Social and Religious Challenges and Social Adaptation of Uzbek Marriage Migrants in South Korea

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to analyze the cultural and religious adaptation of Uzbek marriage immigrants in Korea and derive policy implications for social integration. To this end, this study interviewed Uzbek women who immigrated to Korea through marriage to identify the personal, policy, and social difficulties they have faced in Korean society. In addition, this study examined the efforts they and their families make to overcome the difficulties and the systems and programs provided by the government for successful integration to identify their significance and limitations. The results of the study showed that Uzbek marriage immigrant women were experiencing difficulties due to differences in food,

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language, and religion, and were experiencing resistance, compromise, and assimilation. The variables that had the greatest influence on this process were Korean husbands, parents-in-law, and Uzbek women's online communities. The faster the husbands and parents-in-law understood halal food and religious practices and did not impose Korean culture, the faster the adaptation. On the other hand, the programs of the 'Multicultural Center' provided by the Korean government were mainly language education, but were not helpful because they did not provide information on food and religious practices. Therefore, women solved this problem through digital networks, through which they obtained information about groceries, shared religious and cultural difficulties, and gained emotional stability. Therefore, our society needs to provide appropriate education to Korean families who welcomed married immigrant women as family members, such as husbands and in-laws, and implement the information and emotional stability provided by digital networks at the institutional level to promote the social integration of Muslim married women.

Key Words: Marriage Migration, Islam, Religious Identity, Uzbekistan, South Korea

Ⅰ. Introduction

One type of migration is marriage migration, where people from one nation travel across the borders to marry a citizen of another nation (Han, 2006). This fits into other globalization trends and strengthens cultural diversity and interaction in receiving countries (Kraler et al., 2011). It, therefore, impacts the social development of migrants as they navigate new cultural contexts about their established social roles (Siddiqui, 2008).

Many women in Uzbekistan and other developing countries seek work outside their countries, primarily because of the economic inequalities in the developing countries (Abdurazakova, 2011). Being married to South Korean men helps them to live better economically and obtain Korean citizenship (Lee et al., 2006; Kim & Kilkey, 2018). Job search, family pressures, exploitation, and integration may be among the consequences of marriage migration to South Korea (Yongcharoenchai, 2017).

Thus, it is important to further analyze the diversifying role of marriage migration in South Korea as a particular case of particular ethnic and religious communities, e.g., Muslim migrants in non-Muslim society. Based on what has been said above, this involving cultural and religious differences has a direct effect on the integration of Uzbek migrant brides in South Korea. This paper explores how such migrants live in South Korea, where society is becoming increasingly diverse.

Unlike other migrant women, Uzbek wives must deal with

some cultural and religious challenges to follow dietary Islamic restrictions and preserve religious practices in South Korea. Also, Uzbekistan is an Islamic nation; South Koreans eat a lot of pork, which is forbidden in Islam. The scarcity of halal food and Korean society's ignorance of the unique dietary and religious requirements of Muslim migrants may compound the problem. Thus, while other researchers studied the overall integration issues of migrant brides, this research introduces cultural and religious aspects of Uzbeks that are specific to Uzbek women.

This paper aims to understand the cultural and religious barriers of Uzbek migrant brides and analyze their experience in the context of their religious and cultural backgrounds. In order to achieve this goal, the research seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What cultural and religious challenges do Uzbek migrant brides and their families encounter during their adaptation to South Korean society, and how do these challenges influence their integration experiences at the family level?
2. How do government policies and social programs address the challenges faced by Uzbek migrant brides and their families, and what gaps or successes are evident in facilitating their integration into South Korean society?
3. How do digital communities, informal networks, and NGO support complement government policies in addressing cultural and religious challenges and promoting the successful integration of Uzbek migrant brides into South Korean society?

It is important to know these challenges to make policies and interventions for the benefit and well-being of multicultural families. This paper will also contribute to policymakers in the future. The paper will also be part of the present literature on marriage migration and interfaith marriages. The study aims to increase cultural sensitivity and tolerance towards intercultural families in South Korea. It also proposes to bring out the needs of Uzbek migrant brides alone, as well as disclose how to attend to the needs of other migrants who are of various cultural and religious minorities in the secular society.

Ⅱ. Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

1. Cultural Identity and Social Perception of Muslim Immigrants

As Srimulyani (2021) states, Indonesian Muslims in South Korea struggle to preserve their Islamic and cultural identity from Islamophobia. Thus, the results suggest the importance of including minorities in the fiqh for successful integration. Therefore, it is also pivotal to understand how the host society accepts Islamic practices; as Lee (2023) states, Central Asian Muslim migrants are socially and economically integrated, displaying strong bonds to their traditions and religious beliefs. Although Muslims are marginalized in Korea, many are

seeking ways to integrate, according to Jang and Choi (2012). The struggle towards forming a unified Muslim identity by the Korean Muslim community, mainly composed of immigrants and their immediate families, has been ongoing. Numerous immigrants come to Korea to work and send money back to their country rather than stay here permanently. Due to this, they cannot get involved in learning the Korean language and culture (Lee et al., 2018). Like other Muslim diasporas, Muslims in Korea experience difficulties related to food and religious practice, including pork and other essential foods available in the workplace. No different from religious discrimination, there are a few universities that refuse to accommodate Muslim students' prayer schedules (Jang & Choi, 2012). The Muslim community in Korea, though gaining increased interest in Korean culture, is quite heterogeneous and not well integrated within Korean society.

