extricate herself from being illegal visitors, and some chose this way out of a religious belief. Above all, the strongest reason was their financial difficulties and a desire to support their parents. The way they got married also varied: some used a matchmaking agency while others had their marriage
arranged by their relatives or friends and some by the Unification Church. As they arranged their marriages, they experienced both worries and support from their family and friends. Also, they had to make a decision in a short time, go through the complicated, cumbersome paperwork after marriage to come to Korea, endure a long wait for the visa, and hold several kinds of wedding ceremonies both in their home country and in Korea.

As mentioned above, this category of “International Marriage for a New Life” includes the following subcategories: “Ways of Coming to Korea,” “Motives for International Marriage,” “Ways of Meeting the Husband,” “Surroundings’ Opinions of the Marriage,” and “Things Unfamiliar in the Marriage.”

(1) Ways of Coming to Korea

① Searching for a job:

“I did not come to Korea to get married...but I met him while working here. After working for a year... I got married, did the paperwork, and stayed in Korea.” (P.A)

“I came to Korea with a work visa issued by the Ministry of Labor of Korea because I was told that Korean companies pay their workers much more than Vietnamese ones.” (P.K)

“I came to Korea seven years ago to get a job.” (P.P)

② Travelling to Korea:

“I visited a friend of mine who was living in Korea, and this friend introduced me to my husband.” (P.N)

③ Being married to a Korean:

“After getting married and receiving my visa, then I came to Korea.” (P.B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J, L, M, N, O)

“I wanted to meet a Korean guy just as my sister, who had married a Korean and lived in Korea.” (P.J)

(2) Motives for International Marriage

① Out of curiosity:

“I wanted to see a different world.” (P.G)
② Being persuaded by neighbors:

“A friend of mine said it was nice to live in Korea.” (P.C)

“My cousin said she liked living in Korea.” (P.I)

“I was told by my friends that Koreans were rich, so I should marry a Korean man. I agreed.” (P.O)

③ None (by chance):

“I didn’t mean to marry a Korean but was led to do so by my husband’s elder sister’s intervention.” (P.B)

“My husband met me at my workplace while he was traveling in my country. He approached me, and we went out. His friends were my acquaintances; that’s how I got to know him.” (P.F)

“I was not serious then; but it just went that way.” (P.L)

“I accidentally met my husband when I was visiting Korea.” (P.N)

④ Difficulties in home country:

“You know we Filipino and Filipina suffer (from financial hardship)… we do not make enough earnings. It is evident that you will live in hardship if you marry a Filipino. So I thought back then that things will be better if I go abroad…” (P.E)

“Because life in Korea seemed better… than in Mongolia…” (P.G)

“When I was single, I wanted to marry a foreigner, not a Korean but an American. Filipina are poor because of the job shortage. Even if one has a job, he or she is poorly paid.” (P.I)

“Life in Vietnam is very hard. Other Vietnamese friends’ reason for marriage (with Koreans) is money because Vietnamese men earn less.” (P.K)

⑤ To provide financial aid for family:

“I thought I could find means to help my mother if I went abroad. Actually, I wanted to marry an American, but I couldn’t meet one.” (P.E)

“My family had been so poor that I decided to come to Korea and help them. We could not even afford to buy rice when I was young.” (P.K)

“My parents went through a lot of difficulties. Living in Vietnam is very challenging because the cost of living is high compared to earnings… My friends there earn seventy or eighty thousand won (per month). That is not enough to make a living. That’s why I wanted to help my parents and put my trust in my cousin’s word.” (P.M)

“My reason for coming here is to live in a better condition. Because my family has financial difficulties I thought I might be a help…” (P.O)

⑥ To avoid the illegal status:

“As my cousin was living in Korea, I also came and worked with a tourist visa, and then became an illegal citizen. To solve this problem, I met my husband by matchmaking after two years of working in Korea. Back
then, the regulation for illegal visitation was so intense that I married him... (P.A)

⑦ Religious faith:

“Many of us, the believers of the Unification Church, often get married internationally inside the church.” (P.D)

(3) Ways of Meeting the Husband

① By a matchmaking agency:

“(We were) introduced by a matchmaking agency.” (P.G)

“A friend of mine who is a matchmaker persuaded me to meet a Korean, saying Koreans are nice. So I met one, and liked him. My husband was the third man I met in this way. The first and second ones were not my type.” (P.H)

“I consulted a matchmaking agency, saying I wanted to meet a Korean. That was how I met my husband.” (P.J)

“As I wanted to come to Korea, I visited a matchmaking agency and was introduced to a man who has become my husband.” (P.O)

② Introduced by family, relatives or friends:

“There was an old restaurant in world market. A lot of foreigners would visit the place. My husband delivered goods to the restaurant, and the owner suggested to me that he could introduce me a good guy.” (P.A)

“My husband’s older sister was so fond of me that she introduced her brother to me. One day she asked me whether I had a boyfriend. As I said no, she asked to me if I was willing to meet a Korean.” (P.B)

“My close friend got married to a Korean man and was living in Korea. She said she knew a nice Korean guy and I could meet him. ‘Whether it works or not, you two would at least become friends,’ she said. He (my husband) was one of her husband’s acquaintances.” (P.C)

“The pastor of the Unification Church where I had been going persuaded me (to marry him). So I followed his idea.” (P.D)

“My cousin came to Korea because she married a Korean in the Unification Church. Then she matched me and my husband to first meet in the Philippines.” (P.I)

“I went to the Philippines (to meet her) as I liked her picture. I was already determined to marry her then.” (P.I’s Husband)

“I was once hospitalized when I hurt my hands. I shared the room with the older sister of my future husband. During the time, she suggested that I meet her brother. Naturally, I began going out with him in that hospital.” (P.K)

“My aunt married a Korean and went to Korea before me. Her husband was a colleague of my husband at that time, and he introduced us to each other.” (P.L)

“My cousin got married to a Korean before me. She introduced us to each other.” (P.M)

“A friend of mine introduced me to him.” (P.N)
“An acquaintance of my husband matched us.” (P.P)

(4) Surroundings’ Opinions of the Marriage

① Trust from family:

“My father’s advice was, “Meet first, and then decide.” (P.B)

“My sisters agreed (to our relationship) as long as I was happy. They were worried about me marrying a foreigner, but it was my business. That was what they told me.” (P.C)

“My parents trusted me and my judgment.” (P.F)

“My parents told me, “You should do whatever you want…Do it if you want it.”” (P.G)

② Anxiety and fear from family and friends:

“As my village was in the countryside, there had not been any case of a girl marrying a Korean… I was the only one in my village. My place was located in the country thirty minutes apart from the city if you take a motorbike. Therefore, most of the people thought an international marriage was risky. My parents were also anxious about it.” (P.A)

“I was too young then. Because it had not been long after graduation from high school, it was an unimaginable choice in my friends’ eyes.” (P.A)

“There had been a lot of objection. My friends said I did not lack anything but then why did I have to marry in Korea.” (P.B)

“They (my parents) worried about me and my adjusting to the new environment. They were not sure if I could manage doing the chores because I had kept studying only (and hardly did any chores).” (P.B)

“My mother as well as my sister disagreed because we were to marry right after meeting…” (P.H)

“My father said, ‘How could you do it when you barely speak the language? Just come back to Vietnam after making some money.’ But I persisted in marrying him, saying he was a good man.” (P.K)

“My husband’s family asked me if I really loved him. They were doubtful and anxious because his first marriage with a Chinese did not go well.” (P.K)

“In 2007, a Vietnamese female immigrant killed herself by throwing herself off an apartment in Korea. Her husband was a bad guy. My mother would not let me go after watching the news. My father was worse than she was. He said, ‘I will never see you again if you leave.’” (P.M)

“In the beginning, my father was worried… because he had no knowledge about the family of my husband, who are foreigners. So I sent him pictures. Yet he was still concerned because he did not see them with his own eyes. I said ‘no worries’ to him since I knew what the life in Korea was like…” (P.P)

(5) Things Unfamiliar in the Marriage

① Marriage process in a very short time:

“Following three meetings in 2001, our marriage was decided.” (P.C)
“It was a one-week dating program. Decisions are made in a week. (After that) we kept in contact by writing a report or fax, and I came to Korea and married after three months.” (P.D)

“One day after the very first meeting, we got married.” (P.E)

“He was to return after a week of dating. So we decided in three days after the first meeting.” (P.G)

“Right after the day of the first meeting, we held a wedding ceremony by the sea in the Philippines.” (P.H)

“We had our wedding ceremony a day after our first meeting.” (P.J)

“When he first came, he had stayed for five days. We liked each other and decided to get married; the purpose of his second visit was to do the paperwork.” (P.L)

“Following his visit to Vietnam, I had kept contacting him by phone calls. After a month, he came back to Vietnam to marry me.” (P.M)

“We got married right after the first meeting.” (P.O)

② Complicated paperwork:

“There are a lot of documents to be done. It is too complicated.” (P.B)

“The procedure in the Philippines was too long and complex. But I did register our marriage.” (P.I’s Husband)

“The paperwork for international marriage was really complicated. One should repeatedly prepare the same study.” (P.K’s Husband)

“It took eleven months due to the shift of the consular representative. I had made the documents as soon as I met her but had to do it again after the shift. The study was really complex, but I did it twice because of the new consular.” (P.L)

③ Waiting for the Korean visa:

“After getting married in Korea, I returned to Vietnam for marriage registration and was given the visa that allowed my stay in Korea.” (P.A)

“Following the marriage registration, one can get the visa after some paperwork. I got mine relatively fast.” (P.B)

“It took four months for me to get the visa.” (P.E)

“Then the marriage had to be registered in Mongolia; after then the visa arrived in a month. I did not want to do it that quickly as I was doing a master’s degree, but I gave it up. My husband urged me to come as soon as possible… Usually, it takes three months to get a visa… but I got it in a month.” (P.G)

“While waiting, I was a little concerned about failing the paperwork.” (P.J)

“It was the fall of 2000 when I first met him. In May 2001, we got married; in October, I came to Korea.” (P.L)

“My husband left (for Korea) first; after waiting for forty days, I left.” (P.O)
④ Several kinds of wedding ceremonies:

“I had five different wedding ceremonies: once in the Philippines, once in Korea, and three times at the Church.” (P.C)

“The marriage custom of the Unification Church includes several different wedding ceremonies.” (P.E)

“I’ve had it both in Vietnam and in Korea as I also have many relatives here…” (P.J)

“I’ve had it in my home country as well as in Korea.” (P.M)

Pre-Achieved Information on International Marriage

Those participants who had international marriages to Korean men had had various sources of information on Korea and were aided in adjusting to Korean life. First of all, they gained trustworthy or exaggerated information on the situation and married life in Korea from their surroundings. That is, their sources seemed to include relatives who had married Koreans, matchmakers, staff at the matchmaking agencies, and religious leaders. All these varieties were put under the category “Information from Surroundings” as subcategories. Besides, they had gained information from the mass media. For example, Korean TV dramas through the recent Korean wave instilled those fantasies about life in Korea. Not only that, the Internet and newspapers served as passive resources on the Korean situation; these belong to the subcategory “Information from the Mass Media.” Finally, the “Lack of Pre-Achieved Information” category includes participants’ unmet expectations and motives that they will live better and will be able to help their families once they move to Korea. These three subcategories were integrated into the “Pre-Achieved Information on International Marriage” category.

(1) Information from Surroundings

① Families and friends living in Korea with Korean spouses:

“My aunt would tell me stories as she had married a Korean and was living in Korea.” (P.B)
"My friend who set me up with my husband told me a lot of stories." (P.C)

"My cousin got married to a Korean and currently lives in Korea. It was she who shared information on Korea and about my husband." (P.I)

"My sister has been living here after marrying a Korean. She told me a lot about it." (P.J)

"My friends who had lived in Korea told me the standard of living was good in Korea." (P.O)

"I trusted my cousin who had lived in Korea after marrying a Korean." (P.M)

② Misleading information on the candidate husbands and life in Korea from the matchmakers:

"When I was training in the Philippines, they would tell me the good side only. Not a word about disadvantages. Yes, people wouldn’t go if they heard the bad side." (P.E)

"The matchmakers told me I would be rich and would live well just as (the protagonists in) the TV dramas once I went to Korea ..." (P.G)

"(I was told) many times that marriage with a Korean is nice because Koreans are rich, are not violent at home, and I would live in comfort without a need to work..." (P.H)

"They told me that my husband had a job and his earnings were good and thus my life would be much better (in Korea) than in the Philippines. I came to Korea counting on them, but they were wrong." (P.I)

③ Trust in the information from the religious leaders and matchmaking agencies:

"In the beginning, we had lived in a branch of the Unification Church in Chungpa-dong. Couples cannot live together right after (marriage) but have to live there for three months doing courses on culture and language... we (believers of the Unification Church) tend to do so when we first move to a foreign country. Then we might gain some information on Korea." (P.D)

"I counted on the words of the pastor at the Unification Church." (P.E)

"One of my acquaintances had been working for a matchmaking agency, and I trusted her." (P.G)

"I counted on the matchmakers and told them I wanted to meet a Korean." (P.J)

(2) Information from Mass Media

① Fantasies gained from Korean TV dramas:

"I thought I would lead a fancy city life just as the TV dramas depicted. But the reality was different, and I wished to return (to my country)." (P.G)

"Korean TV dramas were so famous in the Philippines that I would watch them every day. I might have thought I would live in a house as nice as the one in the dramas. That’s why I got married, I guess. But that was not real." (P.H)

"Korean TV dramas were aired in Vietnam. I got a nice impression about Koreans." (P.M)
The Internet and newspapers:

“I had learned about Korea by online searching while dating my husband for two years…” (P.N)

“As I went out with my husband, I picked up things about Korea using the Internet and newspapers.” (P.F)

“Because I was a graduate student at that time, I was able to reach information on Korea. I used the Internet.” (P.G)

(3) Lack of Pre-Achieved Information

(1) Vague expectation for a better life:

“My husband did not know about the Philippines; likewise, I did not know about Korea.” (P.D)

“I did not even know where Korea is. In the Philippines, I had vaguely wished to marry a Korean man. I came here expecting I would be better off because the living condition here seemed far better than there. So far it has been OK.” (P.E)

“I had worked at a department store where a large number of Koreans would visit. (Korean) women, in particular, would spend a lot of money… Watching them shopping, I thought that Koreans are rich in general.” (P.H)

“As my company was run by Koreans, I learned a little about Korea. I did not hold any fixed idea on Korea, but thought the country was clean and convenient (for living), which seemed better than China.” (P.L)

“I did not know things would be as hard as this. Thought it would be nice (to live in Korea). It’s tough, indeed.” (P.O)

(2) Unmet expectations about being able to help their family:

“I expected my husband to support my family, but it was just once he sent them money. That was it. I cannot send them (money).” (P.I)

“I thought I would be able to live better and to support my family when I went to Korea.” (P.O)

**Self-Construal**

Positive self-construal seemed to enhance the participants’ adjustment to Korea and prospects for a successful marriage by instilling self-esteem. Some of their self-esteem arose from a high level of education, work experience, family, or home country. Besides, they had the right of decision about their own lives, and this acted as a part of their self-esteem.

Furthermore, some of them not only showed an adventurous spirit and willingness to accept the challenges from the unknown world but had studied the Korean language prior to arrival.
Such subcategories as “Self-Esteem,” and “The Spirit of Adventure” of the participants were categorized in “Self-Construal.”

(1) **Self-Esteem**

① From their high-level education and work experience:

“I majored in law at a prestigious college in China. Then I ran a lucrative language institute as I couldn’t turn into a lawyer right after graduation.” (P.B)

“I was a famous teacher in Vietnam. In addition to earning a lot from teaching, I did many private lessons.” (P.C)

“I majored in computers in the Philippines. So I worked for a good company there.” (P.D)

“With the money I earned in Korea, I purchased a lot of land in Vietnam and a house as well.” (P.K)

“When I came to Korea, I had prepared money for my return ticket in case things went badly in Korea. As I majored in computers in my country, I could have done well there, too.” (P.N)

② From their native home and country:

“Thanks to my parents, my brother and I were able to graduate from prestigious colleges. As many of my friends would drop out of college due to financial shortage, they envied us.” (P.B)

“My sisters are well off in the Philippines. I would have been the same since I had a job because of my study.” (P.D)

“My dad was a cop, and I inherited land from him. I can live with money if I return. I had lived only in the metropolis of Manila.” (P.F)

“You know, Mongolia was once the biggest empire in the world. We (Mongolians) are also very patriotic.” (P.G)

“I didn’t marry for money. My family was well off. On the contrary, my friend came for money.” (P.L)

③ From having the right of independent decision:

“I rarely consult others about my personal matters but do whatever I want.” (P.A)

“I can take care of my own business.” (P.C)

“My parents told me that it was up to my decision. They just wished me a happy marriage.” (P.F)

“It is I who is to make a decision. My parents said they were okay as long as I’m happy.” (P.G)

“I was told, “Go if you want to go but don’t if you don’t. Give more thought about it.” (P.O)

(2) **The Spirit of Adventure**
① Willingness to challenge an unknown world:

“Coming to Korea and earning a lot of money was my dream.” (P.A)

“I wanted to live in a foreign country.” (P.E)

“I was confident (in myself) that I could live anywhere... you know, we Mongolian girls are strong. No matter what difficulties come, we don’t consider them hard.” (P.G)

“When I was in the Philippines, I was told about the people who went abroad and lived well. So I wanted to go abroad, too.” (P.I)

“In the beginning, I came to Korea to make money because I was told that I can be given a larger salary in Korea than in Vietnam.” (P.K)

“As I wanted to come to Korea, I by myself visited the matchmaking agency.” (P.O)

② Learning the Korean language prior to arrival:

“In Vietnam, I hired a private teacher and learned (Korean) on a one-to-one basis.” (P.A)

“While waiting for my visa, I had registered for a Korean language institute and learned the language.” (P.J)

“Before coming, I had gone to a language school that taught me the Korean language for about a year.” (P.K)

“I studied at a Korean-Chinese school. So I grew up using Korean language. I would speak Korean with my parents.” (P.L)

“I learned Korean before meeting my husband.” (P.M)

Cultural Similarity

All of these participants were Asians and seemed to feel a sense of cultural similarity with Korean culture. Immigrant women from China or Vietnam said they were familiar with Korean Confucian culture dealing with a Korean husband and his family as they had already experienced Confucian culture in their home countries. That is, the emphasis on Filial Piety with respect for the elderly, ancestral rites, the extended family system, and collectivism was similar to Confucian cultural legacies in Asian countries such as China and Vietnam. These concepts were put in the first subcategory “Confucian Culture.” Also, these female immigrants were feeling sympathy with their husbands, building common ground through their marriage. Most of all, these women as Asians were feeling similarity and familiarity
with their husbands in the food culture based on rice as well as in the environment where they grew up. These concepts were included in the subcategory “Common Ground.” These two subcategories, “Confucian Cultural Background” and “Common Ground” belong to the upper-category “Cultural Similarity.”

(1) **Confucian Cultural Background**

① Emphasis on Filial Piety and respect for the elderly:

“The Korean-Chinese in China respect the elderly as much as Koreans do.” (P.B)

“In Mongolia, we also have the custom of respecting seniors just as in Korea.” (P.G)

“There are more similarities than differences. Respecting the elderly as well as the male-dominant culture.” (P.K)

“The Korean-Chinese culture is very close to the Korean culture. Some people live with their parents...” (P.L)

“In Vietnam as well, people often go and see the elders.” (P.N)

② Ancestral rites:

“It’s the same with the ones in Vietnam. We have ancestral rites in my country, too.” (P.J)

“Vietnamese also have ancestral rites.” (P.K)

“Having ancestral rites is similar to that situation in Vietnam, but here the mother-in-law pays for everything, and other daughters-in-law prepare the work. It’s fine with me.” (P.N)

“Things are a bit different, but we do have ancestral rites on national holidays.” (P.M)

③ Feeling familiar with the system of extended family:

“In China, there still exists the custom of living with one’s parents-in-law.” (P.B)

“Vietnamese also keep close to the parents-in-law and siblings-in-law. So I was fine with living with them.” (P.C)

“My husband’s brothers visit us only on the event of ancestral rites because they live far away. When I was in the Philippines, I used to keep close contact with my sisters, too. All is good. They are all kind.” (P.D)

“My parents take my living with my parents-in-law for granted, not to mention extended families.” (P.F)

“When I went there (I’s house in her country), it was very similar to my house. Living in the countryside with a large family...” (P.I’s husband)

“My family, that is, my parents, brothers and sisters, all live close to each other, too.” (P.K)
Collectivism:

“While I was pregnant, I used to go to the Korean language school, and the old ladies there would bring me vegetables like cucumber and lettuce. They told me that they did so because we were neighbors. We do the same in my country…” (P.A)

“Chinese also emphasize collectivism. I call all of my relatives on national holidays. My mother-in-law and I have something in common in that sense. I found the Korean custom similar to mine.” (P.B)

“My neighbors give me vegetables freely. We do the same in the country of the Philippines.” (P.E)

“As I’m also from the countryside, I’m used to being acquainted with the villagers.” (P.I)

(2) Common Ground

1 Feeling similarity as Asians:

“There is no huge cultural difference.” (P.F)

“Nothing differs that much. One small thing is that the last son in Vietnam takes care of his parents while it is the oldest son in Korea.” (P.J)

“I can’t tell the difference. We even look similar.” (P.K)

“Patriarchy also exists in Vietnam… in the countryside, women work a lot. Men help sometimes…” (P.N)

2 Rice as a staple food:

“It’s good that we have rice as the staple food.” (P.B)

“The Philippines also have rice with side dishes.” (P.F)

“I’m fine because I have rice.” (P.H)

“(Korean) food was okay because I can have rice…” (P.J)

“There are many similar dishes.” (P.K)

“Because I’m Korean-Chinese, food is similar here.” (P.L)

“It’s similar in Vietnam to bake rice cake on national holidays.” (P.P)

3 Having grown up in similar environments:

“Living conditions seemed similar… I used to live in an apartment, but this mansion is fairly nice and big.” (P.B)

“New Year’s Day and Thanksgiving Day are the biggest festive days in Vietnam as well. Vietnamese are also busy preparing for these events just as here.” (P.C)

“I’ve been there and found things quite similar to the Korean countryside, maybe because it was a rural area.” (P.I’s husband)
“I’ve come from the north region, and we have the four seasons likewise, as in Korea: spring, summer, fall, and winter. One thing is that it seems a bit colder here (Korea).” (P.N)

“Vietnamese festive days are the same as Korean ones. They are New Year’s Day and Thanksgiving Day. We make rice cakes, marinated meat, dumplings, and summer rolls.” (P.O)

Cultural Differences

The participants occasionally experienced differences in lifestyle and in Korean patriarchal culture that were unfamiliar. In lifestyle, frustration arose from the language barrier at the beginning of marriage; stress was also caused by the Korean “hurry hurry” culture, embarrassment from too direct questions concerning personal issues at the workplace or outside, and conflict with the mother-in-law because of trivial matters in daily life such as doing the laundry or taking a shower or cooking. Patriarchy was another factor of strangeness participants experienced in Korea; due to the male-dominance deeply rooted in Korean culture, they had to respect parents-in-law and seniors and be able to use the appropriate names particularly used for the in-laws. Moreover, they had to make the food for ancestral rites several times in a year on the holidays, including New Year’s Day and Thanksgiving Day. In this way, those two subcategories, “Different Lifestyles” and “Korean Patriarchy,” were put into the upper-category “Cultural Differences.”

(1) Different Lifestyles

① Language barrier:

“All of a sudden, I was hearing only Korean. I was frustrated and felt that I was disabled. Because of that, I called (my family in) Vietnam a lot.” (P.C)

“While living with my parents-in-law, I couldn’t speak the language, and we couldn’t communicate. I wanted to be close to them but felt a little distance because of the language barrier. My husband would act as an interpreter as he understood what I said…” (P.D)

“It was very difficult and stressful. I had to learn the language to understand what the neighbors told me and answer them.” (P.E)

“I would talk with the dictionary. I was so frustrated at that time that recalling that moment makes me want to cry.” (P.G)
“When I first came, I spoke not even a word with the family or with my niece and nephew.” (P.H)

“As I’m not fluent with the language, child rearing is also difficult. You know, they have to speak Korean.” (P.K)

“My mother says that she cannot understand anything my wife says because she is not fluent.” (P.K’s husband)

“The Korean language was difficult.” (P.M)

“It was challenging in the beginning because of the language barrier. My husband is learning Vietnamese by himself.” (P.N)

“Before getting married, I thought learning Korean and making Korean friends would not be difficult. In reality, I was frustrated learning Korean because I couldn’t communicate.” (P.O)

“Korean language was difficult. Also, I couldn’t understand Korean systems. You know, watching TV does not help you understand everything. That was hard.” (P.P)

② Korean “hurry hurry” culture:

“Koreans rush in every matter. I found it difficult in the beginning, but it has become convenient to me.” (P.D)

“Koreans are so fretful that I had difficulty. Now I understand them.” (P.E)

“Getting up early every morning to fix breakfast has been tough. Besides, you must be quick doing it.” (P.F)

“My husband urges me to be quick. Things in the Philippines go slow. That makes me troubled. I wish to slow things down.” (P.I)

③ Excessive personal questions:

“Koreans, old ladies in particular, bombarded me with personal questions concerning my age, marital status, and even income without hesitation. I understood they were trying to become intimate with me, but on the contrary, I found it burdensome. It just seemed so strange in my eyes that people enthusiastically asked me about my personal information.” (P.A)

“Koreans ask about one’s age or what he or she does for a living at the first meeting.” (P.G)

“Koreans seem to be full of curiosity. They asked me about this and that even when they first met me.” (P.K)

“When I took a taxi and as soon as the driver noticed that I was an immigrant woman, he would ask me about one thing and another in detail. He must have been curious.” (P.L)

④ Different foods:

“I had difficulty in eating as soon as I arrived here as I was pregnant. In China, people have any food fried. So I alone made fried rice for lunch.” (P.B)

Because food is different, it was difficult for me during the first pregnancy. But I have gotten used to it now. I prefer Korean dishes these days. When I visited China, I missed Kimchee and Korean stew after a few days...” (P.B)
“There is a huge difference. In the beginning, I couldn’t eat hot spicy food. Instead, I would go to the Philippine restaurants.” (P.E)

“People don’t eat mutton in Korea. I missed it.” (P.G)

“There was a time I had difficulty in eating because of the different food. When I wanted to have Filipino dishes, my husband would go to World Market (a grocery that sells imported goods) and buy me the ingredients.” (P.I)

“It’s hard for me to get used to the bean paste pot stew.” (P.K)

“Cooking (Korean dishes) is difficult.” (P.M)

“Chinese restaurants are here. It’s different from the Koreanized Chinese dishes. I have restrained myself as the ingredients are not available here…” (P.L)

⑤ Differences in laundry and bath:

“In Vietnam, people do the laundry with their hands at any time. Here in Korea, I was told to wait till the laundry is piled up and use the washing machine. Besides, I would take a shower every day in Vietnam as the weather is like summer (throughout the year) but people here go to a public bath.” (P.C)

“JJimjil-bang (sauna room) and public bath were strange to me, but now I have gotten used to them.” (P.D)

“In the Philippines, I used to take a shower twice a day, but I can’t do it anymore. There is no shower bath (in the house) as I live in the countryside, and I go to the public bath house every week.” (P.I)

“I sometimes go to a public bath house.” (P.O)

(2) Korean Patriarchy

① Male-dominated culture:

“In the beginning, we just liked each other; however, as we have lived together, there has been a lot of conflict. Most Korean men take it for granted that they don’t take care of house chores.” (P.A)

“In Korea, men are above women and women are below men. That’s what my mother-in-law said. She let my husband eat delicious food while women eat leftovers with cold rice.” (P.C)

“(My husband) never helps. I do all the chores. He is tired. When I also had a job, he helped me doing dishes and laundry... but not any longer. He doesn’t help me unless I work.” (P.E)

“When we have a quarrel, my husband becomes a nagger. He rebukes, “Why didn’t you do this and that?” When he comes home, he tells our children, “Wash your hands and change your clothes.” He goes mad when I don’t seem to take care of them.” (P.H)

“Paying required respect to my husband was difficult for me as women dominate in the Philippines. My husband does not like Filipino culture but wants to be bossy at home. He expects me to be always obedient.” (P.I)

“My husband helps me a lot, but he can’t do it as freely as he would like to because of his parents. For example, doing dishes...” (P.I)

“Korean men seem to be more patriarchal than Chinese men. My husband hardly helps me. He wouldn’t
change his babies’ diapers. It was less than ten times that he bathed them. All of that is my job.” (P.L)

“He didn’t allow me to wear tank-tops in summer. These days, I don’t wear any clothes my husband doesn’t like.” (P.M)

“Korean men are patriarchal. They expect women to follow their orders… When we (families) gather on festive days, it is only women who work.” (P.M)

② Required respect for the in-laws and the elderly:

“I did whatever my mother-in-law asked me to do to please her.” (P.C)

“I’ve lived with and taken care of my parents-in-law, but it has been difficult because we couldn’t communicate well. Despite these difficulties, I tried to be nice to them at heart.” (P.D)

“There is a lot of face-saving in Korea. I can’t wear clothes as freely as I want. Particularly, wearing shorts in front of the elderly in summer…” (P.D)

“I want to be good but don’t know how to treat them.” (P.F)

“I’ve thought it stands to reason that I should pay respect to my parents-in-law.” (P.G)

“Especially here, we first serve the elderly and then we eat. Also we have to wait (for them)… because of the culture. There isn’t such a ritual in my country. When we have a meal, we simply say, “Enjoy.” When we go out, we don’t have to tell others that we are going out. So I questioned whether this was really necessary.” (P.G)

“Whenever I have a meal with the in-laws or with seniors, it is I who clean up. In Vietnam, fathers also do the dishes after a meal. It’s not like that in Korea.” (P.J)

“My mother-in-law loves to cook and to share her dishes with neighbors. As I had to assist her in that, I found it difficult. As a new mother to me, she values her position. She is nice to me; at the same time, she wants to be treated well as a mother. Her feelings get hurt over trivial matters. I do wish to be nice to her, but I can’t fully express what I have in my mind and similarly think like her.” (P.L)

The customs are different. (In Korea) when you get married, you are told to pay a visit to the seniors in your family and bow down respectfully. We don’t have such a custom in Vietnam.” (P.M)

“My mother-in-law has cancer and is going to have surgery. I have to take care of her when she is hospitalized. I must treat her well.” (P.P)

③ Particular names used for the in-laws:

“In the beginning, I called my mother-in-law “ŭmma (mom).” She didn’t like it.” (P.C)

“In Korea, you have to call a person “ŭnni” if she is just one year older than you. Koreans are peculiar about age.” (P.F)

“Those names, “Hyung-nim (the name for one’s older brother’s wife)” and “Dong-suh (the name used among sons/daughters-in-law)... It’s troublesome that my dongsuh (my husband’s younger brother’s wife), who is 37 years old and is older than I am, must call me hyungnim. It’s inconvenient to both of us… My sister-in-law also does not like to call me ŭnni (as I’m younger than she is). She rarely calls me by that name but rather by my actual name. That often causes a dispute between her and my husband.” (P.H)

“Because I live with the in-laws, my husband’s older brother lives with me as well. In the Philippines, I can
call him by his name. In Korea, I should not.” (P.I)

“Sometimes I find those names tricky.” (P.J)

④ Preparation of food and table settings for ancestral rites:

“My mother-in-law told me to do the preparation for the ancestral rites as I am the oldest among her daughters-in-law.” (P.D)

“The wife of my husband’s oldest brother takes care of the ancestral rites. Always doing dishes and making foods… We don’t have ancestral rites in my country. It was hard in the beginning... my older sister-in-law taught me how to do it.” (P.E)

“For the ancestral rites, we make too much food, working until night. It takes too long.” (P.K)

“The food for ancestral rites and the way of bowing are different (from the usual). We usually greet, but on such occasions, we have to wear Hanbok (Korean traditional clothing) and bow down.” (P.P)

A Sense of Isolation and Fear

Some of these participants experienced a feeling of Isolation and Fear as they began a new life in Korea without any acquaintances. They felt isolated while staying at home with no one to talk to. They shared their difficulties that they were frustrated with the unfamiliar environment in a foreign country. There was no one to talk to about their troubles, and they didn’t know where to go when they felt like an outing. These issues were integrated into the subcategory “Isolation.” Moreover, they had gained fantasies about Korea from watching Korean TV dramas, but as they faced the reality, they discovered that they were not able to get a job as well as that their husbands’ financial status was not that good. These factors were put into the subcategory “The Reality Different from Their Expectation.” These two subcategories, “Isolation” and “The Reality Different from Their Expectation” were included in the upper-category “A Sense of Isolation and Fear.”

