

MARTIN SCHOOL OF PUBLIC AND ADMINISTRATION

Divorces of Marriage Immigrants in South Korea

An Examination of Factors Affecting Divorce

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Executive Summary

In South Korea, as of 2013, ten out of a hundred newlywed couples included a marriage immigrant, i.e. someone who came to the country for the purpose of getting married to a native (Statistics Korea). South Korea, a traditionally homogeneous society, has seen an increase in marriage immigrants, primarily women, in recent years. Multicultural families face a variety of challenges. Marriage immigrants experience cultural and lifestyle differences, language problems, poverty, and domestic violence. In 2011, the divorce rate in multicultural families reached 10 percent and the average length of a marriage that ended in divorce was 4.9 years (Statistics Korea). High divorce rates in marriage immigrant families not only have a negative effect on divorced couples and their family members, they also play a role in dismantling social integration.

This study examines the factors that lead to high divorce rates of marriage immigrants. The divorce factors vary. Through a review of the available literature, I chose multiple variables: immigrant's age at marriage, couple's age gap, immigrant's education level, Korean proficiency, geographical area, job, spouse's job stability, household monthly income, couple's previous marriages, length of marriage, whether or not the couple has children, and domestic violence.

To determine the effect of these variables on the divorce rates of marriage immigrants, the dataset includes both marriage immigrants who are already divorced and those who are still married. This data was obtained from Korea Immigration Service in 2014. I used a logistic regression model to analyze the data. I found five variables to predict the probability of divorce: domestic violence, Korean proficiency, geographical area,

employment, and household monthly income. Out of these variables, domestic violence has an indisputable impact on the divorce of marriage immigrants.

Based on the results, I recommend the authorities play a supportive role in curbing the dissolution of multicultural families. The Korean language education that marriage immigrants voluntarily participate in should become a compulsory course. Local communities, especially in urban areas, should pay attention and support marriage immigrants in the early stages of marriage. Self-sufficiency programs like job training and employment counseling should be provided to marriage immigrants without a job and low household income. Lastly, domestic violence support programs, such as a legal clinic offering advice to marriage immigrants, a program for developing and educating communication skills among Korean males, and a program for family counseling for husbands and wives, should be expanded to reduce couple conflict and improve conjugal relations.

Introduction

As of 2013, the number of immigrants living in South Korea exceeded 1.6 million (Korea Immigration Service, 2013). This means three out of a hundred residents are immigrants, which is more than twice as many as ten years ago. Among these immigrants are about 190,000 marriage immigrants (Korea Immigration Service, 2013). For this reason, Korean society, a traditionally homogeneous society, has shown higher interest in multicultural families.

For the most part, multicultural families consist of a Korean male and a foreign female who live in marriages arranged through matchmaking agents. Most of the males are from rural areas and poorer urban areas in South Korea and the females are from Asian countries such as China, Vietnam, Thailand, Cambodia, and the Philippines. Rural and working class

males have found it difficult to get married because Korean women, who are typically well-educated and whose economic conditions are better, do not want to get married to males of low socioeconomic status. Foreign women, who have experienced poverty and unemployment in their home country, have chosen an arranged marriage as a means to support their homeland family and to seek out a better life in South Korea (Jae-ryeon Kim, 2011). This trend has encouraged the growth of multicultural marriages in South Korea.

In South Korea, multicultural families face a variety of challenges. Marriage immigrants experience cultural and lifestyle differences, language problems, poverty, and even domestic violence (Hyun-sil Kim, 2008). According to Statistics Korea, the divorce rates between Korean couples shows a decreasing trend, but the divorce rates between multicultural families keep growing steadily. In 2011, the divorce rates of marriage immigrants reached 10 percent (See Table 1).