Traditionally, Korean perceptions of Islam have been negative, with the belief that Muslims are not a part of the community but strangers (Song & Ahn, 2011). Moreover, these views are considerably affected by the 9/11 attacks, heightened Islamophobia meanwhile leading to a more intricate understanding of Islam (Jang & Choi, 2012). The main findings of a 2010 survey indicated that 56.3% of respondents had limited knowledge of Islam, 69.5%- little interest in Islam, 74.4% - Islam's growth would not benefit Korean society, 55.3%- associated Islam with terrorism, and 73.9% - would not allow their family members to marry Muslims. These results

suggest that Koreans view Muslims as distant "guests" rather than neighbors (KBS Research Center, 2010). These issues are even more urgent for Uzbek Muslim migrants since their status as visible minorities amplifies them. Being Muslim, they face unique challenges due to their particular culture and religion in a non-Muslim society such as South Korea. Understanding Uzbekistan's religious and cultural background is important to comprehending the identities of Uzbek migrant brides. It also helps us grasp the role of Islam in Uzbekistan and how pivotal religion is in the lives of Uzbek brides. This knowledge provides insight into the challenges faced by the Muslim minority in South Korea's secular society

2. The Role of Islam in Uzbekistan: Evolution and State Control

Living in the shadow of Islam, the people of Uzbekistan still were influenced by the state in their religious life after gaining independence in 1991. Despite a slight control of religion by the state during the Soviet era, mosques were under strict surveillance, and prayers occurred only in private spaces. Islamic traditions lived in the informal networks (Yapp, 1967). Following independence, the Uzbek government took over the control of Islam, as seen through the Muslim Board of Uzbekistan (MBU), to remain stable and avert radical ideologies. However, the government encouraged Sunni Hanafi Islam, the state-approved version of Sunni Islam, with rules prohibiting

women from wearing the hijab in educational institutions and government-related working spaces. Religious instruction is consistent with secular values (Ohlsson, 2011).

Islamic practices were incorporated into the national identity under President Karimov amid education reforms, which aimed to substitute atheism with moral education based on the state's Islamic values (Cabar. Asia, 2020). Following the 2016 reforms by Mirziyoyev, Uzbekistan became more lenient on public religious expression, reopening practices such as the azan and promoting neighborhood-based charitable activities (Presidential Decree No. 5416, 2018; Urinboyev & Eraliev, 2022). However, the government clings to religious authorities to prevent extremism, and at the same time, it is starting to Islamize the country partially. Adapting religious practices by Uzbek migrant women in South Korea is difficult since South Koreans are more religiously diverse. Such settlement in the diaspora makes these women tend to preserve their religious identity through digital communities or informal networks.

3. Interfaith Marriages and Studies on Mariage Migration

The early Islamic jurists identified two main groups of non-Muslim spouses: the mushriks (polytheists) and ahl al-kitab (People of the Book). Muslim men may marry women from the Ahl al-kitab. In contrast, Muslim women are prohibited from interfaith marriage, even those among the Ahl al-kitab (Sabuni, 1980). The unions between mushrik women

and Muslim men are also prohibited because they are considered responsible for the endangerment of the Islamic faith and the possibility of being included in the weakening of Islam (Al-Tabari, 1988; Al-Razi, 1989). About Muslim men, verse 5:5 of the Qur'an permits marriage to the ahl al-kitab, though this license has often been interpreted narrowly and usually does not cover, for example, Zoroastrians and Hindus (Hasan, 2015; Esack, 1997). However, in cases of Muslim women, due to the concern of having a halal marriage and proper child rearing and preservation of family religious identity, they are prohibited from marrying non-Muslim men (Al Shafi'i, 1973; Azzam, 2015). However, while some contemporary scholars favor an inclusive interpretation that would allow Muslim women to take a man from Ahl al-kitab as a valid marriage partner, this view is a minority opinion, and the majority of Islamic scholars still hold this as prohibited (Lamrabet, 2013; Azzam, 2015).

The ban on Muslim women marrying non-Muslim men is not only considered a theological stand but a sociological protection that will save the religious faith and practices of the Muslim community (Shaltūt, 2011). A man's religious commitment, according to the scholars, is likely to protect the Islam of his family, while a Muslim woman could be led astray if she marries a non-Muslim man (Ibn Taymiyya, 2005). In the contemporary time, more recently, the European Council for Fatwa and Research has, in its pronouncements on these unions, acknowledged that the said unions pose challenges for

Muslim women, in particular, to retain their religiosity in non-Muslim settings (FATWA: On Christian Men Marrying Muslim Women, 2016).

This paper uses the existing literature on interfaith marriages and religious inclusion to focus on the experiences of Muslim migrant women in South Korea. Kosmin and Keysar (2009) have looked at the effects of religious differences on interfaith marriages, studying areas such as communication, child rearing, and gender roles in these types of marriages, but did not examine the particular challenges facing Muslim women, including that of halal dietary practices and prayers that can place significant stress on the already stressed union of the interfaith family. However, this paper is going to fill this gap by studying the experiences of Uzbek Muslim brides in South Korea, which is a country where Islam is a minority religion and where institutional support for Islamic practices is minimal. However, other scholars, such as Wheat (2017), discussed the importance of communication in interfaith marriages. However, he did not discuss the religious and societal pressures that Muslim women have, especially in societies predominated by non-Muslims. As a further elaboration of these ideas, this paper considers how Uzbek Muslim brides in South Korea adapt their religious life in the host country, and it also looks at how digital platforms assist them in overcoming those challenges.