(1) Isolation

① Frustration:

“There were a lot of difficulties. In particular, I had no one here. Not anyone.” (P.A)
“When I first came here, the hardest thing was that although I used to work in China, I was left alone at home to clean up after having meals or sleeping while my mother-in-law went out for some exercise. After several days or a week, I was so frustrated that I felt that I was in a prison. As I didn’t know my whereabouts, I had to put up with a month in that way.” (P.B)

“I felt that I was a baby who could not do anything by herself. I felt suffocated and frustrated.” (P.C)

“For several months following my arrival in Korea, there had not been much I could do by myself. I was frustrated because I didn’t know where the market was or what to eat. When I went shopping, I was nervous and worried about being ripped off. Taking a bus was difficult because I couldn’t read (Korean).” (P.D)

“I was so frustrated in the beginning that I feel like crying whenever I recall that moment.” (P.G)

“I cry alone. I’ve never talked about my troubles like this before. I feel that I am suffocating.” (P.H)

“My husband did not react to my difficulties even though I told him that I was in trouble; otherwise he told me to be patient. Then I felt frustrated.” (P.I)

② No one to talk to or no place to go:

“I don’t talk about myself to anyone. I have no one to talk to.” (P.A)

“I missed everything in Vietnam, everything about my home in Vietnam…. So I went out, sat on a staircase, and cried alone. I’ve repeated it for about a year.” (P.C)

“My husband often got drunk and went home after midnight. So I went out as well, waiting for him. After wandering here and there, I got lost and came back home after midnight. My family was greatly disturbed about that.” (P.C)

“I was born and raised in urban areas. So I didn’t know where to go in the countryside.” (P.G)

“Even if I shared my story, no one would understand me. If I talked to women in a similar situation, what is good in talking about our difficulties when we still will be in trouble after all? I don’t think they can understand. It is no use talking.” (P.H)

“I want to go out somewhere when I have a dispute with my husband. The problem is, I don’t know where to go. I could have gone to my home if I had lived in the Philippines.” (P.H)

“When I am distressed, I just cry alone at night. I cried alone without bothering my husband. I have nowhere to go when I’m distressed” (P.O)

(2) The Reality Different from Their Expectation

① Husband’s financial status and the living conditions:

“This is not what I had expected, but anyhow, I’m living in the countryside. It’s a farmers’ village. My parents-in-law are farmers. I was disappointed because I’d only lived in the cities. But I decided to remain here because of my very kind husband. It’s a country cottage (where I live now).” (P.G)

“I was shocked. When I first arrived at my husband’s house, it was in the evening, and I didn’t know what the outside was like. It was too dark. When I woke up in the morning on the next day, it was a country house. The only things I could see outside were rice paddies and dry fields. I thought I’d made a wrong choice, but returning home seemed risky because I had no money.” (P.H)
“It is an old shabby house with an outdoor toilet. Before marriage, I anticipated helping my parents, but it has turned out to be impossible. I think that makes me think about divorce.” (P.I)

“I had thought I should send money (to my parents) but I was short of money for doing so. My husband doesn’t seem to reach such a consideration. He does not care about giving allowance to his parents or my parents. Even though he is twelve years older than I am, he is less thoughtful than I am. Only on special occasions does he give money (to his parents). I would have given them much more if we prospered. (I think my husband behaves this way because) we are not prosperous enough at the moment.” (P.L)

“My husband gives his mother all of his income while I don’t have any. It’s a difficult problem.” (P.O)

② Not being able to get a job:

“Because I was a foreigner, my job opportunities were limited.” (P.A)

“Because my baby was too young, I quit my job.” (P.C)

“I usually worked overtime and would come home late. That’s why I don’t work now. My baby is too young…” (P.D)

“When my youngest baby grows enough to go to a day care center…” (P.E)

“My husband does not like me working.” (P.H& P.I)

“My children are so young that I can’t work.” (P.K& P.M)

“I would like to teach Chinese but don’t know where to begin.” (P.L)

Challenges in Married life

As the immigrant women began their married life with Korean husbands, these participants experienced neighbors’ prejudice, difficult familial relationships, husband’s coming home late, and weariness. They faced the stereotype that they had gotten married for money and that they were from developing countries and had financial difficulties. When it came to familial relationships, they had to adopt a culture and life dominated by the mother-in-law and relationships with the siblings of their husbands. Moreover, the immigrant women would be left at home alone because their husbands often had meetings after work and came home late. On weekends, some of their husbands spent time outside enjoying their hobbies while the wives stayed at home alone. Due to various stressors, some of the participants sometimes felt an impulse to divorce, got depressed, and had to work on
weekends. They were burdened down with the responsibilities of child rearing, house chores, and financial difficulties. These experiences of “Biased Views from Surroundings,” “Features of Korean Familial Relationships,” “Husbands’ Coming Home Late,” and “An Exhausting Life” were included in the upper-category “Challenges in Married life.”

(1) **Biased Views from Surroundings**

① Prejudgment that they got married for money:

“I’ve sometimes seen it on the Internet. The TV drama ‘Hwang-guem Sinbu (Golden Bride)’ is a story about immigrant women who married Koreans; people posted malicious comments online. For example, ‘Didn’t you (immigrant women) come here only seeking money?’ Those comments broke my heart.” (P.A)

“Some people say, ‘It must have been difficult to make a living in your country... ’ Such notions made me sad.” (P.O)

② Lack of trust:

“My younger brother recently got married, but my husband didn’t let me attend the wedding. He seemed afraid that I might run away and never return since he thought I didn’t like him.” (P.G)

“My husband does not give his money to me. I don’t like it because he doesn’t seem to trust me. I joked, ‘Don’t you trust me? Why did you marry me then? If you don’t trust me, you’d better live alone.’ Then he said, ‘I’ll let you manage the money later. I have not enough money but too many expenses.’” (P.M)

“(My husband) hasn’t yet registered me to get an ID card. He doesn’t seem to trust me. I think he is afraid that I might run away when he gets me my ID.” (P.O)

“Many husbands of my Vietnamese friends do not give money to their wives. That’s because they think their wives are ignorant or don’t trust them. So I told them, ‘You might have been hurt, but try to discuss with your husband and win his trust.’” (P.P)

③ Disregard:

“I wanted to learn English. As I came from a foreign country, China, (I told my husband that) I wanted to learn something in English, but he didn’t reply. Not even a word.” (P.B)

“Once I had a dispute with a vendor... I wanted to buy a good which was 3000 won for two. He asked 2000 won for one, but I wanted to buy it with 1500 won. Then he said, ‘You are a foreigner and yet you talk too much.’ Because he seemed to ignore me, I said, ‘Why can’t a foreigner talk that much?’ I was very upset even when I arrived home.” (P.C)

“When my first son was in the second grade, his friends would exclude him because of the fact that I am a foreigner. I felt sore about it.” (P.E)

“When I worked for a factory, I was paid less than the Koreans.” (P.E)

“I once worked at a factory, and the people made me work a lot (more than they did) and carry heavy loads
just because I was young. That caused me to have a miscarriage at that time.” (P.H)

“When I went shopping in a department store last time, I paid with a credit card, and later I found out that the cashier had charged 10,000 won more. So my husband went and asked the clerk; then he told him, ‘It might have been my mistake. There was another example; a Korean vendor at a market humiliated me saying, ‘Why are you poking about the expensive items while you can’t afford a cheap one?’’” (P.H)

“I feel a bit ignored by my sister-in-law because I’m a foreigner. I feel distressed when it happens. She thinks I might (secretly) send a lot of money to my home family if I live apart from them.” (P.J)

“When I went shopping in a department store last time, I paid with a credit card, and later I found out that the cashier had charged 10,000 won more. So my husband went and asked the clerk; then he told him, ‘It might have been my mistake. There was another example; a Korean vendor at a market humiliated me saying, ‘Why are you poking about the expensive items while you can’t afford a cheap one?’’” (P.H)

Some ladies disregarded me saying, ‘Don’t talk to her. She’s a foreigner.’ So I asked her, ‘Why is it bad to talk to a foreigner?’ Then she said I was ugly and not fluent. Another lady told me, ‘My daughter-in-law (who was an immigrant like you) ran away.’ I think some people don’t like me for that reason.” (P.K)

“Some people ignored me even when I said hello. I tried several times, but still there was no answer. They ignored me because I am a foreigner. I’ve experienced that many times. There were three to four people who did that. So I once asked them if they were disregarding me because I was a foreigner.” (P.M)

“In the former days, when I worked for a factory, a colleague was unfriendly and ignored me. I don’t want to think about it.” (P.O)

(2) Features of Korean Familial Relationships

① Mother-in-law’s dominance:

“My mother-in-law would rebuke me for opening the doors of the fridge when I was looking for something in it. It was not that long, but she worried about the payment of electricity. Besides, I couldn’t have spicy Korean food from the beginning and yet I had to wake up early in the morning to learn cooking from her. Whether I was able to eat them or not, I had to sit by the table and wait. As I was pregnant, I hardly ate (Korean food) and would eat eggs and cucumbers after she went out. Cucumber is my favorite. Others don’t fit my taste. We have the same cucumber in Vietnam. It tastes the same. I put some salt on the cucumber. When she came back, she asked me where those eggs and cucumbers were gone and why they disappeared so quickly.” (P.C)

“Living with my mother-in-law was hard. We couldn’t communicate well because of the language barrier. Before she passed away, I lived with her for a year and six months. I didn’t know how to treat her. Getting up early in the morning to fix breakfast was difficult as I didn’t know how to cook...” (P.F)

“It is embarrassing that my mother-in-law treats me with a blunt manner when she has a bad temper. It might be because she is too old and not feeling well. I wonder why she is still mad at me although I’m trying so hard. It’s a bit tricky. She occasionally bursts into anger without any reason, which is inconsistent...” (P.G)

“My husband has lost a lot of properties because he sold the land. That’s why my mother-in-law is mad at him. It’s because of him. My mother-in-law is not kind. She is upset one time and happy the other time...” (P.H)

“My mother-in-law would yell at me to wake up early. I was too tired to wake up because I couldn’t sleep well at night taking care of my children.” (P.I)

“In Vietnam, my mother would do everything including cooking for me, but after marriage, I had to take care of my mother-in-law and cook for her. I wasn’t happy about that.” (P.J)

“It’s strange; why should Koreans lift their mothers-in-law as superior? It was weird in the beginning that I had to fear her and be subordinate to her. I thought my husband was a mama’s boy. In Vietnam, a man should follow his wife instead of his mother after getting married. In Korea, the relationship between a mother and her son seemed so strong that I asked a few Vietnamese friends about it. ‘I don’t know why my husband
depends on his mother.” They told me, “Most Koreans do! They are dominated by their mothers!” (P.M)

“In Vietnam, a father-in-law is more important than a mother-in-law; but here, it seems mothers are much stronger.” (P.N)

“I like my mother-in-law, but she scares me. She made me labor every day and rebuked me for making mistakes. With swearwords, she threatened me to get out and go away. Ever since I came here, she hasn’t been kind to me but only yelled at me when I failed to do something... When it had only been two weeks after my baby’s birth, she shouted that I didn’t make breakfast... Besides, she urged me to get up earlier to make breakfast for my children while I was already doing that at six in the morning... Although I do this, they don’t eat it...what shall I do? Moreover, she doesn’t like me because I don’t talk much... Even though I want to speak, I can’t, as she abruptly loses her temper and scares me...” (P.O)

② Relationships with the in-laws:

“As I listened to the stories of those women at the centers for multicultural families, I discovered that some mothers-in-law or sisters-in-law are nice, of course, but some aren’t.” (P.A)

“Because my sister-in-law once lived in China, she understands me a lot.” (P.B)

“My husband’s brothers and their wives understood me well and taught me a lot about things that I hadn’t known...” (P.C)

“My husband’s siblings live far away and visit here only on the events of ancestral rites. All of them are nice and kind.” (P.D)

“The members of the family are okay except my sister-in-law, who disregards me. I think it’s because I am younger than she is and a foreigner.” (P.H)

“I live with my husband’s older brother, who is reserved and still single. He said he was not interested in marriage.” (P.I)

“Those wives of my husband’s older brothers, who are living with us, are mean, but other siblings who occasionally visit us are fine.” (P.J)

“My sisters-in-law, or the wives of my husband’s older brothers, show great affection to my children as their children are all grown up. They bring lots of gifts and pocket money for my children.” (P.K)

“My sister-in-law once questioned me like this: ‘My mother is a nice person. Why don’t you talk to her?’” (P.O)

(3) Husbands’ Coming Home Late

① The result of frequent meetings and Korean business drinking culture on wives:

“My husband had a lot of meetings. Very often, he comes home around 2 or 3 a.m. I feel lonely since he is the only reason I came here. I wonder why I got married if I am to stay at home all alone.” (P.A)

“When his friends call him, he goes out no matter what. I want him to change that habit. He has too many friends. He drinks too much; maybe it’s because he earns a lot. He once came home at 3 a.m. even when we were newly married. I wasn’t sure whether he was drinking or doing something else. So one day, I waited for him on the road and fell asleep. It was at 2 a.m. The family was greatly disturbed (because of me). I told them I slept on the road. It was a cold day, and I was pregnant at that time... Korean men spend too much time outside of the home. I couldn’t understand why.” (P.C)
“I couldn’t understand. He would just go out when his friends called. I questioned why he was leaving again. His answer was that he would come back soon. I found it difficult for me that my husband too often spent time outside of the home with others. Now I understand him.” (P.D)

“Maybe 4 or 5 days a week... He came home around 1 a.m. or 2 a.m. after drinking. He kept sleeping the next day...” (P.E)

“Particularly after drinking, my husband goes wild. I hate that. I’m not against his drinking, but I wish he drank neither too much nor too often.” (P.I)

“I feel sorry about my husband as he came home late because of overwork.” (P.P)

② Home alone on weekends:

“I, sometimes, spend weekends alone with my baby. My husband goes out every Sunday to play baseball because he loves it. (He does so) from early in the morning till late at night..... So I stay with my baby...” (P.A)

“When he got a day off, he would go out for drinks with his friend in the morning and came home late at night... while I had to work at home.” (P.O)

“There is so much work for him that he often works overtime on weekends.” (P.P)

(4) An Exhausting Life

① Feeling an impulse to seek a divorce:

“As my husband favors baseball (more than family) and doesn’t spend enough time with family, I urged him to divorce if he will continue doing that. He got mad at me. After then, I couldn’t talk about it anymore...” (P.A)

“I’ve thought about getting a divorce, but my husband disagreed. I’ve been patient.” (P.E)

“My husband has a fixation about cleanliness; that makes me not want to live with him for the rest of my life. I can’t deal with him. The problem is that we have children. It’s complicated.” (P.H)

“I want to live in the Philippines. It’s not what I had expected. Sometimes I think about divorce.” (P.I)

“I feel like going back when I get depressed. Then he says, “Leave the child here and go alone.” (P.O)

② Depression:

“There was no one to take care of me when I delivered my baby. So I went through a depression.” (P.A)

“I was depressed because my mother-in-law troubled me seriously. I cried a lot.” (P.B)

“I was deeply disappointed and cried for about a year. I kept crying even when I was pregnant. The only thing I wished was to go back to the past.” (P.H)

“I feel depressed when my husband drinks and my husband and I are short of money, not to mention the environment.” (P.I)

“I am frightened of my mother-in-law. I can’t even sleep well at night worrying about things I have to do from early morning the next day.” (P.O)
③ Having to work on weekends:

“On weekends, interpretation or translation of the professors’ handouts and documents for the class, yes, I translate and record them. It’s hectic. Every weekend I have to go to Seoul for the task, and there is another job with a company for interpreting. And so, I’m very sorry for my children.” (P.A)

“T work on weekends. I teach children.” (P.B)

④ Child rearing and house chores:

“As I also have a job, I get annoyed when I go home because my husband does not help me. It feels like twenty-four hours is not enough for a day. I work outside, study, take care of my children, and do the chores...” (P.A)

“My first baby began to speak too late, and I was seriously worried. Since my baby didn’t talk until he was twenty-eight months old, I took him to the hospital since I was broken hearted. Up to now, I still think it might have happened because I am a foreigner. On top of that, since I began to send them to the daycare center; I’ve needed help from my husband or my friends with the parents’ note. Korean schools require a lot more preparation for class than schools in Vietnam. On top of that, there are meetings for parents and volunteer work (serving school lunch), which is too frequent. Korean schools demand too much of mothers. That brings about less independence.” (P.C)

“I cannot teach my children. I ask my husband. Mathematics is manageable, but social studies or science is beyond me. Even the elementary school level is difficult for me.” (P.E)

“I didn’t talk much with my children. They are slower in speaking while other children speak well. What are their problems? I guess it is because I’m a foreigner... Sometimes I feel frustrated because I cannot talk to them as fluently and correctly as other Korean mothers. I can’t communicate well.” (P.G)

“In the beginning, I got homesick, but these days, I suffer physical tiredness.” (P.I)

“I go out to the fields to work. It’s terrible because I’m doing what I wouldn’t think of doing in the Philippines... Things here are very busy in summer planting peppers...” (P.I)

“What I’m going to deal with in the near future is the matter of education for my children. Preparing for classes and keeping the parents’ note is quite troublesome for a foreign mother. That makes me most worried.” (P.K)

“My children began speaking Korean too late. Far late...around three to four years old, my first child was able to pick up the language. My second child was even slower than this. Now he is six years old, and he has gotten much better. I was so concerned.” (P.L)

“Many Korean children learn this and that from morning until night. I wonder how they manage such a stress. I’m afraid of adjusting to the Korean educational system. Entering a prestigious school seems too competitive and difficult. (My child) has never got more than 80 on the exam for Korean. I thought this might have been caused by the fact that I hadn’t encouraged my child to study enough. I couldn’t, as I didn’t know what to do. And we moved often... we used to move when we almost settled down.” (P.L)

“Owing to my husband, who goes to work, I have to take care of the two children by myself. It makes me physically exhausted. Particularly when my baby gets sick, it is indeed difficult to take care of the baby alone.” (P.M)

“Doing laundry, cleaning the house, and cooking... All of these are hard work, but still I am the one who has to manage them all... My children don’t help; they neither set the table nor listen to my words when I call them...”
Financial difficulties:

“My current problem is money. Because of the fact that I lost my job…” (P.C)

“You know, when you are jobless, you have to spend within the boundary of what you’ve got. Likewise, I have to be frugal. I’m in a difficult situation that I can’t work now because of the baby.” (P.E)

“My husband used to invest funds in the past and everything was ruined by that… Shouldn’t he be pulling himself together by now? His money was lost and gained again and again… I wish he would stop it. But once he got in, it seems very difficult to get out. He insists on doing that.” (P.H)

“My husband tells me he has no money. So I’d like to have a job and earn my allowance. I want to support my younger brothers and sisters in my home country as well as to buy fancy dresses and cosmetics for me.” (P.I)

“I got a part-time job as he did not give me any allowance. Please don’t tell my mother-in-law the fact that I have a job. She will take away my income.” (P.O)

Support from Family Members

Participants were able to cope with the stress and to adjust to the new environment due to the warm support from their husbands, home families, and in-laws. More than anyone, their husbands seemed to play the most significant role in making their wives feel supported by helping with the chores, understanding and encouraging their wives, giving the rights of financial decisions to her and showing trust of her, and finally, voluntarily sending money to her family in her home country. Another supporting factor for these women was their families back home, who always listened to them, prayed for them, and encouraged them despite the limitation that the only way of communication was through the telephone. Not only that, the Korean in-laws also played an important part in the support: they taught the Korean language, ways to cook Korean dishes that were unfamiliar, useful information for living in Korea; also, they showed affection; sometimes they played counselor; some mothers-in-law took care of these women after delivery of their babies, instead of their birthmothers; finally, some of the in-laws would look after their children when necessary as well as provide foods such as Kimchee. These various kinds of support from husband,
family in the home country, and the in-laws as subcategories were put into the category

“Support from Family Members.”

(1) **Husband’s Support**

① Doing house chores:

“My husband helps me on every weekend cleaning the house and doing dishes. In Korea, however, a man rarely cooks at home, no matter how considerate he might be.” (P.B)

“My husband often cooks at home, cleans the house, and takes me out on weekends for a picnic.” (P.D)

“My husband taught me how to cook. So I cooked as I learned.” (P.F)

“When my husband stays at home on weekends, he helps with cleaning and other chores.” (P.J)

“My husband makes breakfast, does dishes, and sometimes, cleans the house. Also, he goes grocery shopping and takes me out for dinner on weekends.” (P.K)

“My husband is a great help. He looks after the baby, changes diapers, and cooks, sometimes.” (P.M)

“My husband helps me by doing the chores. He takes care of the baby and cleans the room. On weekends, he takes me out for dinner or a trip.” (P.N)

② Understanding and encouragement:

“In the beginning, my husband didn’t understand me sending goods or presents to my family (in China). Now he has changed. When he is told that someone is going to China, he says, ‘Pack this and that at home (to send them to your family).’” (P.B)

“My husband understands me well and has good problem-solving skills. I liked him covering me without a word when I used the phone too much. He allowed me to learn how to use a computer thinking I might be bored staying at home alone. (Thanks to him), I learned to use a Korean word processor. When I was pregnant, he would take me to eat out many times. He treated me to Korean ribs as well as barbecue several times. Although they are not available in Vietnam, they suit my taste.” (P.C)

“I’m one-hundred-percent satisfied with my marriage because of my husband’s love, understanding, and helping me out. These reasons count more than anything else.” (P.D)

“My husband calls me three to five times a day. He loves to talk to me.” (P.F)

“I think my husband is proud of me settling down well and studying in Korea.” (P.G)

“My wife is a quick learner. Besides, she is quick-witted and thoughtful.” (P.K’s husband)

“Since the beginning, my husband and I have been in a good relationship. We talk heart-to-heart and he teaches me things or places I don’t know. My husband is the only man I count on most in Korea.” (P.P)

“My husband calls me three times a day from his office. He is curious about how I’m doing.” (P.P)

③ Entrusting the wife to manage family finances:
“My husband and I manage finances together. Recently, he told me to open a savings account or invest in my own name by myself. I hadn’t thought about that; he suddenly came up with the idea. I was so grateful when he told me that. He said, ‘You earn more than me these days. It’s true that I exceed him in income. But I opened an installment deposit for my son. That’s all.’” (P.B)

“He left the financial management to me from the beginning, but I gave up because I didn’t know much about it. Instead, I was given an allowance. As for now, it has been about five years since I began to manage family finances with his credit card... because I still don’t know well.” (P.D)

“Keeping money, you know. He gives all of his money to me. That makes me thankful and happy.” (P.E)

“My wife is economical in housekeeping and in purchasing goods. So I gave all my money to her. I can trust her. That’s why I told her that supporting her family financially was up to her.” (P.K’s husband)

“My husband wouldn’t give me any money in the past. (As for now,) we trust each other and share the finances. He seems to have trusted me from 2010. I questioned him, ‘Don’t you trust me? Is that why you don’t allow me to manage our finances? It’s hard to make a living as we have a baby now. I’m new here, you know. ‘Now he entrusts everything to me.” (P.M)

“My husband entrusted me with all of his money. I feel good that he trusts me.” (P.P)

4) Providing financial support for the wife’s family and allowing the wife to visit her family:

“Owing to my frequent visits to Vietnam, I have almost gotten over being homesick.” (P.A)

“My husband suggested that I visit my home country once a year from now on. I’m happy.” (P.B)

“I am sending money to my family according to my own decision. My husband agrees with me in that. Sometimes I send a great deal of money, which is three million won. My family didn’t ask me to do so.” (P.C)

“It has been done by my husband. I haven’t told him to support my family. I used to send half of my income to my parents before marriage. He remembered that. No sooner than we got married, he suggested me sending money to my parents. When I asked why, he said, ‘Because you don’t have a job now, I’ll send your mother the money.’ I thought he would do that just once. I was wrong. He has sent money to my parents every month. I thought I’d chosen the right man. You know, such a person is a rarity.” (P.D)

“Once a year, my husband sends me to the Philippines. When I visit my family there, my homesickness is resolved.” (P.D)

“Every month, I send 300,000 won to my family. It is their living expense.” (P.F)

“That’s one way my husband shows a favor. He let me send money to my parents and younger siblings when they were students. So I did as he told me. I didn’t ask him to do so, and yet he insisted on doing so. He kept supporting my younger brothers and sisters as long as they were students. Besides, he sends money on my father’s birthday.” (P.G)

“I’m grateful that my husband financially supports my mother.” (P.H)

“My husband takes care of that matter. He does not send money often, but my parents were able to build a house with it.” (P.J)

“My mother is coming from Vietnam. Soon after that, I’m also going to Vietnam. My husband told me to go to see my dad.” (P.J)
“He sends 200,000 won every month owing to the fact that my parents are old. I’m so thankful.” (P.K)

“Not every month but sometimes. He takes care of it by himself, and I greatly appreciate that.” (P.N)

“My husband bought me a flight ticket last year to visit my family with my baby. I was so happy.” (P.O)

“I have visited my family five times in the last three years. The visits were willingly paid for by my husband because I missed my mother.” (P.P)

“My husband sends money to my parents occasionally or whenever we visit my parents. My mother was so pleased. Sometimes I ask him to do so, but he can take care of it.” (P.P)

(2) Support from the Family in the Home Country

① Listening to their story and praying for them:

“I frequently talk to my dad on the phone.” (P.A)

“I often telephone my aunt because I don’t have a mother. My aunt and father have both lived in Korea, and thus they understand me a lot.” (P.B)

“I made a lot of phone calls when I missed my family. In the beginning, I got a very high phone bill, which was 600,000 won, because I made too many calls, not knowing the cost. My sisters are good listeners.” (P.C)

“I discussed confidential issues with my older sister. When I told her, ‘My sister, I feel lonely,’ she encouraged me to pray more.” (P.D)

“When I feel weariness, I call my sisters; they carefully listen to me.” (P.E)

“Every day, I made a phone call to the Philippines. My husband bought me international telephone cards. I talked to my mother daily.” (P.H)

② Showing affection:

“When I’m tired, I call my sister. She is a real comforter.”

