

Experience of Korean Women Who Have Foreign Immigrant Sisters-in-law as Family Members through Their Husbands' Brothers' International Marriage: A Ethnographic Study

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Abstract

This was a qualitative study designed to explore the daily lives of Korean sister-in-laws who took an immigrant woman through an international marriage as their new family member. The focus of this study was to discover what difficulties they had and what experiences affected them. Subjects were six Korean sister-in-laws, selected by snowball sampling. Data were collected from May 1 through August 31, 2013, using the ethnographic research method. A 1-to 2-hour session of in-depth, face-to-face interviews and informatory observation were conducted for each subject. The data were analyzed by an ethnographic study through an ongoing process. As a result, the data were organized into 6 categories, 14 main thematic domains and 31 properties. The categories included: "Blaming the sister-in-law who is different from what was expected," "Afraid of suffering damage from her," "Acknowledging the way of life of her own," "Understanding her as the same woman," "Accepting her as my family member" and "Being in harmony with her through trust and love." The Korean sisters-in-law in this study turned out to accept the immigrant woman as their family member through 14 main thematic domains. Korean sister-in-laws empathize with their foreign sister-in-laws because they are in the same circumstances as women, and love for the foreign sisters-in-law begins to germinate in the sisters-in-law as supporters through a stage of accepting them as their new family members. It is noted that this experience leads the families to healthy and stable harmony.

Keywords: *Immigrant, Women, Sister-in-law, life experience, Ethnographic research method*

1. Introduction

According to globalization with social change, the number of international marriages in South Korea was 4,710 cases in 1990, 1.2% of all marriages in Korea, slowly increasing to 42,356 in 2005 (13.5%) and decreasing slightly to 25,963 cases in 2013 (8%), which is still a high level [1].

Multi-cultural families formed through international marriage have brought about a new form of family relation that had not existed in Korean society, which has been a homogeneous nation [2]. The differences in cultural backgrounds and awareness have brought about conflict and difficulty between family members. In addition, South Korea is a society of patriarchal Confucian ideology, traditional family relations, and a male-

centered society, which has changed much in the 21st century. However, it is still patrilineal, which appears as a problem between foreign daughters-in-law and their in-laws. Studies of the difficulties in married immigrant women's lives in Korea have been conducted on patriarchal family culture, conflict with in-laws [3], relationships with in-laws [4] and in-laws' interference and control [5], and in these studies, Korean feministic values, that is, characteristics such as priority of the family over the individual, respect for parents and socio-economic fellowship among brothers, sisters and relatives turned out to have a lot of negative impacts on their life in Korea [5]. The relationship between the sisters-in-law in a family is a relative term for the relationship between more than two women when their husbands are brothers [6], and it is a secondary relationship with the husband in between, and a complicated relationship in the competition with parents-in-law [7]. Like the old saying goes, 'living with sisters-in-law is more fearful than living with a mother-in-law.' A family is a group centered on blood and hierarchical order, so in it, there are various relationships and principles of order, and affection between a mother-in-law and husband, satisfaction with daughters-in-law, support of the parents-in-law and property rights have influences on stress caused by conflict in the role between sisters-in-law [8]. Especially if sisters-in-law are foreigners, conflict in the role between sisters-in-law cannot help but be deepened due to cultural differences between the daughters-in-law. In the same in-laws' culture, in the daughters-in-law performing role, and especially, in the conflict between a mother-in-law and a daughter-in-law or conflict with husbands, sisters-in-law have double-sidedness, in that they may be most supportive of foreign women while they may be the target of the competition as the same women in the same position.