Moreover, this study further extends Mohd's (2011) study on interfaith marriages and religious conversion in the context of

a Muslim majoritarian, yet not entirely Muslim nation, specifically in Malaysia. However, unlike her study, this paper tries to examine the case of Uzbek Muslim brides while assuming that South Korea does not institutionalize Islamic practices to a high degree. Using Berry's model, Ahn (2009) studied Indonesian Muslim women's acculturation strategies in South Korea. Nevertheless, his analysis suffers from Berry's static framework, which is too simplistic about the complex and highly context-dependent ways migrants play with their cultural identities. Researchers criticized the application of Berry's model in this regard because it fails to consider the fluid and non-linear nature of acculturation. Also, Ahn's paper does not fully emphasize the role of digital platforms in acculturation. Digital resources help migrant women who lack institutional support in South Korea, mainly in keeping their religion and cultural identity, keeping up with social connections, and preserving cultural traditions.

4. Theoretical Framework

In this paper, secularization theory and acculturation theory helped to investigate the experiences of Uzbek women in South Korea, a primarily non-Muslim and secular society. Secularization theory, a sociological concept, posits that as societies modernize, religion's influence and importance in public and private life gradually decline, leading to a shift towards non-religious values and institutions (Dhima & Golder, 2021).

As both Berger (1969) and Durkheim (2023) articulated, secularization theory investigates how religion is susceptible to change in a secular environment over time. So, in secular societies like South Korea, those religious boundaries that differentiate minority religious groups may become more pronounced. In South Korea, where the migrant women are Uzbek, most of them practice a religion that is quite significantly different from the religious norm of Korean society. Islamic religious practices like daily prayers, dietary laws, or just knowledge of and respect for religious beliefs may have become very important to the migrant women's identities.

Joining Muslim networks in South Korea, however, may enable Uzbek migrant women to preserve their faith by providing support in the name of faith and solidarity against the secular influences in the country. This reflects the secularization process where religion adapts to or fades in a secular environment. However, migrants must navigate the conflict between their deeply rooted religious practices and the secular values of South Korean society. For first-generation migrants brides, maintaining their religious beliefs takes precedence, while the second generation, their children, may face increasing pressure to adopt South Korea's dominant secular cultural norms (Dimitriadis & Molteni, 2023).

According to Berry (1992), acculturation theory explains how individuals, particularly immigrants or minorities, adapt to a new culture, involving changes in their behaviors, values, and attitudes. Individuals can respond to acculturation through

various strategies, including integration, assimilation, separation, and marginalization. It refers to cultural change that results when people from different cultures come into contact through prolonged contact (Redfield et al., 1936). Their interaction affects those involved in this change of their values, beliefs, identities, and groups and the social and cultural systems to which both individuals belong (Berry, 2003). Characteristics of the host society (e.g., levels of discrimination), the country of origin (e.g., political and cultural contexts), and the immigrant group itself (e.g., ethnic cohesion and vitality) significantly impact the acculturation process. Berry's acculturation processes can be examined in four strategies: integration, assimilation, separation, and marginalization. In the case of Uzbek marriage migrants, acculturation theory helps explain how Uzbek migrant women in South Korea interact with Korean culture while still retaining their cultural identity. Some integrate by learning the Korean language, joining cultural events like cooking Korean food, and still keeping the Uzbek culture at home by celebrating Uzbek holidays or eating Uzbek food. However, others face separation when they stick with their original culture and do not engage in Korean culture. They prefer to stay within the Uzbek community and stick to familiar routines.

However, the validity of the categories of integration, assimilation, separation, and marginalization was criticized because of problematic correlations between these constructs (Montreuil & Bourhis, 2001). The critic discussed Berry's

acculturation model, which also overemphasizes the simplicity of the acculturation process and presents it as a linear process.

Traditionally, acculturation theory has centered on the acculturation of cultural practices and ethnic identity but overlooked religion's role in determining acculturation outcomes (Berry, 1997; 2003). This paper suggests incorporating religious identity into extant religious diversity frameworks and acculturation frameworks, especially for Uzbek marriage migrants, who are considered minorities.

In conclusion, the chosen theories help to understand religious and cultural adaptation. Suppose secularization theory helps to understand migrants' religious adaptation in a secular society where religious practices may be less emphasized. Acculturation explains migrants' cultural adaptation, the process of their integration and negotiation between two cultures.

In the case of Uzbek Muslim women in South Korea, religious activity strongly influences the acculturation outcomes. Uzbek Muslim women often prioritize their religious beliefs by preserving cultural norms like dietary restrictions and daily prayers (Verkuyten & Yildiz, 2009). This can be contradictory to South Korea's secular norms. Most of the time, these women have no choice but to negotiate their religious identity and gender roles between Uzbek cultural traditions and state-controlled Islam in Uzbekistan with a non-Muslim, predominantly secular society like South Korea. Because of these practices, Uzbek migrants may be considered foreign or

contradict Korean norms, creating considerable barriers to assimilation into the host culture.

A modification of Berry's acculturation model is needed to account for these complexities, and this will require consideration of how religion, ethnicity, and gender mediate migrants' acculturation conditions and outcomes. In this regard, the study of Uzbek Muslim women in South Korea shows how religious identity complicates women's full integration into the host society. As well as how it can be a resilient basis for preserving ethnic and cultural practices. Using religion in Berry's framework provides a more complicated view of the acculturation process, especially for migrant groups whose relation to religion is not only a cultural trait but a central element of their social identity.