“Twice a week, I telephone by the Internet. My mother always talks to me with love. She is also proud of me.” (P.G)

“I can’t tell everything to my mother because she might be worried. But it’s the best moment when I talk to her.” (P.H)

“My mother told me to come back to the Philippines if I am too tired... but I won’t return.” (P.I)

“My sister comforts me, and my mother is also kind on the phone.” (P.J)

“I feel relieved when I talk to my mother and sisters on the phone.” (P.K)

“My parents also live in Korea. It’s great that we can meet here.” (P.L)

“I often call my parents and an older sister. They encourage me.” (P.P)

(3) Support from the In-Laws
① Teaching Korean:

“I learned a lot from my husband’s older brother. As he is an English teacher, I was able to communicate in English and to learn it from him.” (P.C)

“I learned it with my mother-in-law. Old ladies have not many things to do, you know. My mother-in-law was so bored that we studied together. Besides, as I live with the family of my husband’s older sister, my niece, who was an undergraduate, sometimes came over and taught me.” (P.J)

“One of the relatives who live beside us has taught me.” (P.O)

② Teaching how to cook and providing Kimchee and side dishes:

“I was taught by my father-in-law rather than mother-in-law how to cook Korean cuisine when we lived together.” (P.C)

“I make Korean food like Kimchee with my mother-in-law.” (P.D)

“My mother-in-law occasionally visits us to teach me Korean cooking. Once a month on a Sunday...” (P.E)

“During my pregnancy, I couldn’t eat properly, and my mother-in-law used to give me some boiled meat every day.” (P.H)

“The in-laws, my sisters-in-law taught me the ways of table setting. My mother-in-law sends me various dishes including Kimchee that she made.” (P.K)

“Sometimes my mother-in-law makes side dishes and gives them to me” (P.M)

“When I visit my parents-in-law, my mother-in-law cooks for me.” (P.N)

③ Giving information and affection:

“My mother-in-law actively supported me to learn anything possible from the local community center, or a center for women, saying that I should become involved in social activities to adjust to Korea.” (P.B)

“The first two years of living with my mother-in-law was very difficult, but later on my husband’s older brother and my sisters-in-law spoke for me on my side. The oldest sister-in-law is so nice that she gives my children pocket money and clothes, and treats them like a mother would.” (P.C)

“The oldest sister-in-law was very nice to me. She was like my mother. She was my favorite...” (P.H)

“My husband’s siblings are nice. They are good listeners...” (P.J)

“When I have trouble, I discuss the matters with the wives of my husband’s brothers or my sisters-in-law. My sisters-in-law show much interest in our children’s education and give me diverse information on that issue. I think this is because my children are much younger than theirs.” (P.K)

④ Nursing after delivery of babies:

“My mother-in-law took care of me when I delivered a baby.” (P.B, D, E, G, H, I, J, N)

⑤ Looking after the children:
“Because I don’t live with my mother-in-law, I don’t have much trouble with her. She helps me in a positive manner. If there is an occasion when I visit Vietnam, she comes here and babysits my children…” (P.A)

“My mother-in-law takes care of my children while I work. I’m always grateful to her.” (P.B)

“I like that my mother-in-law babysits my children when she visits us.” (P.M)

Social Support

Participants were supported not only by their families but also by their friends who live in Korea or in the home country. Besides, other immigrant women as well as neighbors were their supporters. Their friends who are in the home country or who had come to Korea before these participants were the people they could frankly talk to and rely upon in hard times. Also, they kept in touch with other immigrant women whom they had met in Korean language classes in the early days. Among these women, they created groups with those who shared common ground and relieved homesickness by regularly meeting together as well as making and eating their native food together. Furthermore, although they were isolated during the first stage of settling down in Korea because of the language barrier, they were able to improve their language skills (in one case, after having a baby) and kept a good relationship with the neighbors, gaining information about becoming a candidate for Korean citizenship. In this way, these participants seemed to be receiving support from friends, a group of other immigrant women, and their neighbors. All these subcategories were integrated into the category “Social Support”.

(1) Support from Friends

① A person to speak frankly:

“One of my best friends lives in Gunsan. She married a Korean, too. Besides, I chat online with my friends in the Philippines.” (P.F)

“I have a friend whom I talk to in times of trouble. She is Korean-Chinese like me. She came here one year later than I did. We knew each other even before coming here. We telephone each other.” (P.L)

“There is a ünni (older sister) who also came from Cambodia. She understands me best.” (P.O)
A person to rely on in hard times:

“I know a Korean unni (older sister) at my graduate school. I have talked to her many times. She truly understands me. She is the best person to whom I can speak frankly about my concerns.” (P.B)

“My Korean teacher has been a great help. I call her “mother” since she is like my mother. She is old and in the same age range as my mother. I still call her when I have difficulties.” (P.G)

“The wives of my husband’s friends, they are all Korean and help me a lot. When my baby got sick, they took us to the hospital. Two of them are really nice.” (P.M)

“When I have trouble, I go visit my best Cambodian friend.” (P.O)

(2) Support from the Group of Immigrant Women

① Groups at Korean language class:

“We created a circle among those students of the Korean language classes at the local community center.” (P.C)

“After the language class at the community center, we go out for a meal. We talk to each other while eating together.” (P.H)

② Establishing common ground and sharing information:

“We talk together and exchange information.” (P.C)

“When I go to the church, I meet other immigrant women who have lived here for fifteen to sixteen years. When I tell them I have such and such difficulties, they will say, ‘It’s okay. It will be fine after some time.’” (P.D)

“We meet once a week and speak in Tagalog. Husbands and families are the main topic.” (P.F)

“We pick up useful information, learn from each other about things we don’t know, ways to overcome difficulties, and issues related to child education. When it comes to child rearing, in particular, I find it very helpful and satisfying to meet people.” (P.G)

“I go out to talk to my Filipino friends. I feel way better after meeting them.” (P.I)

“We get together and share information on child rearing. We ask each other question.” (P.K)

“We share information on the government support for multicultural families as well as know-how on cooking. The famous topics are about child rearing and husbands. What I’m most interested to know is how Korean mothers make side dishes and things like that.” (P.P)

③ Regular meetings and get-togethers for native food:

“There is a variety of foreign immigrant women in my village. Five women from China, Vietnam, Nepal, and the Philippines, including me (Mongolian), used to gather once a week, but we meet once a month these days because I have been too busy. Also there is a gathering of Mongolian women. On top of that, there is a branch in my town, Paju, which is a group of staff from NGOs for multicultural families. When we gather, we talk and eat together.” (P.G)
There are three immigrant women in my village. Once a month, we meet, cook, and eat together.” (P.I)

“When Vietnamese get together, they cook and share the native dishes.” (P.K)

“We sometimes meet and eat together. I feel comfortable with them. It’s good that we meet during the day while the husbands are at work. They are Cambodian and Mongolian.” (P.M)

“When I suddenly feel like Vietnamese food, I gather them and we cook together. We frequently call each other to speak in Vietnamese...” (P.N)

(3) Support from Neighbors

① Kind attitudes:

“They were kind to me because I looked like a Korean.” (P.D)

“One Korean lady who lives on the lower floor... her baby and mine are the same age. She told me nice things like this, ‘It’s all right. Koreans are the same. Don’t take it seriously.’ (P.E)

“I can talk to the wives of my husband’s friends or other women around me.” (P.G)

“Koreans don’t disregard me but are kind.” (P.I)

“I think they don’t ignore me if I speak the language. I couldn’t speak Korean in China but have improved it since I came here.” (P.L)

They say, “You are good in Korean! Where are you from?” Most of them are kind.” (P.M)

“In the beginning, I was ignored because I didn’t speak well, but not any longer. Nowadays Koreans are kind to me. As they notice me being a foreigner, they become nicer.” (P.O)

② Accepting them as Korean:

“It’s good that most people at my school are kind without prejudice. We Korean-Chinese have no difference from Koreans as there is no language barrier.” (P.B)

“Because I’m involved with various volunteer jobs serving Koreans for Korean society, I feel like a Korean.” (P.D)

“When I say hello to my neighbors, they praise me for speaking good Korean and going to school in spite of having three children.” (P.G)

“It’s great that I can communicate with my neighbors. I think I look like a Korean. I chat with Korean mothers at the playground.” (P.M)

Governmental Support

The Korean government has been offering various services and programs for the settlement of immigrant women and multicultural families since 2000. Thanks to this service, these participants were able to take Korean language classes or to have one-to-one Korean
tutoring. In addition, the government is running after-school classes and one-to-one mentoring programs for the children from multicultural families to learn Korean.

Furthermore, there is child-rearing support from the government: financial aid is given on the event of the birth of a baby as well as for childcare charges; not only that, a caregiver is dispatched for two weeks for postpartum care of a mother. Moreover, participants have taken part in the various programs offered by social welfare centers for multicultural families. Those who have wanted to pursue their postgraduate study in Korea have majored in, or completed, a program in social welfare studies for multicultural families that was newly established by the government as a part of the multicultural social work. Immigrant women majoring in this study may be given a governmental scholarship. Moreover, TV programs targeting multicultural families and immigrant women are another part of the governmental support for the adjustment of these women to Korea. While these TV programs bring about a positive understanding of multicultural families, some of these women have argued that these programs are just for show. These subcategories mentioned above, “Free-of-Charge Language Classes,” “Financial Aid for Child Rearing,” “Social Welfare Centers for Multicultural Families,” “Establishing a Department of Multicultural Social Welfare at Schools,” and “TV Programs about Multicultural Families,” were put together in the upper-category of “Governmental Support.”

(1) Free-of-Charge Language Classes

① Korean language classes:

“I’ve been taking a Korean class at a center for multicultural families twice a week since 2009.” (PG)

“The Korean class was very interesting because I was able to learn not only Korean but also Korean cuisine, culture, history, and how to use a computer.” (P.H)

“For Korean, I went to a welfare center. I was pregnant then... so I went irregularly...” (P.H)
“I learned it at a welfare center for about a year.” (P.I)

“I learned it at a welfare center and a center for multicultural families. For about two years.” (P.M)

“I took a language course at a center for multicultural families for several months.” (P.O)

② Private tutoring and immigrant woman and her children:

“A tutor visited to teach my kid Korean without any charge. It was from the government…” (P.A)

“In the beginning, I learned it through one-to-one private tutors for five months.” (P.D)

“I’m learning Korean. The tutor visits my place twice a week.” (P.F)

“My tutor visited me twice a week for five to six months. It was quite helpful.” (P.H)

“The tutor came twice every week for five months. It was helpful. She would babysit…” (P.I)

“The tutor came to my home to teach Korean. It has been a month. It mainly helps my conversation.” (P.J)

“A tutor came to teach me Korean.” (P.K)

“A tutor came to my home for five months. I learned the language a lot as well as cooking.” (P.M)

(2) Financial Aid for Child Rearing

① On the birth of a baby:

“They give financial aid for the third baby. I was told that the subsidy is going to be transferred to our account for a year.” (P.E)

② Child-rearing charges:

“Starting from this year, every parent gets a subsidy for childcare no matter how much their income is. There is nothing like this in China. It’s wonderful.” (P.B)

“I send all my children to the daycare center. The government supports it. It’s a great help for multicultural families.” (P.G)

“The government gives a subsidy for sending my children to a daycare center. We are supported because of the fact that we are a multicultural family.” (P.I)

“A subsidy for childcare, yes, I do get 150,000 won.” (P.J)

“I’m given a subsidy for my children.” (P.K)

“I’ve received a subsidy for (sending my child to) the daycare center.” (P.M)

③ Dispatch of a postpartum caregiver:

“After giving birth to my baby, the government sent me a caregiver; she helped me for two weeks.” (P.K)
“I was given a postpartum caregiver for two weeks. She did all the chores: cooking, doing the laundry, and taking care of my baby.” (P.M)

(3) Social Welfare Centers for Multicultural Families

1. Counseling:

“I’ve never been counseled but did counsel someone. When an interpretation is needed or on some occasions like that…” (P.B)

“The welfare center arranged for me to have a mentor. I call her “mother.”
“I was counseled by my Korean teacher. I was greatly helped out. She even bought baby food for me.” (P.I)

2. Programs for immigrant women:

“In Korea, there are various kinds of support for immigrant women such as free health check-ups and special appointments at the National Police Agency.” (P.A)

“I learned baking there.” (P.B)

“As far as I know, a Korean education center for multicultural families has been running since 2006.” (P.B)

“Programs like field trips, cultural experiences, and things like that… somehow I feel like a cat’s paw of their business. Those programs for multicultural families seem to be set up here and there as a show aiming for the government subsidy.” (P.C)

“I got a health check-up for free.” (P.D)

“I think they have fine social programs like cooking or computer classes. But I can’t go there because they are too far. I want to participate.” (P.L)

“I’m grateful, for they help me in every aspect. I don’t need anything more.” (P.M)

3. Prevention of family violence and divorce:

“The center I work for provides counseling for immigrant women in order to resolve family conflicts. I interpret such counseling at a police station for those women who are abused by their husbands.” (P.A)

“I served as an interpreter for those who were abused or had conflict with their mothers-in-law. There was a professional counselor. One thing I found problematic was that it is difficult to prove a husband’s grounds for a divorce. A policy that supports women’s statements must be developed.” (P.B)

“Working as a volunteer, I have met newly married couples wanting to divorce, have taken part in counseling, and learned about multicultural families in which the wife is having an affair and being disappeared.” (P.C)

(4) Establishing a Department of Multicultural Social Welfare at Schools

1. As a part of the social welfare plans for multicultural families:

“I was motivated to study because of the fact that support and scholarships are available at OO University, which established a department of multicultural social welfare studies as a part of its specialized program for multicultural affairs. As I listen to the professors’ lectures, I can learn better about current issues in Korean
politics and economy. Furthermore, I can meet and make friends in the class, which is good for me.” (P.B)

“I was introduced to a professor from OO Graduate School by my language tutor. The professor suggested that I study. I told him that I was not sure, and then he asked me my husband’s phone number. He talked to my husband. In this way, I got an interview and was accepted to the school.” (P.G)

② Scholarships for immigrant women:

“I didn’t pay my tuition because my major is multicultural social welfare, which is a specialized program for immigrant women.” (P.C)

“I don’t pay any tuition as I’m an immigrant woman. So I’m thankful...” (P.G)

(5) TV Programs about Multicultural Families

① Provoking a positive impression about multicultural families:

“I’ve been on the nine o’clock TV news with the Korean President and some big people promoting childbirth. It was fun and meaningful.” (P.A)

“I think supporting the needy, the people who were not able to visit their home countries, is good. The government seems to be raising interest and awareness of multicultural families because of those programs.” (P.D)

“I’ve appeared on a program from EBS (Korea Educational Broadcasting System). They might have wanted to see my life in Korea.” (P.G)

“They (those TV programs) are moving. By showing various situations, I think they enhance people’s understanding of multicultural families. Besides, they present immigrant women having adjusted to Korea and becoming successful. They are actually successful, yet their difficulties are also illustrated. Those women’s hearts are revealed, and people are impressed watching them... They show several circumstances worse than mine in which people still endure and succeed. Not only immigrant women but also Koreans are moved and challenged by watching the programs. My father-in-law is a passionate viewer of those programs.” (P.G)

“I’d like to participate in such programs. Then I could go to the Philippines for free (as the TV station supports the contributor’s flight tickets).” (P.I)

“Promoting multicultural families.... People come to understand those immigrant women’s home countries.” (P.L)

“(As I watch such TV programs), I come up with an idea that there is a great variety in the people who have come here. I learn that there are so many foreigners out there and that I’m not alone. It motivates me to live life to the full.” (P.N)

“I envy those (immigrant women) on the TV programs because they look happy when they are sent to their home countries. If they could send me to Cambodia, I would like to take part in those programs, too.” (P.O)

“Owing to the fact that those programs share experiences of foreigners like me, they are good, I think. I learn from them.” (P.P)

② Nothing but a show:
“Sometimes I feel that they are just for show.” (P.B)

“When I watch a show about multicultural families, some part of it seems to be fake. For example, a mother-in-law (on a show) seemed to fake it up because mothers-in-law cannot be that kind.” (P.H)

“When people cry (on a TV show), I think they are faking to get sympathy.” (P.K)

“I don’t think they are 100% true. Some of them are just for show. It’s not bad, but from my experience, I can tell that there is something for show.” (P.P)

**Devotion and Consideration**

Participants have actively taken part in their families and their life in Korea with devotion and considerate hearts. They were trying their best to understand their husbands, to adjust to Korean culture and the in-laws, to take care of their children, and to learn the language and cooking. These aspects were integrated into the subcategory “Devotion.” Also, participants said that they were trying not to nag their husbands but to reward them with delicious food, and to endure difficulties. These factors were put into the other subcategory, “Consideration.” These two subcategories were put together in the upper-category, “Devotion and Consideration.”

(1) **Devotion**

① Trying to understand their husbands:

“My wife (K) is the woman of my dreams. She is a kind-hearted woman who understands me well.” (P.K’s husband)

“Korean men in general want women to be obedient.” (P.M)

“My husband is not that good to me, yet I truly love him.” (P.O)

“It’s fine that my husband doesn’t help doing the chores. I understand that he comes home late at night because he works too much without free time. I know that he wants to take me out for dinner; even if he cannot make it, I understand because he works so hard. My husband is sorry about not being able to please me although he wants it.” (P.P)

“I try to have a conversation with my husband as much as possible.” (P.N)

“I pity my husband. He has been divorced once...” (P.O)

② Adjusting to the Korean in-laws:
“I liked my mother-in-law more than my husband at first sight. So I had no objection to living with her.” (P.B) 

“My husband asked me from the beginning if we could live with his mother. I said it was fine. I had thought it stood to reason that we live together; but later I found it difficult.” (P.C) 

“When my husband told me in advance that we were going to live with his mother, I thought it was not a big deal since the people in my home country respect the elders. I thought it was natural to do so.” (P.G) 

“I call my mother-in-law and sometimes make Vietnamese dishes for her, considering her as my birthmother.” (P.N) 

“I frequently visit my parents-in-law and wash the dishes.” (P.P) 

③ Doing their best in child rearing:

“As I have a job, I don’t have much time, but I cook for my children and play with them.” (P.A) 

“My first child began to speak late. I think the reason was me being a foreigner. I want to speak Korean more fluently for the sake of my children.” (P.C) 

“I don’t send my daughter to any institutions (as others do). Neither does she home-school with workbooks. Taking an after-school class is all. If she learns everything, she cannot learn anything from school. I supervise her study. I’ve seen some children sleeping in class.” (P.D) 

“My children are very sweet. They tell me everything that happened at school. I talk to them a lot, likewise.” (P.E) 

“My wife is very kind to our children.” (P.K’s husband) 

“I can take care of my children alone without my husband.” (P.I) 

“I enjoy raising my children, at least.” (P.J) 

“I think the most important thing is to take care of my children.” (P.M) 

“I try to talk to my baby and to amuse her.” (P.N) 

“As my baby grows up, I wonder what Korean mothers cook for their children and how they educate them.” (P.P) 

④ Endeavoring to learn the Korean language and cuisine:

“I took a course to become a Korean assistant teacher. It’s supported by the government, and I completed fifty-one hours. I got a certificate. After then, I took another course for three months. Afterwards, I worked at a department store, and my Korean got even better because of that.” (P.A) 

“My husband enjoys the dishes I cook for him. Conversely, now I like Korean food, and he likes Filipino food. It’s interesting.” (P.D) 

“I’ve tried to cook Korean dishes properly...” (P.E) 

“I endeavored for the language.” (P.E) 

“I learned by myself. With a workbook I bought, I studied it alone.” (P.G)
“I learned Korean watching TV and dramas. Speaking of swearwords, I picked them up from my mother-in-law.” (P.H)

“I learned it from my tutors as well as from the welfare center.” (P.I)

“By talking, studying alone, and purchasing books.” (P.J)

“She’s picked up (how to cook Korean dishes) just by watching my family… and yet she is better than other Koreans. She hasn’t covered traditional dishes but still she cooks very well.” (P.K’s husband)

“I’m not very good at Korean cooking but can copy the taste. I learned it from the in-laws. If I have a question, I ask them. Korean dishes are similar to those of Korean-Chinese.” (P.L)

“While the people here use a lot of foreign-origin words, we Korean-Chinese do not use them. At first, I didn’t understand when people used English words. Later I came to understand the meanings by watching TV.” (P.L)

“I had learned it for two years at the welfare center in Anseoung and a multicultural center in OO College. Besides, a private tutor came to my place for five months. I studied a lot…” (P.M)

“I learned a lot of Korean cooking from my Korean language tutor who used to visit my home. Because I told her cooking is difficult, she taught me how to do it. She visited me twice a week, one day for cooking (and the other day for language).” (P.M)

“I’ve learned either by watching my mother-in-law cooking or by asking her to teach me.” (P.N)

“I’m a good housekeeper. I make delicious Korean dishes.” (P.O)

“I’d like to cook just as Koreans because I like Korean food. I make Kimchee stew and soybean sauce stew at home. I learn cooking from TV.” (P.P)

“A tutor came once, but mainly I learned by myself at home and also by watching TV dramas. For seven years, I learned it alone at home with books. Besides, I talked to the people at the factory and watched television… The most frustrating moment is when I cannot communicate with my husband. Then it grows into a dispute and my husband says, “Okay. I’ll learn Vietnamese.” Likewise, I feel I should learn Korean more.” (P.P)

(2) **Consideration**

① No nagging and endurance:

“If I think in a positive manner and sacrifice more...” (P.A)

“Even though my mother-in-law was severe to me, I didn’t talk to my husband about it. For two years, he didn’t know anything about it. Later on, he stood on my side and defended me after learning about it.” (P.C)

“Whenever I had trouble with my husband or wanted to complain, I used to write a letter to him and put it in his pocket. He said nothing about it. Later on, I discovered a pile of my letters that he had collected.” (P.C)

“When my husband is upset, I don’t get irritated along with him but find out what is going wrong. After leaving him alone for a while, I ask him sometime after then. He does the same to me. In particular, I don’t nag him when he is drunk.” (P.D)

“I tend to endure difficulties... Even when my husband drinks, I don’t bother him. I have to let him go to bed because he becomes too talkative when he gets drunk.” (P.E)
“I’ve endured a lot of trouble with tears.” (P.I)
“I don’t nag him.” (P.L)
“My husband told me that I’m patient even in heart-breaking times.” (P.P)

② Reward their hard-working husbands with delicious food:

“My husband said he particularly likes my cooking. He likes both Korean food and spaghetti.” (P.D)
“I make an effort to have enough conversation with my husband as well as to cook delicious food for him. My husband likes Vietnamese dishes” (P.N)
“I try to make my husband’s favorite foods for him.” (P.J, K, L, M)
“I try to make delicious food for my husband, who works very hard. When he eats the dishes, he praises my cooking.” (P.P)

Positive Attitudes towards Life

Participants were grateful for the in-laws’ support, family members’ understanding, and the gradual change in the attitudes of their husbands. These factors were sub-categorized as “Gratefulness.” Also, they were satisfied with the speed and accuracy of the administration style of Koreans, the clean and cutting-edge hospitals, the civil service system, and convenient roads and transportation in Korea. Besides, they were content with the variety and abundance of foods as well as the work environment, which provides long-term job opportunities. These factors were categorized as “Satisfactory Living Conditions Compared to Their Home Countries.” These two subcategories, “Gratefulness” and “Satisfactory Living Conditions Compared to Their Home Countries,” were integrated into the upper-category, “Positive Attitudes towards Life.”