Table 1. Divorce Development

Year	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Total divorce (a)	124,097	116,535	123,999	116,858	114,284
Divorce of immigrants (b)	8,294	10,980	11,473	11,088	11,495
% of (b)/(a)	6.7	9.4	9.3	9.5	10.1
<i>Number of mixed marriages</i>					
<i>Year</i>	<i>2007</i>	<i>2008</i>	<i>2009</i>	<i>2010</i>	<i>2011</i>
<i>Mixed marriages</i>	<i>37,560</i>	<i>36,204</i>	<i>33,300</i>	<i>34,235</i>	<i>29,762</i>

Source: Statistics Korea (www.kostat.go.kr)

Divorces of marriage immigrants have raised concerns in Korean society. High divorce rates in immigrant marriages not only have a negative influence on the divorced couples and their family members, they also play a role in dismantling the social integration of immigrants and Korean society as a whole. Therefore, there is a need for policy-making to mitigate and prevent the divorce of marriage immigrants.

Previous scholars have focused on marriage immigrants who are considering divorce, and made an effort to analyze factors that influence divorce intention (Chae-kyu Park, 2007; Mi-yeon Joo, 2010; Jeong-soon Kim, 2012). In this research, I analyze the factors led to completed divorces in immigrant marriages. To bridge the gap between actual divorces and divorce intentions, this research also includes marriage immigrants who are still married.

This paper contains a problem statement, a review of academic studies, a research design, analysis and findings, and conclusions and recommendations.

Problem Statement

With the number of marriage immigrants growing, their divorce rate has increased as well. In 2005, the rate of multicultural marriages reached 13.5 percent of all marriages. As of 2013, ten couples out of a hundred newlywed couples included a marriage immigrant. However, multicultural couples, who have come from socially and culturally different environments, are more likely to face conflicts. Especially, the acculturative stress of marriage immigrants, namely the language and cultural barriers, causes conflicts (Oh-nam Kim, 2006). These conflicts develop into situations in which multicultural families end in divorce.

The family is the basic unit of society, so divorce, which is the breakdown of the family, is no longer just a personal issue, it is a social issue. The divorce of multicultural families matters more than the divorce of Korean families in that the divorce of the former can hinder social integration-- where, Korean society pursues, all members of the society are living in together. Additionally, divorced marriage immigrants face residence and citizenship troubles caused by the termination of a marriage which impacts child-rearing, and economic self-sufficiency. For example, marriage immigrants are required to accompany

their Korean husbands to the Immigration office when extending visa and obtaining citizenship, and are ineligible to receive social security before acquiring citizenship.

In this paper, I analyze factors that lead to divorce of marriages involving immigrants. Through a review of the literature, I chose multiple variables to include in the analysis: immigrant's age at marriage, couple's age gap, immigrant's education level, Korean proficiency, geographical area, job, spouse's job stability, household monthly income, couple's previous marriages, length of marriage, whether or not the couple has children, and domestic violence. To examine factors leading to divorce, I hypothesize that marriage immigrants, who are older, who have a big age gap between couples, who are less-educated, who have low Korean proficiency, who live in urban areas, who have no job, who have employment instability on the husband's side, who have low household monthly income, who have previous marriage experience, who have short length of marriage, who have no child, and who experience domestic violence, will be more likely to get divorced than those who are in opposite position. Through analysis of these variables, I set out to determine the factors that affect the divorce of marriage immigrants and propose alternatives to prevent and mitigate the divorce of multicultural families in South Korea. My findings also inform recommendations for policy makers in designing policies related to reducing the rate at which immigrant marriages end in divorce.

Literature Review

For a long time, Korean society had been homogeneous ethnically and culturally (Geon-soo Han, 2007; Hyun-sil Kim, 2010). Along with a growing number of immigrants living in South Korea, marriage immigrants have been changing this pattern. Since the mid-1990s, multicultural marriages between Korean males and foreign females have increased. In the early 2000s, multicultural marriages accounted for 10 percent of the total marriages.

The rapid increase in multicultural marriages results from the following reasons. First, Korean males who live in rural areas and poor urban areas find it difficult to get married. Even rural females avoid living in socially, culturally, and economically less developed regions. Second, there is a skewed ratio of males to females, particularly in rural areas, caused by a notion of preferring sons to daughters (Donghoon Seol, 2006). Third, Korean women, who want to marry someone who are of higher social status, are hesitant about marriage to males of low socioeconomic status because of their relatively high level of education and active labor force participation. These social and cultural trends are expected to make multicultural marriages even more common in the future.