Ⅲ. Methodology

This qualitative research uses a data-gathering method, semi-structured interviews. The study of Uzbek migrant brides in South Korea confronted sociocultural and religious dissonances, and the fieldwork is among 10 Uzbek women who practice Islam and married Korean men. Due to the difficulties of reaching study participants directly, snowball sampling was used, where the researcher asked to refer to other people who would fit the criteria of this study:

1. had to be of Uzbek origin and born in their home country.

2. being in an international marriage with a Korean husband.

3. be of a legal age.

4. is willing to participate.

The researcher conducted online and face-to-face interviews between August and November 2023. The researcher interviewed eight of the 10 women by phone, and two participants agreed to in-person interviews. The researcher obtained consent for data usage from participants. The researcher conducted audio-recorded, semi-structured interviews lasting thirty minutes to two hours. The open-ended interview asked three broad research questions:

1) What cultural and religious challenges do Uzbek migrant brides face in South Korea?

2) What role do local policies and MFSC play in their integration process?

3) How do digital communities, informal networks, and NGOs help them?

However, many potential participants declined to participate in the recruitment because they feared being stigmatized for being in interfaith marriages with non-Muslim men and worried about being judged. As a native speaker, the researcher conducted interviews in Uzbek and then translated them into English for the analysis. The ethical considerations were adhered to in the study. The researcher acquainted the study voluntarily, individuals' right to drop at any stage, and the

guaranteed confidence measures. Before and after the interview, the researcher got consent and ensured the anonymity of participants. Despite not wanting to talk about difficulties with family or dealing with being in a new culture, the researcher's effort to build trust helped some participants to relax. Also, the researcher secured the audio tape of the interview and anonymized the participants' names. This study contributes methodologically to understanding the adaptation

〈Table 1〉 Background information of the research participants

No	Initials/ place	Age	Position	Migration year	Kids	Education	Religion	Interview method	Husband's job
1	Participant 1 Incheon	38	Housewife	2009	4	High school	Islam	Phone	Business
2	Participant 2 Cheongju	40	Interpreter	2005	2	College	Islam	Phone	Horticulture
3	Participant 3 Daejeon	36	Interpreter	2003	2	University	Islam	Phone	Real estate
4	Participant 4 Seoul	36	Restaurant	2018	1	High school	Islam	Phone	Techician
5	Participant 5 Seoul	36	Restaurant	2013	2	High school	Islam	Phone	Business
6	Participant 6 Gwangju	33	Factory	2015	1	High school	Islam	Phone/face to face	Factory
7	Participant 7 Daegu	35	Housewife	2012	2	College	Islam	Phone	Horticulture
8	Participant 8 Gwangju	30	Factory	2015	1	College	Islam	Phone	Seasonal farming
9	Participant 9 Gwangju	31	Family restaurant	2020	1	High school	Islam	Phone	Company
10	Participant 10 Gwangju	28	Factory	2017	2	College	Islam	Phone/face to face	Company

experience of Uzbek migrant women and the integration problems. It also studies the help of informal community and institutional support despite the difficulties associated with recruitment and data collection.

However, the direct recruitment of the participants is the limitation of this research. This was because of the absence of Uzbek marriage migrants in the local MFSC. In order to minimize the impact of this limitation, the researcher used snowball sampling and observed Uzbek Muslim women's digital communities, giving qualitative data on these women's real lives. Berry's acculturation typology permitted to analyze the findings in the context of religion, culture, family, gender roles, Policies and informal networks.

IV. Cultural and Religious Challenges: Faith, Family, and Food

This chapter explores the experiences of acculturation processes of Uzbek migrant women in South Korea, particularly by examining the interrelation of adaptation strategy, food culture, religious practices, and family dynamics. The researcher explored how women negotiate cultural identity following Berry's typology of acculturation (separation, integration, and assimilation).

For Uzbek migrants, the diet is one of the most critical adaptation challenges. Separation or nonacceptance of Korean

food by a few women, integration through mixing Uzbek and Korean diets by some respondents, and assimilation, like accepting a Korean diet. These foods are not preferences. These are the part of their culture, the part of them. Secondly, religious practices also present challenges. However, Uzbek Muslim women adapt in different ways. For example, some women practice Islam according to traditional Islamic traditions while under the pressure of the host society (separation), others integrate part of the culture into the receiving society (integration), and third, give up or compromise with the Islamic traditions under the demands of assimilation.

Gender roles and family dynamics also help to shape adaptation. Women must now go through the transition from a collectivist society to the nuclear family structure and deal with new expectations. They tend to adopt a more egalitarian model (integration), assimilate to hierarchical family structures (assimilation), or remain in traditional separation roles. This chapter uses Berry's framework to understand these domains. How migrant women balance home country demands and host society demands tells us how migrant women use strategies to adapt to a new life in South Korea.

1. Language Barriers and Food Culture Enforcement

An important challenge for adaptation between Uzbek immigrant women is their food culture. These Challenges are involved in its self-preserving Islamic diet in a non-Muslim

society. These are the acculturation strategies reflected in participants' responses. What underlies Berry's concept of separation is the result of participants refusing to adapt to food to preserve cultural and religious identity. Other participants noted that this conflict between Muslim dietary laws and living in a household that disregards their dietary and other needs can be problematic. As a result, there was frequently much emotional stress between members of the same family in the case of Participant 3, who had a problem with checking the ingredients of the products due to the language barrier and accessibility of halal food because she lived in far areas that hardly had access to halal stores.