Most studies of married immigrant women and multi-cultural families were conducted on married immigrant women's conditions and measures, difficulties in adapting to Korean culture, social recognition of married immigrant women or children, the effects of programs for them and the policies for them as quantitative research. These suggested positive and progressive views as studies on multi-cultural families' identity, [9] and as a study approaching the interactions between parents-in-law and foreign daughters-in-law in multi-cultural families [10] and a study analyzing the experiences of conflicts between Korean mothers-in-law and foreign daughters-in-law living in rural areas with an ethnographic research method, anxiety of run-away daughters-in-law and psychological anxiety because of prejudice and discriminative attitudes in Korean society [11] as qualitative research. In addition, recent studies have been conducted with Korean husbands and mothers-in-law of the multi-cultural family members, but there are no studies of female family members or sisters-in-law. In a conflict situation between sisters-in-law, according to various interests of individuals and groups, they try to find several alliances, and in the family, if there is an agreed goal and the family's leader, the head of the household has a high persuasive power with the members, the conflict lasts shorter and is likely to be solved [12]. In addition, satisfaction with life is the sum of individual satisfaction in various independent areas of life, with differing weights [13]. Satisfaction with life is influenced most by social relations [14]. Raham [15] classified the conflict management approach into five types, including integration, accommodation, domination, avoidance and compromise, according to the degree of interest in others and themselves. First of all, integration is a part of cooperation and collaboration, in which they jointly pursue desires they have, through mutual-collaboration between the persons directly concerned with the conflicts, which is good as a basic solution method, but it has a demerit that it takes a lot of time to solve the conflicts. Second, avoidance is a process in which the parties concerned with the conflict avoid each other and delay the decision-making. This is temporarily effective, but conflicts are not fundamentally solved and potentially accumulated, which may rather bring about a bigger problem. Third, domination is coping with conflict through strong pressure with a method of competition or coercion. This is the fastest and most effective solution to conflicts, but there is victory

and defeat. Fourth, accommodation is acceptance, and since one's own desires are not met, it is not a good way of solving conflicts. Fifth, compromise is solving conflicts through concession by the persons directly involved. Compromise is a lower system than integration, but it is evaluated positively in that it goes through a process of mutual consultation. Through Raham's five types of ways [15], this study planned to check the process of conflicts in family relationships. Thus, this study attempted to reveal the nature and meaning of the experience of Korean sisters-in-law who have foreign sisters-in-law through in-depth interviews using Colaizzi's ethnographic method [16], draw sympathy and increase the understanding of the conflict between the sisters-in-law.

There have been many studies related to the married immigrant women's acceptance of another culture and difficulties in their adaptation, but there is no preceding research on the experience of Korean sisters-in-law having them as their family members with different cultures and interests, so it is very meaningful to explore the essence of the experience of these sisters-in-law concretely and in depth.

Therefore, this study aims to discuss the process in which Korean sisters-in-law accept foreign sisters-in-law as family made through the marriage of their family members and how they perceive and treat foreign sisters-in-law, regarding the conflicts appearing with the rapid increase of multi-cultural families. Moreover, it aims to seek a plan so that they can find the causes of conflicts in their lives and they could solve the conflicts actively and rationally themselves.

2. Method

2.1. Research Design

This study is an exploratory qualitative study applying a ethnographic research method to figure out what Korean sisters-in-law who have foreign women as their sisters-in-law experience in their daily lives.

2.2. Research Data Collection Procedures and Ethical Considerations

Data collection in this study was conducted until the data reached a saturation level from May 1 through August 31, 2013, and information providers totaled six Korean sisters-in-law with a married immigrant woman as their sister-in-law, introduced through neighbors who had formed a relationship with the researcher in order to obtain sufficient sincere interview data, who reached the saturation level in an analysis using snowball sampling. The general characteristics of the information providers are shown in Table 1.

Prior to research, approval was obtained from the Institutional Ethics Commission (HYIRB-13-022). The frequency and time of in-depth interviews were about 1 to 2 hours per session for each information provider, an open and unstructured questionnaire was used, so that the information providers could talk about their experiences, and to obtain data on their general information such as sex and age, a simple survey was used. For the prevention of missing data and their accuracy, under the consent of the information providers, records were made and notes were taken, which were transcribed by the researcher after the interviews.

