

An Exploratory Study on the Divorce Experience of Korean Males with International Marriage Backgrounds

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This is a pilot study of multifaceted longitudinal research project to explore divorce experience of Korean males with international marriage backgrounds. Especially for this study, the researcher carried out a qualitative study of five Korean males who are recently undertaking the dissolution of their international marriage. In order to examine each case from multi-perspectives, the data of this study was collected through the series of semi-structured in-depth interviews. As a result, although the Korean males' damage aspects generated from the dissolution of marriage are shown in many different ways, the reality is that it creates mental and physical damage not only to the Korean males but to family members, relatives, and their children as well. The result of this study thus shows that there is an urgent need of further and thorough study of divorce cases of international marriage that are not commonly recognized yet, and it is necessary to take appropriate social actions in examining relevant policy and management. There are also needs of strict modifications on relevant policies of international marriage. In order to prevent the negative effects of international marriage, the strict regulation that is fair to both male side and female side is a must and the enforcement of legal action on wrongdoing is also required. Immigration Bureau, local government, and consulate should be able to take necessary legal actions if necessary.

Key Words: The dissolution of multicultural family, International marriage

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I. Introduction

The increase of Multicultural families has become new social phenomena in Korea. The rate of International marriage has been increasing since the beginning of 1990s and many of this marriage were between elder Korean men in rural area of Korea and relatively young women from Southeast Asia. As the rate of international marriage has been increasing, the divorce rate has also been increasing. According to the National Statistical Office (2014), there were 13,701 divorce cases between Korean and their non-Korean spouses in 2012, which was 11.9% of total of 114,316 marriage cases reported in Korea. The reasoning for a divorce was such as the difference in personality in 2,567 cases (32.6%), finance difficulty in 376 cases (4.8%), denial of spouse in 646 cases (8.2%), and family discord in 387 cases (4.9%). The National Statistical Office (2014) confirms 85.4% of the couples lived less than 5 years together, and an average of cohabitation period came out to be 3.1 years.

In the recent dissolution cases of such international marriages, it is known that it is primarily the immigrated female that demands a divorce (Kim, 2012). And such phenomenon leads to a judgment that the dissolution of international marriage should no longer be resolved with a schematized conclusion of victimized female and victimizing husband. According to Kim (2012), it is known that the marriage of a Korean male and a Southeast Asian female gets accomplished mostly through an international matchmaking agency. And because many of these prospective brides and prospective grooms understand that they come to a marriage for certain purpose through the matchmaking agency, they tend to think that there aren't much of reasons to keep the marriage if the original purpose is not being fulfilled enough through their married life.

According to Ministry of Gender Equality and Family (2010), in the recent dissolution cases of international marriage, female marriage immigrants feel that they hardly achieve their purpose through their international marriage than their Korean male spouse do, and consequently this leads to the dissolution of their marriage. The data from Ministry of Gender Equality and Family (2010) show that some female marriage immigrants even run away or disappear as soon as they arrive in Korea because their primary purpose was originally to find a job in Korea and not to get married. In such cases, female marriage immigrants file for a divorce at once and try to earn Korean citizenship after the divorce.

The data from Ministry of Gender Equality and Family (2010) also shows cases that some female

immigrants who maintain their marriage life, get pregnant and give birth to a child, but eventually run away with a child and detain the child in their motherland. In such cases, Korean male spouses experience difficulties of regaining their child who is detained in their in-laws. This group of male spouses call themselves 'victims of international marriage' and call their cases 'victimized cases of international marriage' as they experience the dissolution of marriage 'abandoned' by their wife (Ministry of Gender Equality and Family, 2010).

The purpose of this study is, thus, to explore and examine the 'victimized cases' of male Korean spouses who are undertaking the dissolution of their international marriage. With its focus on the social, economical, and psychological struggles that the male Korean spouse go through during the process of their marriage breakup, this study aims to explore the process from coming to an international marriage, the married life, and up to the issues afterwards, and then to properly recognize the current status of international marriage breakup as a rising social issue.