"One of my biggest challenges was dealing with food here in Korea. Since I wasn't fluent in the language and couldn't read labels, I had no way of checking if products contained pork. On top of that, we lived far from the city center, so halal meat shops were a long way off."

Participant 3's case, where she faced difficulties in finding halal food, is one of the unique challenges of Muslims in non-Muslim societies, which can further lead to isolation. This case also shows the level of readiness of the host (South Korea) to accommodate or support the religious needs of minority groups like Uzbek brides. However, South Korea's government might be unable to dedicate sufficient resources to harmonize various religious practices, including food, especially everyday necessities like halal food. Here, the role of informal networks and the community system is significant. The role of informal

networks and communities and how they provide a key source of help and solidarity for Uzbek migrant women will be discussed and explained in Chapter VI.

1) Integration (Compromise)

The cases of participants related to integration relate to the role of family members in the process. Integration in this context was more about mixing two cultures: preserving some elements of Uzbek culture and accepting parts of Korean norms, which led to their new hybrid identity. Participants in the case of Participant 5 talked about her husband's contribution to bringing an Uzbek atmosphere to the household. Family members' acceptance and support are key factors in integration here. Also, her husband's efforts to incorporate Uzbek dishes demonstrate mutual cultural respect and a balanced acculturation approach.

"Alhamdulillah, even though my husband is Korean, he's really made an effort to bring an Uzbek atmosphere into our home. My husband's favorites are 'pilov' and 'tabaka.' It's really sweet how he embraces our traditions, and it makes me feel at home."

Her story shows a hybrid form of cultural assimilation because she and her husband could keep some parts of Uzbek culture and some parts of Korean culture and create a new form of culture. However, the integration process has de-

pended on the support and acceptance from family members, among them the husband's efforts to bring Uzbek traditions into the home. How her husband brought home Uzbek food for the wife also shows the husband's willingness to accept a new culture in his household, epitomizing integration more than assimilation and sharing two cultures smoothly.

2) Assimilation (Full adaptation)

Adhering to host norms and abandoning cultural practices carried out by participants totally adapted to Korean food culture, which led to the full acceptance of the host society's norms. Participant 8 shares her experience, where she gave up dietary restrictions, which caused cultural identity loss, where the person does not feel as either Korean or Uzbek. However, it still depends on the person's self-reflection about this choice, whether she felt uncomfortable or improved her life. In the case of Participant 8, she felt more included in the family and the host society, which reduced her feeling of alienation.

"I initially did not know the language very well and could not read labels…" Now, I've adapted and am drinking and eating everything Koreans drink and eat. I have discovered what works for me. I am used to the local food."

Participant 8 gave up on her dietary restrictions and embraced Korean food, which brought her feelings of belonging within the family and society. She adapted herself to this to

reduce the feeling of alienation but at the cost of losing her original cultural identity. This represents the emotional trade-offs that one can go through because of assimilation.

As a part of the acculturation process, food adaptation is an interbreeding of religion, culture, and family. Resistance was sometimes emotionally stressful and created familial conflicts. Food and language are two components of well-being in migrant women. Halal practices (dietary restrictions) are a matter of cultural practices and physical body health. For example, one of the participants had an experience with her mother-in-law ignoring her dietary requirements, which led her to think about divorce because of food choices. There are also all of the language barriers that make communication too hard, as well as isolation and frustration. If communication fails, it can result in long-term emotional and health problems. Both emotional and physical costs are involved in the cultural adaptation of these two fundamental human needs: food and communication.

2. Emotional and Health Impacts of Cultural Suppression

A central issue for migrant women related to food is not only cultural preference but also because food makes physical and psychological sense to them. They were raised their whole lives by following Islamic dietary restrictions; it was part of their lives rather than just a preference. Add to these pressures the stress of adjusting to a new society, and these struggles can have substantial emotional and health repercussions.

1) Separation (Strong resistance)

Some women reject the host culture to the point of feeling undermined by it. This resistance often causes emotional pain, isolation, and frustration. A case of cultural suppression in Participant 6 includes her experience during pregnancy when her mother-in-law denied her culturally significant food and even threw away a gift of "manti"- Uzbek traditional mandu, which led to an emotional toll. Ultimately, this incident led to the sad loss of her baby and emphasized the fact that culturally different environments can end up harming her not only emotionally but physiologically. Participant 8:

"During my pregnancy, my mother-in-law refused to give me the food I craved... One day, my friend brought me four manti... My mother-in-law scolded me and threw them in the trash. Not long after, I lost the baby at four months."

2) Compromise (Integration)

Some women tried to combine their cultural values and patterns of behavior with those of South Korean society. Participant 7 states that her husband has made an effort to be taught of and to learn and practice religious rituals with her, which makes her feel supported and decreases emotional stress. The spouse's support can decrease stress and give the feeling of acceptance of one's culture by the host family. This makes the bride feel more included and heard. This example shows how it can be emotional well-being and a sense of belonging in a new environment. Participant 7:

"My husband makes an effort to join me in my religious practices. He now prays with me and has learned how to pray properly, which makes me feel supported."

Sometimes, women fully adapt to South Korean norms and give up parts of their culture. Participant 8 discusses how assimilation may relieve conflicts and decrease stress. This participant better understood South Korean culture and was less stressed. However, such a state of mind can result in emotional detachment from one's cultural lineage, with thoughts about identity and emotional well-being in the long run. This shows the importance of essential knowledge and readiness to accept a new culture.