(1) Gratefulness

① Support from the in-laws:

“My mother-in-law has been the biggest supporter; the next is my husband... and then my sister-in-law. It was helpful that they knew the environment and culture of China. My uncle-in-law who frequently visits China plays the role of father-in-law. When some people come (from China), my uncle-in-law invites them.” (P.B)

“My husband’s brothers and their wives are so kind that they treat me well. When my mother-in-law could not...
understand me, they spoke for me.” (P.C)

“I’m happy for my sister-in-law, who is good to me. She treats me like a younger sister.” (P.H)

“Mostly the wives of my husband’s brothers or my sisters-in-law help me out in hard times.” (P.K)

“I don’t have any difficulty as the in-laws are really nice to me. In the beginning, I didn’t even cook. As we lived near my aunt-in-law, she would come to invite me to a meal. Later on, I went there in advance and learned how to cook, watching them cooking. My mother-in-law made Kimchee for me. She’s a stepmother and is really nice. We lived happily indeed.” (P.L)

“My mother-in-law works at a market even though she has pain in her waist and knees. Sometimes it breaks my heart. As I tell her, “You don’t have to work. I’ll give you some living expenses,” then she replies, “No, don’t bother. The pain gets worse if I don’t work. You spend the money for your food.” She works so hard. I’m very grateful.” (P.M)

② Support from their families:

“As my father is an Oriental medicine doctor, he sends me a lot of health foods and medicines such as mushrooms.” (P.B)

“I was helped by my mother when I asked her how to take care of my baby. She came here recently to babysit my children.” (P.C)

“I talk to my mother in hard times.” (P.H)

“My younger sister also got married to a Korean and lives near here. As we meet often, we help each other.” (P.I)

“I have my older sister here in Korea. She comforts me greatly by talking on the telephone.” (P.J)

“Owing to my parents, who also live in Korea, I am supported by them in many ways.” (P.L)

③ Husband’s behavior change:

“I’m just thankful for my husband’s cleaning the house. It’s better than doing nothing… In the past, he would never dump garbage or wash the dishes. What a change that he cleanses the house.” (P.A)

“He had smoked when we got married but after our children were born, he quit smoking. I’m so glad for that. It’s one of my boasts.” (P.C)

“I’m so happy when my husband willingly helps me.” (P.M)

“I feel comfortable now because my husband has changed. Had he still come home late at night, I would have had conflicts with him and not lived with him…” (P.E)

“He was a heavy smoker before marriage; however, he quit smoking after getting married.” (P.N)

(2) Satisfactory Living Conditions Compared to Their Home Countries

① Quick and accurate administration services:

“I like that the administration here is well-organized and systematized.” (P.E)
“Various facilities and systems are well established.” (P.N)

② Clean hospitals and public offices equipped with cutting-edge technology:

“Hospitals are well equipped, and their cost is reasonable.” (P.B)

“Hospitals and banks are convenient to use. Public office service is quick.” (P.D)

“I like that hospitals and banks are quick in their service. Filipinos are too slow.” (P.E)

“I like the banks and hospitals because their facilities are good and their service is fast.” (P.I)

“When I go to the banks or public offices, I find them well organized and the people kind. I like it.” (P.K)

“Everything here exceeds. Hospital facilities, in particular, are better and the people are kind. Chinese are not kind. When I visited China last time, I went to a hospital there because my brother’s wife gave birth to her baby. The environment was worse and the people were not that kind.” (P.L)

“Things like facilities and hospitals are nice. People are kind. They are nice to foreigners. When I go to a bank, they help me with details. When I go to a supermarket and feel lost, they help me so kindly when I ask for their help.” (P.M)

③ Convenient roads and transportation:

“I like that the air is clean and the water and electricity are good. It’s a convenience.” (P.E)

“I like Korea because living in Korea is safer than in the Philippines.” (P.F)

“Nice environments and more opportunities. Security for children is another reason. In Mongolia, there are many problems in winter because of briquette gas. Driving is also difficult because of the road…” (P.G)

“It’s true that there are so many high-rise apartment buildings and the environment is much cleaner in Korea. Asphalt pavements and cleaning systems are much better.” (P.L)

“Streets and apartment buildings are well set up and clean.” (P.M)

“The road is so nicely paved that buses and cars can run speedily.” (P.O)

“Because of the distinctive four seasons, the scenery is very beautiful. The living environment is more convenient.” (P.P)

④ Abundance of food:

“I love Korean sentiment and laws. People share their food… While volunteering at a soup kitchen, I wished we had such a service in the Philippines. It’s good that we can feed the needy at least a meal. It makes me happy to see them enjoying their meal.” (P.D)

“I like Koreans sharing food if they have something to eat.” (P.E)

“Food is abundant. When I purchase some vegetables, the sellers teach me how to cook them. For example, they taught me how to make soybean sauce stew with mugwort. Besides, they freely give me an addition.” (P.M)

“I can live better and eat better than in Cambodia; that’s what I like.” (P.O)
“I like the material prosperity in Korea. You don’t have to worry about what to eat.” (P.P)

5 Long-term job opportunities:

“I feel Korea offers me more opportunities. My licenses or certificates are acknowledged in Korea. That enables me to continue my job.” (P.B)

“If I work at a factory in the Philippines, in one or two months, the owner asks me to leave as there are too many people who want a job there. After two months, one person is replaced by another one. It doesn’t happen in Korea. One can work for a year; two or four years as much as he or she wants. People can continue working if they want to.” (P.E)

6 Well-developed social welfare services:

“The government is supporting in full measure. I think Korea is the only nation that provides subsidy for the immigrants who are married to Koreans. Although I’m not sure...” (P.A)

“The social welfare plans are far better than those of China. Not to mention the medical insurance system covering the most part. Consideration for foreigners is another merit. China still lacks policies for minorities.” (P.B)

“The state is responsible for the social welfare of the people in need. I think it’s beautiful and wonderful. Within the social welfare system, I figure medical welfare is particularly nice.” (P.D)

“I’m grateful for the Korean government for its subsidy and consideration of the children from multicultural families.” (P.K)

“I’m thankful for being given the subsidy to send my children to a kindergarten. I feel the government is recently trying to be nice to multicultural families; and yet I still have some wishes for them. I hope the multicultural centers can settle the issues of the people in need or the people with troubles.” (P.P)

**Satisfaction at Being a Member of a Family**

Participants seemed to be satisfied about being a member of a family as a wife, a mother, and a daughter-in-law simultaneously. They trusted their husbands and were given credit by them; besides, they were grateful for their husbands’ efforts to learn their native language and culture. These aspects were put into the subcategory “Satisfied to Be a Wife.” As mothers, they were happy to spend time with their children, who looked lovely. This was categorized as “Satisfied to Be a Mother.” Furthermore, some of the participants were living with the parents-in-law or taking care of the sick parents-in-law. Those who did not live with the parents-in-law frequently visited them. These aspects were put into the subcategory
“Trying Their Best as a Daughter-in-Law.” These three subcategories were integrated into the upper-category “Satisfaction at Being a Member of a Family.”

(1) Satisfied to Be a Wife

① Trusting their husbands and being given credit by them:

“My husband takes pride in my studying.” (P.B)

“I’m thankful for her adjusting to the life here, being nice to my parents, and giving birth to a son.” (P.B’s husband)

“I’m grateful that she came to Korea, gave birth to Jinju, our daughter…” (P.D’s husband)

“We always have quality time after his work talking about funny things, drinking a cup of beer, and discussing matters to settle. My husband is grateful for me.” (P.D)

“My husband tells me that he likes me because I understand him and make him feel at ease without nagging.” (P.E)

“I like him because he neither smokes nor drinks. Family is always his first priority. My husband knows my heart and is thankful for that.” (P.J)

“I didn’t complain a word when we had financial difficulty from his moving to a new job. He seemed to be grateful for that. He also thanked me because I take care of our children well…” (P.L)

“My husband told me that I was patient and good at cooking.” (P.O)

② Husbands trying to understand the wife’s native language and culture:

“My husband has studied English for me.” (P.C)

“After meeting me for the first time, my husband learned English and read books on the Filipino culture while waiting for me to come.” (P.D)

“My husband is learning English and Tagalog from me every night.” (P.F)

“As I arrived here in winter, my husband made a lot of efforts to keep the house warm.” (P.I)

“Recently, my husband has learned Vietnamese.” (P.N)

(2) Satisfied to Be a Mother

① Lovely children:

“My baby is so lovely.” (P.C)

“Our children are beautiful. There were conflicts with my husband, but I endured all just because of them. I’ve run away from home several times, but I came back because of them.” (P.E)
“At least, my children are lovely.” (P.H)

“There’s no concern because my babies are so sweet.” (P.J)

“Since my baby was born, I’ve felt like I was the happiest person and my baby was the most beautiful one in the world.” (P.P)

② Spending time with children:

“Having a family is the best thing. I’m most happy being with my baby.” (P.F)

“Whenever I see them, I smile. The funny thing is, the oldest daughter displays her charm dancing and saying, “Mom, how do I look? Am I sexy? Cute? I can’t help laughing when she sings.” (P.H)

“I think I can raise my children without my husband.” (P.I)

“Staying at home playing with my children is never boring. It’s not only because I’m patient enough but also because I like spending time with children.” (P.K)

“I feel the happiest when I babysit.” (P.M)

(3) Trying Your Best as a Daughter-in-Law

① Living with the parents-in-law:

“Living with my mother-in-law, I am rather helped by her as she babysits. My mother-in-law praised me saying that even her own daughter couldn’t have been better than me.” (P.B)

“I wished I had a mother in Korea as well. That thought motivated me to positively consider living with her.” (P.C)

“Before my father-in-law passed away, we lived with him.” (P.D)

“I thought it was not a big deal to live with my parents-in-law.” (P.G)

“I thought living with my mother-in-law was fine.” (P.F)

“We all live together including my parents-in-law and my husband’s brother.” (P.I)

“As soon as I came here, I lived with my mother-in-law. I thought it was an obligation.” (P.O)

② Taking care of the sick parents-in-law:

“I lived with my mother-in-law for six years. As she was sick, I had to take care of her until she passed away.” (P.C)

“I had to support my father-in-law since he was sick.” (P.D)

“My father-in-law had originally lived with my husband’s brother’s family. However, the wife of my husband’s brother hated her father-in-law, and thus he had to sleep at a nursing home. So my husband took him to our place last week.” (P.F)

“My mother-in-law has cancer now, and I have to take care of her.” (P.P)
③ Frequent visits to the parents-in-law:

“We often visit my mother-in-law, who has begun to live on her own. She lives near us.” (P.D)

“My mother-in-law lives apart from us, and I visit her from time to time. She is very nice to me.” (P.J)

“Once a week, I go visit my parents-in-law.” (P.L)

“I frequently visit my mother-in-law and cook for her. I also help her with chores.” (P.M, P)

“I’m sorry that my mother-in-law lives alone. She insists on it. Yet we visit her once a week as her place is near. We make foods and share them together.” (P.N)

Social Participation

After settling down, participants as citizens of Korean society took part in self-development and volunteer work. Some of them were being educated at a college or a graduate school, enthusiastic about their hobby or religion, earning incomes through a job. These activities were put into the subcategory “Self-Development.” In addition, these women were involved with various kinds of volunteer work such as interpreting for other immigrant women, teaching English to Korean old ladies or elementary students, and assisting in a soup kitchen at a social welfare center. All these activities were subcategorized into “Volunteer Work.” These two subcategories, “Self-Development” and “Volunteer Work,” were integrated into the upper-category “Social Participation.”

(1) Self-Development

① Undergraduate/graduate study:

“I thought there might be an opportunity to continue my study in Korea and brought my diploma and certificates from China. My mother also encouraged me to keep studying. That’s why I studied and got a degree here.” (P.B)

“Coincidentally, I came to study at a graduate school.” (P.G)

② Having a hobby, a religion and a job:

“After working at a factory or a restaurant, I took a Korean language course and got a job at a department
store. You know, that job requires a lot of conversation. I think the job improved my Korean. Then I was introduced to work here at a multicultural center.” (P.A)

“I’ve worked as a Chinese language instructor since I came here. I teach junior and junior high students at an institute, or at a high school. I also lead courses for the HSK certificate or for seniors…” (P.B)

“My aunt-in-law introduced me to work at a pharmaceutical company. I liked the job.” (P.C)

“As I go to the church and participate in the weekly meetings, I get along with regular Koreans.” (P.C)

“When I go to the Unification Church, I meet many other Filipinas and others from different countries. I enjoy it.” (P.D)

“I’ve recently attended the Seventh Day Adventist Church and have been learning how to plant a dwarf tree in a pot with coals. It’s great that I can decorate my house with these pots, which are used as an air cleaner as well.” (P.E)

Before having the youngest baby, I worked at several places such as a factory, a company, and a restaurant…” (P.E)

“I work in the public schools as a member of the multicultural staff. I completed a training course at Korea Arts and Culture Educational Service to raise awareness about multicultural issues. Now I’m involved in teaching. It’s fun and instills in me self-confidence. What’s more, I have an income that is not small. I am paid forty thousand won per hour. I feel I am acknowledged in Korea, and that gives me confidence and satisfaction. I can dream about the future now. I wouldn’t have been able to do this if I had remained in Mongolia. The more I am recognized, the more motivated I am…” (P.G)

“I go to church with my children. Attending the church is good.” (P.G)

(2) Volunteer Work

① Volunteer interpreters and language teachers:

“It’s nice that I can help those women from my home country by working at the Immigration Office. I feel rewarded when people thank me and show their interest in me. There is a program called “Happy Start,” which includes a cultural orientation for foreigners. When they apply for their registration ID, they participate in this program. I serve as an interpreter in that. There are representatives from each country. I like volunteering. It’s fun. Meeting people from various countries… and speaking Korean is important. The people are good. My job is to help foreigners get their registration ID and to interpret in seminars.” (P.D)

“I teach English to the elderly at Anseong social welfare center. I can not only talk with them in English but also learn Korean from them.” (P.D)

“I volunteer at a police station as an interpreter.” (P.H)

② Supporting other immigrant women:

“The people at the Immigration Office often call me when problems in multicultural families are reported… All the officials there have my number.” (P.D)

“The Immigration Office once recruited mentors. (I was selected) and I am now one of the mentors for the new Mongolian immigrant women. Meetings new immigrant woman remind me of my early days and encourages me even more to help them.” (P.G)
“I was jobless, and the first job I found was volunteering. The longer I serve, the more confident I feel that I can volunteer longer and be of help.” (P.H)

③ Volunteer at social welfare centers:

“I think Korean sentiment and laws are superb. People share their food, and the state looks after the needy. That’s truly beautiful. Watching these advantages, I wish we had such a service in the Philippines. It’s good that we can feed the needy at least a meal. It makes me happy to see them enjoying their meal.” (P.D)

**Future Plans**

Participants had plans for the future just as other ordinary people. If possible, they wanted to have an opportunity of education or vocational training. Also, they wished to have a job or open their own store when their children had grown up. These wishes were put into the subcategory, “Planning for Work.” Besides, they hoped to move to a better environment. This subcategory includes a desire to move to a larger apartment building, to move out from the in-laws and lead an independent life, to purchase a house in a city, and to save money for the future. Moreover, those who were doing their master’s degree showed an interest in studying abroad and wanted to improve their English in preparation for that. These were categorized in the “Interest in Studying Abroad” category. Furthermore, some of the participants were planning for their children to study abroad. This subcategory, “Plans for Their Children to Study Abroad,” includes short-term language learning programs, wishes for their children to learn their mother’s native tongue, and plans that they go to their mother’s home country for college level education. On top of all these, some of them had plans for immigration. Some had already purchased land in their home countries, and some were preparing for a future business in the home country by taking Korean cooking classes. These subcategories mentioned above such as “Planning for Work,” “Dreams of Moving to a Better Environment,” “Interest in Studying Abroad, “Planning for Their Children to Study Abroad,” and “Planning Immigration” were integrated into the upper-category of “Future
Plans.”

(1) Planning for Work

① Seeking educational opportunities or vocational training:

“The reason I am majoring in Korean language at Hankuk University of Foreign Studies is to become a Korean teacher after graduation. I also applied for a special appointment at the Police Agency and passed the first screening, but I failed the second one because I didn’t have a license. I’m going to try it again next year.” (P.A)

“I’d like to work at a supermarket.” (P.F)

“I hope to continue my study more professionally and get a Ph.D.” (P.G)

“I’d like to get a driver’s license now. Besides, I want to learn hair dressing skills because my sister-in-law, who runs a hair salon, suggested that I become her partner.” (P.H)

“I want to study and go to college. I need a helping hand.” (P.I)

“We cannot afford it financially... also because of the children.” (P.I’s husband)

“If it is possible, I’d like to learn how to use a computer.” (P.K)

“I’m going to study Korean harder so that I can learn piano when my baby grows up enough. I have wanted to do so, but I haven’t had an opportunity.” (P.M)

“I’d like to learn various kinds of cooking, particularly baking. I’ve worked at a bakery in Vietnam when I was a college student. That’s how I got interested in baking. Also, I want to learn how to make Korean side dishes.” (P.N)

“My hobby is painting. I’m gifted in it. I’d like to learn it in a professional way.” (P.P)

② Desiring to have a professional occupation or to own a store:

“I want to study more about counseling so that I can get a position that allows me counsel immigrant women as well as their families. I want to become a professional counselor.” (P.B)

“I’d like to work for a company, but I can’t do that now because of my baby. I’m going to send her to my sister in the Philippines next year and then have a job.” (P.D)

“I want to do things like counseling or working at an institute for immigrant women.” (P.G)

“I want to study and get a job in the field of IT.” (P.H)

“I’d like to have a nice job after studying.” (P.I)

“When my children grow up a little bit more, I’d like to open a beauty salon or anything like that.” (P.J)

“After digging into the Korean language, I want to get a job. I’d like to produce Vietnamese rice wrap from my own factory. A factory for Vietnamese rice wrap.” (P.K)

“I’d like to become a Chinese teacher, but I don’t know where to begin.” (P.L)
“I want to learn more about Korean cuisine and open a restaurant.” (P.N)

“I wish I could work at a factory or a company.” (P.O)

“I’d like to learn painting professionally and work at an art institute. I want to hold an exhibition, too.” (P.P)

③ Wishing to help others by volunteering:

“I’d like to volunteer interpreting from Tagalog to Korean. Because I went through hardships in the beginning, I want to help the newcomers. I’d like to work for the Immigration Office and help those who have troubles with their husbands.” (P.E)

“I think I have to share the educational opportunities I’ve been given. People sometimes positively respond after taking my lectures on multicultural issues. On the other hand, some people ignore me. Such experience motivated me to study more and to become a professional lecturer who can deliver multicultural issues in a better, more interesting way. It’s the only thought in my mind. The fact that other immigrant women are not as satisfied with their lives in Korea as I am bothers me. I’d like to support them.” (P.G)

(2) Dreams of Moving to a Better Environment

① Moving to a larger apartment and purchasing a house in the city:

“Of course I’d like to buy a house, an apartment. I want to live in a bigger house since we have three children. I want to save money.” (P.E)

“I’d like to move to an apartment in an urban town.” (P.I)

“I think our place is crowded. As we have two children, the space has become limited. I’d like to save money to move.” (P.M)

“I’m saving up money (for a house). I envy house owners.” (P.N)

② Living separate from the in-laws:

“I wish I lived with my husband and children only.” (P.I)

“I’d like to move out from my husband’s brother’s house.” (P.J)

“I’d like to live with my husband and children without my mother-in-law. But we are living in her house.” (P.O)

(3) Interest in Studying Abroad

① Desires to study abroad:

“If there is an opportunity, I’d like to study in a Ph.D. program in the US. I’d like to take my child with me and to study there.” (P.B)

“I wish I could do my Ph.D. program in countries like the US or Australia when I finish my master’s degree. My parents studied in Russia.” (P.G)
② Desires to learn English (in preparation for studying abroad):

“To do so, I have to improve my English...” (P.B)

“I’d like to keep learning English.” (P.C)

“I speak good Russian and a little English. If I’m going abroad, I should improve it.” (P.G)

(4) Planning for Their Children to Study Abroad

① Short-term language training courses for learning their mothers native language:

“I’d like to take my children (to Vietnam) during the vacation so that they can learn their mother’s mother tongue.” (P.A)

“I want to send my child to her uncle (in China) to learn the language for two to three years.” (P.B)

“I’m going to take my child to the Philippines after two years from now. I’ll stay with her for the first year, and my sister will take care of her for the rest of the time. She will be educated in English and Tagalog...” (P.C)

“When my baby speaks fluent Korean, around the age of six, I’m willing to take her to the Philippines for her education.” (P.F)

“I’d like to take her to Mongolia and teach her Mongolian.” (P.G)

“I’m going to teach Vietnamese to my children when they grow a little older.” (P.M)

② College education in their mother’s country:

“When my child grows up, I’d like to let her study at a college in China.” (P.B)

“I plan to educate my child in Vietnam when he grows up. I’ll have him learn Vietnamese as well as the knowledge about Vietnam.” (P.O)

(5) Planning Immigration

① Purchasing a plot of land in home countries in advance:

“Before getting married, I had already bought some land and a house in the Philippines. So I plan to move to there with my husband when we become older than sixty.” (P.C)

“I’d like to purchase land in the Philippines in advance as I wish to return in the future...” (P.E)

“Because both of us want to move to the Philippines, we bought a plot of land there. We’re not sure about when but we want to move to the Philippines after saving money and becoming old enough.” (P.F)

“While working in Korea before marriage, I bought a house and land in Vietnam. They are being managed by my parents these days, but they are mine.” (P.K)

② Planning for business in the home country:
“I’d like to run a house-renting business after renovating my house and land that I purchased there.” (P.C)

“I want to spend my old age in the Philippines as a farmer.” (P.F)

“When our children finish their school in Korea, I would like to go to Vietnam with my husband and spend the rest of our life running a Korean restaurant. It was my husband’s idea. Because he learned Japanese cuisine like Shabu-shabu and Sushi in Japan, he wants to go to Vietnam and open his own restaurant.” (P.N)

“I hope I can go to my country with my husband and have a business.” (P.K)

**Category Analysis with a Paradigm**

The Paradigm model, which means to explain generic relationships among categories, describes the following process: (1) correlations lead to a phenomenon, (2) contextual conditions that are related to the phenomenon and control the action/interaction strategies, (3) intervening conditions handling the action/interaction strategies with a broad structural circumstance that belongs to the phenomenon, (4) the action/interaction strategies directed at managing and reacting to the phenomenon, and (5) the consequences.

In this research, fifteen central categories were drawn from an open coding process. Following is the list of the fifteen categories: 1) International Marriage for a New Life, 2) Pre-Achieved Information on International Marriage, 3) Self-Construal, 4) Cultural Similarity, 5) Cultural Differences, 6) A Sense of Isolation and Fear, 7) Challenges in Married life, 8) Support from Family, 9) Social Support, 10) Governmental Support, 11) Devotion and Consideration, 12) Positive Attitudes towards Life, 13) Satisfaction at Being a Member of a Family, 14) Social Participation, 15) Future Plans.

As for the topic of this research, challenges and strengths of immigrant women who married Korean men, it stemmed from the women’s experiences of cultural differences, a sense of isolation and fear, and marital challenges. In addition, the topic focused on those women’s potential abilities and the efforts they made. These women went through difficulties including emotional isolation, disappointment, fatigue in familial relationships
and life due to the lack of accurate information, low self-esteem, and experiencing cultural differences. Although they had faced critical moments overcoming these challenges, most of them showed devoted and considerate attitudes for their family, a positive view on life, and a feeling of satisfaction as a member of a family. Moreover, they were actively participating in social activities and putting in a lot of effort for their future dreams. Such strategies were subjected to the conditions of their family, society, and the government and their support. Consequentially, the interrelationships among those central phenomenon, contextual conditions, intervening conditions, action/interaction strategies, and the consequences are illustrated in figure 1.

![Figure 1: Paradigm Model](image)

**Correlations**

Through in-depth interviews of the participants, this study undertakes systematical analysis of data that are difficult to quantify statistically such as experiences, beliefs and meanings of specific people. As a result of the grounded data analysis, each immigrant
woman’s international marriage aiming for a new life brought about a sense of isolation and fear as well as challenges in her married life. Individual differences were observed depending on the woman’s active or passive attitude toward her marriage.

Central Phenomenon

A phenomenon, which means “what is happening right here,” is a central concept or event controlled by a series of action/interaction strategies of the participants (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). As a result of the grounded data analysis, the central phenomenon that these participants experienced seemed to be “cultural differences,” “a sense of isolation and fear,” and “challenges in married life.”

To examine the properties and dimensions of the central phenomenon, the property in “the experience of cultural differences” was defined as experiencing different lifestyles and Korean patriarchy with the dimensions from strong to weak. Also, the property of “a sense of isolation and fear” paralleled the participants’ feeling of isolation and disappointment at the reality which was a far cry from their expectations. Likewise, its dimension was distinguished from strong to weak. Besides, the dimension of the “challenges in married life” that the participants go through had a degree from strong to weak that is dependent on their surroundings and the people around them (see table 2).

Table 2

Properties and Dimensions of Central Phenomenon

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Property</th>
<th>Dimension</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cultural differences</td>
<td>Degree</td>
<td>Strong/Weak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A sense of isolation and fear</td>
<td>Degree</td>
<td>Strong/Weak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenges in married life</td>
<td>Degree</td>
<td>Strong/Weak</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Contextual Conditions

Contextual conditions, or special conditions provoking any influential situations or problems, manage and control action/interaction strategies in order to react to a specific phenomenon (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). As a consequence of the grounded data analysis, three categories were developed as contextual conditions: first, the amount of pre-achieved information an immigrant woman had gained before her marriage to a Korea man; second, the degree of self-esteem of these women; third, the level of cultural similarity or difference between the immigrant woman’s native country and Korea. These three contextual conditions had an impact on the phenomenon of these participants (see table 3).

Table 3

Properties and Dimensions of Contextual Conditions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Property</th>
<th>Dimension</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-achieved information</td>
<td>Degree</td>
<td>Much/Little</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-esteem</td>
<td>Degree</td>
<td>High/Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural similarity</td>
<td>Degree</td>
<td>Much/Little</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Intervening Conditions

Intervening conditions refer to extensive structural situations that a phenomenon belongs to, and they direct or force the action/interaction strategies applied under the contextual conditions (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). According to the result from the grounded data analysis, the supporting system for these immigrant women, such as supports from family, society, and the government, appeared to intervene in the action/interaction strategies; on the other hand, the intervening conditions responded to the phenomenon through the action/interaction strategies.

To illustrate the properties and dimensions of these intervening conditions, first of all,
the range of “familial support” differed in accordance with the degree of the support from
these women’s husbands, families, and the in-laws. Likewise, “social support” depended on
the support from their friends, groups of other immigrant women, and neighbors. Finally,
“governmental support,” including language classes, child rearing subsidies, multicultural
welfare centers, college departments of multicultural welfare studies, and TV programs
promoting multicultural families, can be measured by each participant’s participation in
these activities; the more they become involved in these supports, the more these women are
being supported, and vice versa (see table 4).

Table 4

Properties and Dimensions of Intervening Conditions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Property</th>
<th>Dimension</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Familial support</td>
<td>Degree</td>
<td>Much/Little</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social support</td>
<td>Degree</td>
<td>Much/Little</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governmental support</td>
<td>Degree</td>
<td>Much/Little</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Action/Interaction Strategies

Action/interaction strategies manage and control a phenomenon in order for the
participant to respond to it as if the central phenomenon existed under the contextual
conditions or other peculiar ones. In other words, they are a set of deliberate behaviors
intended to cope with or deal with a phenomenon (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). In this research,
participants’ strategies for the central phenomenon representing “Cultural Differences,” “A
Sense of Isolation and Fear” and “Challenges in Married life” were analyzed. The
consequences of the analysis on the participants’ strategies for their experiences appeared to
be “Devotion and Consideration” and “Positive Attitudes towards Life.”

On one hand, “Devotion and Consideration” can be measured by the participants’
dedication and consideration for their husbands and children. On the other hand, properties of “Positive Attitudes towards Life” can be examined by these participants’ gratefulness in daily life as well as by their satisfaction at a better living condition than that in their home countries (see table 5).

**Table 5**

*Properties and Dimensions of Action/Interactional Strategies*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Property</th>
<th>Dimension</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Devotion and consideration</td>
<td>Degree</td>
<td>Strong/Weak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive attitudes towards life</td>
<td>Degree</td>
<td>High/ Low</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Consequences*

Consequences are drawn in accordance with the action/interaction strategies taken as a measure to deal with or cope with a phenomenon (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). In this research, these participants’ experiences of “Cultural Differences,” “A Sense of Isolation and Fear” “Challenges in Married life” were turned into consequences such as “Satisfaction at Being a Member of a Family,” “Social Participation,” and “Future Plans” by the means of their action/interaction strategies.

**Stages of the Immigrant Women’s Experience in Marriage**

An analysis of stages refers to the reciprocal action between a structure and its stages, which is a continuous link of action/interaction strategies related to controlling, coping, and reacting to a phenomenon (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). A stage represents the dynamic and instable characteristic of action/interaction; an analysis of stages examines how this action/interaction changes according to time, place, and unexpected interruptions so that the researcher can discover a pattern (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). In this research, participants’
experiences in their marriage with a Korean man were analyzed beginning from the moment
when they realized the phenomenon including cultural differences, a sense of isolation and
fear, and challenges in married life. From this analysis, these four stages were developed:
first, participants felt like being lost in the sea; second, they realized and accepted the reality;
third, they settled down and stabilized; fourth, their life improved and they discovered future
plans (see figure 2).
Figure 2  The Process of Immigrant Woman’s Adjustment Experience
1) First Stage: Feeling of Isolation

As the participants begin a new life in Korea because of an international marriage to a Korean man, they take their first step with a hopeful anticipation that the new life in Korea will be better than the one in the native country. At the same time, participants begin to face the disappointing reality because of their fear, concern, and inaccurate information. Those who come to Korea only because of marriage generally suffer more confusion and conflicts than those who had come earlier for a job and had already adjusted to Korea.

In this first stage, the participants experienced conflicts and confusion caused by cultural differences between the two countries. Among cultural differences, the language barrier was the most common and worst obstacle. Not only that, they had to adjust to the four distinctive seasons and the food; they felt awkward living with Koreans because of their particular living styles. For example, participants felt embarrassed for the Korean “hurry hurry (rushing)” culture and excessive personal questions.

In such circumstances, they went through culture shock and frustration and had emotional difficulties. Also, they experienced loneliness and isolation as they had no one to talk to; neither had they a place to go to take a rest when they had a dispute with their husbands, owing to the fact that they came from foreign lands. Besides, if there was a discrepancy between their expectation and their husband’s actual financial status or living condition, their disappointment became even more intense. They had developed fantasies about life in Korea from watching Korean TV dramas, and they got stressed out because of the drinking culture in Korea. To illustrate, the husband tended to have too many business meetings or get together with his friends at night while the wife stayed at home all day long waiting for her husband; these aspects were so disappointing that wives regretted marrying
their husbands. On top of that, participants wondered why the mothers-in-law were
dominating in Korean families. Some participants were hurt by their mother-in-law’s harsh
treatment.

On the other hand, some participants were empowered by their husband’s love and
concern for them to overcome those difficulties. Some others also made a positive start
supported by the in-laws or their mother-in-law, who had sympathy for these immigrant
women who had married Korean husbands.