While the entry of foreign single women to South Korea helps males in rural and poorer urban areas get married, cultural differences generate a variety of domestic issues. For instance, foreign females often marry after dating their prospective husbands only once or twice (Chae-kyu Park, 2011), without understanding Korean language or culture, or knowing their future spouses well. In addition, many marriage immigrants find out that the economic condition of their spouse is different from the information provided to them by the matchmaking agency. South Korea's affluence has played a role in making women from Southeast Asian countries decide on multicultural marriage. These marriageable women use a marriage to enter the financially affluent country (Mi-jung Park, 2011) and choose a marriage to give their homeland family economic aid and enjoy a better quality of life in Korea (Jeong-soon Kim, 2012). After their wedding, however, many immigrants find their husbands to be of low socioeconomic status and find their lives little improved as a result.

As previously mentioned, many studies on marriage immigrant's divorce have focused on divorce intentions of the immigrant women, who have not yet divorced (Chae-kyu Park, 2007; Mi-yeon Joo, 2010; Jeong-soon Kim, 2012). Because of limits to data collection (Chae-kyu Park, 2011) and the immigrants' unwillingness to talk about the dissolution of

marriage (Mi-yeon Joo, 2010), much of the research on divorced immigrants has been cursory. Recently, a survey of actual divorcees by Yun-hee Cho (2011), determined that the divorced immigrants typically had children and that there was a big age gap between themselves and their ex-husband. Cho (2011) also found that the divorcees typically experienced unstable job conditions and were of low economic status at the time of the divorce.

Researchers have also determined that there are various factors for immigrants to consider divorce: age at marriage, level of education, Korean proficiency, household monthly income, number of children, husband's economic competence, geographical area, domestic violence, and husband's economic support for wife's homeland family. White (1990) pointed to various factors that lead to divorce: age at marriage, parental divorce, previous marriages, childlessness, length of marriage, race, socioeconomic level, women's employment, education, and marital happiness. The question becomes, how well does divorce intention predict divorce? Determining validity of divorce intention is a critical element in understanding potential divorces. According to Korea Legal Aid Center for Family Relations, in 2013, the organization gave divorce counseling to 1,017 marriage immigrants with divorce intention and said 68.4 percent of them got divorced¹. These numbers suggest that divorce intention is a valid predictor of potential divorces.

Chae-kyu Park (2007) found that about a third of marriage immigrants have divorce intention and pointed out that the husband's earning potential and the marriage immigrant's Korean proficiency greatly affect marriage immigrants' divorce intention. Marriage immigrants have come to South Korea to overcome economic difficulties in their homeland, but they find little improvement in South Korea. This is because their husband's

¹ More information can be found here:
http://lawhome.or.kr/law1/sub07/detail.asp?board_no=450&board_seq=0&board_code=1&searchtype=&searchword=&page=1

socioeconomic status is low. Korean proficiency also comes to the fore in multicultural marriages. For marriage immigrants, understanding Korean is fundamental to becoming acculturated. Marriage immigrants' low Korean proficiency makes it hard to adapt to Korean culture within a short time. Further, it causes lack of communication and conflicting situations, and finally drives marriage immigrants to divorce. With regard to immigrant's level of education, Park (2007) found that the higher the level of education, the lower divorce intention. It seems that well-educated marriage immigrants, when facing conflicts, do not resort to divorce, but resort to effective communication to resolve conflicts.

Mi-yeon Joo (2010) mentioned that age, level of education, income, and geographical area are not important factors to divorce intention. Rather, domestic violence and longer length of marriage increase divorce intention. In terms of Korean proficiency, Joo's study, contrary to Park's research, shows that immigrants with a good command of Korean have higher divorce intention. Joo (2010) found that longer lengths of marriage actually increased divorce intention. This result runs counter to the generally held belief longer marriages curb divorce intention because it provides marriage immigrants with enough time to acculturate. Joo (2010) also found that when the couples' age gap is bigger and the husband's information before and after marriage is different, divorce intention increases.