II. Review of the Literature

Gu and Park (2012) defines Internationally married male in Korea as a man who holds Korean nationality and resides in Korea, and who has experienced the married life with a foreign female. According to them, many of these Korean males, especially who reside in rural areas, choose international marriage as they have been rejected from marrying a Korean women due to their lack of personal resources such as financial resources, emotional resources, or educational resources. Under this circumstance, with the given superiority of the national resources, they tend to choose a marriage with a woman from relatively poorer country than Korea (Gu & Park, 2012).

According to Choi (2009) and Lee and Kim (2009), the internationally married males' motive for marriage is strongly associated with the instrumental nature. And thus they tend to have hard time to accept the fact that tension and conflict can be generated from the disagreement in exchanging their different values. Thus some of them tend to have control over their spouse if they confront any conflicts during their marriage. Also, in response to resolve this kind of conflicts, some hide their intention to have control over the other spouse and display oppressed action through disguised tolerance or superior status (Choi, 2009).

In his study, Choi (2009) reveals what kinds of experience that an internationally married male goes

through as a husband in an international marriage. According to him, an internationally married male experiences the mixed feeling of getting married to a foreign female. Especially the male experiences a lot of difficulties caused by linguistic and cultural difference, and feels frustrated from not knowing how to resolve problems caused from interactional conflicts. In such situation, there isn't anyone to rant to and there isn't sufficient information or help for him. Even then, however, it's been confirmed that the Korean male still keeps the will to live for the wife who married him for who he is and for the children from the marriage, and attempts to resolve the conflicts within the family and to live with hope for the future.

According to Chae and Hong (2012), it is difficult to generalize that the Korean husbands are paternalistic and authoritative, because there has been a change in awareness that Korean husbands seek the female to be a companion. In their study, Chae and Hong presented the internationally married male's conflict from a male spouse's perspective and it was considered that the Korean males are not just perpetrators of domestic violence, but rather as equally victims as the female marriage immigrants; mentally, financially, and socially.

Although there are scarce of studies dealing with male victim cases of international marriage, it shows that there are some studies in progress regarding the internationally married Korean male's pre-marriage life, their adapting process or solution to the conflicts after the marriage. Like Chae and Hong (2012), these studies repeatedly demonstrate that the Korean males are also the victims in the international marriage. Within this reference, this study try to analyze the issues occurred in the dissolution process of international marriages in Korea with its focus on the internationally married male, and yet factoring in the female marriage immigrants as equally as possible.

III. Methodological Framework of the Study

1. Data Collection

This study is exploratory qualitative case study in nature. Case study aims to answer questions by providing "understanding of the situation and meanings for those involved" (Merriam, 1988, p. 19). In order to fully comprehend the internationally married Korean male victims, we interviewed five internationally married Korean males, whose immigrant wife had run away.

Research participants of this study were selected on a voluntary basis. The researcher of this study have been working as an advisory professor of the center director of Migrant Support Center at K city for years and thus were able to meet with research participants on a regular basis for consulting and counselling. All research participants lived either K city or B city.

<Table 1> Research Participants

Name	Age	Marriage Duration	Occupation	Situation
K	Early 40s	6 years	Factory Worker	Wife took a child to Vietnam and returned alone.
S	Mid 40s	8 years	Small Business	Wife went missing after she left a child at her parents' house in Vietnam.
L	Early 40s	3 months	Factory Worker	4th divorce trial in progress. Falsely accused of domestic violence.
Ka	Late 40s	15 days	Factory Worker	Wife went missing only 15 days after entering Korea.
C	Late 50s	5 years	Small Business	Wife had an affair with a man from homeland, left home, and gave birth to the other man's child.

Seidman's (1998) three-interview series format was utilized for the interviews for each research participant. According to Merriam (1998), this format allows each interview to build upon each other as researcher explores the questions posed by the study as this format encourages a conversation between the researcher and research participants (Marshall & Rossman, 1999; Merriam, 1998). Indeed, in the beginning of this study, research participants of this study only gave the objective descriptions in effort not to reveal themselves much. However, throughout the ongoing interviews, they gradually started sharing about their stories and hardships that their family and relatives had to go through.

For the multi-perspective analysis of the cases, the researcher of this study interviewed not only the married life of these men, but also the entire process from how they first met the female marriage immigrants and came to a marriage up until the current status after the wife's run away. In addition, the researcher examined the aspect changes in their social status and in family relationship, which these male victims had to experience after marrying a female marriage immigrant.