2) Second Stage: Realization and Acceptance of the Reality

In the second stage, participants realized the reality, began to learn what they could,
and tried to learn Korean culture with an open-minded attitude in order to settle down to
their married life and Korean culture. That is, along with the individual efforts of the
participants to learn the language and the lifestyle, collective support of their husbands,
families, and the surroundings are critical in this stage. When it comes to language,
participants studied and took courses provided for immigrant women at social welfare
centers or at colleges, or had a private tutor at home supported by the government. From
these tutors, they not only picked up the language but also the answers to their questions
about Korean culture as well as Korean cooking. During this stage, participants wavered
between their own living style and the new adopted one; besides, they had both excitement
and thrills at the new ways of life. To be specific, they learned Korean ways of doing the
chores such as cooking, cleaning the home, and doing laundry from their husbands, parents-
in-law, or others-in-law. Thus, they gradually adjusted to Korean patriarchy, which requires
respect for the elders and the in-laws as well as housekeeping and child rearing as the
woman’s main responsibility although this was not relevant to some of the participants.
Other challenges these participants faced were preparing foods and setting tables for particular national holidays and ancestral rites. In this way, some of them got interested in their attempts to try to settle down in the new environment. Furthermore, they were even more motivated to do so when they were given positive response or appreciation from their husbands or the surroundings.

However, participants would experience another kind of marital challenge during this stage. As they went through pregnancy and delivery of a baby, they missed their native country and the food even more. Some of them developed depression from their pregnancy, delivery, and child rearing in a foreign land; additionally, negative feelings stemmed from the fatigue of doing the household chores. When their husbands did not live up to their expectations, they felt an impulse to return to the home country or to divorce. Moreover, they made an attempt to have an identity as a member of the society, looking for a group or community where they could fit in. However, a lack of language skills as well as an invisible barrier between neighbors hindered them from getting along with others. Sometimes they faced ignorance or prejudice from Koreans who assumed that they had gotten married only for money. For these reasons, their efforts to reach a bigger support system were too weak at this stage, and thus they tended to remain in the domain of the family.

3) Third Stage: Settling Down and Stabilization

In this stage, participants put more focus on harmony and stabilization with the given environment, which resulted from the acceptance of the reality after a great deal of disappointment, conflict, and regret. In doing so, they realized what strategies they should adopt in order to overcome difficulties and become a member of the family and the society; they made choices of strategy suitable for themselves and put more effort into achieving
their goals. To illustrate, they positively admitted the cultural differences between their own culture and Korean culture as well as actively attempting to understand the Korean perspective. Besides, they endured their husbands, who rarely changed their attitudes or views. On the other hand, their children became a meaningful reward for them as their children grew up, and thus the unity of family was strengthened. Moreover, the relationship with the parents-in-law became much more comfortable as they gradually improved their language skills; consequently, their position in the family was enhanced.

On top of that, the scope of these participants’ interest was expanded from the range limited to themselves and their family to a bigger one; not only that, they walked into the larger structure of support aiming for self-development. For this reason, they actively participated in Korean language courses and developed their language skills during this stage. Also, they enhanced their self-esteem by making friends with those immigrant women they met in class and by creating a circle with them to share information and advice. They got along not only with immigrant women, but also with more Koreans. However, they still confronted prejudice and negative attitudes against foreigners and married immigrant women. Embracing such a hopeless reality, they strengthened their ties with the groups who positively accepted them.

As a result of actively adopting Korean culture, they got used to it and felt stabilization, which conferred on them happiness in their married lives. In addition, confidence as a Korean citizen gained by the completion of the naturalization process that they had been waiting for was another typical event in this stage. Above all, they appreciated a better social environment, such as fast administrative services, clean and cutting-edge medical and public services, convenient transportation with wonderful pavements,
communication, an abundant supply of food, long-term job opportunities, and well-developed social welfare systems. On the other hand, they maintained pride in their native culture, creating harmony (with Korean culture). For example, they taught (or plan to teach) their mother tongue to their children when they became fluent in Korean. Furthermore, they continued to maintain their native culture and cooking through gatherings with other immigrant women.

4) Forth Stage: Improved Life with Future Plans

In the last fruitful phase, these immigrant women secured their position in their family, discovered their identity as a member of a multicultural family, and deeply rooted themselves into Korean society. As a result, they felt rewarded and satisfied with their achievements of goals and fulfillments. As a member of a family, the credit given by husband as well as their children gave them not only satisfaction but also a significant link that connected them with the society. Moreover, the unity with the mothers-in-law of immigrant women became stronger as the elder women admitted and appreciated the efforts and sincerity of their daughters-in-law. Furthermore, such confidence enabled them to set up goals for self-realization as a member of the society and to endeavor towards these goals. Social participation that they had wished for was more possible as they were able to speak the language more fluently. According to their personal character or efforts, a career path would become more visible; those who had desired high-level education in Korea were given opportunities to go to a college or graduate school; some others were able to enjoy financial satisfaction and the resulting pride of having a job. Hobbies and religion also played an important role in allowing these women necessary skills or deeper involvement in the society. Their hardships in the past became a motivation for volunteer activities. Some
still interpret for other immigrant women in trouble; some good English speakers teach English; and some serve at local soup kitchens.

After settling down, participants would picture their future with a specific plan and prepare to realize it. Those who could not prepare for the future because of their too-young babies wished that they could have educational opportunities or vocational training so that they could have a profession or own a business. Moreover, they hoped to save money to move to a city or a bigger house. Those who obtained a master’s degree were planning to study abroad with their children as well as to send their children to the home country for their education. Some participants had already purchased a plot of land in their native country, planning to return with their husband in the future and launch a business there. On the contrary, some participants were considering divorce or leaving Korea because of an unsatisfactory environment or family relationships, even though they had spent quite a lot of time in Korea. It seemed necessary for these participants that their families, society, and the government provide more support. Yet they showed a great deal of interest in their children’s education and in self-development by means of learning skills or earning a degree. Instead of being housewives passively staying at home, they wanted to be persons with financial capabilities.

These adjustment stages of immigrant women are consistent with Choi’s (2009) analysis, which has showed that migrant women mainly follow four consecutive steps during their adjustment process in Korea. In the first stage, the “desire and frustration stage,” these women decide to live with men from developed countries. After coming to Korea, they may become frustrated and disappointed with their married life in Korea when they experience more difficulties than they had expected and may then enter into the “resolution
stage” (Choi, 2009). In this second stage, they realize that they must be patient and overcome difficulties step by step (Choi, 2009). After this period, they enter into the “transformation stage,” which refers to a period in which they need to develop their strengths and to receive support and encouragement from the people surrounding them and their work environment (Choi, 2009). Finally, in the “growth stage,” as they become active immigrants, while they go through painful experiences, they also develop their self-esteem (Choi, 2009).

The descriptions of each stage show that the coping process involves constant shifting back and forth between conflict and struggle and withdrawal, defense, or avoidance (Lazarus, 1984). At each stage the women may need to develop coping skills that draw upon the women’s potential strengths. The core finding from each stage is consistent with those reported by Moon et al. (2009) and Kim & Eun (2007). Immigrant women’s successful adjustment and marital satisfaction was significantly correlated to their skills and abilities in coping with stress.

**Core Category**

In the selective coding stage, the core category was revealed with other categories that were specified and integrated based on the core category. As a consequence of analysis following the method of selective coding, the relationship among those categories became evident, and the properties and dimensions of those categories were integrated. In this way, the core category was generated from the experiences of these immigrant women as follows: “Settling herself down as a member of a family and the society and discovering her strengths that can help her in the wilderness of the sea.”

The Core Category: “Settling themselves down as members of their families and society and discovering their advantages that can help them overcome their isolation and fear.”
A core category stands for the research topic, which tells what this research is about; therefore, it is a connotative abstraction containing the whole content of the topic in a few words. For this reason, a core category should contain an analytical power to embrace other categories so that it can generate one integral description as well as an explanation of the changes among those categories (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

With various motives, these participants began a new life in Korea by choosing to marry Korean men. Some of them were introduced to Korean men by neighbors while working in Korea; others went through the unfamiliar process of marriage with the purpose of financial support for their family or avoiding financial difficulties in their native country. Most of them made a quick decision aided by international matchmaking agencies or by their acquaintances, except those who got married for love. Thus, information for them was limited and inaccurate; even if they gained quality information, the discrepancy between their expectation and the reality could not be avoided. Although they felt a cultural similarity as Asians, differences in lifestyle or the tradition of Korean patriarchy burdened them as a challenge to cope with. Besides, a feeling of isolation and the disappointing reality brought about conflicts and regrets. On the other side, they came to realize their position and possibilities while experiencing a number of troubles and challenges in married life. This context gained from the research made the researcher depict the participants as being lost in a wilderness of the sea.

As time went by, however, these participants adjusted to Korean society and their married life with open-mindedness while learning about the culture and making use of familial, social, and governmental support in order to resolve their problems instead of sighing over their limitations. In this way, their potential strengths were developed and came
to be used to aid their families and Korean society. In other words, these women achieved marital satisfaction and social participation, and specific future plans resulted because of their efforts with dedication, consideration, and positive attitudes. In the whole process, the core category describing the adjustment of those married immigrant women appeared to be “Settling themselves down as members of their families and society and discovering their advantages that can help them overcome their isolation and fear.”

**Hypothetical Standardization & Hypothetical Relational Statement**

1) *Hypothetical Standardization*

Hypothetical standardization refers to the first level of an analysis the purpose of which is to find relational patterns; at this level, hypothetical relational patterns of each category are standardized (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). In this research, the relational patterns of each category’s properties and dimensions, which combine the contextual and intervening conditions revolving around the central category, were standardized. There were two reasons for this: first, contextual conditions are special conditions which direct or control action/interaction as a broad structural context; second, intervening conditions are special conditions that can alleviate or alter the intensity of the central phenomenon and are thus influential to the participants’ advancement to the next stage or their actual problems. For these reasons that contextual and intervening conditions can generate a practical intervening strategy, hypothetical standardization was used. The standardization of the hypothetical relationship between the core category (Settling themselves down as members of their families and society and discovering their advantages that can help them overcome their isolation and fear), contextual conditions (pre-achieved information on international marriage, self-esteem, and cultural similarity), and intervening conditions (familial support,
social support, and governmental support) are depicted in table 6.

**Table 6**

Hypothetical Standardization of “Settling Themselves Down as Members of Their Families and Society and Discovering Their Advantages That Can Help Them Overcome Their Isolation and Fear.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N</th>
<th>Core category</th>
<th>Contextual conditions</th>
<th>Intervening conditions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Pre-achieved Information</td>
<td>Self-esteem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Settling themselves down as a member of a family and the society and discovering their strengths that can help them overcome their isolation and fear (B.K.)</td>
<td>Much</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Settling themselves down as a member of a family and the society and discovering their strengths that can help them overcome their isolation and fear (J.)</td>
<td>Much</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Settling themselves down as a member of a family and the society and discovering their strengths that can help them overcome their isolation and fear (P)</td>
<td>Much</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Settling themselves down as a member of a family and the society and discovering their strengths that can help them overcome their isolation and fear (A.)</td>
<td>Much</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Settling themselves down as a member of a family and the society and discovering their strengths that can help them overcome their isolation and fear (I.)</td>
<td>Much</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Settling themselves down as a member of a family and the society and discovering their strengths that can help them overcome their isolation and fear (C. D. G. M. N.)</td>
<td>Little</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Settling themselves down as a member of a family and the society and discovering their strengths that can help them overcome their isolation and fear (F.)</td>
<td>Little</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Settling themselves down as a member of a family and the society and discovering their strengths that can help them overcome their isolation and fear (E.)</td>
<td>Little</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Settling themselves down as a member of a family and the society and discovering their strengths that can help them overcome their isolation and fear (H.)</td>
<td>Little</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Settling themselves down as a member of a family and the society and discovering their strengths that can help them overcome their isolation and fear (O.)</td>
<td>Little</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2) *Hypothetical Relational Statement*

In this research, the relational statement was created as well with an attempt to analyze the patterns. It is a hypothetical relationship suggested in the form of a statement that relates the core category and action/interaction strategies in accordance with the contextual conditions and intervening conditions, which were revealed in the analytical process or the grounded data. The significant hypothetical statements supported by the participants are written in table 6. Although the patterns of contextual conditions and intervening conditions were similar, the pattern of the participants’ settlement differed depending on their choice of action/interaction strategies. On the grounded of the hypothetical standardization mentioned above, the hypothetical relational statement that
correlated with the participants’ actual experiences was suggested as follows:

1. If an immigrant woman had much pre-achieved information, cultural similarity, familial, social, and governmental support and high self-esteem, the core category “Settling themselves down as members of their families and society and discovering their advantages that can help them overcome their isolation and fear” will be actively sought after with the interactional strategies.

2. If an immigrant woman had much pre-achieved information, cultural similarity, familial, and governmental support and high self-esteem but little social support, the core category “Settling themselves down as members of their families and society and discovering their advantages that can help them overcome their isolation and fear” will adjust to the reality with the interactional strategies.

3. If an immigrant woman had much pre-achieved information, familial, social, and governmental support and high self-esteem but little cultural similarity, the core category “Settling themselves down as members of their families and society and discovering their advantages that can help them overcome their isolation and fear” will be actively sought after with the interactional strategies.

4. If an immigrant woman had much pre-achieved information, self-esteem, familial, social, and governmental support and high self-esteem but little cultural similarity and social support, the core category “Settling themselves down as members of their families and society and discovering their advantages that can help them overcome their isolation and fear” will be actively sought after with the interactional strategies.

5. If an immigrant woman had much pre-achieved information, cultural similarity, and governmental support but low self-esteem, little familial and social support, the core
category “Settling themselves down as members of their families and society and discovering their advantages that can help them overcome their isolation and fear” will adjust to the reality with the interactional strategies.

6 If an immigrant woman had high self-esteem and much familial, social, and governmental support but little pre-achieved information and cultural similarity, the core category “Settling themselves down as members of their families and society and discovering their advantages that can help them overcome their isolation and fear” will be actively sought after with the interactional strategies.

7 If an immigrant woman had high self-esteem and much familial support but little pre-achieved information, cultural similarity, social support and governmental support, the core category “Settling themselves down as members of their families and society and discovering their advantages that can help them overcome their isolation and fear” will adjust to the reality with the interactional strategies.

8 If an immigrant woman had high self-esteem and much social, and governmental support but little pre-achieved information, cultural similarity and familial support, the core category “Settling themselves down as members of their families and society and discovering their advantages that can help them overcome their isolation and fear” will be actively sought after with the interactional strategies.

9 If an immigrant woman had little pre-achieved information, cultural similarity, familial support, social support and governmental support and high self-esteem, the core category “Settling themselves down as members of their families and society and discovering their advantages that can help them overcome their isolation and fear” will be skeptically sustained with the interactional strategies.
If an immigrant woman had little pre-achieved information, cultural similarity, familial support and social support, and low self-esteem but much governmental support, the core category “Settling themselves down as members of their families and society and discovering their advantages that can help them overcome their isolation and fear” will be skeptically sustained with the interactional strategies.

**An Analysis of the Patterns of the Immigrant Women**

A pattern analysis standardizes the relationship repeatedly appearing between each category by constantly comparing the grounded data and the hypothetical standardization as well as the hypothetical relational statement in order to establish a theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). On the ground of the statement that correlated with the participants’ actual experiences, three patterns were noticed: 1) future-oriented success pursuers, 2) pliable adapters, 3) skeptical persons who endure. Which participant fell into which category is suggested in table 7.

**Table 7**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pattern</th>
<th>Future-oriented success pursuers</th>
<th>Pliable adapters</th>
<th>Skeptical persons who endure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

To illustrate the three patterns suggested in table 7, the first group, “future-oriented success pursuers,” considered international marriage as a new possibility and poured out their best efforts for cultural adaptation as well as for developing their potential and their spirit of challenge to the fullest so that they could become sound family members and sound future citizens of Korea. “Pliable adapters” accepted the reality just as it was rather than
attaching a new change because of the difficulties and obstacles in their lives. The “skeptical persons who endure” were very skeptical of the life in Korea either because they lacked information or because the reality was a far cry from their expectation; furthermore, they resigned themselves to their discontentment and troubles with a guilty conscience and decreased motivation. More details on each pattern are described below:

(1) Future-Oriented Success Pursuers

Those participants who fit into this category had enough courage and adventurous spirit to marry a Korean man. Despite the fact that they already had useful information before marriage and their self-esteem was comparatively high, they experienced diverse conflicts as well as culture shock in the new cultural setting of society and family. However, such hardships were turned into a source of energy that helped her to come up with a resolution in order to take advantage of the challenge and make it a turning point. Also, participants of this type were strongly connected to various supportive systems; that is, they were provided necessities from their families, social support including help and care from their friends and neighbors, and governmental support. After overcoming the early stage of being lost in the wilderness of the sea, they not only studied the culture in a dedicated and thoughtful manner but also managed their marriage and social lives with a positive attitude. Most of her appreciated their husband’s consideration and love for her particularly because of their husbands’ financial support for their families in the home country. Besides, accepting the privilege of the improved living conditions in Korea was another reason for their happiness. As a result, they were highly content as members of their families, participated in various social activities, and had a positive outlook for the future (see figure 3).
Figure 3  Future-Oriented Success Pursuers

(2) Pliable Adapters

Those “pliable adapters” were not without any prior information on international marriage but their idea about it was abstract or vague. Despite the pre-achieved information, they held an ambiguous vision that they would be able to support their family and live in a better condition if they moved to Korea. When they realized that the vision was impossible because their husband’s financial status was different from their expectation, they experienced depression or disappointment although they had a high level of self-esteem. Because of the conservative character of their husband and the in-laws, the degree of conflict they had was high. Cultural differences were not so intense, but they lacked the husband’s support compared to other families. Those who were living with parents-in-law had their own problems. They were isolated from the range of social support because their children were too young to allow her to make friends or get along with neighbors. For these reasons, they went through critical moments, only temporarily. However, depression did capture her occasionally. Fortunately, they were receiving governmental support such as a subsidy for child rearing or for language classes. They were trying to accept the surrounding
conditions and to reduce the gap between their expectations and the reality in spite of many difficulties. As a result, they were able to build an identity as a member of a family as well as develop a future plan. Nonetheless, they were not able to speak for themselves because of their conservative husbands or the strong voice of the in-laws. On top of that, the husbands were not supportive enough, and their financial status was not good, which made her less satisfied with the marriage and less confident about anticipating the future; yet, they were trying to move forward with a hope that things would be better somehow (see figure 4).

![Figure 4 Pliable Adapters](image)

(3) Skeptical Persons who Endure

Participants who fit in this category were holding a grudge against the matchmaker who had arranged their marriage because the matchmaker had given her wrong information. From the beginning, they had experienced intense negative feelings because of the great divide between their expectations and the husband’s actual financial status and living condition. What was worse, living with the in-laws and their maltreatment caused a high
level of conflict as well as intense stress. Besides, the degree of culture shock they were going through due to the language barrier, different lifestyles, and customs seemed severe. The self-esteem of these immigrant women was average; the number of supportive agents or their involvement to such a system was little. Also, they found it difficult to comprehend their husband’s character and culture. They did not communicate well with their husbands and were deeply disappointed in the husband for his reliance on his mother despite his age. Furthermore, the husbands neither trusted their wives nor allowed her to manage home finances; consequently, these women had their feelings hurt by such attitudes of their husbands. Nonetheless, they would not share their troubles with their parents, fearing that the parents might be too concerned about her. Owing to the despair of their surroundings, they could not open their hearts freely to others, and thus the link between her and the social support system was very weak. Whenever they had conflicts with their mothers-in-law or husbands, regrets about their choice of international marriage and even a sense of shame followed. For this reason, they were suffering from anxiety and depression and a sense of instability concerning the unpredictable future. Sometimes they felt an impulse to return to the home country, but their children were playing an important role in that they helped the women to settle down in Korea. These women endured their given circumstances and were looking for jobs that they were capable of doing. For example, they were searching for an opportunity to study or to work. In the process, they were trying to overcome their harsh troubles and emotional depression (see figure 5).
Figure 5  Skeptical Persons who Endure

An Analysis of the TV program Love in Asia

For the analysis of an audio-visual material, I selected two episodes (210th episode and 213th episode) and about 21 comments of the TV audience that are reflected in them. To learn how they reflect the women’s challenges and strengths, the researcher analyzed each of three sections such as making a wedding album, multicultural families’ lives in Korea, and visiting the wives’ homeland in two episodes as well as the comments on them.

The First Section: “We are making a wedding album”

In the first section 10 minutes, one couple is usually introduced to the audience in each episode. The 210th episode shows a Korean husband and a Ukrainian wife who dreamed of becoming a ballerina. They have been married for 5 years, but they were not able to have a wedding ceremony. In Ukraine, couples usually perform a dance with their
guests in wedding ceremony. So, the wife still hopes to dance with her husband. In this episode, the husband learned how to dance to please his wife. Finally, the couple gladly enjoyed dancing on the wedding photo day. In this manner, the 213th episode shows another couple, the Korean husband is a Korean man who is a jewelry designer and his Uzbek wife who is pregnant with their second child. They have been married for 4 years, but they were not able to have a wedding ceremony like the couple in the 210th Episode. The wife wanted to show their wedding pictures to her mother. The couple finally had a chance to take wedding pictures and the wife was given the ring that was made by her husband. On that day, she went to a beauty salon to wear wedding gown and to have make up, but she did not want to cut her hair because in Uzbek culture, pregnant women are prohibited from cutting their hair in order to keep an embryo’s health. She was very beautiful and looks very happy in the wedding photos.

Those multicultural couples who want to make a wedding album can apply for this opportunity that LIA provides. Whom this show helps are the applicants who were not able to have a wedding ceremony due to several reasons such as economic status, family situations, and insufficient time for ceremony. This fact may not be explored during the interviews with my participants but LIA shows some vulnerable couples who are not able to make wedding ceremony even though they wanted to do. In this show, the guest couples could get the benefit of taking wedding pictures for free and making a good memory from this opportunity.

The Second Section

In the 210th episode, the researcher found that the husband was rejected several times by Korean women before he met his foreign bride. The couple had been adjusting
well because the bride was actively learning the Korean language and Korean customs such as food, house chores, the way of raising children, and the relationship with in-laws. For example, the wife and her mother-in-law washed her baby’s cloth diapers by hand because her baby is sensitive to paper diapers. In addition, according to the mother-in-law, the wife is good at Korean cooking and has a keen sense of taste. Surprisingly, the wife memorized complicated Kimchee ingredients such as cabbage, pepper powder, ginger, garlic, fish source, pear, onion, onion leaves, salt, sugar, and others. Her mother-in-law was very happy that they had more customers after the wife joined their restaurant business. Therefore, her mother-in-law is planning to hand over her restaurant to her son and his wife and has given the couple a daily allowance in order to encourage them to work hard. Furthermore, one of the advantages for this couple is that the parents-in-law are very supportive and treat their daughter-in-law well. The wife’s father-in-law praised her, saying her Kimchee was better than his wife’s. When the wife faces some difficulties, her in-laws frequently support her. She states that her in-laws helped her cope with her stress. By observing the show, the researcher found that supports from in-law as well as from husband are very significant for the women to adjust in Korea, foreign country. This finding is consistent with the interview data.

The 213th episode also showed the strengths of the couple’s bond; the couple faced a great tragedy when the husband became blind two years ago due to a complication of glaucoma and cataracts. Despite this situation, the wife has been adequately supporting and comforting him to overcome this tragedy. For example, when the husband went to the market to buy something in spite of his blindness, his wife was cooking healthy food for him. Furthermore, she wanted to give one eye to her husband and her gesture made the
husband accept his fate positively. In addition, the family of the wife is not aware of the husband’s blindness: the couple tries to hide this because they do not want the family to worry. This episode had a happy ending. The wife was admitted to the Korean literature program at one of the National Universities this year because studying in a University was the wife’s dream for 10 years. Her husband made a desk for his wife and the wife was very touched. From this show the researcher found that the wife has strengths in seeking for a better life in Korea. This finding is also consistent with finding from the interview data in terms of the women’s attitude.

The Third Section

One of the big advantages of the LIA (spell out LIA) program is that it provides the guests financial supports for visiting the wife’s family in her country. It distinguishes LIA from other similar programs because the LIA helps multicultural family members to understand more (understand more about what?) and to unite (who is uniting?) during and/or after trip. In the 210th episode, during the couple’s visit to Cambodia they and the mother-in-law were enjoying variety of activities such as picnicking, cooking, a dance party, swimming, fishing, and social gathering. After this, the Korean mother-in-law came to understand her daughter-in-law’s culture. It also changed the husband’s perception about the financial difficulties encountered by his wife’s family. The husband renovated the space for them. Because her father was not able to work, her mother had been running a very small store to sell sugar, salt, and oil in the downstairs space of their home. The researcher also found that the wife’s parents have a deep affection toward their son-in-law. As shown in the scene where the wife’s father climbed up to pick coconuts for his son-in-law even though he is blind.
The 213\textsuperscript{th} episode also showed the couple’s first visit to the wife’s family in Vietnam. The wife’s extended family members, including a grandmother, aunts, uncles and nieces, welcomed them. They enjoyed spending time together such as cooking, swimming and having a party. The researcher found similarities between the Vietnamese and Korean cultures. These similarities were shown through their concerns and deep affections between parents and children. These findings are consistent with the interviewees’ descriptions. In the 213\textsuperscript{th} episode, the most touching scene is when the father-in-law eagerly took the husband by the hand and picked grapefruits for him. In every situation, the couple wanted to hide the husband’s blindness, but it wasn’t clear from what was shown in the program on whether the wife’s parents became aware of his blindness or not.

\textit{The Analysis of People’s Comments about Two Episodes}

There were 21 people’s reflections, 12 people’s comments on the 210\textsuperscript{th} episode, and the 9 comments on the 213\textsuperscript{th} episode. These comments show how people perceive the \textit{LIA} program. Among 21 comments, only 3 comments are negatively described. The \textit{LIA} program positively influenced Koreans’ view of multicultural families as a part of the Korean’s ethnic group who are integrated into Korean society. In those supportive comments, most viewers express that LIV encourages them to understand multicultural families and immigrant women better, and this program greatly contributes to building a balanced multicultural Korean society. Furthermore, the majority of Korean viewers hoped that the couples were doing fine in Korea in any situation. On the contrary, even though the number of negative comments are small, they strongly disagree with the concept of multiculturalism shown in the program. One of them argued that there are very few normal couples and thus ignoring the problems of multicultural families because these marriages are
arranged by marriage match agencies. Other voices are concerned that the program overly idealizes multiculturalism. The analysis of the reviewers tells us that most participants from the interview have experienced both positive and negative sides of Koreans’ attitude toward themselves simultaneously.
CHAPTER 5
DISCUSSION

Introduction

This last chapter summarizes prior discussions of the results of this research and presents these married immigrant women’s experiences of adjustment to life in Korea, the related challenges and their strengths, based on the analysis of the original data previously discussed. It elaborates their marriage experiences as well as the hardships and challenges they confronted. As a product of qualitative research, this study has utilized the approach of grounded theory and has defined the core category of the married immigrant women’s adaptation process as follows: “Settling herself down as a member of a family and the society and discovering her strengths.” The women’s adaptation process requires a dynamic comprehension because it has features like complexity, ambiguity, and multiplicity. Therefore, the process is broken up into the following four levels to show how these women discovered their strengths and settled down as members of the society: 1) individual level, 2) family level, 3) social level, and 4) governmental level. Furthermore, in order to improve the negative notion of immigrant women as well as to prove their ways of coping and overcoming difficulties, the study results were applied theoretically, practically, and strategically. In addition, the advantages and limitations of this research are pointed out. Finally, this chapter includes a proposal for future research.

Summary

The purpose of this study has been to analyze the process of married immigrant women’s adjustment to life in their new country and to develop a theory concerning the strengths of those women in overcoming numerous challenges and hardships. According to this purpose, sixteen immigrant women and two of their husbands were interviewed in depth.
The marriage period of all participants ranged from three to twelve years, and they agreed to participate in this research after listening to an explanation about the purpose and method of the study.

Concerning collection of the data, interviews are the primary data collection method in grounded theory research, and this researcher also gathered qualitative data from the media and from documents, including blogs, personal writings, and written observation of immigrant women. This study, with the aim of developing a theory, followed the process of the Grounded Theory Research developed by Strauss & Corbin (1998) the methods of which include open, axial, and selective coding.

As a consequence, 148 concepts and 46 subcategories were developed in this research. Following the final abstraction process, 15 superordinate categories were drawn out. As for the topic of this research, the challenges and strengths of immigrant women who married Korean men, it stemmed from their experiences of cultural differences, a sense of isolation and fear, and marital challenges. Besides, the topic focused on those women’s potential abilities and the efforts they made. The women went through difficulties including emotional stress, isolation, disappointment, fatigue in familial relationships and life due to the lack of accurate information, low self-esteem, and experiences of cultural difference. Although they had faced critical moments in overcoming these challenges, most of them showed devoted and considerate attitudes about their families, positive views on life, and a feeling of satisfaction as a member of a family. Moreover, they were actively participating in social activities and putting a lot of effort into their future dreams. Such strategies were subjected to the conditions of the family, the society, and the government and their support.