Jeong-soon Kim (2012) determined that childlessness, geographical area, and husband's economic support for the wife's homeland family have an effect on divorce intention. Marriage immigrants who are childless and living in urban areas have a higher likelihood of getting divorced. Also, the husband's economic support for the wife's homeland family functions as a positive factor for reducing divorce intention. With respect to age and level of education, Kim (2012) argued that immigrant's age at marriage does not affect divorce intention, but the bigger the couples' age gap and the lower the level of education, the greater the likelihood of divorce intention.

Table 2. Summary of Different Studies

Researcher	Factors positively associated with divorce intention
Chae-kyu Park (2007)	Husband's economic incompetence
	Marriage immigrant's low Korean proficiency
	Marriage immigrant's low level of education
Mi-yeon Joo (2010)	Long length of marriage
	Marriage immigrant's high Korean proficiency
	Couple's big age gap
	Incorrect or misleading information from matchmaking agency
	Domestic violence
Jeong-soon Kim (2012)	Childlessness
	Marriage immigrant's low level of education
	Living in urban area
	No husband's economic support for wife's homeland family
	Couple's big age gap

Research Design

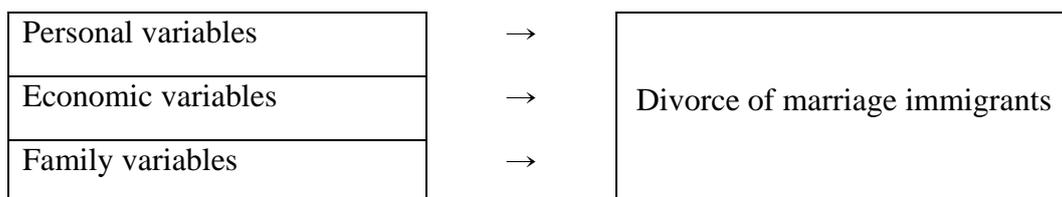
Using quantitative analysis, I examine the factors that influence divorce for marriage immigrants. As the number of marriage immigrants grows, the rate of divorce increases. According to Statistics Korea, 10 percent of all divorce cases come from marriage immigrants, even though they make up only 0.4 percent of the total population of South Korea. The divorce of marriage immigrants brings about family breakdown and has a negative effect on family members. The divorce of marriage immigrants not only hinders social integration, but also causes marriage immigrants to face poverty, child-rearing difficulties, economic hardship, and immigration troubles like residence and citizenship. Therefore, it is important to determine the factors that lead to divorce before policy makers can begin to reduce the high rate of immigrant marriage divorce.

Data Collection

The data obtained for this study came from the Korea Immigration Service (KIS). The KIS is responsible for the issuance of visas, residence permits, and citizenship for marriage immigrants. In relation to the data, the KIS has both divorced marriage immigrants and non-divorced marriage immigrants. The population for this study includes individuals from all parts of the country and was extracted as of December 31, 2014, by my co-workers through random sampling. The random sample consists of 132 divorced immigrants and 132 non-divorced immigrants. The sample frame consists of all female marriage immigrants. Male marriage immigrants are excluded in this analysis because the divorce rate of male marriage immigrants is quite low compared to that of female marriage immigrants.

Variables

In this study, the divorce of marriage immigrants is used as a dependent variable. This is examined by three categories of independent variables: personal, economic, and family variables.



- Personal variables : immigrant's age at marriage, couple's age gap, immigrant's level of education, immigrant's Korean proficiency, geographical area
- Economic variables : immigrant's job, spouse's job stability, household monthly income
- Family variables: couple's previous marriages, length of marriage, whether or not the couple has children, and domestic violence.

Table 3. Hypotheses about Personal Variables

Variables	Definition	Hypothesis
Age	Age when immigrants get married	The older, the more likely to get divorced
Couple's age gap	Age gap when couples get married	The bigger the couple's age gap, the more likely to get divorced
Education	Final education of marriage immigrants when married	The lower immigrant's education, the more likely to get divorced
Korean proficiency	Level of basic Korean proficiency when married	The lower Korean proficiency, the more likely to get divorced
Geographical area	Residential area where couple lived after marrying	Marriage immigrants in urban areas are more likely to get divorced

The first category of independent variables consists of personal variables. I hypothesize that marriage immigrants, who are older and have a larger gap in age, are more likely to get divorced since younger immigrants would have an easier time adapting to a new culture. The couple's age gap also positively affects the divorce likelihood since generation gaps resulting from big age differences intensify conflicts within couples.