2. Data Analysis

The original data first categorized based on the chronological order of the dissolution process of our research participants' international marriage. These were grouped to three main categories; beginning stage issues, married life issues, break-up stage issues. Based on the data, a concept sheet was set up with case-by-case specific code numbers. Then, based on the definition of each concept sheet, the primary concept was specified. Under the each main category, several subcategories were assigned. For example, under the categorization on the beginning stage issues, two subcategories were classified and these were international marriage agencies' irresponsibility and media propaganda. Concepts extracted from each subcategory were systematic errors, lack of support, and increasing expenses requested by marriage agencies, and media propaganda which is promoting fantasy of international marriage without any type of verification. Detailed description of the categorization is as follow;

<Table 2> The description of categorization

Main Categories	Subcategories	Primary Concepts
Beginning stage issues	International marriage agencies' irresponsibility	systematic errors and lack of support Increasing expenses requested by agencies
	Media propaganda	Fantasy of international marriage promoted by media
Married life issues	Finance issues	Economic burden and conflict caused by monthly money transfer to the in-laws
	Relationship issues	Avoiding or rejecting marital relationship Adultery issues
Break-up Stage Issues	Runaway	Planned runaway according to 'divorce manual' Accusation of domestic violence against the spouse
	Damage on child/extended family	Child's emotional instability Extended family members' mental shock and loss

IV. Findings

1. Beginning Stage Issues

1) International marriage agencies: systematic errors and lack of support

International marriage through agency has brought systematically serious errors. It is already expected consequence from the moment sacredness of marriage enters to the structure of brokerage and trading system... (K-1).

In proceeding international marriage between Southeast Asian female and Korean male, international marriage agencies completely ignore the sacredness of marriage...They inevitably treat the marriage itself as a tool (S-1).

All of five research participants in this study got married through international marriage agencies, and the whole process of marriage were similar. While the Korean prospective grooms were in Korea in the process of matchmaking, international marriage agencies only highlighted the pros of international marriage and kindly promised full assistance. However, as soon as they arrived in the country of the prospective brides, agents suddenly changed attitude and forced them to an itinerary that was different from the original verbal agreement or contract in Korea and induced them to a marriage in a short period of time. Consequently, the Korean prospective grooms ended up choosing a wife only within the market the agencies set up, even without an opportunity to get to know their prospective brides.

International marriage agencies bring the unverified girls for marriage, and then do not take responsibility for any post-marriage issues. Initially they promised to compensate. In the beginning, they said they would compensate for any wrongdoing since they had an insurance. However, it is superficial and fictional...you can get compensated by the insurance only after a marriage annulment. You can learn more about it from the case studies shared on a website 'cafe for victims.' It is like the agency is acting as some sort of a pimp (Ka-1).

Unfortunately, in the current system of international marriage agency, the international marriage is still considered as if it is a transaction of "products (L-1)." And the "after-service" they guarantee at the beginning of contract never gets to be provided (Ka-1). All research participants of this study confirmed that the agency did not take any responsibility as soon as they collect fees from them. This itself seemed to serve as a contradiction and creates bigger problems as time goes on.

All five research participants also confessed that they had to go through heavy burden from the

keep-increasing expense requested by the agencies. Not only the international marriage expense itself but also the additional expense requested by the agencies were entirely for the prospective grooms to afford, and consequently they felt more financial burden.

It apparently takes 6 months for a foreign bride to enter Korea. All official documents in their country were still hand-written, so every time there was a need to fill a paper, they asked for a bribe. We made about 9-10 documents. There are many girls without the registered identity, and you need to create the registered identity for them before bringing them to Korea. It costs 600 US dollars (0.6 - 0.7 million Korean won) to laundry their identity. Even if their parents didn't register their children, they can automatically earn their identity through the international marriage (S-1).

A purse and a bag were the all that she brought. She couldn't come to Korea for over a year after the wedding in Vietnam, and I think she lived in some sort of a habitation facility then. She said she stayed there from May, 2006 to February, 2007. When she arrived in Incheon in winter, she was wearing summer clothes. So, my younger brother's wife prepared winter clothes and shoes for her...I spent about 3-4 million Korean won on her monthly (L-2).