Prior to the interviews, the participants received explanations of the purpose and method of the study, and the recording of the contents of the interviews, that the interview data would be used only for the purpose of the study, that the anonymity and confidentiality of the participants would be guaranteed, that they could withdraw from the study at any time during the progress of the research, and drew up a document form for agreement for research participation.

2.3. Preparation of Researchers

The researchers themselves are the tools of qualitative research, all the researchers in this study are qualitative researchers with careers in qualitative research, who had received training of qualitative research skills through qualitative research classes and seminars in a doctoral course. The researchers tried to exclude prejudice about the subjects and maintain continuous reflexivity so that there would not be any prejudice or personal experience affecting the processes of data collection and analysis. Throughout the research, consultation and evaluation were conducted by one qualitative researcher, a professor of nursing, and the results of the analysis went through the final confirmation process by one of the main information providers.

2.4. Validity and Reliability of Research

Qualitative data analysis is an ongoing process made simultaneously with data collection. For the accuracy of the qualitative research, all over the stage like data collection, analysis, result analysis and description, this study attempted to secure four kinds of criteria for evaluation, in other words, credibility (human ability to describe and interpret experience), fittingness (ability to apply the result of the study in other contexts, which is a matter of generalization), auditability (any reader or researcher can follow the development process of the study and understand the logic) and conformability (standards of impartiality without prejudice) [16]. In order to find the information providers' experiences in daily lives, interviews were conducted during free time for both the information providers and the researcher prior to in-depth interviews. The place of the interviews was designated by the information providers so that they could participate most conveniently, so the researcher of this study went to the information providers' home or a meeting place in person. In the in-depth interviews, in order to prevent the interview data from being missing and in order to check their validity, a recorder on a smartphone was used with the consent of the information providers. Records and notes through the in-depth interviews were transcribed by the researcher immediately after the interviews and drawn up as a document. During the interviews, informal and open questions were used. For example, starting with questions related to their daily lives, such as, "How are you these days?" and "How is your daily life?" questions were asked back to back based on the information providers' responses, concerning what the experiences and lives of the Korean sisters-in-law who had foreign women as their family members in their daily lives were like to conduct the in-depth interviews. As for the method of data collection, it was carried out through individual in-depth interviews and observations, and the on-site notes from participatory observations and the recorded interview contents were used for the analysis.

Efforts were made to not induce or suggest a response the researcher wanted during the in-depth interviews, notes of lacking information after the interviews were taken were then supplemented sufficiently in a secondary interview or by phone. To exclude prejudice, a conscious effort was made during the entire research process by the researchers to maintain the process of reflexivity. Interviews and observations were conducted until no more new data appeared, in other words, the data collection was stopped at the saturation level in which data began to be repeated. Thus, the researchers gathered the opinions, read the written interview contents, which is the original data repeatedly and communicated with each other, elaborated them and received a qualitative researcher's consultation and review.

2.5. Data Analysis

This study followed one of the ethnographic data analysis methods, Colaizzi analysis method [17] and the process is described concretely as follows.

Step 1: The researchers listened to the information providers' records from beginning to end, checked the overall outline, conducted interviews to record verbal and non-verbal expressions as they were writing, directly transcribed them immediately, and drew them up as a document;

Step 2: The researchers wrote meaningful topics or concepts in notes during interviews and transcriptions. They read manuscripts and notes repeatedly from the beginning, underlined sentences, line by line, checked words one by one in the meaningful data related to the experiences of Korean sisters-in-law with foreign women as their sisters-in-law, marked the relevant parts, bound them into key words and saved them on the computer for classification;

Step 3: The researchers sub-categorized sentences with similar meanings;

Step 4: The researchers divided similar properties into a domain according to their characteristics for categorization; and

Step 5: The researchers found related domains and bound them for classification.

At each step of the analysis, the original data were checked again for clarification, and if there was anything to be confirmed by the information providers, it was checked through on-site notes, and if there was anything to be reconfirmed, questions were asked by phone.

