

Relationship of acculturation on stress, quality of life, self-esteem in Married Immigrant Women in Korea

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Abstract. Purpose: The purpose of this study was to examine acculturation on stress, quality of life, self-esteem in married immigrant women in Korea. **Method** The participants included 553 married immigrant women who met the eligibility criteria and agreed to participate in the study. Participants were evaluated for subjective assessment of married immigrant-related constructs using a self-report questionnaire, for stress, self-esteem, and quality of life (QOL). The analysis was done using SPSS for Windows, version 22.0 **Result** Women who have a low educational level, poor health and are dissatisfied with their marriage showed low self-esteem, and quality of life. Acculturation on stress had significant correlations with quality of life and self-esteem. **Conclusion:** Developing nursing interventions to enhance self-esteem and to reduce acculturation on stress toward improvement of QOL among married immigrant women is recommended.

Key words: Immigrant, Women, Quality of life, Self-esteem, Stress.

1 Introduction

International marriage in S. Korea has been increasing steadily since the 1990s. According to [1], in 2013, 25,963 marriages out of a total 322 807 marriages were internal marriages and among them, 2.4 % (7,656) were marriages between non-Korean men to Korean women and 5.7% (18,307) were marriages between Korean men to non-Korean women. This reflects that one out of every 18 marriages was an international marriage between a Korean male to a non-Korean female, subsequently increasing attention to international marriages by society as a whole. [1] Meanwhile, phenomenon of non-Korean women's immigrant to Korea through marriage was to pursue a stable life in a developed county rather than staying in their own country due to a lack of economic resources. In conclusion, international marriage between Korean men to non-Korean women resulted from rural Korean men's desire to start a family and non-Korean women's need to pursue a better quality of life and financial stability. Since many women came to S. Korea through marriage and did not have any specific skills, basic knowledge, or preparation to live in a foreign country, they soon faced challenges related to culture shock, language barrier, communication difficulty, disappointment from inability to achieve financial stability, factors related to child bearing and rearing, marital conflict, conflict between in-laws, and discrimination

based on society's prejudice [2]. Often times, many immigrant women through marriage (Immigrant women hereafter) are placed on a fine line between their native and foreign cultures, and rather than integrating two cultures, they are forced to adopt and live by the new cultural boundaries [3], [4]. These types of challenges and difficulties that immigrant women experience in Korea during the cultural adaptation process have been described by many scholars [1], [5].

However, despite these efforts, immigrant women's problems have not lessened, but have become more in-depth and complicated [6], [7]. To date, not enough research studies focusing on immigrant women exist in the current body of nursing knowledge. Furthermore, research studies focusing on identifying relationships between acculturative stress and quality of care and self-esteem are nearly non-existence. Therefore, in this research, acculturative stress, quality of life, and characteristics of self-esteem of immigrant women will be closely studied. Furthermore, this would identify general characteristics and its relationship between acculturation stress, self-esteem, and quality of life.

1.1 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to explore acculturation stress, self-esteem, and quality of life of immigrant women

2 Method

2.1 Research Design

The research design was descriptive research design study.

2.2 Samples and Data Collection

For this study, the data was collected from married immigrant women who received services from the Multicultural Center in six cities. The purpose of this study was explained, permission was asked and granted to access study samples: immigrant women who agreed to participate in this study. Six Multicultural Centers were included in final selection. Data was collected using survey questionnaires written in Korean, Filipino, Vietnamese, and Chinese. The primary researcher who fully understood the research and survey information visited facilities and explained the purpose and details of the research process to the immigrant women. The participants independently completed survey questions by following directions. When the participants did not understand the questions, the researcher provided clarification of the question. Data was collected between August and December, 2014.

2.3 Data analysis

After the completion of the encoding process of collected data, IBM SPSS 22.0 was used for statistical analysis. The steps of statistical analysis to answer the research questions in this study are as follows: First, the participants' demographic characteristics and acculturation stress, Self Esteem, quality of life was analyzed using frequency analysis, and descriptive statistics analysis. Second, in order to verify the relationship between the variables, ANOVA, T-test was performed.

3 Result

Differences of Quality of Life according to Socio-demographic Factors

There were significantly differences native place, age, educational level, religion, income level, migratory period, type of family, health level, occupation, and reason for marrying among quality of life (Table 1).