In the process of these women’s experiences in the marriage, four stages were
developed: first, participants may find themselves isolated; second, they realized and accepted the reality; third, they settled down and stabilized; fourth, their lives improved, and they were optimistic and hopeful about their future. In the first stage, the participants experienced conflicts and confusion caused by cultural differences between their original country and the new country. Also, they felt lonely and isolated as they had no one to talk to; neither had they a place to go and take a rest when they had a dispute with the husband, owing to the fact that they had come from foreign lands. Besides, if there was a discrepancy between their expectation and their husband’s actual financial status or living condition, their disappointment became even more intense.

In the second stage, participants realized the reality, began to learn what they could, and tried to learn about Korean culture with an open-minded attitude in order to settle down to their married life in the Korean culture. That is, along with the individual efforts of the participants to learn the language and lifestyles, the collective support of their husbands, families, and the surroundings are critical in this stage. Some participants experienced depression from their pregnancy, delivery, and child rearing in a foreign land; additionally, negative feelings stemmed from the fatigue of doing household chores. Also, their efforts to reach a bigger support system were too weak at this stage, and thus they tended to remain in the domain of the family.

In the third stage, participants put more focus on harmony and stabilization within the given environment, which resulted in the acceptance of reality after a great deal of disappointment, conflicts, and regrets. The scope of these participants’ interest was expanded from the range limited to themselves and their families to a bigger one; not only that, but they walked into the larger structure of support aiming for self-development. Also,
they enhanced their self-esteem by making friends with those immigrant women they met in language classes and by creating a circle with them to share information and advice. They got along not only with immigrant women, but also with more Koreans. As result of actively adopting Korean culture, they got used to it and felt stabilization, which conferred on them happiness in their married life.

In the last fruitful phase, these immigrant women secured their position in the family, discovered their identity as a member of a multicultural family, and deeply rooted themselves in Korean society. As a member of a family, the credit given by the husband as well as their children gave these women not only satisfaction but also a significant link that connected them with the society. Moreover, the unity with the mothers-in-law of the immigrant women became stronger as these older women admitted and appreciated the efforts and sincerity of their daughters-in-law. Furthermore, such confidence enabled the immigrant women to set up goals for self-realization as members of the society and to endeavor towards those goals.

In the whole process, the core category in the adjustment and married life of those married immigrant women appeared to be “Settling themselves down as members of their families and society and discovering their advantages that can help them overcome their isolation and fear” On the grounds of the statement that correlated with the participants’ actual experiences, three patterns referring to these women were noticed: 1) future-oriented success pursuers, 2) pliable adapters, 3) skeptical persons who endure. First, future-oriented success pursuers had enough courage and adventurous spirit to marry a Korean man. Despite the fact that they had already had useful information before marriage and their self-esteem was comparatively high, they experienced diverse conflict as well as culture shock in the
new cultural setting of society and family. However, such hardships were turned into a source of energy that helped them to come up with a resolution in order to take advantage of the challenge and make it a turning point. Also, participants of this type were strongly connected to various supportive systems. Most of them appreciated their husband’s consideration and love for them, particularly due to their husbands’ financial support for their families in the home country. Besides, appreciating the privilege of the improved living conditions in Korea was another reason for their happiness. As a result, they were highly content with the family as a member of it, involved in various social activities, and had a positive outlook for the future.

Second, those “pliable adapters” had not been without any prior information on international marriage, but their idea of it was abstract or vague. Despite the pre-achieved information, they held an ambiguous vision that they would be able to support their family and live in a better condition if they moved to Korea. When they realized that the vision was impossible because of their husband’s financial status that was different from their expectation, they experienced depression or disappointment although they had a high level of self-esteem. Because of the conservative character of the husband and the in-laws, the degree of conflict they had was high. They were trying to accept the surrounding conditions and to reduce the gap between their expectation and the reality in spite of many difficulties. On top of that, their husbands were not supportive enough, and their financial status was not good, which made them less satisfied with the marriage and less confident about anticipating the future; yet, they were trying to move forward with a hope that things would be better somehow.

Participants who fit into the last category were holding a grudge against the
matchmaker who arranged their marriage because the matchmaker had given them wrong information. From the beginning, they had experienced intense negative feelings because of the great divide between their expectation and husband’s actual financial status and living conditions. What was worse, living with the in-laws and the maltreatment these immigrant women experienced caused a high level of conflict as well as intense stress. The self-esteem of these women was average; the number of supportive agents, or their involvement in such a system, was small. Also, these women found it difficult to comprehend their husband’s character and culture. For this reason, they were suffering from anxiousness and depression, a sense of instability in the face of the unpredictable future. Sometimes they felt an impulse to return to the home country, but their children were playing an important role in that they helped the women to settle down in Korea. These women were enduring their given circumstances and looking for a job of which they were capable.

**Challenges of Married Immigrant Women**

Most of the participants in this research had chosen an international marriage with a Korean man who was introduced by a matchmaking agency or their friends. They had anticipated living in a better condition in Korea and helping their poor families. However, they faced tough challenges in the process of adaptation. The typical experiences of the women are illustrated below.

First of all, they found a huge discrepancy between their fantasies about Korea and the reality in Korea. Those who were able to lead a stable married life had come to Korea prior to getting married with a work visa in search of a job or with enough information from their friends and matchmakers; they had been culturally well adjusted in the early stage of marriage. On the contrary, others had had vague or inaccurate information on the life in
Korea as their matchmakers or friends exaggerated positive aspects of marriage to a Korean. You (2010)’s research strongly supports this idea that such women might choose international marriages for improving their total quality of life, including economic conditions, but information about the Korean bridegroom, including his economic condition, is often exaggerated by the marriage agencies. Those who were without any acquaintances in Korea had no other way but to rely on vague knowledge and fantasies from Korean TV dramas or movies, owing to the “hallyu”. In the case of those who had sisters or relatives living in Korea, they could not avoid conflicts in the early stage of marriage since they too had unrealistic anticipations even though they had been more properly informed than others. Since the Korean men to whom these women married were usually over a marriageable age with financial difficulties, which made them unattractive to Korean women, immigrant women likewise might be disappointed at such a condition. Moreover, if a woman had lived in urban areas in her home country or had watched Korean TV dramas and had fantasies about the Korean living environment, and when these women discovered that they were to settle down in the countryside or with a poor husband, the despair they felt was so strong that they became skeptical or even considered a divorce.

Second, they felt conflicted and helplessness in their married lives because they were not prepared for the different ways of life from their own such as the relationship with in-laws and the Korean patriarchy system. As there are very few immigrants who arrive with a fluent target language, many of the women suffered hardships from language barriers from the beginning; the fact that they had no one to talk to and no place to go made them isolated. Also, they had to adapt to the spicy and salty Korean food and to the weather with four distinct seasons. Some of the mothers-in-law would criticize their ways of taking a shower
and doing the laundry and thus put their daughters-in-law in trouble. The Korean culture of rushing and excessive personal questions made the immigrant women embarrassed, and it took a long time to understand why Koreans behaved that way. When the age gap between a women and her husband was huge, as the average age gap was ten to twenty years, those too-young brides were discontent with their husband’s old-fashioned perspectives. Due to the male-dominated culture in Korea, wives felt compelled to obey and to respect the elderly. Using particular names among family members instead of calling one’s first name was another task to adapt to. These findings are consistent with other studies mentioned earlier in the first chapter noting that immigrant women meet various problems in Korea.

Third, they faced diverse challenges in married life such as neighbors’ prejudice, unique familial relationships in Korea, the husband’s coming home late, and weariness. Above all, others’ prejudice, mistrusting, and disregarding attitudes, as well as their assumption that the only reason for an international marriage was money, raised anger among these women. Park’s (2011) study also shows that reasons for being discriminated against in Korean society are listed as social prejudice and hostility caused by difference in appearance and economic difficulties. When it comes to familial relationships, immigrant women questioned the mother-in-law’s dominance in the Korean family. Some of the participants’ mothers-in-law ignored and rebuked them. As for being a wife, they were disappointed at their husbands’ too many business meetings, their drinking habits, and the consequent habit of coming home late. Occasionally on weekends, they were left at home with their children while the husband went out alone. These findings, which are related to the relationship with a husband, are consistent with other studies (Choi, 2010; Lee, 2011; Kim, 2006). On top of that, these immigrant women had their own issues related to child
education even though their children were a source of reward for them. As the mothers raising their children were not fluent in the Korean language, it was reported many times that their children started speaking rather late. This finding is consistent with Oh (2011)’s study. In that case, the mother felt guilty because her lack of language skills brought about such a result. Furthermore, these women were desperate for their husbands’ support because they were unable to understand notices or letters for the parents from the kindergarten or school. This finding is consistent with Chang’s (2006) report that immigrant wives have various difficulties in guidance because of a lack of communication with the children as well as a basic knowledge of the school life.

**Strengths and Potentials of Immigrant Women**

This section discusses immigrant women’s potentials and strengths that have enabled them to sustain their married life and to adjust to Korea positively. First, their self-esteem as an emotional and individual resource seems to have a positive impact on their marriage and life. This finding is consistent with some previous studies that have found high self-esteem to be associated with marital satisfaction or resilience or less acculturative stress (Kwon, 2009; Lee & Kang, 2007; Park, 2011). The following features are characteristic of those participants with high self-esteem: they received a high level of education and career experience in the home country, are bilingual, and have pride in their home family or native country. In addition, they possess a spirit of challenge, wanting to experience a new world, as well as a spirit of adventure that motivated them to learn Korean in advance. The participants in this study had a rather high level of education, and thus some of them were able to go to a college or a graduate school in Korea and to dream about having a professional career. One Filipina, in particular, seemed to have an advantage of working as
an interpreter or a language instructor because of her fluent English. The women’s prior
work experience in the home country served as a source for confidence when working in
Korea. Most of the participants showed pride in their home family or native country and
cherished their traditions and culture. Those from well-off families emphasized that they had
never had a financial motivation in coming to Korea. Those who had wished for an
international marriage showed a spirit of challenge, dreaming about a new life in a new
world. Among them, some had learned Korean before coming to Korea, and some were
making future plans for learning about the culture.

Second, these participants seemed to have cultural advantages that made the
adjustment to the Korean society easier. The cultural similarity with their husbands created a
positive influence for the stabilization of their lives and their settlement in the early stages.
Korean traditional Confucian culture and the extended family system were not new to them
since these traditions are common in other Asian countries, which also emphasize filial piety.
Especially, Vietnamese immigrants easily accepted the tradition of ancestral rites since they
have a similar custom in Vietnam. So (2006) also agrees that a culturally noticeable fact is
that Korean-Chinese and Vietnamese women are more likely to adapt to this Korean
traditional family way because their cultural backgrounds are also deeply influenced by
Confucianism. As Asians, these women found no trouble adapting to Korean food culture,
which likewise consumes rice as staple. There were some cases of women who had grown
up in rural areas who were also living in the countryside in Korea; they found it rather easy
to settle down because of familiar living environments.

Third, most of the participants exhibited characteristics such as dedication, patience,
and acceptance after experiencing confusion and conflicts in the beginning. On one side,
they tried to reward and please their hard-working husbands by learning about Korean cuisine and making delicious Korean dishes, after gaining a practical understanding about their husbands. On the other side, they endured their obstinate husbands and rarely-changing circumstances. Living with the in-laws, they tried to be good daughters-in-law in order to maintain a good relationship with the seniors; they kept a learning attitude, patience, and taking initiatives to be a role model. With the parents-in-law, they did their best to look after them with consideration and took it for granted to support sick parents-in-law. In this way, they achieved trust and credit from their husbands and other in-laws. As mothers, they put a lot of efforts into raising their children and were satisfied with the maternal role. Such a great deal of dedication and effort played a significant role in alleviating conflicts and maintaining peace in the multicultural family; consequently, these immigrant women were content at being a member of the family. It seems that this strength has not been described in previous studies.

Fourth, the familial, social, and governmental support systems served as a great help for these women in enabling them to discover a resolution or a breakthrough for their problems. These supportive systems were the strongest point they had. For familial support, their husband’s encouraging words and understanding of them were more helpful than that of any other person. This finding is consistent with Kim’s research (2009), which shows that husbands’ understanding is the most important factor influencing the marital happiness of immigrant women. Some husbands who had grown up in patriarchal families were surprisingly supportive in doing the chores, admitting the change of time. Above all, what made these women most impressed about their husbands was that they cared for the wife’s family and sent a monthly allowance for them and that they gave credit to their wives and let
them manage family finances. Besides, the emotional support from their families in the home
country was another source of their energy; however, the distance was too far to fulfill the
needs of these women in life. For this reason, the in-laws were another source of support. The
mother-in-law, sisters-in-law, and other daughters-in-law liked to play the role of language
instructor, cooking class teacher, sources of information, counselor, and postpartum caregiver.
Mothers-in-law, in particular, would babysit their children, make and send side dishes and
Kimchee. As for the social support, these women gradually made friends whom they could
frankly speak to, as their language improved. While taking Korean language classes, they not
only improved the language but also built a common ground with other immigrant women
and created regular meetings to cook native food and to speak in the native tongue. These
immigrant women would get along with their Korean neighbors, which helped them to root
themselves as Koreans. In addition to these supports, the government also provided a great
deal of aid to these women. Since 2000, the Korean government has favorably launched
various supports for multicultural families. For example, they began free Korean language
classes and private language tutoring aiming for these women’s language development. In
order to reduce the child rearing costs, the government is providing subsidies depending on
the region (e.g., a full coverage of child rearing costs, subsidy given for the third child, etc.).
If they need postpartum care, a trained caregiver is sent for two weeks. Besides, welfare
centers for multicultural families have been set up in each city or district to give services
fitting their needs, such as counseling and programs to resolve the problems of immigrant
women. These supportive systems are an enormous source of happiness and welfare for these
immigrant women.

Fifth, the positive attitudes of these participants towards their lives in Korea were
their strengths. It seems that this result has not previously been described. To illustrate, they appreciated their husbands, the in-laws, and their home families and were satisfied with a better living condition than that in their native country. To be specific, they were thankful and content with the fast and accurate administrative services, clean and well-developed hospitals and public offices, pavements, transportation, communication, abundant food supply, and the welfare system. Above all, the medical insurance system, which confers a quality service at a reasonable cost, was the most satisfying. Those who work (or have worked) at a factory loved the fact that they could be hired on a long time basis, which was not possible in the native country.

Sixth, their willingness and desire for social participation (e.g., self-development, volunteering, etc.) was another advantage they had. The range of their self-development included a high-level education and having a hobby, religion, or a career. Those with the privilege of high-level education in Korea did their best equally in the family, school, and work. Having a hobby or a religion seemed to vitalize their lives, allowing them to learn more about Korean society. Those with a career were utilizing their potential quite well. As for their volunteer activities, they were involved with English teaching, interpreting, and serving at welfare centers. This finding is consistent with Kim & Eun’s (2007) study, which has shown that one of the Filipina’s advantages is that of using English.

Seventh, one of these women’s strengths was that they had a future-oriented attitude, allowing them to dream about the future despite their difficulties. This finding encourages us to view immigrant women as potential and powerful people. Hoping to get some opportunities for better education or vocational training, they were putting effort into having a professional career or a business in the future. More importantly, they wished to volunteer
for the newly arrived immigrant women who were no different from them. These women were leading a frugal life, wishing for a financial breakthrough and witnessing that Koreans’ habits of saving money and diligence were a good example for them. Those who had completed an undergraduate/graduate course were showing an interest in studying abroad. Just as other Korean parents, they were highly concerned with their child’s education; as their children were too young, they were teaching them only Korean at present, but they wanted to educate the children in their home country so that they could pick up their mother tongue and become a bridge person between the home country and Korea. Some participants had already purchased a plot of land and were planning to re-migrate with their husbands; they wished to have a business in their native country when they became old.

Last but not least, these immigrant women seemed to be future workers full of potential for helping multicultural families and other immigrant women. Some of the women the researcher met were majoring in multicultural welfare studies or already had a degree in this field, which had been launched by the government with the purpose of producing professional workers for multicultural families. Although there were some Korean students majoring in the study as well with an interest in multicultural families, the government gave prior interest and support to immigrant women so that they could study and serve in the field. Some other participants applied to become staff for multicultural projects and participated in promoting public awareness of multicultural issues. Inviting immigrant women to work in such projects was found to be truly helpful for them in realizing their problems and bringing out their potentials; moreover, this is a practical example of those immigrant women developing themselves as professional workers for multicultural families.
Figure 6  Strengths of Marriage Immigrant Women

“Discovering Her Strengths”: At an Individual Level

Each participant’s background and individual status (e.g., nationality, living environment in youth, current age, education level, previous career before coming to Korea, financial status, and motivation for marriage, etc.) seemed to impact her perception and attitudes on international marriage and the following behaviors. According to the findings from this research, Vietnamese women were more adaptable to the Korean Confucian culture; for example, they tended to have no objection to ancestral rites because their native custom was similar to this. When it comes to the living environment in their youth, those who had grown up in rural areas were better able to adapt to the Korean rural settings while others had many difficulties and confusions. The older the participants were the more
responsible and flexible they were in understanding or resolving issues. Previous work experiences or educational achievements became a source of confidence and allowed them an easier settlement. Besides, the richer their families were, the higher their self-esteem; this resulted from a stronger counter attitude to Koreans’ prejudice against them. As for these women’s inward-motivations for international marriage in this research, they spoke of a pure curiosity, difficulties in the home country, a desire to support their family, and an admiration for Korea influenced by Korean TV dramas. For their outward-motivations, on the other hand, they included advice from the surrounding people, an attempt to avoid illegal status, and a religious devotion.

Among the three contextual conditions that were found to be influential to the central phenomenon in the research, pre-achieved information on Korea and their self-esteem appeared to take place on an individual level. If the information participants gained before coming to Korea was either not enough or inaccurate, and if they had had an unreasonably high expectation of their marriage and life in Korea, more stress and conflicts were reported. Also, their self-esteem seemed to impact maintaining their cultural identity. These women still practiced their cultural customs while settling down in Korea and taught their children their native tongue with a pride in their native country. Such a pride in their own culture appeared to be a value that calls for respect and acceptance, considering the current movement supporting a multicultural society.

Furthermore, it was noted that the participants were trying to solve their problems at an individual level. Despite the negative feelings of isolation and fear, they sought an individual level of response strategies. The most common strategy was that they tried to build a cordial relationship with their husband and to understand him. Especially, they did
not nag but appreciated their husband’s hard work, for his convenience. Another strategy was to do chores and learn the Korean language as well as cooking with a positive attitude so that they could turn challenges into new opportunities. Also, they actively discovered ways of settling into the new life and felt satisfaction with the living conditions in Korea, which were far better than those in the home country. As a result of this individual level of effort, participants were content with being a member of a multicultural family in Korea, actively participating in the society and working hard for future plans.

“Discovering Her Strengths”: At a Family Level

An interaction at a family level occurs when the participants and their families altogether influence each other. The participants experience conflicts at an individual level, which evolve into a more complex and inclusive relationship at the family level that interweaves their own family and their husband’s. On one hand, a central phenomenon in this research appeared to show women experiencing cultural differences, feeling a sense of isolation and fear, and facing marital challenges; on the other hand, the subcategories of the central phenomenon (e.g., peculiar experiences in some cases due to Korean patriarchy, financial hardships, the husband’s coming home late, feeling an impulse to divorce, and weariness from babysitting) appeared to take place at a family level. Besides, Confucian culture included several concepts at a family level, such as the immigrant women’s familiarity or unfamiliarity with ancestral rites and the extended family system, as an example of cultural similarity, one of the contextual conditions influential to the central phenomenon. Also, familial support, which is one of the intervening conditions, assisted some women directly/indirectly in overcoming numerous challenges. That is, support from their husband, home family, and the in-laws were considered to be support at the family
level. To be specific, a husband’s helping with chores, his understanding and encouraging attitude, his trust in these women by letting them manage home finances, and most importantly, financially supporting their families back home made the women with successful marriages feel stable and secure. Their home family served as a counselor or an adviser before they became fluent in Korean; mothers-in-law took care of them after their delivery of a baby, babysat for them, taught them how to cook, and made foods for them; sisters-in-law stayed close and acted as a source of information on chores like cooking, homemaking, and child rearing in Korea; all in all, these family members helped those immigrant women feel a sense of belonging to a family.

On the other hand, when these women had trouble in communicating with their spouses, they asked the members of the extended family for help, realizing that they alone could not solve this problem. It was discovered that a supportive and considerate husband and his family had a positive impact on the participants’ adjustment and strategies. The more support a participant gained from her family, the more she was satisfied and felt less homesick and lonely and had fewer regrets and fears; participants were highly capable of controlling negative emotions, had a strong sense of belonging as a member of a family, and peaceably settled down in Korean society. Furthermore, as their children were born, they realized positive meaning in their new lives and developed a hope in the children that gave them a positive outlook on the future. Contrary to this, when their familial support was weak or uncooperative, they experienced more conflicts and isolation and became passive and skeptical about their life in Korea.

As mentioned above, it was noticed that a familial support system was a crucial factor in immigrant women’s adjustment and self-development that allowed them a dream
future. Particularly, when an intervention takes place at a family level with the aim of helping an immigrant woman to settle down, her identity will become stronger, and she will become a model member of the society voluntarily.

“Discovering Her Strengths”: At a Social Level

A social level in this chapter refers to the structural background of these women (e.g., a workplace, school, church, and a local community) in which the range of anonymity becomes larger than at an individual level; yet it is smaller than that of the governmental level. The society is a place where those immigrant women can search for possible resources and information for self-development; thus, it has an impact on their adjustment in marriage and the new life in Korea and provides a supportive system which can help them sustain their lives after marriage. From this research, it was found that these married immigrant women were being heavily influenced by the social structures and relationships; at a social level, participants can be either given support and encouragement so that they can overcome pressures and low self-esteem or discriminated against and disregarded because of the fact that they married internationally. Interaction at this level also includes public stereotypes and customs which directly/indirectly impact an individual’s behavior. The people’s stereotypes of international marriage as a kind of marital challenge, one of the central phenomena, contained negative impressions such as mistrust, ignorance, and prejudice in that the only reason of immigrant women’s marrying Koreans was money. Because of this stigmatization, some of the participants lost their confidence in personal relationships and became daunted. On the contrary, some of the participants confidently manifested their being internationally married and even tried to withstand the stigmatization by strengthening the husband’s position in the society.
To look at the challenges of married immigrant women at a social level, the biggest problem was the language barrier that dispirited them, causing troubles in communication. In addition, Koreans’ tendency of rushing in daily life, excessive personal questions and intervention made them embarrassed. Also, they were confused at the differences between their own culture and the unique Korean food culture of enjoying spicy food, the different ways of life, and ways of greeting. Moreover, these women were complaining about their Korean husbands’ habit of drinking and too-frequent meetings at night; they could never understand the widespread drinking culture in Korea.

Thus, the researcher focused on the social level relationships that could assist these women in their challenges so that they could overcome and cope with their hardships; this includes support from friends, groups of other immigrant women, and Korean neighbors. This study provides evidence that immigrant women require a receptive attitude from Korean society in order to successfully settle down in the society. The most helpful emotional support came from their friends who had come to Korea before them or their colleagues at work or school to whom they were able to talk frankly. Additional support came from groups of other immigrant women who served as their “social family” in Korea. Those groups were created at Korean classes or in their town as the immigrant women met frequently and got along with each other. These groups acted as a source of energy in place of their families far away, helping the women to overcome instability in life as well as financial difficulties. These groups were the second family where they could build common ground and collectively deal with the issues of household chores and child rearing. Above all, making native food and picking up news from the home country filled their emotional emptiness; besides, these groups had an influence on sustainability of daily life in that the
women shared practical assistance. Moreover, these were the first people the immigrant women would go visit when they had a challenge in married life because these people were a source of positive influence, the only people they had empathy with, who gave and received counseling and provided shelter. Finally, Korean neighbors helped them improve the language and gave them detailed information and emotional stability. In this way, these women felt accepted as Koreans and established stable identities as members of a multicultural family in Korea. The data suggest that the social level of support for immigrant women enables them to establish their identity in Korea, to feel a sense of achievement, to have a positive outlook on their future, and to discover their strengths.

“Discovering Her Strengths”: At a Governmental Level

At this level of structure, the anonymity between married immigrant women and the structure becomes most enormous as the interactions of this level cover macroscopic organizations, customs, the constitution, and all of the programs and social welfare systems managed by the government. The Korean government provided the participants with both emotional and material services: to be specific, free Korean classes, child rearing services, welfare centers for multicultural families, special entrance to a college department of multicultural social welfare studies, and TV programs on multicultural families.

While the participants learned Korean from their families in daily life, the Korean classes run by the government were the most systematic language education these women could get. They offered various levels of classes so that an immigrant woman could take a class suitable for her level of fluency. Not only that, but private tutors would visit the woman’s house twice a week without any charge; of course, this was the best way for the women to improve their language skills as well as to adapt to the culture.
Moreover, diverse child rearing services were given to these women; available services varied depending on the region. For example, some women had the whole cost of childbirth covered by the government on the condition that they did not have any surgery. Starting from last year, every child from a multicultural family was given the full cost of a daycare center and kindergarten from the government regardless of their parents’ income. As for low-income families, they could require a postpartum caregiver for two weeks for free. Those immigrant women deeply appreciated these services from the government.

Additionally, the government has been running multicultural welfare centers in each city and district since 2000 as the number of married immigrant women has rapidly increased. Not only the government, but also private and religious organizations are managing such centers and programs for immigrant women. Activities at the government-run multicultural welfare centers include language courses, counseling, information sharing, and programs on artistic topics, mentoring from Korean mothers, and intervention and counseling for family violence or divorced families. Not only that, but those women who are not able to hold a wedding ceremony can take a brief course on married life from the centers and sign for a joint wedding ceremony. After being naturalized, they can take vocational training for certificates with a subsidy from the government and search for a job after completion of the training. If a multicultural family is hardly earning their bread, they can be entitled to the government’s livelihood subsidy as well as support programs for married immigrants and are given emotional/material aid. On the one hand, these programs have been helpful for restoring the relationship between a couple, maintaining their marriage, and helping them adjust to the society; on the other hand, these programs have not been well organized as some programs overlap, are repeated, or are available to a limited range of
Interestingly, a significant number of the research participants were doing their graduate degree course at Pyoung Taek Graduate School and majoring in multicultural social welfare studies, which is a part of the special multicultural education program. Because the government provided scholarships for those immigrant women, they were encouraged to continue their study. Those who had finished the course as well as those who were doing the course wished to aid other immigrant women in a more professional way and to have careers as social workers. One good example is the participant who was serving as a member of the multicultural staff at the public schools, promoting students’ awareness of multicultural families. Also, there was another participant who was being trained to be a multicultural counselor. It seems that these activities reflect the need for a more systematic and professional role for immigrant women and multicultural families in Korea.

In addition, the Korean government has been supporting public awareness of private TV shows exhibiting successful examples of married immigrants and models to promote a positive awareness of multicultural families and an understanding of various cultures. Immigrant women also took advantage of indirect updates on their home countries or encouragement from other immigrants’ success stories by watching those programs. However, some participants have been critical about these programs because they depict immigrant women or multicultural families as poor and underprivileged people and thus aggravate the negative notions about them. Not only that, but these shows make the point that the successful immigrant women appearing on those shows seem to be unrealistic and fake in some ways.

To sum up, the experiences of married immigrant women at an individual, family,
social, and governmental level appear to be useful for understanding each level of the process of these women’s adjustment as well as for shaping an inclusive framework for a better comprehension.