3. Result

Information providers of this study were six Korean women who had a married immigrant woman as their sister-in-law. Two of them were in their 40's and four, in their 50's. Their average age was 52 and they all lived in Seoul. Three of them were high school graduates, and three were college graduates. Three had Christianity as their religion, and three did not have any. Of the six married immigrant women that the information providers had as their sister-in-law, four women were in their 20's and two, in their 30's. Their average age was 29 years old. Two came from Uzbekistan, two from Vietnam, and two from China. Three of them were Christians, one was a Buddhist, and two were not religious. The average length of residence in Korea was 6.2 years (Table 1). Four out of six had a positive attitude toward their foreign sister-in-law while two had a negative attitude (Information Provider 2 and 6). The period in which they became sisters-in-law was, respectively, eight years, twelve years, six years, two years, one year and eight years, and most of them became sisters-in-law after the wedding ceremony in their home country.

As a result of the study, a total of 6 categories and 14 main thematic domains were drawn from the meaningful statements on the experiences of Korean sisters-in-law with a foreign woman as their sister-in-law.

Category 1: Blaming the Sister-in-law Who is Different From What was Expected

The information providers came to have foreign women as their sisters-in-law without any preparation. Most of them came to Korea after marriage through a dating service agency, so they knew nothing about the women and became family without expecting what kind of difficulty there might be. Having sisters-in-law with different appearances, cultures and languages, their expectations and hopes that they could share their obligations in their husband's family affairs with them were brought to naught, and rather, family conflicts became deeper due to the foreign sisters-in-law.

1) Taking My Husband's Family Affairs Are Unlike Expectations

The information providers blamed their foreign sister-in-law for several reasons. They believed that they could share and lessen their husband's family affairs, which had been

solely taken on by them, when they had a sister-in-law, but rather, the burden on their shoulders became heavier because of the sister-in-law, and even their mother-in-law defends and favors her, which gradually led to deeper family conflicts, and contrary to their expectations, they suffered difficulty because of their sister-in-law, which led to them blaming her.

“I suggested to my foreign sister-in-law that we should raise pocket money for my mother, and she said that she wouldn’t. She said that they couldn’t because they didn’t have money to give. I was embarrassed...” (Information Provider 1)

“It seems that her mind changes constantly. Sometimes it’s good, sometimes sad, sometimes gloomy and empty. It was on the weekend last Chuseok. I asked her in the beginning of the month, and she did not have time to do the grocery shopping. She told me very flatly. I asked her when she would be available, and she answered that no days would be free. Even on holidays, she leaves as the guests are leaving.” (Information Provider 5)

2) Causing Family Conflicts

As a foreign sister-in-law becomes a family member, family feuds and conflicts begin. After the foreign sister-in-law came, Korean sisters-in-law were embarrassed by her words and actions. Korean daughters-in-law had more complaints due to stress in their daily lives. Even quarrels with husbands were caused, and family conflicts increased.

“My husband and I did not quarrel much, but after we had been to the place of my sister-in-law, I always quarreled with my husband. My husband told me off saying that I distorted her when I told him about her...” (Information Provider 2)

“After the sister-in-law came, the relationship with my mother-in-law became worse. So, my position was ambiguous. I got married first and had served as the eldest daughter-in-law until now, but suddenly...” (Information Provider 4)

3) Mother-in-law’s Increasing Favoritism for Sister-in-law

The mother-in-law feels pity for a foreign daughter-in-law. So the mother-in-law wants her daughter to understand the foreign daughter-in-law more, but she feels bad as her daughter does not care for the foreign daughter-in-law, and complains about her and blames her mother. However, the Korean sisters-in-law, who are the same daughters-in-law, experience embarrassment because of the mother-in-law’s attitude, which they did not feel when they did not have a foreign sister-in-law, and they think that because of the mother-in-law’s favoritism, the sister-in-law grows impudent and becomes more stubborn, so they blame the cause of all the problems on the foreign sister-in-law.