Since level of education and Korean proficiency play a role in stabilizing marriage by improving communication, I believe that low education and poor Korean proficiency of marriage immigrants positively affect the likelihood of divorce. Based on the existing literature, marriage immigrants who are living in urban areas are more likely to get divorced than immigrants in rural areas.

Table 4. Hypotheses about Economic Variables

Variables	Definition	Hypothesis
Job	Having a job at the time of divorce	Marriage immigrants who have no job are more likely to get divorced
Spouse's job stability	Husband's job retention for more than three months	Husband's job instability positively affects the likelihood of divorce
Household's monthly income	Income that a household earns a month	The higher income, the lower the likelihood of divorce

The second category of independent variables consists of economic variables. Marriage for foreign females relates to finding a means of escape from economic hardships in their home country. I hypothesize that marriage immigrants who have no job and whose husbands experience job instability are more likely to get divorced because they do not enjoy economic affluence.

The household's monthly income is also an important indicator of potential for divorce because marriage immigrants get married as a way to improve their lives. In addition, marriage immigrants expect their husbands will give economic support for their homeland family. If the husband's economic condition is unsatisfactory and the expectation proves impossible, the likelihood of divorce increases.

Table 5. Hypotheses about Family Variables

Variables	Definition	Hypothesis
Couple's previous marriages	Number and frequency of couple's previous marriages	The couple's previous marriages positively affect the divorce
Length of marriage	How many years marriage lasted until divorce	The longer the length of marriage, the lower the likelihood of divorce
Children	Whether or not the couple has children	Childless positively affects the divorce
Domestic violence	Experience domestic violence during marriage	Domestic violence positively affects the divorce

The third category of independent variables consists of family variables. I hypothesize that both marriage immigrants and their husbands are more likely to get divorced again if they were married previously. Husbands of the multicultural families are largely rural males or urban working class. In particular, urban males who have a failed first marriage to a Korean woman often get remarried to a foreign woman. Without any changes in their socioeconomic status, men with a failed previous marriage are more likely to decide on divorce and this factor accelerates the breakdown of multicultural families.

In regard to the length of marriage, I hypothesize that the longer the marriage lasts, the

lower the likelihood of divorce. Marriage immigrants who maintain a long-term marriage have enough time to acculturate, develop a stronger family relationship, and gain greater fluency in Korean. By contrary, marriage immigrants in a short-tem marriage have not yet had much chances to adapt to the Korean culture or build a positive family dynamic, so the short period of marriage positively affects divorce intention and eventual divorce.

I hypothesize that childlessness and domestic violence positively influence divorce of marriage immigrants. Having children tends to make couples rethink the effects of divorce on their children and this should act as a deterrent to divorce. Also, I believe domestic violence will increase divorce. According to a survey by the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family in 2010, 40.9 percent of marriage immigrants experienced domestic violence.²

Statistical Models

In order to examine the divorce factors of marriage immigrants, my dataset included both divorced and non-divorced marriage immigrants. To find out the effect of the independent variables on the dependent variable, divorce of marriage immigrants, I use STATA statistical software. Since the dependent variable is a dummy variable, the divorced and non-divorced marriage immigrants, I use a logistic regression model.

Analysis and Findings

This study analyzes the factors that influence divorce of marriage immigrants. A logistic regression model was used to determine the effect of independent variables on the divorce of marriage immigrants.

Summary Statistics

Table 6 shows variation in each variable. The average age of marriage immigrants is 29.1 years. This figure corresponds to the average age of Korean women at marriage

² http://www.mogef.go.kr/korea/view/news/news03_01.jsp?func=view&bid=24&idx=609258

(Statistics Korea, 2011). The average age gap between a husband and an immigrant wife is 11 years. Marriage immigrants' level of education is, on average, high school graduation. The education level of marriage immigrants is considerably low, compared with the level of education of Korean women (Jeong-soon Kim, 2012). Marriage immigrant's Korean proficiency is relatively low. The average household monthly income of marriage immigrants is 1,980,000 Won. This amount is far below the average traditional Korean household monthly income of 4,264,000 Won (Statistics Korea, 2014)³. The mean length of marriage in immigrant marriages is 5.5 years.