It is not an unusual issue that there are no objective data or proven documents for the identity of the prospective brides in their homeland because of the lack of administrative system there. Therefore, there are many cases where they register or apply for an identity for the first time through international marriage. The Korean prospective grooms who want to marry to these foreign prospective brides are required to prepare all the necessary documents for their brides' immigration. And any related expense is thus also the grooms' responsibility.

Also, as many of foreign brides enter Korea empty handed, Korean grooms also inevitably have to provide everything and this results the financial burden on the grooms as well. Because most international marriage agencies make prospective brides believe that everything can be managed by Korean prospective grooms, they come to Korea with a fundamentally wrong idea that everything will be provided even if they come empty handed. Eventually, this taken for granted financial burden make grooms feel more frustrated.

2) Fantasy of international marriage promoted by media propaganda

Another issue is that the prospective brides who chase a fantasy of Korean culture they have seen in Korean TV dramas tend to have wrong idea about their Korean prospective grooms and fantasize their future married life in Korea. According to the research participants of this study, international marriage agencies they had worked with also tend to take advantage of the prospective brides who only chase a fantasy of Korean culture, and allow them to use the international marriage as a means to easily enter Korea with the least restrictions.

Obviously, the propaganda by media promotes fantasy and movement of international marriage without comprehensive and valid verification. Even without the completed objective verification or observation on the various aspects of international marriage, media presents role model types of international marriage show such as 'Love in Asia,' which is promoting fantasy of international marriage to Korean prospective grooms. Such propaganda causes damage not only to Korean prospective grooms but also to the foreign prospective brides.

I wish they would stop showing the TV program like 'Love in Asia.' There are many people who get fantasized by the program. The reality is not like it after all. (L-3)

I genuinely hate the propaganda of 'Love in Asia.' It provides fantasy for foreign females without holding responsibility for the post outcome. It presents just one type of role model, but many fall for it and end up struggling from much more damage. (K-3)

All research participants of this study agreed that they were misguided by media propaganda. Because many of programs dealing with international marriage and multicultural family in Korea tend to promotes romanticized view of international marriage, research participants of this study pointed out the fact that such brief or one-sided program can not comprehensively cover the whole aspect of international marriage. Indeed, even a lifetime of study of certain event would not be enough to unravel the whole aspect of each case of international marriage.

It is also problematic that media picture Korean males as perpetrators of domestic violence

whenever incidents of domestic violence in multicultural family occur in this society. They will never believe the fact that we are as equally victims as the female marriage immigrants (C-3).

The media often describe foreign female marriage immigrants as the subject of social support because they are seen as a vulnerable social group being marginalized. However I don't think it justifies their wrongdoing. Marriage relationship should not be only one-sided and media also need to be fair to both sides (L-3).

These statements presented here trace the bigger issue leading to great concerns in the current media programs on international marriage and multicultural family. Obviously, these programs need their own urgent campaign in monitoring and controlling their biases. This way, the persons directly involved, whether the male side or the female side, could set their feet in an equal ground and do not feel like they are used by the media propaganda.

2. Issues during the marriage

1) Financial issues

It is a well-known fact that martial relations should base upon love and caring. However, as stated earlier, many couples of international marriage often subconsciously end up basing their marriage on the superficial relationship and it gets expressed at crucial times. In cases of female marriage immigrants who happen to decide on the international marriage for finance reasons, more conflicts tend to happen if the financial status becomes rough. And some of them even decide to leave the marriage eventually.

At the time of wedding, I had a bit of debts. So after I took care of the debts, my wife came to Korea. My monthly paycheck was about 1.6 million Korean won, at that time. My parents had passed away and we lived in a house for 3 years with my brother, his wife, and my younger sister. A few months after the marriage, I transferred about 1.5 million Korean won to the in-laws because they needed to repair the house damage from a typhoon. 1 million won per month was deducted from my paycheck in lieu of loan...(K-4).

During my marriage, sending money to the wife's parents was the biggest cause for family discord. Big age difference between me and her was also an issue...but if I miss the date of sending money to her parents, she would make my daughter to call me to tell me to transfer money...(C-4)

For the female marriage immigrants whose main purpose for international marriage is the financial stability and economic support for their family in motherland, their Korean spouses' financial support becomes one of the most important element in maintaining of their marriage. Therefore, if their Korean spouse can no longer financially sponsor them, many issues arise and these issues even lead to the dissolution of their marriage. As seen in cases of the research participants of this study and the data from Ministry of Gender Equality and Family (2010), some female marriage immigrants even run away or disappear.