Theoretical Implications

This study is one of the early research projects in Korea having married immigrant women as subjects/participants. Concepts, categories of the challenges, and strengths resulting from this study could be utilized as a primary resource for future empirical studies that would lend to the generalization of a theory on married immigrant women’s adjustment and marital satisfaction. The participants’ behavioral acculturation patterns and psychological status were examined according to Berry’s four acculturation strategies: Assimilation, Integration, Separation, and Marginalization. In addition, the immigrant women’s efforts and strengths in the process of acculturation were studied. Among other strategies, “Assimilation,” which prioritizes acculturation rather than maintaining one’s native culture, appeared to be the strongest. Among three patterns of immigrant women, the future-oriented success pursuers and pliable adapters showed a higher likelihood of assimilation. Even though they met some diverse conflict and difficult situations in the early stages, they tried to turn these difficulties into a source of energy in order to accept the reality. Not only the immigrant women, but also the in-laws expected them to adapt to Korean culture due to the fact that they were married to Korean men and had come to live with them in Korea. The participants showed a higher likelihood of assimilation when their husbands took their adaptation to Korean culture for granted more than other members of the family. For this reason, these participants were learning the Korean language, cuisine, and lifestyle in order to enhance communication and to avoid conflicts in their family. The
participants in the assimilation stage feel ambivalent. Sometimes, they were disappointed in their married life and they wavered between their own living style and the newly adopted one. In addition, some of the women showed a higher degree of disappointment when they had unrealistic expectations for Korean life. On the other hand, they were both excited and thrilled at the new ways of life when they genuinely attempted to try to settle down in the new environment and were given positive response or appreciation from their husbands or the surroundings. Hwang (2009) criticized the fact in his research that in contemporary Korean society it is unfair to discuss the framework of multiculturalism because most immigrant women are forced to absorb Korean culture by their husbands and other family members. The second strongest strategy was “Integration,” which contains one’s willingness to accept both native and Korean cultures positively and to integrate them in oneself. Future-oriented success pursuers demonstrated this strategy. Owing to their husband’s support in allowing them to maintain their native culture and ways of life, they were able to integrate their native customs and Korean customs and consequently created a third family culture.

While the majority of participants exhibited these two acculturating strategies, a few of them, the skeptical immigrants who endured, showed features of “Separation,” which refers to one’s favoring one’s own culture and adhering to it, or “Marginalization,” which means a negative perception of both cultures and a lack of will to acculturate. The number of participants who fit “Marginalization” was particularly low. The reason for the low number is assumed to be that it was the women’s own will to come to Korea and the intent of immigration is to become a resident through marriage. Thus, they understood the need to adjust quickly to their new environment.

Following is an analysis of those research participants’ perceptions of Korean culture
and their behaviors examined according to Berry’s acculturation strategies. First of all, these women demonstrated strategies of assimilation and integration in their attitudes and behaviors. For example, while other participants were gradually adjusting to Korean dishes, some future-oriented success pursuers were instantly fascinated and voluntarily adapted their taste to Korean spicy foods, believing that they were good for health. When it comes to the integration of the two food cultures, the family members’ attitudes and approval played a significant role. For example, if a husband enjoyed his wife’s native food, integrating the two cultures was rather natural; if he did not, the women was not able to cook her native food often at home although she missed it. Like the Exchange Theory in family relationships, it can be said that wives’ acceptance of the husband’s culture is more likely to take place on the condition that the husband shows a favorable attitude toward his wife’s culture. Kim (2008) showed that the level of integration was one strategy for cultural adaptation that affected adjustment and marital satisfaction positively. Therefore, this research suggests that husbands should learn their spouses’ languages and cultures in order to increase their marital quality and satisfaction. Another example of voluntary acculturation might be the sedentary lifestyle in Korea (leaving one’s shoes outdoors). Such a lifestyle caused stress to the participants in the beginning, for they had physical discomfort as well as different hygienic perceptions. However, once they got used to Korean culture, they realized that taking off their shoes indoors was rather clean, and they were satisfied with it. Likewise, they gradually favored Korean Ondol (traditional heating system) and adjusted to it rather quickly.

Second, most participants showed a strong antipathy for Korean patriarchal notions. However, while exhibiting marginalization strategy in thought, their behaviors revealed a tendency of acculturation. What was most unbearable for these women in Korean patriarchy
was the strong tie between a husband and his mother, which put them in a triangle relationship. This may negatively impact their marital satisfaction. Skeptical persons felt the impulse to divorce and to return to their home country. This finding is consistent with Park’s study. According to Park’s (2005) study, factors such as the unreasonable demands of the mothers-in-law for economic support, too much interference from the mothers-in-law, and the unwillingness of daughters-in-law regarding living together with parents-in-law affect their marital satisfaction negatively. Despite the conflicts and stress they experienced, those skeptical immigrant women who endured did not seem to be motivated by a strong determination to improve or change the situation. On the contrary, most of them wanted to follow the example of Koreans’ filial piety and respect for seniors. In this regard, it can be suggested that the participants reflected an attitude of acculturation.

All in all, it was discovered that the research participants were taking the strategies of assimilation and integration in adapting to Korean culture. To be specific, because future-oriented success pursuers have the unlimited capability of learning about a new culture and adjusting to it, they are able to integrate into Korean culture when necessary while maintaining their native cultural identity. In addition, those who want to understand pliable adapters and skeptical persons who endure Korean society should positively acknowledge the women’s identities and realize that it takes time to learn a new way of life, realizing that Korean culture might be difficult for them to accept, and that it is not easy for them to raise their voices in the society. Furthermore, although skeptical immigrants are very few in this study, we should focus on their endurance despite of a high level of conflict and intense stress. Their patience is another point of strength helping them to remain in Korea.

According to recent studies conducted by Park (2010) and Choi (2009), which analyzed the
acculturation process of immigrant women in Korea in accordance with their education level, marginalization was dominant among highly educated immigrant women while assimilation and integration were strong among less well-educated immigrant women. In this research, however, the focus was mainly on how these women perceived and responded to Korean culture rather than considering their education level. In conclusion, only then can the immigrant women enhance their adaptability without losing their cultural identity, and the society can develop an advanced multiculturalism just like a bowl of salad in which various vegetables keep their color, shape, and flavor.

**Practical Implications**

The result of the research proposed three major practical implications: 1) Practical strategies based on married immigrant women’s desires and needs, 2) Practical strategies focusing on the women’s strengths or strengths/assets, and 3) Practical strategies appropriate for each level of individual, family, society, and the government.

First, this research seems to point out the need for more specific and personal services for married immigrant women. To be specific, it depicts the process that married immigrant women go through (e.g., making a decision of international marriage and meeting their husband, hardships and confusions commonly experienced by these women in the early stage, culture shock, overcoming the challenges, and discovering future plans) so that this study can help social workers to understand these women’s living conditions, environment, time sequences, and personal strengths and challenges. For example, immigrant women’s pre-achieved information on Korea and international marriage and their cultural similarities of their own culture and Korean culture appeared to have a positive influence on the culture shock of these women and their conflicts in married life. That is, future-oriented success
pursuers who received proper information about the conditions and their husband in Korea prior to getting married, experienced more stable settlement. Therefore, it was significant that these women, even pliable adapters and skeptical persons who endure, require some time to collect enough data and information before getting married, and that marriage-related lectures or courses are necessary not only for married couples but also for premarital couples.

Second, in order to understand immigrant women’s challenges and strengths in terms of adjustment and marital satisfaction, this research discusses how these immigrant women interact and cope within individual, family, social, and governmental levels. Such a discussion facilitates a setting of practical strategies for intervening in each level of structure. As for the **individual level**, practical strategies for healing or counseling are recommended to care for those immigrant women with emotional challenges and confusions. It appeared in this research that self-esteem of married immigrant women has a significant impact on their quality of life. For this reason, it is important for a successful settlement of immigrant women to develop for a program to enhance their self-esteem. This researcher showed that future-oriented success pursuers and pliable adapters have high self-esteem, while skeptical persons who endure have an average level of self-esteem. Even if a married immigrant woman has had high self-esteem in the past, she might lack confidence and feel daunted and isolated due to prejudice and unfamiliar surroundings. Thus, there is an urgent need of professional counselors to be aware of such characteristics of immigrant women as well as an awareness of diverse cultures to assist these women in the acculturation process.

Concerning the **family level**, when immigrant women learn about Korean culture, this circumstance would bring about a compulsory assimilation that would hardly allow a true
integration (this sentence doesn’t make sense. Reword for clarification). In reality, however, it is not an exaggeration to say that most multicultural families in Korea are dominated by Korean culture. Support programs for multicultural families must enhance a multicultural perspective so that they can inclusively embrace those immigrant women’s own culture as well; thus, any Korean man and his family who plan on an international marriage must be educated on the culture and customs of the future wife’s country. In this way, a cultural orientation on both prospective husband’s and wife’s cultural background must be included from the beginning of a marriage relationship program. This research also revealed that immigrant women who are future-oriented success pursuers were more open to Korean culture and positive about their marriages on the condition that the husband was favorable and willing to learn about his wife’s culture. Furthermore, counseling for those couples who belong to the groups of pliable adapters and skeptical persons or family reconstruction programs should be conducted in ways appropriate for the status and condition of the family.

In addition, training in effective communication skills and acknowledging distinct life cycles and cultural differences are suggested because the couples in this study were from different cultural backgrounds and the average age gap between spouses was over ten years. Furthermore, counseling enhancing a couple’s communication and programs promoting a couple’s understanding of sex differences should be facilitated in order to help multicultural couples apply this knowledge to their marriages. Also, special programs specifically considering the features and situations of multicultural couples should be developed (e.g., educational programs for the newly-married, for each marital stage, and for enhancing marital relationships). Moreover, early intervention is recommended for the children from multicultural families because of the long history of mono-ethnic culture in Korea. From this
aspect, culturally sensitive social workers and assistant teachers should be placed at public schools, including elementary, junior high, and high schools, and integral education on multiculturalism should be offered. Regarding the **social level**, the worst confusion mainly came from the Korean patriarch. It seemed evident that immigrant women who belong to both groups, pliable adapters, and skeptical immigrants who endure, needed accurate information on Korean society and the in-laws as well as a comprehension of cultural differences. In this regard, it seemed necessary to compel the Unification Church or matchmaking agencies to provide accurate information and orientation on Korean culture to the women as these two organizations were the most common channels for those women to arrange international marriages in Korea. To give an orientation on Korean culture, a detailed explanation on Korean patriarchy as well as on the positive aspects of Korean men would be preferable to include in a brief introduction so that those women could learn about Korean men’s values and attitudes toward the family. Fortunately, the Korean government has started to establish a system and regulations that will offer accurate information to each partner’s within the international marriage process (Seol, 2006). To protect innocent victims, since 2010, matchmaking agencies have been required to provide both marriage partners with personal information by “the law for control of matchmaking agency”, even though only few people have recognized this regulation (Kim, 2011). To protect Korean males, “Precedent Visa Interview System” has been created to get accurate information about the foreign women (Seol, 2006). The case of seeking application of Korean Embassy in the Philippines “Precedent Visa Interview System.” is a good example (Seol, 2006). Although the application of such a system is desirable, the system should respect equally the rights of both the male and the female who need to receive accurate information about each partner
(Seol, 2006). In addition, support from other immigrant women’s groups seemed to be a positive influence to the women’s adjustment. Immigrant women’s groups are an essential support for these women; however, the information shared among them was limited as most of them neither knew much about Korea nor had a network in Korea. What they needed most was information on child rearing and education because they had not spent their youth in Korea. Not only that, but they were in need of information on private institutes for their children, local public health centers for an economical medical cost, or legal consultations on family violence and/or visa issues. If the multicultural welfare centers facilitate their groups and provide useful information, those immigrant women would very likely support each other. As the social level of support systems is inseparable from the governmental level of intervention, it should be discussed with policies at the governmental level. If the policies of the government are to be truly effective for multicultural families and immigrant women, overlapping services should be avoided and political strategies responsible to their practical needs should be discussed. Since this topic is related to the next section, “Implications for Policy,” it will be more fully discussed later. Support at each level mentioned above requires an intervention of professionals with cultural sensitivity and competency. Thus, fostering professional multicultural manpower in the field of social work to help should elevate the level of multicultural awareness (run by the government) and position the multicultural welfare business as a new portion of social welfare practice. Setting up the department of the multicultural social welfare studies at Pyoung Taek University would be a good example.

Finally, this research emphasizes immigrant women’s potentials and strengths so that they can be extricated from the status of the weak and redefined as independent individuals
who are capable of problem solving. The studies on married immigrant women in Korea so far have mainly focused on those women’s problems in adjustment, marriage relationships, or family violence. Despite the fact that this approach suggests practical methods for resolving immigrant women’s absolute needs and issues, which are meaningful, it shows a limitation in developing those women’s potentials. For this reason, the present study focuses on immigrant women themselves who were found to have been strongly motivated to adjust to the exclusive Korean society, to bring their potential to the fullest and overcome numerous challenges, and to positively adopt Korean culture while maintaining their own culture. Likewise, more advantage-focused programs should be developed in order for the married immigrant women to become sound members of the society as well as to sustain longstanding marriages. Some of the future-oriented success pursuers in this research would serve as good examples for showcasing immigrant women’s strengths such as utilizing their capability of doing volunteer activities or majoring in multicultural social welfare studies and becoming multicultural social workers. Another example would be the groups of immigrant women described in this research in which a small number of immigrant women, usually four to eight, from the same country get together to resolve homesickness, share information, encourage each other and develop leadership. Such a gathering seems to be a good opportunity for these women to develop their strengths and to practice advantage-focused activities. Considering the fact that a significant number of immigrant women are dependent on these groups and build their own network for social support as well as information sharing by the means of them, these groups might turn into effective and sustainable social gatherings, providing that these women are given leadership training to make them multicultural professionals with a profound understanding of multiculturalism,
aids for facilitating meetings, and networks for information sharing. However, pliable adapters and skeptical immigrants rarely get together. For that reason, it is important to get these women involved in their own network because the women’s potential cultural resources are one of their strengths. Moreover, their children are likely to become future-oriented manpower due to their bicultural background, which might contribute to the competency of Korea in this global era. To illustrate, children from multicultural families are familiar with two languages, cultures, and value systems from their youth. Such an experience allows them to possess a wider perspective and diverse ideas unlike children from monoculture families. Therefore, it is assumed that providing social support for the education of children from multicultural families is, in return, an enormous benefit for the government. A specific suggestion is fostering professional multicultural educators for children from multicultural families. Multicultural education should be practiced not only in the public education sphere but also in the local communities and facilities for youth with a variety of programs. In addition, incorporating lectures on multicultural families in courses of study from kindergarten to high school may contribute to integrating and normalizing multiculturalism in a society so children of these families are less likely to be alienated at school or in educational fields. These efforts will promote the potentials in immigrant women and their children as valuable sources and members of a national.

**Implications for Policy**

Policies on the subject of immigrant women and international marriage are not the final response to these important social problems. Policies affecting multicultural marriages are important as long as prevention and regulation continue. This section insists that the constitution and policies related to immigrant women should guarantee the fundamental
rights and the rights of happiness to multicultural families, thus playing an active role in the
rebirth of Korea as a multicultural society. Based on this aim, the research shows that what
both public and private sector actually do and how current and existing policies help to
improve immigrant women and their families’ conditions. Rather than simple proposals, this
study suggests alternatives in practicing policies as well as the role of the government and
local self-governing bodies in preparation for a multicultural Korean society.

The organizations involved in work related to multiculturalism are broadly
classified as either public sector or private sector. The former includes the central
government and the local government, and the latter includes social welfare agencies,
religious organizations and civic groups (Lee, 2012). First, we can see that the central
government offers a mid-and long-term multicultural outlook, provides an institutional
framework by establishing immigration policies and regulations, and coordinates diverse
supporting activities from the relevant authorities (Lee, 2012). The services for multicultural
families provided by the central government are directly involved with the Ministry of
Gender Equality and Family, the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, the
Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism, the Ministry of Employment and Labor, and the
Ministry of Justice, and are indirectly linked with the Ministry of Public Administration and
Security, assisting local self-governments, and the Ministry of Food, Agriculture, Forestry
and Fisheries, aiding farming areas (Jung & Jung, 2010). The Ministry of Justice is in charge
of social integration support programs for immigrants; the Ministry of Education, Science
and Technology takes charge of educational support programs and mentoring programs for
multicultural families; the Ministry of Employment and Labor provides occupational
information and runs support programs for private companies’ employees; the Ministry of
Public Administration and Security organizes inviting events for parents, leadership training programs, and living environment improvement projects for married immigrant women; the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism operates Korean language training programs for teachers and multicultural performance programs, and administers libraries for children and teenagers; the Ministry of Food, Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries carries out basic farm work training programs for married immigrant women in the rural area; the Korea Communications Commission and Educational Broadcasting System offers Korean language education programs; the Ministry of Health and Welfare administers free educational programs; and the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family offers multicultural family support services, operates multicultural family support centers, provides local information for future immigrants, and supervises matchmaking agencies (Kim, 2010). As such, the central government contributes to overall management by mapping out a general scheme for multicultural family support, securing and executing a budget for the support programs, and evaluating the programs (Ra, 2011). Despite all the effort, the government invites criticism about wasting the budget on overlapping support programs, as in the case of educational programs such as language development programs and language teacher training and event programs like cultural festivals by the relevant government ministries. To prevent wasting the budget, the government should apply more systematic and concentrated approaches to support programs through cooperation with related departments and local governments (Kim, 2010).

Next, the local governments also conduct support programs for multicultural families on the basis of the central government’s general scheme (Ra, 2011). The local governments not only organize their own support systems and build a cooperative structure...
with support institutions within the area, but also are located close to immigrants in order to grasp their current situation and provide instant service for them (Lee, 2012). For example, *gu* and *dong* (Korean local community) offices conduct support programs for immigrant women such as language classes, English newsletter services, Asian food festivals, a year-end party, “mothering” guardians, cooking classes, sexual violence prevention education, childcare support, computer classes, and programs to connect families with helpers (Lee, 2012). Local public health centers carry out aid programs such as medical checkups, registration for pregnant women, and help for mothers and newborn babies (Lee, 2012). Community welfare centers support multicultural families by offering computer classes, “mothering” guardians, cultural experiences, Korean language classes, childbirth helpers, self-help meetings, education for multicultural family candidates, counseling for discordant multicultural families, family support, and international parties (Lee, 2012). To improve the role and the quality of services of the local governments, Ra (2011) suggests that the local governments need to set up networks within their areas with institutions such as volunteer organizations, community centers, and health and family support centers and to provide budget support and facilities for private institutions’ activities. In addition, the local governments need to diversify their support programs because their programs put their focus on assimilation; they need to develop those programs in order to respect both immigrant women’s cultural identity and their integration within Korean society (Ra, 2011).

Third, when determining what services are provided for immigrant women, it is important to be aware of the services of Multicultural Family Support Centers (MFSC). In 2005, the Ministry of Gender Equality & Family in the Republic of Korea started to establish MFSCs in order to support stable settlement and successful family lives for
multicultural families in Korea. Now in 2012 there are as many as 204 MFSCs\textsuperscript{2}. The purpose of the MFSC is basically to provide cultural services for multicultural families, to help them enjoy stable state as family and to support the early settlement of immigrant women in Korean society (Jung & Jung, 2010). To be specific, MFSCs are designed as a one-stop service organizations that operate comprehensive programs such as Korean language and cultural education programs, family education and counseling programs, childcare support programs, vocational education programs and campaigns to promote multiculturalism\textsuperscript{3}. Three-level organizations are operated to achieve each role and dimension of the MFSC: 1) the Central Office for MFSCs, 2) Base Centers, and 3) Regional Centers (Kim & Kim 2011). The Central Office for MFSCs manages the development and distribution of programs and manuals, health care development, performance management and PR, and programs for the operation of the MFSC (Kim, 2011). Next, Base Centers support programs and operate new centers established in the region, build and operate the network among centers and related organizations in the region, and provide visiting instructors in the education programs (Kim, 2011). Lastly, Regional Centers support employment, self-support communities, counseling services for individuals and multicultural families and provide language support classes for children, operation of childcare information centers, translation and interpretation services and language classes for immigrant women as specialized programs (Kim, 2011). Regional Centers also take very seriously their responsibility to help multicultural families gain the information they need through volunteer teams for multicultural families, improvement of public awareness on multiculturalism and PR in local communities, and reinforcement of networks in local communities.

\textsuperscript{2} See http://www.liveinkorea.kr/center

\textsuperscript{3} Ibid.
communities (Kim, 2011). Moreover, Regional Centers provide visiting education programs such as Korean language education, education of parents, and support for children and visiting counseling services (Kim, 2011). According to Park’s (2011) research, one sixth of all programs’ participants joined in Korean education programs because linguistic ability is thought to be essential for adaptation to Korean society (Park, 2011). Married immigrant women account for 55% of all participants, their husbands for 15%, their parents-in-law 5% (Park, 2011). In a survey of the centers’ users, the average satisfaction rating came in at 91.7 out of 100, and this shows that the users are quite satisfied with the centers' services (Park, 2011). Nevertheless, Jung & Jung (2010) suggests four ways to improve multicultural family support centers' services. First, the centers need to offer customized service by region based on multicultural families’ needs because it is expected that services requested by the families are differentiated by region (Jung & Jung, 2010). Second, the centers have to make every endeavor to improve service accessibility for the multicultural families such as providing transportation and strong public relations efforts (Jung & Jung, 2010). Third, the centers have to operate visiting education services more systematically because immigrant women want the number of visiting instructors to meet promptly (Jung & Jung, 2010).

Lastly, it also should be emphasized that private organizations help immigrant women and their families. They not only carry out contracted-out programs by the central or local governments, but also conduct support for illegal aliens who are not covered by the public support activities, and do research on policy for multicultural families (Lee, 2012). The public institutions offer services only for legitimate residents, but private organizations such as NPOs (non-profit organizations) and NGOs (non-governmental organizations) do provide support programs for all immigrants (Lee, 2012). Therefore, private institutions can
encourage civic participation and support for the immigrants who are excluded from the public bodies’ activities and benefits (Lee, 2012). According to a religious group’s statistics\(^4\), as of 2010, there were a total of nearly six hundred immigrant welfare organizations including a large number of religious institutions and NGOs. This number, counting diverse types of private organizations working not only for immigrant women but also for immigrant workers or North Korean defectors, is three times the number of multicultural family support centers operated by the public sector (Hong, 2011). In spite of the large number, the support activities by private organizations are relatively slight for now (Lee, 2012) because most of them, religious institutions or not, are not financially stable (Hong, 2011). Private organizations conduct education programs to adapt immigrants to Korean society, such as Korean language classes, cooking classes, computer classes, and cultural experience programs, and education programs for multicultural children, like supplementary classes for Korean, English and math, creativeness development, art courses, and culture of aesthetic sentiments. Also, multicultural family programs by private groups include free medical care, diverse seminars, family-to-family affiliations, family outings, camps, and year-end recitals (Hong, 2011). To remove obstacles to the governance of the local governments and private organizations and keep a balance of power between them, the central government should simplify complicated procedures for founding NPOs and NGOs and provide budget support for the local governments and private organizations (Lee, 2012).

Furthermore, in some particular cases, some detailed recommendations need to be created in order to strengthen foreign wives and their families. So, these recommendations represent a strengths-based approach for immigrant women and their families. First, policy

\(^4\) See http://liveinkorea.kr/center
should provide social support and government support programs that encourage social participation. Since this study examines immigrant women’s strengths that impact their adjustment and marital satisfaction, the points of strength are important factors to apply to policy directions. As self-esteem of immigrant women was found to be one of the contextual conditions influential to the phenomenon, one of policy strategies on establishing a supportive environment for immigrant women to develop their potentials and strengths in social supporting networks is required in order to enhance the women’s self-esteem and positive perspective. In order to promote diverse social support networks for married immigrant women, a system of aid that enables continuous and organic intervention should be established so that it would connect unofficial networks (e.g., volunteer activities, religious groups, and mentors), private institutions, supports from local self-governing bodies, and NGOs as well as GOs (Governmental Organizations). To be more specific, MFSCs should establish diverse tailor-made capability building programs. Furthermore, local community meetings or events are needed to provide an opportunity for the immigrant women to meet with the neighboring native people; this should not be a temporary event but a fundamental chance to make Koreans into continuous and positive supporting agents for immigrant women’s successful settlement. Social participation is also one of the strengths of immigrant women. Those future-oriented success pursuers who actively participated in various social activities were more likely to be satisfied with their lives in Korea. The other two patterns, pliable adapters and skeptical immigrants who endured, were participated less in social activities, but they were searching for opportunities. Governmental support for immigrant women’s social participation, such as vocational training and job matching services, is more required. In addition, social activities and vocational-capability-building
services that confer financial satisfaction and stability are desperately needed. It was found that immigrant women’s biggest motivation was a desire to live in a well-off country and to support their parents financially. In this study, most future-oriented success pursuers appreciated the fact that their husbands supported their parents, but some of the pliable adapters and skeptical women’s husbands in general were financially unstable. These immigrant women were disappointed with this fact in the early stages of their lives in Korea, but they gradually pulled themselves up, wishing to be of help to their own family finances as well as to their home families. Likewise, the participants in this research exhibited a strong desire for social participation, vocational training and job matching programs aiming for a specific bread-winning opportunity. One challenge is to develop diverse occupations for immigrant women who are settled down to some extent and have become fluent in Korean so that they can utilize their multicultural advantages and capabilities by participating in social and financial activities. Most of the immigrant women had 3D (Dirty, Dangerous, Difficult) jobs such as working at a factory or a restaurant, and yet their income was little while their work was intense. On the contrary, some women among the future-oriented success pursuers were highly educated, bilingual, and thus competent; they were looking for a professional career regarding their cultural diversity, and being a bilingual was an asset. With this purpose, some of the women were working as interpreters at a welfare center, as language instructors (e.g., English and Chinese), and as multicultural instructors. Such cases seemed most desirable because they presented immigrant women with their own identity utilizing their strengths and contributing to the benefit of Korean society. Therefore, married immigrant women’s social participation should be promoted in order for them to enhance self-esteem “self-efficacy” and to contribute to the development of Korean society.
as members of the society.

Second, to strengthen immigrant wives and to have them lead independent lives both economically and socially, policies should encourage them to take responsibility for both their human rights and their obligations. On the one hand, the current policies have contributed to an improvement of their human rights to some extent, but some detailed issues are still waiting to be solved. For example, one of the participants who belonged to the pattern of skeptical persons who endured had experienced the pain of miscarriage while lifting a heavy load at a factory when she was pregnant. According to Cha’s (2009) research on migrant women’s labor, these women work longer than most Koreans, but they receive lower wages. In worst cases, most of them are not aware of the national minimum wages. This kind of basic rights issue may be tacitly accepted when the Korean government pays less attention to this issue and Korean natives allow themselves to discriminate against or ignore other ethnic groups. A number of advanced multicultural countries such as the U.S.A, Canada, European countries, Singapore and China have accepted the indiscriminative and reciprocity principle in terms of policy regulations. In particular, Singapore is one good example of an Asian country that positively maintains a multicultural society organized through “the merit system” that operates regardless of the race or ethnic group so that members of the society can enjoy social success (Choi, 2009). The other example is that in order to protect the rights of immigrant women and to provide fundamental human rights for expatriates, a new bill that restricts racism and human trafficking is advised. While these measures are basic factors that allow immigrant women to keep their rights in the family and the society and to participate as members, these women, particularly those from underdeveloped countries, were being excluded from such rights. Considering this situation,
swift intervention on this issue is urgently needed. That is, discrimination and prejudice stemming from racism should be reversed in order to reduce subjective feelings (impulses) of discrimination. Current efforts made by the government and civil organizations are limited because the range of their focus is no more than the media; future efforts should be focused on improving experiential awareness through contacts. Thus, starting from local support centers for married immigrant women, local social welfare centers, educational institutions, etc. should promote more programs for social participation of immigrant women as well as contacts with local neighbors. Through these multicultural programs and projects, a place for gatherings with local people and opportunities to develop a considerate attitude toward different cultures and races can be fostered. On the other hand, fortunately, new bills have been recently passed for the married immigrant women and multicultural families with a multitude of problems. Yet these measures are still not enough to protect their rights because they are focusing on immigrant women’s fast acculturation rather than on protecting their rights. What is more, married immigrant women are not actually aware of what rights they have or how they should be protected; therefore, the focus should be on the improvement of these aspects. Most of all, as a measure of preventing human trafficking, the weakness of international matchmaking agency control and the customer protection strategies should be pointed out. To be specific, the contents of the matchmaking service or the process, and illegal matchmaking aiming for a profit are not at all under control of the administration or the judiciary. Thus we must call for an enhancement of judicial control. Not only is that, but a unified system on this issue recommended because the related businesses are widely spread among various departments and therefore ineffective. In fact, it is proposed that the current "Marriage Agency Business Management Act" should be
amended to correct the problems caused by the present marriage agencies such as marriage decision in a short period of 'marriage trip', poor interpretation (Kim & Kim, 2011), and lack of information on women's decision-making (Jeoung, 2012). The act, currently prescribing notice of the marriage partner’s personal information to the other side, interpretation service, and punishments for violations, has to also include clauses about monitoring to guarantee the fulfillment of the present regulations (Jeoung, 2012). The current law, even though including clauses about compensation for loss or damage, is frequently insufficient because immigrant women often do not have relevant documents including a contract. Consequently, monitoring on the marriage contract has to be included in the law (Jeoung, 2012). Also, the ambiguous concept of "illegal means" in the law prohibiting advertisement for marriage applicants with illegal means or tricks is problematic (Jeoung, 2012). On the other hand, policies should also encourage immigrants to take solidarity as a civic responsibility. Gilbert (2004) describes globalization as a challenge to solidarity in the welfare state in terms of national identity, and he insists that social rights of citizenship have to be balanced by obligation. This obligation may give more confidence to the immigrant wives. For example, some Filipina wives who belong to the pattern of future-oriented success pursuers are actively working as volunteer English teachers in afterschool programs at their children’s elementary schools. Other evidence regarding the importance of obligation is that many women desire to get a job not only because of financial reasons but as a means for social participation. These activities make them feel pride and a sense of satisfaction. Even skeptical immigrants who regretted the choice of international marriage were looking for jobs and volunteer work to overcome a sense of instability.