Table 6. Summary Statistics (N=264)

		Number	%
Marriage immigrants	Divorced	132	50.0
	Non-divorced	132	50.0
Age at marriage	10s	8	3.0
	20s	143	54.2
	30s	88	33.3
	40s	21	8.0
	50s	4	1.5
Couple's age gap	0-9 years	117	44.3
	10-19 years	116	43.9
	20+ years	31	11.7
Education	Elementary school graduate	7	2.7
	Middle school graduate	42	15.9
	High school graduate	158	59.8
	College graduate and more	57	21.6
Korean proficiency	High	96	36.4
	Average	89	33.7
	Low	79	29.9
Geographical area	Urban	231	87.5
	Rural	33	12.5
Immigrant's job	Have no job	111	42.1
	Have a job	153	57.9
Spouse's job stability	Not stable	48	18.2
	Stable	216	81.8
Household monthly income	0-1 million Won	34	12.9
	1.1-2 million Won	145	54.9
	2.1+	85	21.2

³ As of the current exchange rate on Mar. 31, 2015, 1,980,000 Korean Won is equivalent to 1,814 US Dollar and 4,264,000 Korean Won is equivalent to 3,906 US Dollar.

Frequency of marriage	Husband first marriage	144	54.5
	Husband previously married	120	45.5
	Wife first marriage	189	71.6
	Wife previously married	75	28.4
Length of marriage	1-4 years	112	42.4
	5+ years	152	57.6
Children	Have no children	113	42.8
	Have children	151	57.2
Domestic violence	Have no domestic violence	201	76.1
	Have domestic violence	63	23.9
		264	100.0

Logistic Regression

Table 7 reports the results of independent variables influencing divorce of marriage immigrants. Five of the independent variables in my model have a substantial impact on the divorce of marriage immigrants.

Table 7. Logistic Regression Explaining Divorce

Divorce	Coefficient	dy/dx	Std. Err	p-value
Age at marriage	-0.0456	-0.0054	0.0393	0.247
Couple's age gap	-0.0488	-0.0058	0.0503	0.332
Education	0.1438	0.0170	0.4322	0.739
Korean proficiency	-0.7824*	-0.0927	0.4633	0.091
Urban area	1.7075**	0.1274	0.8470	0.044
Employed	3.6161***	0.4693	0.6209	0.000
Spouse's job stability	0.2080	0.0233	0.7163	0.772
Household income	-0.0225***	-0.0027	0.0043	0.000
Immigrant's previous marriage	1.1091	0.1593	0.7450	0.137
Husband's previous marriage	-0.3111	-0.0360	0.6242	0.618
Length of marriage	0.1108	0.0131	0.1159	0.339
Domestic violence	0		(omitted)	
Children	0.3607	0.0417	0.5154	0.484

Significance: ***p<0.01; **p<0.05; *p<0.1; dy/dx indicates the change in the predicted probability of divorce for a one-unit change in the explanatory variable in question, with all other explanatory variables held at their means

In my analysis, domestic violence is a perfect predictor of the probability of divorce. One hundred percent of marriage immigrants who reported domestic violence got a divorce (See Table 8).