In 2012, my wife's older brother got married. I offered to help out and was going to transfer 300VND at first, but I ended up sending 700VND. Then I brought another 3 million Korean won in cash to the wedding. I pretty much paid for the entire wedding cost. After the wedding, my wife's older brother even wanted more money from me and my wife. He even wanted to buy a karaoke machine for his house. I thought that it was too much and my wife and I had a quarrel. After we came back to Korea, she began keeping distance from me and eventually ran away...(K-4)

Relatively, Korean male spouses of foreign female marriage immigrants also became "more and more stressed out from the financial burden (L-4)" that their wife requested of them. Since Korean male spouses of international marriage experience a lot of difficulties caused by linguistic and cultural difference on a daily basis, they get more frustrated from not knowing how to resolve accumulating financial conflicts. In such situation, there isn't anyone to rant to and there isn't sufficient information or help for them. Thus they also find it useless to ask their female spouses for the aspect of sacredness of marriage and eventually give up on their hope in happy married life.

2) Relationship issues

Besides the financial issue, the research participants of the present study all stated that their spouses gradually started avoiding them, avoiding the responsibility of married life, and staying occupied with

internet instead.

We had a computer in our living room. My wife would wake up in the middle of night and sit at the computer saying she is studying. If I approach to the computer, she changed the screen and turned on the music. As time goes, I fell asleep in front of TV and she stayed in front of computer... (S-5)

While she was at home, she was always on computer doing messenger all day. Even when she came out to my store, she continued messenger in the corner. Later, I found out that she had a lover back in her country...(L-5)

Before I got married, I heard that there are some women who come to take advantage of international marriage and they tend to hang on to the computer avoiding everything...Who knew? My wife will turn out to be one of them? Later, I also learned that Internet messenger is usually to communicate with a lover back in their homeland, or to look for a new way of dating a guy from homeland or internet match making. I heard that this phenomenon is common amongst women who run away within 5 months of marriage... (C-5)

For the research participants of this study, conflict causes from their spouses' affairs has become another big issue. There were cases that they already were involved in relationship with a man of the same country.

One morning in May, my wife received a talk message, and it was a photo of a Vietnamese man. My wife told me that he was just a friend of her, but in the picture they were hugging and rubbing the cheeks. (L-5)

One day, phone rang... I was going to get the phone, but she ran to answer the phone. Male voice leaked out, and it sounded like her mother tongue. They stopped the conversation right after about 30 seconds, then hung up the phone. I asked who it was, and she said she didn't know who it was. Phone rang again. She didn't say anything on the phone, but pressed a number, then # and *, and hung up. Then she said, "I don't know who it is, I just hung up". When I picked up the phone, they were still on the phone, and when I said 'hello', there was no response but

when I said again 'hello' (in Korean), they hung up... (K-5)

Unfortunately the above kinds of misconduct during the married life of international marriage happened to be result from the continuous relationship with ex-boyfriends back home country. Such relationship could have been maintained through internet chatting or by speaking mother tongue over the phone, taking advantage of the fact that their Korean husband doesn't understand their mother tongue. If things get worse, some of them even pre-arranged an elaborate divorce plan.

3. Breakup Stage Issues

1) Runaway issues

My lawyer tells me that my wife has systematically utilized the surrounding conditions in order to induce me to get furious...and eventually disguise it as a legal divorce case... If things go well as she has planned, she will end up receiving alimony and she will be with her Vietnamese boyfriend. In our male victims meeting, I heard so many similar cases. This becomes a cause to increase the cases of male victims, you know...(K-6)

I went straight to XXXXX region police station and reported a runaway. Next day, I got a call from the police station and heard "Your wife says she was going to return home..." A few days later, my wife's application for national pension arrived at home. I was able to know that she was working in XXX. Later, she contacted me and asked for a divorce. She said she was mentally exhausted and didn't like the way I was suspicious of her... (Ka-7)

Two of the research participants of the present study, C's and L's cases present an issue after the planned runaway. In their cases, their spouses tried to induce them to commit violence so that they could use it as evidence in the lawsuit cases for divorce.