"Now, I understand the culture better and am much less stressed."

The emotional and cultural challenges that Uzbek migrant women face in South Korea adjusting to new family and gender roles. Whereas the family system in Uzbekistan was collectivist, that of South Korea is nuclear, making it extremely difficult emotionally and logistically. It is especially felt by brides when it comes to the dynamics of the family and the gender expectations therein.

3) Separation (Strong resistance)

Many women resist the Korean nuclear family structure,

preferring to maintain the collectivist family values of Uzbekistan. This resistance often stems from extended family networks' deep emotional and cultural significance. Participant 9's response shows that the nuclear family structure in South Korea creates feelings of isolation and loneliness. The challenge is not just logistical but deeply emotional, as the extended family's sense of unity and closeness is lost.

"Back in Uzbekistan, most of our relatives live nearby, and we gather a lot. Here in Korea, it's just me and my husband, and I missed that feeling of unity. It made me realize how important that big family atmosphere is in my life."

Participant 9 stated that because South Korea has a more nuclear family structure, it can lead to a feeling of isolation and loss of unity.

4) Integration (Compromise)

Some women find a middle ground by integrating some aspects of South Korean and some Uzbek family norms. Participant 4's experience reflects this compromise, where she adapts to shared household responsibilities, a more balanced approach than the traditional gender roles she experienced in Uzbekistan. This strategy allows these women to hold on to key aspects of their cultural identity while also adapting to the expectations of their new society. Integration provides a more flexible approach, allowing for the coexistence of both cultures in family life.

5) Assimilation (Full adaptation)

In the end, some women fully embrace South Korean family norms, often at the expense of their cultural values. Participant 5's story illustrates this when she adjusts to a more hierarchical family structure in South Korea despite her previous experiences of more freedom in Uzbekistan. Assimilation can lead to smoother adaptation but often results in emotional distress as women abandon personal preferences to fit into the rigid family frameworks of the host society.

"In Uzbekistan, I was used to more freedom within the family, but here, I had to adjust. My mother-in-law was very controlling... It felt suffocating, but over time, I learned to accept this as part of the family dynamic here."

The analysis shows that while separation may help women preserve their cultural identity, it often hinders full integration into South Korean society. Integration strikes a balance, enabling women to maintain their cultural values while adapting to the new environment. This makes the emergence of a new identity in brides a hybrid identity. However, assimilation can come at a significant emotional cost, as women may need to let go of their cultural heritage to fit into the host society's family norms.

3. Religious Differences and Adaptation

This section will examine the problems of religious adapta-

tion that Uzbek women face in non-Muslim surroundings, which constitutes extra-layered difficulties. Interfaith marriages between Muslim women and non-Muslim men are not allowed in Islam, so this is a particularly sensitive issue. Religion is a part of Uzbek women's identity and how they define themselves socially, religiously, and culturally. By exhibiting how navigating religious differences within their new family structure (either through conflict or compromise) affects their sense of self and how their religious identity is either retained or transformed through migration, the part of the paper explores how religious differences can be adapted to a new context.

1) Separation (Strong resistance)

The challenges of religion's life tend to get the better of some. This follows the consonance of the concept of resistance to assimilating and adapting to the norms of the host society. However, keeping that religious practice intact gets even more complex when one must contend with social pressures. For example, Participant 3 shared her story about her son:

"I try to teach my son to say Bismillah before eating... But here in Korea, the other kids didn't understand. They laughed at him, and he stopped saying it at school."

It also shows how religious practices may be misunderstood or even mocked by others and thus become a source of isolation. However, society was so resistant that the partici-

pant's son no longer practiced the important religious ritual that she attempted to teach him. This situation illustrates the emotional and social strains of adhering to religious rituals. It shows the decline of the role of religion in a society where religion is not understood.

2) Integration (Compromise)

Some participants figure out a way to integrate and settle it down. However, somehow, they manage to get their religious practices and satisfy the expectations of their spouse or the host culture. This strategy shows mutual respect and under-standing that removes tensions between different cultures. For example, Participant 7 described how her husband adapted to her religious practices:

"He has quit eating pork and drinking alcohol and tries to attend the mosque for Friday prayers. His dedication is evident in how he engages with our faith."

Participant 7's husband also demonstrated respect for her religion's beliefs by attempting to participate. This kind of integration builds the relationship and adds to a feeling of mutual comprehension. The fact that both partners are willing to adapt means compromise can work to produce a harmo-nious, mutually supportive family environment.

3) Assimilation (Full adaptation)

Instead, some participants might even avoid or forsake some

of these religious practices to slip more easily into the host society. This strategy is assimilation because the participant adapts to the norms of the host country to the exclusion of their own religious identity. For instance, Participant 8 shared her experience of fasting during Ramadan:

"During Ramadan, my husband didn't fully understand why I had to fast... I focused on balancing my devotion with his more relaxed approach."

In this instance, the participant's husband did not understand the concept of Ramadan and had to adapt her practices for the relationship to flow. This is an expression of the emotional price one pays in the process of assimilation: the price to pay to take up another culture or to accept the understanding or need of the host culture or one's partner is the alteration or discard of the original religion. Family dynamics are strongly influenced by religion, in particular for migrant women whose religious context is different from their spouse and the society to which they have migrated. In cases of separation, such as with Participant 3, little or no emotional distress or conflict can be experienced when religious practices are not understood or respected. Because of these challenges, a person feels isolated since they are a foreigner in their culture and the new world.