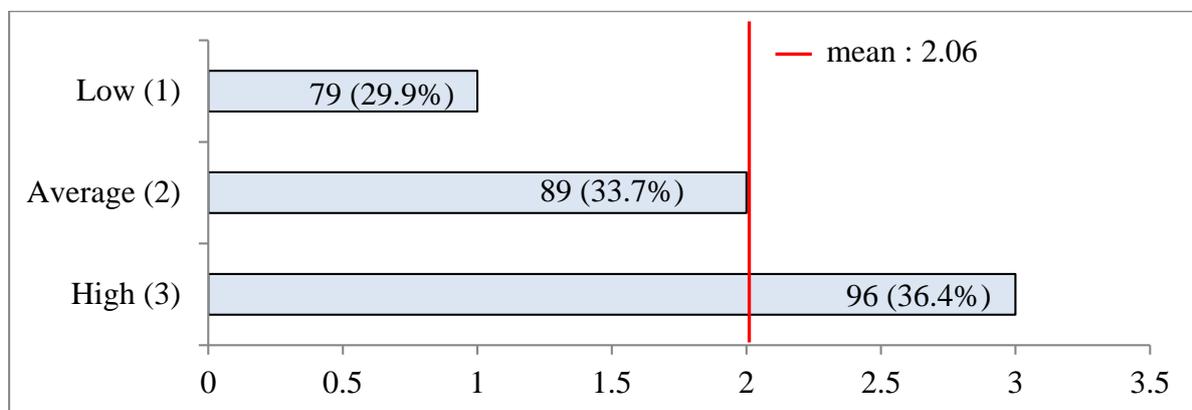
Table 8. Result on Domestic Violence

	Have no domestic violence	Have domestic violence	Total
Non-divorced	132	0	132
Divorced	69	63	132
Total	201	63	264

Domestic violence in my dataset includes verbal abuse, threat, and damage to property including physical violence. Supporting my hypothesis, this result implies that, though domestic violence occurs in many different forms, any type of domestic violence is directly connected to divorce.

Korean proficiency has a positive and statistically significant impact on the divorce of marriage immigrants. Holding the other independent variables at their means, immigrants who have the average level of Korean proficiency are 9 percent less likely to get divorced than those who have the low level of Korean proficiency. This result supports my hypothesis: the lower Korean proficiency, the more likely marriage immigrants are to get divorced.

Figure 1. Marriage Immigrants' Korean Proficiency



Specifically, Figure 1 illustrates Korean proficiency of marriage immigrants. The level of Korean proficiency breaks into three levels: high (3), average (2), and low (1). The mean of Korean proficiency of marriage immigrants is 2.06. It indicates that over 50 percent of marriage immigrants possess only rudimentary Korean proficiency. Marriage immigrants' low level of Korean proficiency causes communication barriers and aggravates conflicts within the family, increasing the likelihood of divorce.

There is a positive and statistically significant association between marriage immigrants' divorce rate and their living in urban areas ($p < 0.05$). Immigrants living in urban areas are 13 percent more likely to get divorced than immigrants living in rural areas. Given that most immigrants in rural areas live with their parents-in-law who are typically conservative-minded toward divorce, and reside in local communities where they enjoy community-based attention and support, divorce rates are lower than for their urban counterparts. In one study, Kim (2012) found family relationships in rural areas to be more positive than that in urban areas.

Employment of marriage immigrants has a positive and statistically significant relationship with divorce ($p < 0.01$). Immigrants who are employed are 47 percent more likely to get divorced than immigrants who are unemployed. This result runs contrary to my hypothesis: marriage immigrants who have no job are more likely to get divorced. One expectation for the unexpected result might be that marriage immigrants who are employed have more chances to be economically self-sufficient. This situation reduces immigrants' economic reliance on their husband and makes it easier for immigrants to decide on divorce.

Household monthly income has a negative and statistically significant correlation with the divorce of marriage immigrants ($p < 0.01$). Holding the other independent variables at their means, households with a 100,000 Won higher in household income have a lower probability of getting divorced by 2.7 percent. This result supports my original hypothesis:

the higher income, the lower the likelihood of divorce.