Table 1. Acculturation stress, self-esteem, quality of life according to general characteristics.
(N=553)

	Categories	n (%)	quality of life M (SD)	F/t	p	Post-Hoc
Native place	China	83	3.32 (.59)	12.534	.000	
	Vietnam	295	3.39 (.69)			
	Philippines	114	3.81 (.31)			
	Japan	24	3.92 (.35)			
	Uzbekistan	7	3.73			
	others	30	3.76 (.78)			
Age(year)	20-29	84	3.46 (.82)	2.676	.046	
	30-39	231	3.45 (.66)			
	40-49	197	3.62 (.54)			
	over 50	41	3.52 (.64)			
Academic background (women)	Elementary school	60	3.37 (.50)	4.623	.003	d>a, b
	middle school	125	3.38 (.54)			
	high school	230	3.57 (.72)			
Academic background (husband)	college above	138	3.61 (.60)	6.744	.000	d>b, c
	Elementary school	9	3.68 (.90)			
	middle school	61	3.31 (.44)			
Religion	high school	278	3.45 (.63)	-7.112	.000	
	college above	205	3.65 (.67)			
	No	313	3.35 (.59)			
	Yes	16	3.73 (.65)			

Residence	major city	46	3.42 (.46)	.631	.532
	small town	340	3.52 (.67)		
	rural area	167	3.53 (.63)		
	<100	64	3.11 (.55)		
Income level (10,000won)	100-200	232	3.52 (.52)	9.839	.000
	200-300	198	3.59 (.71)		
	300-400	42	3.51 (.88)		
	400-500	17	3.96 (.16)		
Migratory period (year)	0-2	245	3.36 (.67)	9.741	.000
	3-5	188	3.65 (.56)		
	6-8	78	3.56 (.60)		
	over 9	42	3.74 (.68)		
Type of family	couple	102	3.69 (.54)	19.557	.000
	couple+children	196	3.65(.64)		
	couple+children+parents-in-law	201	3.40 (.63)		
	couple+children+parents-in-law+grandparents	26	3.52 (.27)		
	others	28	2.69 (.48)		
Occupation (women)	housewife	433	3.47 (.61)	18.831	.000
	farming	59	3.30 (.62)		
	commerce	25	3.66 (.72)		
	manufacturing	7	4.85 (.00)		
	office job	29	4.13 (.41)		
Health	healthy	429	3.57 (.67)	8.246	.000
	Not good	104	3.29 (.55)		
visit mother country	one's			1.435	.231
	No	249	3.43 (.67)		
Reason marrying	Yes	304	3.58 (.61)	6.066	.000
	Korea improves futher economically.	57	3.35 (.49)		
	She wants an economic support to their family.	74	3.32 (.72)		
	She loves her husband	389	3.56 (.64)		
	She wants to leave home country absolutely	21	3.42 (.11)		
	Her family and relatives advised actively.	33	4.12 (.60)		

Levels of Quality of Life and related Variables

The levels of variables were showed acculturation stress 2.26(.64), self-esteem 3.5(.64), and quality of life 3.49(.49)(Table 2).

Table 2. The average level of the main factors (N=553)

Category	Min	Max	M±SD
acculturation stress	2.21	2.31	2.26±.64
Self-esteem	3.46	3.56	3.5±.64
Quality of life	3.45	3.54	3.49±.49

Correlations of related Variables with Quality of Life

Quality of life had significant correlations with acculturation on stress and self-esteem (Table3).

Table 3. Correlations of related Variables with Quality of Life (N=553)

	acculturation stress	quality of life	self-esteem
acculturation stress	1		
quality of life	-.418*	1	
self-esteem	-.404	.353*	1

4 Conclusions and Recommendations

The significance of this study was that the study result provided an understanding of immigrant women's acculturation stress and self-esteem and became a foundation to develop strategies for improving quality of life in S. Korea. The result of this study of the relationship between acculturation stress, self-esteem, and quality of life of immigrant women, provided practical implications for the need of program development to improve quality of life of the immigrant women. Upon close examination of the relationship between the main variables in relation to the demographic characteristics, acculturation stress was closely related to the immigrant period, presence or absence of visitation to their home country, and reasons for marriage whereas self-esteem was closely linked with the religion, immigrant period, and presence or absence of visitation to their home country. In addition, acculturation stress, quality of life, and self-esteem was closely related to each other. Based on the study results, these authors recommend the following: It is necessary to create a social atmosphere of acceptance of the immigrant women's own culture and support for the integration of their own and Korean culture. It is imperative that multi-cultural and community welfare center develop systematic to promote communication between immigrant women and their families in their home country through video conferencing methods (calls) at any time. In addition, countries need to develop international policies and agreement to support immigrant women for visiting their country. A follow-up study is needed to include immigrant women who are not receiving services from the multicultural or community welfare center, and women residing in other areas of the country. Further research is needed to identify other factors affecting the quality of life of the immigrant women in addition to the acculturation stress and self-esteem.

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