“I asked my mother-in-law to teach this to my sister-in-law, and she told me not to. She suffered this year. There were especially many affairs in my husband’s family....My mother-in-law did not know about my sister-in-law... She was like that from the beginning... This year, my mother-in-law might change her mind about my sister-in-law a lot. She came to know (the sister-in-law) does not do anything.” (Information Provider 2)

“At first, my mother-in-law lived with her. She did very well for her, but the effect was the opposite.” (Information Provider 5)

“She always does as she pleases. She even coaxed her husband to ask my husband to borrow money for a business. I was really embarrassed... But my mother-in-law... my husband said that it would be better to lend the money because he is his brother.” (Information Provider 6)

Category 2: Afraid of Suffering Damage from Her

Korean sisters-in-law with foreign sisters-in-law are afraid that their foreign sisters-in-law will suddenly leave for their home country and the family will collapse, so that they

will have to take responsibility for their children. Moreover, they look at their sisters-in-law who miss their family who they left in their home country and are concerned about the possibility of increasing responsibility because of economic support for their family. Korean sisters-in-law express their concerns that they might have an adverse impact on their children, looking at those who do not accept them and are cautious about the married immigrant women and their children as family members.

1) Anxiety about the Collapse of the Family of The Sister-in-Law

It is a concern that the foreign sister-in-law might run away because of hardship in her life in Korea. Korean sisters-in-law are concerned that they might have to take responsibility for child-rearing, if, by any chance, their sister-in-law does not come back from a visit to their home country and the family would collapse. They are afraid that the day will come and they will have to live a life that they do not want.

“Previously, she said that she would leave, sometimes. She suggests to her children that many Korean people are divorced, and the family may break... If she leaves, abandoning my younger brother and children... Making her mother-in-law concerned... There will be such difficulty.” (Information Provider 1)

“Since my younger brother is not a man who can easily marry a Korean woman, my mother is very concerned when my sister-in-law says that she will leave. In fact, I, too, am concerned. The sister-in-law is very young, so I am worried if she can live well with him...” (Information Provider 3)

“Sometimes, when she does not get along well with her mother-in-law... she says that she will leave, and my heart sinks. My older brother has been married three times already. I hope that she will live well with him.” (Information Provider 5)

2) Worried Since She Only Takes Care of Her Family

Korean sisters-in-law who find out that immigrant women miss their families in their home countries and support their own family financially are very concerned about she who only takes care of her own family. They are concerned about the following: If she sends too much money, she might ask them for help. If she brings her sick parent to Korea, hospital bills and support expenses would increase. So their burden for her husband’s family might increase.

“She sends money to her family every month. My younger brother earns a lot of money, and my sister-in-law manages the money. So, I told my brother not to let her do that. She is so greedy for money to bring her family to Korea, and asked me the price of our house.” (Information Provider 2)

“My younger brother makes a lot of money in business. So, she does fairly well for herself. I can see new things in her house all the time. She sent money to her family regularly. She was told off by her mother-in-law when she said she would go to her home, leaving the children, to look after her sick mother.” (Information Provider 6)

3) Having a Negative Impact on My Children

Korean sisters-in-law’s children are confused by calling a foreign woman little aunt or elder aunt. It is difficult for them to accept a woman from another country as their little or elder aunt before growing up. The information providers’ children do not trust them and are cautious about their aunt’s free attire and slurred Korean, so they are concerned about any adverse effects on their children. Moreover, they think that the birth of a cousin from the married immigrant woman may have mental confusion and negative impacts on their children.

“She thought nothing of wearing short shorts and low-cut tops in front of our parents-in-law, so it was very different from ours... My children were startled.” (Information Provider 1)

“My sister-in-law spoke impolitely to elders. Probably because she did not learn the honorifics when she learned Korean in her country, but we did not know that, so we were very shocked. It seems that multi-cultural families have many problems.” (Information Provider 2)

“My children say that they cannot trust their little aunt since she confuses them by saying this and then saying that.” (Information Provider 3)

Category 3: Acknowledging Their Own Way of Life

Korean daughters-in-law think that their younger brothers or older brothers who married a foreign woman are an owner of an unusual nature and sometimes, their way of thinking feels frustrating. So, he married extraordinarily and it would be difficult to understand his way of life in which he had a foreign woman as his wife. They were displeased with his life attitude, such as pretentious behavior, but as they came to understand their younger or older brother who refused to receive financial help but wanted a life beyond his means, they experienced why he married a foreign woman and that couple's way of life, and the negative thoughts changed little by little.