Figure 2. Marriage Immigrants' Household Monthly Income

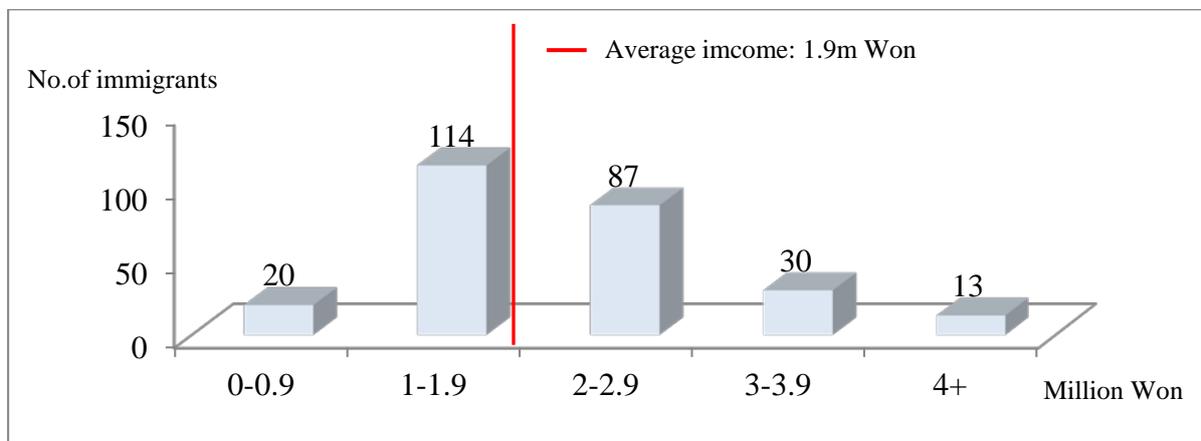


Figure 2 shows household monthly income of marriage immigrants and 1.9 million Won of average income. Given that most marriage immigrants get married as a means of escape from economic hardships in their home country, it makes sense that low household income would negatively impact the divorce.

Some of the independent variables that I thought of as statistically important factors did not affect the divorce of marriage immigrants. As opposed to the literature, age at marriage, couple's age gap, education, spouse's job stability, couple's frequency of marriage, length of marriage, and whether or not the couple has children were not significant factors that affect divorce.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Factors affecting the divorce of marriage immigrants are various and overlapping. Some of the variables previous researchers noted as significantly relevant were not statistically significant in my model. Some of the variables I thought would be of importance have no correlation with my hypotheses. However, Korean proficiency, geographical area, employment, and household income turned out to be statistically significant. Simply put, immigrants who have low Korean proficiency, live in urban areas,

have a job, and have low household income are more likely to get divorced. Particularly, domestic violence has an indisputable effect on divorce. Marriage immigrants who reported domestic violence got a divorce.

The breakdown of the multicultural families caused by divorce emerges as a social problem. Since social integration is based on a stable family, the government needs to play a supportive role in curbing the dissolution of multicultural families. Based on my results, I recommend the following.

First, Korean proficiency has a significant impact on the divorce of marriage immigrants. Therefore, I recommend the government should devise a measure to enhance Korean fluency in marriage immigrants. The current Korean language education that marriage immigrants voluntarily participate in needs to become a compulsory course. The government should prepare legal procedures that require marriage immigrants to complete the course after arrival. Since Korean proficiency is a requirement for acquiring citizenship, marriage immigrants who want to obtain Korean nationality will be eager to attend the course.

Second, I recommend local communities, especially in urban areas, should work to support marriage immigrants by connecting newly married immigrants with naturalized immigrants. Establishing these relationships will give newlyweds indirect experience about marriage life and help newlyweds adapt to their new surroundings. Community support for marriage immigrants will shorten acculturation periods and decrease divorce intention.

Third, marriage immigrants' employment and their household income have a significant relationship with divorce. Even though marriage immigrants with a job are more likely to get divorced, I recommend self-sufficiency programs like job training and employment counseling should be provided in order to alleviate their and their children's economic hardships.

Last, domestic violence has an obviously significant effect on divorce. Thus, I

recommend multicultural family support programs should be expanded. For example, a legal clinic offering advice to marriage immigrants, a program for developing and educating communication skills among Korean males, and a program for family counseling for husbands and wives would all be helpful. Such programs have the potential to help multicultural families reduce couple conflict and improve conjugal relations. One good example is that the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family is providing Korean husbands with preventative education of domestic violence and the Ministry of Justice is offering pro bono legal services to marriage immigrants who experience domestic violence

The random samples analyzed in this study contain 132 divorced and the same number of non-divorced marriage immigrants in 2014. If the patterns of divorce change substantially, the results of my analysis might not be generalizable into the future.

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