Uzbek migrant women in South Korea undergo a process of complex adaptation under the changing and complicated

conditions in which they try to maintain their religious and cultural identity and adapt to the host secular society. Secularization and acculturation theories are employed in the study to exemplify how immigrants' religious practices are either (re)acquired or transformed and how these women experience the pressures and emotional strains. The adaptation process is nonlinear, as family dynamics, social pressure, personal agency, etc influence it.

In conclusion, Chapter IV is dedicated to detailing the dilemmas that Uzbek migrant women face in South Korea regarding their cultural and religious integration. The results show that adaptation is not a one-way street and that the life of these women revolves around a powerful interplay of family dynamics, gender roles, dietary restrictions, and religious practices. The values and experiences associated with these factors rooted deep down in their Uzbek identity often clash with the norms and expectations of South Korean society, hence what generates psychological and emotional stress. However, these challenges are exacerbated by the language barriers that restrict their full integration into society.

V. Institutional Efforts and Limitations for Integration

In this chapter, the researcher explained how Multicultural

Family Support Centers (MFSCs) in South Korea serve as key factors for integration for Uzbek migrant women. Support varies by language, cultural adaptation, and career integration in these centers. The participants' adaptation strategies differ and are investigated using Berry's typology of acculturation strategies: separation, integration, and assimilation.

1. Separation (Strong Resistance)

Participant 5 attempted to criticize the limitation of MFSC services. She described overcrowded language classes, which made learning almost impossible for her:

"The class was packed with too many people, and I didn't get enough attention to actually learn anything. It was frustrating trying to keep up, so I ended up quitting."

Her frustration signifies the strong resistance to integration because Participant 5 felt alienated due to insufficient personalized and culturally sensitive support. This may be because MFSC is not yet fully ready for the rapid increase of immigrants. She could not assimilate into South Korean society due to her lack of progress in her language classes. This further led to deteriorating her emotional state and socially isolating her from South Korean society. Participant 3's experience also mirrors this sense of isolation. Language classes that provided very little depth or frequency of instruction were difficult for her. Because of this, she claims that she could make little

progress. Despite the availability of resources, the discrepancy between what the MFSCs were offering and what she needed resulted in frustration that stopped her from becoming a part of South Korean society. According to both participants, MFSCs provide resources, but they may not fulfill the unique requirements of migrant women if the cultural and personal expectation is not attended to.

Participant 7's positive experience with the MFSC's language classes can demonstrate the strategy of Integration (Compromise). She could adopt things from South Korean society and retain her cultural identity. According to her, the language classes are helpful, and the staff is supportive.

"I was really surprised how helpful the Korean classes were. The staff at the center was so friendly, and they helped me with my language skills. They were really patient, which made me feel less like an 'alien' when I spoke. And also when they talk, they try to use easy words and talk very slowly, so we can understand."

Besides that, she faced challenges away from the center.

"But when I try to talk to people outside the center, sometimes they're less patient and cut me off when I make mistakes. And when the classes were in Korean for the person who does not know Korean I was shocked. But that helped me to learn the language faster..."

Although MFSC had a supportive environment, the real world proved to be difficult in terms of establishing full integration. This demonstrated that compromising cultural retention with adaptation could be emotionally challenging.

2. Assimilation (Full Adaptation)

Participant 1's narrative perfectly shows assimilation, where she fully embraced South Korean culture. Moreover, thanks to MFSC, she was able to find her first job and develop professionally:

"When I first came to Korea, the MFSC helped me get my first job. They found a program where I could learn medical terminology and become a coordinator. Now, I'm working in a hospital as an interpreter and coordinator. I love my job, and it makes me feel independent from my husband."

Her case illustrates how MFSCs can help migrant women fully adapt to South Korean society by providing career development opportunities fostering independence and personal growth. However, this complete assimilation often comes with the emotional cost of distancing oneself from one's cultural roots.

3. Gaps in Services

The religious needs of Muslim women to consume halal food

are not supported by MFSCs. Participant 5 stated the frustration of seeking halal food for herself.

"We had to find our own halal food, and no one at the center really knew much about helping with religious dietary restrictions. It felt like we were navigating everything on our own."

Religious practices are not tailored; therefore, many migrant women feel isolated when the centers do not have culturally sensitive resources. The quality of MFSC services differs significantly across regions. Participant 2 also mentioned that in the case of smaller cities, MFSCs for smaller numbers of multicultural families provide more personalized support, but in big cities like Seoul, they are less effective:

"In my city, the centers are more involved because there are fewer multicultural families. But in Seoul, where there are many migrant families, the services are stretched thin, and it's harder to get the attention you need."

However, the regional disparity disproves that MFSCs should adapt their services to the needs of the local migrant population. Many Uzbek migrant women from rural areas lack multilingual staff and knowledge of using digital resources. Participant 4 shares about the digital gap in accessing information, as many women do not have internet access or are unfamiliar with using it for services.

"I didn't know how to use the internet to find programs or services in MFSC or others. In Uzbekistan, we mostly used paper-based resources, and here it is all online."

Migrant women experience more significant challenges in accessing vital services at MFSCs because of their low digital aptitude as well as the shortage of Uzbek-speaking personnel. Integration of Uzbek migrant women depends heavily on the MFSCs, even though these programs operate at different support levels and experience service deficits. Some Uzbek women achieve integration by making compromises, whereas others face difficulties staying separate from South Korean society or fully joining it. The MFSCs need to enhance their services by focusing on religious needs. It can be achieved by offering culturally adapted services through multilingual staff and digital support. Improved services will aid Uzbek migrant women in their adaptation journey to maintain their cultural identity while integrating into South Korean society.