I went to the police station for investigation. I kept saying "No it's not what happened..." but no one believed me. I was shocked by the evidence photos she submitted to the police. There was a light scar on face, and scar on neck, and both arms were covered with bruise. There was another bruise on the back and on the shoulder. There were scars on head and around eyes...

(C-6)

Later I heard that it is open secret among people from her home country that they have access to learn how to file a divorce and make their spouse guilty for the cause of divorce in prior to their entry to Korea... Some people also learn how to do it through their friends of same nationality...They have their own network... It is like they recognize the Korean males as nearly ignorant in legal knowledge, and consider most of them as completely vulnerable. On the other hand, they hide their affair and rather maneuver the sponsor of their motherland as well as Korean law to trick their Korean husbands...(L-6)

In C's case, he later found out that his wife had an affair with another man, even got pregnant, and gave a birth to a child during her runaway.

She submitted a petition in 2013. On the divorce petition, it included issues like alimony and stated that I lack fidelity. I started searching for any record on her during her runaway. I searched for 2 weeks. I looked for the record of pregnancy and birth. Finally, I found a birth record under her name. Within a month, I submitted a petition to the court. (C-7)

According to C, he believes that he is rather lucky because he has custody of his daughter at least, even after his wife ran away. In many cases, Korean males end up not knowing whereabouts of their children if their spouses runaway with their children. It is an open secret that many of the marriage immigrant females bring their children back to their home country once they think of the possibility of divorce, leave the child there with their family and then return to Korea alone for an employment. The data of Ministry of Gender Equality and Family (2010) show that this occurs frequently nowadays. Because these immigrated female already have an experience of living in Korea, they know that it is more favorable for them to leave the child with their parents in their home country and return to Korea to become financially independent. Many of them are taking this route to break the marriage and to provide most realistic financial solution.

2) Damage aspect on children and extended Family

The most serious issue during the dissolution process of international marriage is inevitably the child issue. Sometimes, children become emotionally instable and in many cases, they suffer from emotional turmoil and experience anxiety.

Early November in 2011, my wife left me with my child and didn't come back. It started just like that...In September, 2012, a guy brought her back and told me to raise her... (C-9)

One day I took the child to near XX station. Suddenly, she asked me to go to a market next to the station. There was a construction site near the station, and the child said "uncle dad works there." She said "I want go to the playground". She was very familiar with the playground there. I realized that they lived near there while they took my child away...'Uncle dad'... I don't know how I can explain it to her... (C-9)

Psychological status and emotional reaction of the child who experienced living with 'uncle dad' because of the mother's affair outside of marriage are not the issue in current time, but something to confirm later in the future after the child becomes an adult.

The child means the whole world to me. Imagine someone like me who got married at an old age and finally had a child.... Not letting the father know of his child's status or whereabouts should be understood as an intentional deprivation of parental right...(K-9)

After 2 weeks, I met a wife of my wife's cousin. She helped me to talk to my mother-in-law over the phone. She said, "Sort things out with my daughter first. Then, I will send the child back to you"...I miss my son so much... (Ka-9)

My son was born in 2010. In 2013, my wife went to visit her home in Vietnam, but came back alone. She was supposed to come back with the child at the end of November, but she returned 9-10 days earlier. Her phone was out of service, and there was a high possibility that she was at her relative's house in Korea. There was a record of entry according to the immigration at the airport, but there was no way of finding out where she was. I don't know where in Vietnam my

son lives either...(L-9)

In cases where the mother leaves the child back in her home country and return to Korea alone, it is not easy to track down the trace of the child. Unless the in-law family members inform the status of children, it is known that it is very difficult to find out where they are and how they live. Depending on how much of effect the parental right has in the international law, various conclusions can be drawn from it. Also, international relations between Korea and the wife's country plays an important role in resolving such issues. Obviously, there is a need to specify how much of restrictions or regulations will needed in relevant law or policy regarding this kinds of issues.

There is significant damage on extended family or relatives side as well. In case of L, his aged mother passed away from the shock of her daughter-in-law's runaway. According to L, it was a great joy for his parents to see their old son getting married. For the same reason, their daughter-in-law's runaway caused a great amount of shock for them.