1) Younger Brothers Resembling The Sisters-in-Law

Married immigrant women do not understand Korean cultures and customs, so they have strong self-assertion and sometimes shock in-laws with bold attire and behavior. I thought that my brother would fix this part little by little, but rather, I see him resembling her.

“I thought that my sister-in-law was a problem, but actually, my brother and mother were the problems. She did not fit in with my family at first... Why would a normal Korean man marry a foreign woman? This is the part that can be difficult to understand about people who made such a decision.” (Information Provider 1)

“At first, I was shocked, looking at her thinking nothing of wearing short shorts and clothes with low necklines even in front of her parents-in-law. Later, I told her not to, so she won't do it again.... So, I came to understand her that she did that because she did not know, instead of doing that on purpose.” (Information Provider 5)

2) Younger Brother's Couple's Way of Life is Different from Ours

Korean sisters-in-law feel discomfort with the married immigrant women's attitude toward life that they would live without their husband's family and would live for their family. Moreover, they come to understand the foreign sisters-in-law who compare themselves to their Korean sisters-in-law, whom they take as competitors, gradually, while they suffer difficulties as daughters-in-law, they come to understand the reason for their behaviors, and consequently, they come to understand the way of life in multi-cultural families.

“After visiting my house and seeing something new, she buys the same thing in her house the next time.... I thought that it is the way people live in the country! I thought that she had lived hard! Thinking so, I felt sorry for her and gave up on changing her.” (Information Provider 6)

“My sister-in-law lives a very easy life. She doesn't care about others. She thinks only of her family. They have a strong pride, and.... Spending a few years together, I gave up on her, thinking that she was born that way.” (Information Provider 2)

Category 4: Understanding Her as the Same Woman

Korean daughters-in-law miss their own family looking at their foreign sisters-in-law who care for their own family well and keep a relationship with them. They are sorry for their mothers and realize that they do not care for their own family well.

1) Understanding the Foreign Sister-In-Law As A Person in The Same Situation

It is very natural that married immigrant women in Korea miss their own family. Looking at them, Korean daughters-in-law miss their own family naturally. Even though they are not far away, they did not take care of their family business, but married immigrant women care for their own family and keep the intimacy with their family members, so they have a vague sense of kinship as the same women.

“At first, I did not understand her, but as time passed, we could communicate, and I came to know her family story.... I felt sorry and pitiful for her. So I came to be her supporter.” (Information Provider 5)

“I thought my sister-in-law was lazy. But actually, it was because she couldn’t speak and understand Korean.... As we spent time together, I realized that she wants to earn money if she is given a chance. Now, her child is little, and she does not have a place to leave the child. She says that she will get a job and make money after the child grows up.” (Information Provider 1)

2) Proud of Changing Into an Active Attitude

The attitude of married immigrant women who were poor in their home countries changes into an active attitude. They think that they should learn Hangul fast in order to adapt themselves to South Korea quickly and help their parents and siblings in their home. They actively try to adapt themselves to Korean society. For example, if their child is little, they learn Hangul at home, and if they do not have a child, they look for an institution for Korean education.

“Maybe not because their families are poor or needy, but because they have a Korean dream, so the smart ones come here... It seems that they would like to settle down in South Korea.” (Information Provider 1)

“At first, she asked me to teach Korean by her side, and she came here after learning some Korean words. She told me that she would teach her native tongue and asked me to teach her Hangul...” (Information Provider 4)

Category 5: Accepting Her as My Family Member

As Korean sisters-in-law accept foreign sisters-in-law who experience difficulty in communication and conflict from cultural differences in a strange place called Korea as new family members, slowly strong relationships develop.