The third recommendation to strengthen support for international marriage assures
that immigrant women’s voices are transmitted to policy makers. Lee (2008) also suggests that the government should recognize immigrant women’s reflections on the policies and include their voices in policy agendas in the near future. Setting up the official channels at the public level is required so that these women can express their needs and opinions, raise questions, and suggest changes in order to revise and add to government policies (Lee, 2008). The one example is that premarital education programs for international couples should be institutionalized. Considering the fact that numerous international couples do not have enough time to get to know each other (as an example, some of the participants whose marriages were set up in just a couple of days), such programs should be institutionalized and practiced as a mandatory course. Among the programs, topics on social skills (e.g., skills for communication, considerate listening, and interpersonal relationships) and each spouse’s culture should be essentially offered. To realize this suggestion, organizations to foster multicultural social workers and counselors and to promote such programs should be established. Moreover, the policies’ demands are very different according to their environments and immigrant’s characteristics (Kim & Shin, 2007). For example, a childcare service for immigrant women is more urgent in rural areas than in urban areas due to lack of provision (Seol, 2006). This study shows that skeptical immigrants who endure had fear and weaker support systems than future-oriented success pursers and pliable adapters had. Although the policy makers cannot respond to all of their needs, listening to these women’s voices may help lawmakers create policies that are more practical and avoid wasting immigrant women’s lives.

Fourth, policies should be decided and managed recognizing shifts in direction from a homogeneous society to multicultural heterogeneity with the ideas of acceptance and
flexibility. In other words, the government and society of Korea should seek to adopt a cultural integration policy instead of focusing on cultural assimilation (Kim, 2010). The Grand Plan may pursue a “Policy Plan to Support the Social Integration of International Marriage Female Migrants, their Families and Children,” but its results and limitations refer to the transfer of customs in a simple one-way process (Kim, 2010). It is not enough for immigrant women to learn the Korean language and customs if Korea desires to establish a multicultural society. To achieve multiculturalism, this research agrees with Kang’s suggestion (2006) that husbands and other family members should also learn the immigrant women’s cultures, languages and customs. Among future-oriented success pursuers, if the husbands learned about the wives’ culture and language, the wives were happier. Whereas among pliable adapters and skeptical persons who endure, if the husbands neglected or showed insufficient interests in their wives’ culture and language, the wives were unsatisfied with their married lives. The immigrants could be allowed to contribute some of their own cultural traits to Korean society, and the distinct culture and life of immigrant women should be fully respected because they are making efforts to be members of Korean society. There is also another cultural factor that seems not to be fair in making policies. For instance, it is easier to obtain Korean nationality for Korean Americans than for migrant women due to emphasizing the bloodline. Through acknowledgment of some unfair issues in the multicultural process, the policy will help to establish a successful multicultural society in Korea and to empower immigrant wives to have a better life. If the citizenship is hard to obtain for their marriage in addition to other factors, the status of immigrant women could result in them being either citizens, denizens, or dwellers. Their rights and responsibilities will vary depending on their immigration status. More than anything, the most important
factor for a married immigrant woman’s successful life in Korea is a stable status; a stable status is made possible mostly by achieving citizenship. According to the statistics, only 30.7% of married immigrant women achieved citizenship in 2007 (The Ministry of Public Administration and Security, 2008). Attaining citizenship seemed somewhat problematic; because of the age restriction, immigrant women under age were not able to gain citizenship, and this might be a violation of human rights. Also, those who were desperate for citizenship endured a certain period (two years) required for naturalization, no matter how severe the family violence they were suffering. Moreover, if the immigrant woman got divorced within that period, she was to be expelled right away unless she proved her husband’s responsibility (e.g., for the violence) in their divorce. Not only that, even if she proved her husband’s fault in spite of many difficulties, the qualifications for citizenship were too fastidious, and earning an income was not allowed during the legal proceedings, which made it difficult for the woman to concentrate on her case. Among the participants who are skeptical persons who endure, a husband and his mother were suspicious that the wife might run away and thus kept delaying the process of naturalization; what is worse, they took her registration card away from her for the same reason. In preparation for such a case, the nationality law should be revised so that an immigrant woman can achieve citizenship through marriage or by an application. However, the reason for the government’s tardiness on this issue is that there have been many cases of immigrant women cheating on their husbands and running away after achieving the citizenship. To be specific, statistics from the Korean National Police Agency show that among immigrant women, approximately 10% of women have run away as 3,610 women ran away while there were about 33,000 married couples in 2010 in
Korea. Although it is true that current institutions are the result of such incidents, it must be also considered that there are many other immigrant women suffering disadvantages. Until recently, there was a regulation that a person must give up his or her original nationality within six months after naturalization to Korea. From 2011, however, dual-citizenship has been legalized. This has become good news for some Japanese immigrant women who had hesitated to gain Korean citizenship. The new law allows these women to maintain their right of citizenship in their native country and thus, their inheritance from their Japanese parents. The migration control regulation, which is presently regulated by the migration control enforcement regulations, should also be revised in order to make the policy for the right of permanent residence (F-5) directly regulated by the regulation instead of the enforcement regulations. If citizenship is not given on the event of marriage, conferring at least the fundamental resident right on a citizen’s spouse should be positively discussed. Furthermore, even an unregistered spouse of a citizen should be allowed to have her status changed as long as she continues to be in the marriage. In this way, harsh treatment and family violence would decrease, and Korean spouses would be free from the stigma that they are potential assailters.

Lastly, a system of networks among governmental and private organizations that support married immigrant women requires consistency. Although the amount of recent services from the government, self-governing bodies, and private organizations has been rapidly increasing, programs and services by these organizations and the government have overlapped. As a result, distribution of resources encountered negative unforeseen

consequences. Few immigrant women roam around here and there without a sense of belonging to supportive organizations (Cho, 2010). In addition, it is wasting the national tax. In this sense, establishing a system of networks among governmental and private organizations seems to be a way of streamlining the costs for multicultural projects and preventing stigma attached to assistance for immigrants. Thus, organizing public and private services for such projects and consistency in policies are both necessary.

**Strengths and Limitations of the Study**

Given the background that the ideology of a multicultural society has become evident and has continued to be a social issue, this study possesses the following advantages: first, this research with in-depth interviews examines the acculturation process, potentials, and efforts of immigrant women who have lived in Korea from three to twelve years. The study gains significance in that it suggests the participants’ coping strategies and ways of overcoming challenges from their actual experiences and that it contributes to the expansion of the field of multicultural studies, which had been limited. That is, the perspective and voices of married immigrant women voluntarily witnessing their own experience were reflected in this study. As the phenomenon of multicultural families has newly appeared since 2000, various studies in diverse academic fields have been conducted focusing on state policy or social welfare with a macroscopic perspective. Besides, they have emphasized the hardships in multicultural families. Therefore, an integral understanding of these families was restricted, and studies with a microscopic approach have been called for. In this sense, the inside view of this research enables a more fundamental approach and the results seem to be helpful for a sound understanding of immigrant women and future policies related to them.
Second, this research contributes to a positive perception of immigrant women with its focus on their strengths in terms of adjustment and marital satisfaction rather than on their weaknesses. So far, the introductory research and the early approach on this issue saw the women as weak or as victims, or they were dominated by a discriminatory discourse that one-sidedly asked for their adjustment to Korean society. With their fixed images on immigrant women as victims of international marriage, early studies depicted these women as passive adapters. In order to move out of the fixed discourse on immigrant women, this study has attempted an approach that appreciates and accepts diversities and appreciates immigrant women as drivers of life, focusing on their strengths (Suzuki, 2003). Therefore, this research would add to enlarging and facilitating the range of immigrant women with a multi-faceted perspective and approach. That is, the importance of this research lies in its presentation of immigrant women’s potential and resilience, which allows them to overcome numerous crisis and stress.

Third, this study was conducted mainly in Gyunggi province where the population of multicultural families was dense. Past studies on international marriage have targeted rural areas. On the other hand, this research considered the fact that the location of multicultural families varied and had its focus on areas with dense populations of multicultural families. The research participants were in various living environments including urban and rural areas.

However, this research has several limitations: first, its result is limited and is not generalizable to the whole population of married immigrant women in Korea, because of the intentional/theoretical sample selection. Those in-depth interviewees were from a few cities in Gyunggi province; in addition, their native countries were restricted to five countries, all
of which limit this study and make it not a statistically representative study.

Second, it is admitted here that there is a discrepancy between the language, culture, and experiences of the participants and those of the researcher. Interviews were conducted with a semi-structured questionnaire, and only few participants who were slightly limited in Korean way of expression needed the researcher’s special attention and understanding. Of course, these selected participants had good enough Korean or English skills to be interviewed, but still there were some limitations in their discussion of deep issues as neither of the two languages was their mother tongue. In addition, the researcher had small difficulties in drawing out appropriate answers to the interview questions because of the cultural difference between the researcher and the participants. Although the researcher had studied related literature in order to understand the participants, having complete empathy is admitted to be impossible as the researcher does not share their experience. What is more, families of the participants were suspicious about the researcher interviewing the participants due to the characteristics of immigrant women, but later they showed a cooperative attitude after understanding the researcher’s intention. This initial suspicion may have had an impact on the participants’ responses.

Third, the researcher felt a limitation in her knowledge and skills for dealing with the factors calling for counseling. As confidentiality was the first priority in conducting this research, the researcher did her best to keep the promise written in the consent form to protect participants’ confidential issues. At some point, however, the researcher had no other way but to discuss with a professor serving immigrant women’s rights at a college since a participant’s rights had been violated by her husband and mother-in-law; of course, the participant’s personal information was not revealed. Additionally, another participant visited the
researcher after an interview, asking the researcher to counsel her for divorce. As the participant’s plan was to return to her home country without informing her husband, the researcher had a moral conflict as a social worker and also as a researcher. The separation of these two roles is not clear. A researcher should keep in mind participants’ confidentiality and should listen to what they want to say or to observe without interfering (Orb et al., 2001). In addition, a social worker may be obligated to protect not only the woman but also her family. In this case, the researcher confronted with an ethical dilemma— to maintain confidentiality or to deal with the ethical and legal issues by telling her family if the participant would decide to divorce or run away without informing her husband. In addition, the researcher gave advice or suggested to get an appropriate treatment or counseling service (Orb et al., 2001).

Although a qualitative researcher may establish rapport while interviewing, the researcher felt her role was limited when the role of a counselor was required. Fortunately, the one who considered a divorce has changed her mind and is enduring her situation because she realized that her children urgently needed her care.

Fourth, although the research focus was the immigrant women, the researcher discovered that research restricted only to the women is limited in its ability to present a dynamic understanding of them. For this reason, the perspectives of the two husbands of the participants were included in this research. In order to enlarge the scope to better understand immigrant women’s challenges and strengths, the future researcher should incorporate perceptions of the husbands, mothers-in-law, and children altogether in the study.

**Suggestions for Future Research**

Suggestions for future research are as follows: First, it is recommended that more detailed samples of married immigrant women to study the kinds of differences there are in
strengths and challenges according to the character of each sample. In other words, a more specified approach is recommended for future studies to gain more detailed data. Also, it was mentioned that the samples would not be able to represent the whole body of immigrant women and thus generalizing the results is not possible. Therefore, future studies investigating whether those strengths discovered in this research are applicable to other immigrant women from different backgrounds would be required. To be specific, the participants of this study were limited to five countries (i.e., the Philippines, Vietnam, China, Mongolia, and Cambodia), and the number of the participants from each country was not even, which is problematic for generalization. That is, despite the uniqueness in participants from each nation (e.g., various patterns of cultural differences, acculturation processes, overcoming challenges, lifestyles, and peculiar ways of thinking), these aspects were not fully investigated in detail. For future studies, therefore, an examination of married immigrant women’s native lifestyles and cultural perceptions, causes of conflict and strengths, and acculturation patterns, which vary depending on the participants’ nationality, is suggested. Not only qualitative studies that allow a more profound understanding of these women’s adjustment, but also quantitative studies should be conducted. For example, whether a woman received various kinds of support or not, whether she had a job, her educational level, the different levels of income, differences in living environment (e.g., rural or urban areas), having a job, language fluency in Korean, motivation for marriage (e.g., financial, religious reasons, etc.), duration of marriage, length of stay in Korea, living with the in-laws, and husband’s financial status- studying all of these factors could enable a discovery of immigrant women’s additional potential, thus leading to a more comprehensive approach to intervention.
Next, it is proposed that integral studies on immigrant women’s husbands, children, and the in-laws are needed as previous studies focused only on immigrant women. Likewise, this study has dealt with immigrant women only. However, considering the fact that their strengths and challenges are affected their families, this researcher felt that a study of their husbands and families was strongly needed as well. The husbands themselves were facing diverse problems, were socially weak and sometimes in urgent need (Choi, 2009; Lee, 2010). However, the amount of research focusing on their lives and mental health is minimal. If more studies emphasizing the strengths of multicultural families, such as strengths of husbands, children, and in-laws were conducted, a deeper and richer understanding of multicultural families would help to decrease negative perceptions, and present these families in a more appropriate context.

Third, when studying immigrant women, the researcher suggests using various channels for meeting immigrant women. As a consequence of the need to interview immigrant women in person, this study was conducted at multicultural centers at colleges, multicultural centers within local welfare centers, a university department of multicultural social welfare studies, local communities and churches, and other public/private organizations running educational programs for these women. However, those women who are isolated and have no access to these facilities or other immigrant women who are highly acculturated in Korean society were out of the range of this research; this is another limitation. Therefore, a comparison between those without any access to any kinds of support and those conspicuously acculturated should be also conducted.

Fourth, a qualitative research study with an approach to diverse contexts among immigrant women is necessary. This research project has studied immigrant women married
to Korean men who have adjusted relatively well to their conditions, including those who came to Korea only for marriage, or who came for work or study and then got married in Korea; for this reason, other cases of married immigrant women, such as those who live separate from their husbands or who are in complex situations, were excluded from this study. Such variety in these women’s lives was discovered during the research process. To illustrate, some women became breadwinners because of their husbands’ unemployment and financial difficulties in their families. Some were living alone after divorce, separation, or the husband’s death; others were hiding from regulations as their status had become illegal after the break-up of their family; some had returned to their home country after separation from the family and then had come back to Korea for a job. This research acknowledges the fact that women with various immigration status or experience are living in Korea.

According to Kim (2011), the divorce rate of international couples rapidly increased from 1,694 to 11,692 in the years from 2000 to 2009. She proposes that the calls for political response to couples in international marriages with various problems will keep increasing. As a consequence of an analysis of the original data from the “2009 investigation into the actual condition of the multicultural family,” 5.2% (i.e., 6,064 people) of 117,516 immigrant women were divorced, separated, or staying in Korea. If these women were without citizenship, their status became degenerated, their rights were taken away, and they faced massive poverty and anxiety similar to that of immigrant laborers. Because immigrant women in this predicament are in even more vulnerable conditions that creates greater feelings of isolation and hardship, an in-depth qualitative study with a strengths-based approach to their lives is essential.

6 See http://www.yonhapnews.co.kr/bulletin/2011/11/07/0200000000AKR20111107120300372.HTML?did=1179m
Conclusion

In this research, the process of married immigrant women’s adjustment and married life was analyzed to establish a theory emphasizing the strengths of these women in overcoming numerous challenges and hardships in the process. With this purpose, sixteen immigrant women and two of their husbands were interviewed in depth. The marriage period of all of the participants ranged from three to twelve years. In order to understand their experiences, the researcher first reviewed their psychological and social motivations for choosing an international marriage with an approach focusing on their strengths to understand how their journey had been and how they had reacted during it. In the process, the researcher focused on these women’s positive potentials, which are strengths that helped them to maintain their married life. Instead of understanding these women as passive subjects and focusing on providing aid for them, the researcher focused on fundamental ways they developed their potential as active leaders. Previous studies on married immigrant women depicted them as experiencing numerous conflicts, difficulties in settling down, and family violence, all stemming from patriarchal and exclusive tendencies in Korean society. Because of the relevance of the challenges from the women’s perspective that focused on their troubles, resolutions for those problems were included in the study. The study pointed out the need for intervention and practical programs for married immigrant women as a responsibility of Korean society. However, the study also revealed that these women’s experiences were not always negative. During the process of acculturation, many women were coping with the changes and the new environment and showing a rather high level of satisfaction with their lives and marriages. Despite the research, exhibiting successful cases of immigrant women, information on the fundamental force that enabled the women to
overcome challenges and maintain marriage have been hard to find.

So far, support and intervention for immigrant women emphasizes pathological problem resolution. However, a new perspective is called for because an ex post facto intervention based on the pathological approach is no longer effective for resolving the difficulties in multicultural families. What is required are preventive measures. Besides, social welfare in practice is moving from a problem-centered approach to a strengths-centered approach, and there are studies revealing the effectiveness of the shift in actual cases. Thus, the new approach would serve as an alternative perspective applicable for studies on married immigrant women. After going through pain and difficulties during the process of adjustment, immigrant women build their own unique resilience that will further strengthen them for future hardships so that they become healthy members of their families and society. This study proposes the alternative of understanding immigrant women’s strengths and positive forces as well as their problems, which is a new and fresh perspective on treating immigrant women.

All in all, even though immigrant women actively seek a successful settlement with their best efforts, they may not be able to spread their wings but rather may live in regret for marrying Korean men if Koreans and the society keep their exclusive attitudes and do not allow them an opportunity to live as Korean citizens. This is not only unfortunate for immigrant women but also a significant disadvantage for the society. For this reason, it is imperative for the Korean society to view immigrant women not as foreigners who have to be acculturated but as people with unique cultures and values, neighbors to live with, contributors to the development of Korean culture, and resources for the national competency.
APPENDIX A: Informed Consent Form
(English Version)

Title of Research Project:
Challenges and Strengths Ajustment and Marital Satisfaction for Immigrant Women Who Married Korean Influencing Men in Korea

Investigator:
Mihye Choi,
University of Hawai’i School of Social Work
Phone: 808-294-5427
Email: mihyec@hawaii.edu

This research project is being conducted as a component of a dissertation for a doctoral degree. The purpose of this study is to investigate strengths and challenges influencing adjustment and marital satisfaction of migrant women who married Korean men in Korea.

Participation in the project will consist of filling out a form on background information about yourself, and a short interview with the investigator. Because you are an immigrant woman and also a wife of Korean man, you are being asked to participate. You will be asked to participate in a sixty to ninety minute interview. During the interview, questions will be asked about your experience of life in Korea, how you get along with your husband, what challenges you face in your marriage, and what you have done to overcome those challenges and maintain a happy marriage. Moreover, the questions include about how the interviewee perceives the relationship with her children and what kind of support has been receiving that affects your marital satisfaction. The interview will take place at any location that is convenient, maintains your privacy, and is acceptable to you. With your permission, the interview will be tape recorded for the purpose of transcription.

The investigator believes there will be minimal or no risk to participating in this research project. However, there are some possible risks from being in this study. Since answering some of the questions about emotional issues may make you uncomfortable or upset, it is your right to refrain from answering any questions you do not want to answer and to stop in the individual interview.

The investigator believes there is little or no risk to participating in this research project. However, as a result of participating in this study you may feel empowered because the findings from this research are intended to strengthen migrant women who marry Korean men in Korea in order to help their marital satisfaction and well-being in Korea.
All information you provide will be confidential. All research records will be stored in a locked file in the primary investigators’ desk for the duration of the research project, and the only person who will have access to it will the primary investigator. On the transcriptions, participants will not be identifiable. Once transcription is completed, the audio files will be destroyed. Once the audio files are destroyed, your name and voice will not be connected to the data in any way. Audio files digital recodes tapes will be destroyed following transcription. Transcripts will be kept until the project is finished and will be destroyed at the conclusion. All other research records will be destroyed upon completion of the project.

As appreciation of time spent participating in the research project, you will receive a gift card. Your participation is strictly voluntary and you are free to withdraw from participation at any time during the duration of the project with no penalty, or to refuse to participate entirely. You are free not to answer any questions you do not wish to answer and to stop the interview at any time.

If you have any questions regarding this research project, please contact the researcher, Mihye Choi, at 82-31-654-3358(Korea), 1-808-294-5427 (U.S.A).

If you have any questions regarding your rights as a research participant, please contact the UH Committee on Human Studies at (808) 956-5007, or uhirb@hawaii.edu.

**Participant’s permission:**

I have read and understand the above information, and agree to participate in this research project.

Name (printed)

__________________________________________  __________________________ 
Signature                                              Date
APPENDIX B: Informed Consent Form
(Korean Version: 면접동의서)

논문 제목:
한국 남성과 결혼한 이주여성들의 적응과 결혼만족도에 영향을 주는 강점들과 당면한 과제

연구자:
최미혜
하와이 주립대학교 사회복지학과 박사과정
전화번호: 031-654-3358(집), 010-2396-3358(핸드폰)
이메일: mihyec@hawaii.edu

이 프로젝트는 하와이 대학교 사회복지학 박사 논문을 위한 것으로 한국 남성과 결혼한 이주여성들의 적응과 결혼만족도에 영향을 주는 강점들과 당면한 과제를 연구하는 것을 목적으로 합니다.

먼저 이 연구를 위해 여러분 자신을 소개하는 간단한 내용을 서술하신 후에 연구자의 질문에 답하는 형식의 인터뷰에 참여하시게 됩니다. 여러분은 한국인 남편과 결혼하여 한국에 거주하는 이민자로서 참여하게 됩니다. 인터뷰는 60분에서 90분 가량 진행되게 될 것입니다. 인터뷰 동안 여러분은 그 동안 한국에서 쌓 였던 경험들이 무엇인지, 남편과는 어떻게 지내웠는지, 결혼생활에 있어서 겪는 도전들을 무엇인지 그리고 이러한 도전들과 행복한 결혼생활을 유지하기 위해 어떻게 극복하고 있는지에 대한 질문들을 받게 될 것입니다. 또한 여러분과는 어떻게 지내왔는지, 그리고 어떠한 도움들이 여러분의 결혼생활에 도움을 주고 있 는지 질문 받게 될 것입니다. 인터뷰가 이루어지는 곳은 참여자에게 편안하며, 참여자의 사생활을 존중 받을 수 있으며 참여자가 기꺼운 마음으로 수용하는 장소를 선택하겠습니다. 참여자의 허락아래 필사본을 위해 인터뷰는 녹음될 것입니다.

이 연구에 참여하는 동안 여러분에게는 최소한의 위험이 존재하거나 또한 어떤 위험성도 전혀 없다고 봅니다. 그러나 불가피하게 잠재된 위험이 있을 수 있습니다. 예를 들어 어떤 감정적인 질문을 받게 되는 것이 여러분을 불편하게 만들 수도 있고 실망을 줄 수도 있기 때문에 여러분이 원하지 않는 질문에 대해 대답을 거절할 수도 있고 인터뷰를 끝낼 수 있는 권리도 있습니다.

여러분이 제공한 모든 정보는 비밀로 지켜집니다. 이 연구가 진행되는 동안 모든 기록은 파일에 봉합되어 연구자의 책상 안에 보관될 것이며, 연구자 이외에는 그 어떤 누구도 이것을 열어 보지 못할 것입니다. 기록본은 누가 참여자인지 알아볼 수 없을 것입니다. 기록본이 완성되면, 녹음된 파일은 파기될 것입니다. 녹음파일이 파기 되면 참여자의 이름과 목소리는 더 이상 데이터에 남아 있지 않게 됩니다. 기록본은 연구가 끝날 때까지 사용 될 것이며 결국은 역시 파기할 것입니다. 이 밖에 다른 연구 기록들도 연구가 완성 되면 모두 파기될 것입니다.

이 연구에 참여해주신 여러분은 참여에 대한 감사의 표현으로 소액의 상품권을 받게 될 것입니다. 여러분이 이 연구에 참여하는 것은 여러분의 자원이므로 연구가 진행되는 동안 만약 불편하시다면 언제든지 철회하실 수 있으며 전체 시간에 참여하는 것이 힘들면 언제든지 그만두실 수 있습니다. 또한 대답하기 곤란한 질문은 답하지 않을 자유와 그만큼 권리가 있습니다.
이 연구에 관한 질문이 있으면 언제든지 이 번호로 연락 주시기를 바랍니다. 최미혜: 031-654-3358 (집), 010-2396-3358
여러분이 이 연구에 참여할 때 여러분의 권리에 관한 의문사항이 있으면 여기로 연락주세요: 하와이 주립대학교 윤리 위원회 1-808-956-5007 혹은 uhirb@hawaii.edu

참가자의 동의

저는 위의 모든 정보들을 읽고 이해했으며 이 연구에 참여하기를 동의합니다.

이름

________________________  ________________________

서명                     날짜
February 3, 2011

TO: Mihye Choi
Principal Investigator
School of Social Work

FROM: Nancy R. King
Director

Re: CHS #18749- “Strengths and Challenges of Migrant Women who Married Korean Men in Korea”

This letter is your record of CHS approval of this study as exempt.

On February 3, 2011, the University of Hawai‘i (UH) Committee on Human Studies (CHS) approved this study as exempt from federal regulations pertaining to the protection of human research participants. The authority for the exemption applicable to your study is documented in the Code of Federal Regulations at 45 CRF 46 (2).

Exempt studies are subject to the ethical principles articulated in The Belmont Report, found at http://www.hawaii.edu/irb/html/manual/appendices/A/belmont.html

Exempt studies do not require regular continuing review by the Committee on Human Studies. However, if you propose to modify your study, you must receive approval from CHS prior to implementing any changes. You can submit your proposed changes via email at uhirb@hawaii.edu. (The subject line should read: Exempt Study Modification.) CHS may review the exempt status at that time and request an application for approval as non-exempt research.

In order to protect the confidentiality of research participants, we encourage you to destroy private information which can be linked to the identities of individuals as soon as it is reasonable to do so. Signed consent forms, as applicable to your study, should be maintained for at least the duration of your project.

This approval does not expire. However, please notify CHS when your study is complete. Upon notification, we will close our files pertaining to your study.

If you have any questions relating to the protection of human research participants, please contact CHS at 956-5007 or uhirb@hawaii.edu. We wish you success in carrying out your research project.
APPENDIX D: Interview Questions

The interview questions are the following:

1. What did you think about an international marriage before you married?
2. How did you meet your husband?
3. Why did you pick a Korean as a spouse?
4. What was your experience in Korea in the beginning? What factors helped you to adjust to Korea in the beginning?
5. What issues have you been facing in Korea? How did you cope with some of these difficulties?
6. When do you feel homesick? If you feel homesick, how do you overcome this emotion?
7. How do you get along with your husband?
8. Within the past years, what difficulties have you experienced in your relationship with your spouse?
9. Could you explain when you feel you are satisfied with your marriage?
10. Could you tell me how you cope with your marriage problems?
11. How do you want your spouse to behave?
12. What efforts have you made in order to maintain your marriage life?
13. How do you get along with your children?
14. What issues have you been confronting in raising children? How have you tried to overcome these issues?
15. Who gave you help in raising your children?
16. How is your relationship with other family members including your in-laws and relatives?
If the relationship is good, could you tell me how to maintain a healthy relationship?

If not, could you tell me how to deal with a difficult relationship?

17. Do you have close friends who helped you?

18. Whom do you talk to or go to if you need help?

19. Do you have any support groups? If so, what kind of support do you get from them?

20. Could you tell me whether you have sought professional help? To whom did you go?

What was helpful to you if you received professional help?

21. What factors have helped you to establish yourself including social services, programs and policies?

22. What do you think about ordinary Koreans’ perceptions toward your marriage?

23. How many times do you watch *Love in Asia* in a month?

24. How would you reply to the question, “What are the strengths of this program”?

25. What would you suggest to the Korean government or Korean society for improving multicultural families’ quality of life?
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