I had an aged mother in nursing hospital when my wife ran away. My mother passed away from the shock...Korean males who try out for international marriage are usually from lower social class, and so the family members around us are not from higher social glass either. Therefore, strong patriarchal mind is present. Through the marriage, they hope their family name can be carried on. In such condition, the daughter-in-law's runaway not only ruins the life of the man, but also takes away the possibility of carrying on the family name...(K-8)

For the elderly generation in Korea, son means an existence to carry on the family name. There is a need to re-interpret the runaway of immigrated female, from a perspective of the elderly generation who wish to carry on the family name through the daughter-in-law even with the cost of money...(L-8)

There are also cases that family and relatives suffer from immigrated female's kleptomania.

For an immigrated female with no interest in marriage itself, Korean male and his family can be recognized just as a means to raise initial capital to settle in Korea. Korean male and his family are just a stepping stone for their independence in Korea...(C-9)

I later found out that my wife used to steal things from my sister who has 1st classification disability. My mom and my sister live together. One day she was wearing new earrings, and when I asked her about them she said her mother bought them for her and I believed her. Later, I found out that she took them from my mom and sister. My sister and mother's earrings, necklace, and bracelet were gone. My wife took them. My other sister already knew, but didn't tell me. Later I heard that my family decided not to tell me because they didn't want me to get hurt. My family had to suffer like this because of my marriage...When she ran away, she took two wedding rings as well...(L-9)

According to the research participants of this study, their spouse's runaway becomes “family shame” and it is not recoverable. Korean society's perspective on Korean males of international marriage is based on a idea that “he bought a young and powerless bride from economically challenged country with the money (S-9).” Since Korean male with international marriage background and his family are used to this kinds of stereotyped view, they don't want to reveal the fact that there are serious international marriage problems in their family.

My neighbors still don't know that my wife has run away. I can't tell them, because of Korean society's perspective on this. They may say 'How can you possibly mistreat your young wife and make her run away from you?' They will blame me saying, "She probably left you for a reason..." (L-8)

Male who experienced his wife's runaway lives alone with a scarlet letter of 'divorced.' Now that their hope to renew their lives through marriage has been crushed, they have to live with serious financial and physical pain...(C-8)

While International marriage agencies' irresponsibility, media propaganda, economical burden, avoiding marital relationship, damage on child and extended family were common criteria each participant of this study claimed as important issues occurred in the dissolution process of their international marriages in their international marriage, the five research participants of this study also all agreed upon the fact that the noun “victim” was the best word to describe them. Throughout the interviews, it was not hard for us to witness that what other researchers also called the common

problems of Korean male victims of international marriage were manifested in our research participants' experience (Chae & Hong, 2012).

After all, as seen in Kim's study (2012), Korean males can be as equally victims as the female marriage immigrants; mentally, financially, and socially. Therefore the dissolution of international marriage should no longer be resolved with a schematized conclusion of victimized female and victimizing husband. However in reality, as the cases of male victims of international marriage are growing in number, personality insult to internationally married males which is derived from social prejudice is also getting more and more serious. "Many people are not hesitant in insulting the internationally married male by treating him as the incompetent or incapable (So-10)"

They suffer even more from the institute's judgmental attitude or legal authority's prejudice. There is almost no legal custody protection for them. No one research participant of this study trusted either staff members at multicultural family support center or police officers. "People in multicultural center will believe me even if I lie to them." "Police too, Even if I lie at the police station, they will believe me and they will help out (L-10)." The research participants of this study often heard this kind of statements from their wives and they learned that it was true after all. They felt that professionals in multicultural center did not even try to listen to their side of story. They wondered "If the center is for multicultural family, how come it has no function of protecting Korean male locals as well? (L-10)"

The social status of immigrated females should be re-interpreted. Korean society tends to categorize the immigrated females as social prey and recognizes them as victimized beings to help and protect. At the same time, it is more urgent to review and re-interpret the internationally married male's social status within Korean society as well. Obviously, it is not fair for those males' social status gets downgraded and their speech or communication no longer has social impact from the moment the male decides to have international marriage. As all the research participants of this study claimed, there is a need of establishing "some kinds of protection system for male victims in international marriage (Ch-10)." "Just as the multicultural center or shelter and police station protect immigrated females, they should also protect Korean males as well(K-10)."