1) Becoming A Citizen of The Republic of Korea

At first, due to the difficulty in communication, Korean women did not understand the exact meaning of words the foreign women said, there was a lot of misunderstanding. However, as they were accustomed to the environment and language little by little, foreign sisters-in-law felt more comfortable in their lives, and since they acquired citizenship, they came to have confidence and became stouter in Korean society.

“At first, I thought that she married my younger brother because of his money. I still have such a thought even now, but she acquired citizenship by making an effort, so I consider her stout-minded for a young woman.” (Information Provider 6)

2) Feeling Natural and Grateful

Foreign sisters-in-law overcome various conflicts and stressors and adapt themselves to Korean society, and Korean sisters-in-law's experiences change in their mind. As time goes by, they naturally adapt to their husband's family's culture and family members, and as social awareness gets better, Korean sisters-in-law feel grateful for foreign sisters-in-law.

"Now, I feel that she is my family as a little aunt. I don't feel any difference. I think she is my family, unconditionally... Probably, 5 to 8 years have passed so." (Information Provider 2)

"I am grateful for her that she settled down. I thank her. After I accepted her, she did things better and..." (Information Provider 4)

"At first, I asked her to tell me what she did not understand, and she asked me to tell her what she did not know. As time passed, our relationship became more natural, and about two years later, she was able to speak more naturally and I could understand her, so we could depend on each other. I filled her deficiencies, and she did all the cooking when I was busy. So, we depend on each other, and I have come to support her." (Information Provider 6)

Category 6: Being in Harmony with Her through Trust and Love

The family's care and trust, the mother-in-law's trust and the Korean sisters-in-law's support for the foreign sisters-in-law are very helpful for their adaptation to Korean society. In addition, as they come to have a religion, their mind is consoled, they become mature to form an independent family.

1) Forming Unity With A Religious Life

Religious life and family support help the foreign sisters-in-law stabilize their emotions and cope flexibly with stress and are very helpful for the family unity.

"My sister-in-law's mother suddenly fell. My sister-in-law and I went to church and prayed for her mother, and she miraculously recovered a lot. Now, the sister-in-law's mother goes to church." (Information Provider 1)

"My sister-in-law went to a Buddhist temple with my mother, and recently, she goes there alone. I just guess that she goes there because going to the temple makes her comfortable as she said, and fortunately, she became brighter and was better to my mother, after going to the temple." (Information Provider 2)

2) Supporting With Love

Family members are supporters when there is difficulty. Childbirth for foreign sisters-in-law is a driving force for them to recognize the Korean land as their land. They come to understand, accept, take sides and encourage the foreign sisters-in-law who live hard.

"My mother-in-law still hates my sister-in-law. She says that the sister-in-law is lazy and extorts money from her husband. When I hear that, I am angry as the same woman and take her side... She thanks me. In fact, I feel sorry for her. She endures hardship, coming far from a foreign country, I am her supporter." (Information Provider 3)

"I decided to accept and encourage her unconditionally. And endure and wait.... So, now, I think that we, sisters-in-law... could have a really good relationship." (Information Provider 4)

Like above, it was found that Korean sisters-in-law with foreign sisters-in-law blame those who are different from what was expected in an early period and experience a difficulty of being afraid of damaging themselves, but consequently, they accept them into their lives, understand them as the same women, accept them as family members,

care for them, so that they can adapt themselves well to the unfamiliar Korean husband's family's culture, and form a unity of trust and love, which are positive experiences.

Table 1. Personal Data of Study Informants

Informant	Age	Education Level	Occupation	Religion	Sister-in-law's Nation	Sister-in-law's age	Education Level	Religion	Duration as sister-in-law
1. (Kim**)	52	college graduate	Nurse	None	Uzbekistan	29	College graduate	Christian	8 years
2. (Shin**)	48	college graduate	Housewife	Christianity	Uzbekistan	32	College graduate	Buddhism	12 years
3. (Park**)	49	High School graduate	FC(Financial Consultant)	None	China	36	High School graduate	Christian	6 years
4. (Lee**)	56	High School graduate	Self-employment	None	China	25	High School graduate	None	2 years
5. (Kim**)	55	High School graduate	Housewife	Christianity	Vietnam	23	College graduate	Christian	1 years
6. (Jung**)	52	college graduate	Nurse	Christianity	Vietnam	28	College graduate	None	8 years

4. Conclusions

This study was conducted to provide basic material for the development of an intervention program that could help improve married immigrant women's and multi-cultural families' adaptation to Korean society by finding out the essence and meaning of the experiences they experience in their daily lives so that Korean sisters-in-law who have foreign women as their sisters-in-law can accept them as their family members and adapt themselves to them.

As a research method, Colaizzi's ethnographic analysis method [13] was used. The subjects of the qualitative research were six Korean sisters-in-law who had a married immigrant woman as their sister-in-law in Seoul. As a result of an analysis of the meaning of the experiences they stated, six categories, 「Blaming the sister-in-law who is different from what was expected」, 「Afraid of suffering damage from her」, 「Acknowledging the way of life of her own」, 「Understanding her as the same woman」, 「Accepting her as my family member」, and 「Being in harmony with her through trust and love」, and 14 main thematic domains, 'Having to solely take the matters of my husband's family unlike what was expected', 'Causing family conflicts', 'Mother-in-law's increasing favoritism for the sister-in-law', 'Anxious about the collapse of the family of the sister-in-law', 'Worried since she only takes care of her family', 'Having a negative impact on my children', 'Younger brother resembling the sister-in-law', 'Younger brother's couple with ways of life different from us', 'Understanding the foreign sister-in-law as a person in the same situation', 'Proud of changing into an active attitude', 'Becoming a citizen of the Republic of Korea', 'Feeling natural and grateful', 'Forming unity with a religious life' and 'Supporting with love' were drawn. Most preceding studies of multi-cultural families were conducted on the married immigrant women, and some studies have been conducted on the problem of conflicts between daughters-in-law and parents-in-law or mothers-in-law. According to the results, policies have been implemented, regarding settlement in Korean society. Recently, multi-cultural families have stood out as an issue, interest is increasing and social awareness is changing. Women have come to take various positions acquired through marriage, and in

addition, responsibility and obligation differ depending on the rank, so conflicts arise, and the situation experienced by them of the same sex turns into a competitive relation, so like the conflict between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law, it comes to take another structure of a complicated conflict between sisters-in-law. The conflict between sisters-in-law is understood as a type according to competition for filial duty and the rank, regardless of occupation and age [17]. Korean sisters-in-law expect that they could share the obligations of their husband's family with a foreign sister-in-law, but they rather have a difficult time taking a greater burden because of their mother-in-law's favoritism and the family's favoritism. To top it off, this experience in which they were once filled with trepidation about other damages, and rather, put down everything, look at the lives of foreign sisters-in-law with an understanding, understand them as the same women, sympathize with them as they are in the same circumstances, welcome them as their family members and begin to treat them with love as their supporters will lead the family to a healthy and stable unity.

Based on the above conclusions, the following suggestions are made.

First, this study has a regional limitation since it was conducted with Korean sisters-in-law in the Seoul area, so it is necessary to repeat the research with Korean sisters-in-law in various areas.

Second, this study included not many countries, two Uzbekistanis, two Chinese and two Vietnamese, and since there are similarities in experience and culture of each country, further research is necessary on the experiences of Korean sisters-in-law who have foreign sisters-in-law from various countries with various cultures.

Third, in order for Korean sisters-in-law to help foreign sisters-in-law positively adapt themselves to Korea and minimize the conflict between the sisters-in-law because of a lack of understanding, it is necessary to develop a program for learning the characteristics, cultures and languages of their home countries and conduct a study to verify its efficacy.

Fourth, it is necessary to look into whether there is anything forceful to adapt married immigrant women faster to Korean society by any chance, basic research on needs and demands should be attempted, regarding what multi-cultural families desperately need and what they want, and a program should be developed centering on requirements by subjects based on this.

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