V. Conclusion

Although the Korean males' damage aspects generated from the dissolution of marriage are shown in many different ways, the reality is that it creates mental and physical damage not only to the Korean males but to family members, relatives, and their children as well. Indeed, it appears that there is an urgent need of strict modifications on relevant policies of international marriage. In order to prevent the negative effects of international marriage, the strict regulation that is fair to both male side and female side is a must and the enforcement of legal action on wrongdoing is also required. Immigration Bureau, local government, or consulate should be able to take necessary legal actions if necessary.

All the research participants of this study described that immigrated female's local identity should be thoroughly reviewed at the first place. According to them, it was not fair only Korean male's personal information is reviewed, from owned property to personal history, while female marriage immigrants only need to go through a superficial procedure and pass the review with an unverified document. Therefore, they insisted that the immigrated females also to be reviewed and examined thoroughly from an equal point of view, with proper documents and strengthened requirements.

Especially, solutions to the imperfect identity documents in their native country, thorough procedure for re-issuance of foreigner's residence certificate, and institutional supplement for immigrated female's employment are found to be crucial. However, realistically speaking, it is not easy to execute because legal interpretation differs from country to country. Yet, it is obvious that continuous adjustments must be provided.

As all the research participants of the present study see it, an awareness of the significance of these issues is a prerequisite for a meaningful discussion of successful international marriage. Within this reference, professionals and researchers in this area are said to be responsible for conducting further studies, ones that allow us to hear both what has been spoken and what has been unspoken. The result of the present study supports this point of view by providing some of male victims' own voices. We believe these voices can provoke a reconsideration of international marriage practices to make them more reflective and more positive.

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국문초록

다문화가정 이혼 남성 사례 연구

심미경

본 연구는 한국사회에서 상대적으로 피해사례가 덜 알려져 있는 해체된 다문화 가정 남성들의 사례를 심층적으로 조사하여 이들에 대한 전면적인 연구의 토대를 제공하고 향후 보다 바람직한 다문화가정 확립을 위한 지원방법을 모색하고자 기획된 장기 프로젝트의 일환으로서 파일럿으로 실행된 기초조사연구이다. 본 연구는 해체된 다문화가정 남성들의 직접적인 목소리를 반영하기 위하여 심층인터뷰 기법을 사용하였다. 본 연구에 참가한 연구 참여자들의 사례를 좀 더 다각적으로 분석하기 위해 본 연구의 데이터는 이들의 결혼생활 뿐 만 아니라 처음 여성을 만나 결혼하게 된 시점부터 집을 나가고 난 이후 현재의 관계에 이르기까지의 과정을 포함하였고 국제결혼 이후 남성이 한국사회에서 경험한 사회적 위치의 변화양상과 가족 내에서의 위치 변화양상도 함께 조사하였다. 연구결과, 다문화 가정의 해체 과정에서 오는 한국남성들의 피해 양상은 다방면으로 나타나며, 무엇보다도 그를 둘러싼 가족과 친지, 그리고 자녀에게 가해지는 정신적, 물질적 피해는 아주 심각한 문제로 드러났다. 그럼에도 불구하고 이러한 상황에서 한국인 남성을 위한 법적인 보호 장치나 자녀에 대한 국제적 친권 주장을 할 수 있는 사회적 조치가 전혀 없는 실정이며 그들을 향한 한국사회의 사회적 편견이나 인격적 모독까지 감수해야 하는 상황이었다. 현재 한국 내 국제결혼으로 인한 사회적 파장과 다문화 가정 해체 과정에서 오는 여러 가지 사례로 볼 때 국제결혼을 하고자하는 한국남성 뿐 아니라 국제결혼 이주여성들에 대해서도 신분과 결혼 동기 등의 확실성에 대한 점검절차나 제도적 장치는 반드시 필요한 상황으로 대두되고 있는 만큼 건강한 다문화 가정의 형성과 유지를 위해서라도 국제결혼과 관련된 사회적 제도적 장치의 실질적인 면을 재점검하고 분석하여 보완 장치 등에 대한 방안을 마련할 필요성이 있다고 하겠다.

* 주제어: 다문화가정의 해체, 국제결혼

투고일: 2015.3.21 / 심사일: 2015.4.7~4.20 / 게재확정일: 2015.4.27