VI. Social Adaptation through the Digital Networks

For the Uzbek migrant women in South Korea, digital platforms are the primary modes that help their practical and emotional needs in the first steps of their adaptation into a society that does not offer a convenient and reliable halal food

supply, prayer rooms, and cultural networks. Uzbek migrant women are supported through essential resources and emotional foundations by MUFKO, KOHAS, Bozor Aka, and Facebook and Telegram communities. MUFKO has a barcode scanning service to identify halal food and prayer time schedules. However, the platform needs more resources and money to continue to lead Muslims to halal goods and services.

KOHAS dedicates itself to providing halal certification for businesses to certify that their products comply with halal requirements. FMG certification assures Uzbek women about the religious compatibility of food products and service offerings. Bozor Aka is an established platform that delivers diverse halal products and services, thus earning trust among South Korean Uzbek Muslims and the wider Muslim population. This establishment serves more than grocery functions because it enables Uzbek women to preserve their cultural and religious identities by purchasing ethnic products.

Facebook and Telegram groups called "Uzbek Moms in Korea" and "Uzbek Women and Girls in Korea" also provide their members with helpful practical and emotional support. These platforms allow Uzbek women to build relationships based on shared experiences, solve religious and cultural problems, and foster a feeling of community. As such, social media is a private, secure space meant to solve women's matrimonial issues and legal problems, and connecting with halal cuisine providers is one of the platform's benefits.

Digital tools provide daily support to migrant communities

but demonstrate a dual nature by showing limitations concerning geographic gaps in halal service locations and an inability to solve cultural and family disputes completely. However, the support available through these digital platforms stands vital for integrating migrant women because it helps them maintain their cultural and religious roots while adapting to South Korean society.

1. Fast Communication and Emotional Stability

For many Muslim women in Korea, non-institutional support networks, primarily via digital platforms and informal community-based organizations, have become a significant resource. Informal community networks and Telegram groups have helped to adjust to culturally and religiously challenging situations.

In the context of secularization theory, non-institutional support networks, especially digital platforms and informal community-based organizations, have become pivotal resources for Muslim migrant women in South Korea. These informal networks, like Telegram groups, offer practical advice and emotional support in the face of cultural and religious challenges. Participant 2 described how a Telegram group specifically for "Uzbek women and girls in Korea" offered valuable advice before she even arrived:

"Before I came to Korea, I was part of a Telegram group

for Uzbek women living here... There are about 600 people in that group, so if someone asks about halal food stores, mosques, or even personal stuff, the group members usually respond quickly. That is actually where I made some friends."

Participant 2's experience shows how these digital platforms serve as an informal support network, helping migrants feel less isolated. They offer practical guidance and an instant connection to others going through similar experiences. The online community acts as a form of informal support, where women can discuss everything from where to buy halal food to dealing with cultural conflicts within their homes. Digital spaces like these provide a sense of community for women adjusting to a secular society where formal support may not fully understand or cater to their specific needs. One of the significant benefits of non-institutional support is its accessibility and speed. Participant 2, for example, explained how quickly she could get help:

"If you ask a question, you usually get a response fast. That's actually where I made some friends."

The immediacy and the ease with which a woman can access support from these sites is a lifeline to women who would otherwise feel alone in a foreign country. Also, because of the informal networks, migrant women can create friendships and form a sense of community, aiding them in shifting to the alien

Korean environment. For women like Participant 4, the emotional connection these platforms offer is just as important as the practical help:

"It is not just about getting practical help; it is like having a little community where you actually feel like you belong."

While the digital space was a source for practical advice, it was also a place where women could forge meaningful connections, helping counteract the social isolation many migrant women experience in a new and foreign place. These platforms offer quick responses and instant connections and thus create an informal but necessary sense of community. This justifies the idea that non-institutional support networks not only keep women informed practically but are also a source of emotional stability for them and a sense of belongingness in a society that may not embrace them.

By creating a safe, supportive space to address wellness and happiness, informal communities help mitigate the alienation many Uzbek migrant women experience from the cultural and linguistic barriers in a new place. For migrant women coming into a new country with very different cultural norms, having this sense of belonging can be very valuable. Informal support does not substitute for formal social institutions but instead functions to fill in gaps in the social institutions where Muslim women's needs may not be fully met. Additionally, Participant

5 shared how her husband helped navigate some of these challenges, ensuring that she felt a connection to her cultural roots:

"My husband knows how important my traditions are to me and helps me find places to get halal food... We even met other families in the same situation through online groups."

Her response shows that digital networks may spread beyond digital platforms; the support system can include family and local immigrant families. Some women have informal communities and personal relationships to help them practically and emotionally. While these digital platforms give women access to resources, they go beyond this by carving out space for women to offer each other emotional and practical support. It fosters a profound sense of connection.

2. Mismatch between Online Platforms and Reality

Providing women guidance and emotional support (e.g., where to find halal food) and feeling connected to a sense of place in a new and unfamiliar secular environment. However, the secularization theory suggests that while these platforms fill a vital need to provide immediate help, they cannot replace the comprehensive support that government and formal institutions can provide. For instance, Participant 3 described the difficulty of accessing halal food, pointing out that these

digital platforms cannot overcome the geographic limitations of rural areas.

"We lived far from the city center, so halal meat shops were a long way off. It was really stressful trying to navigate food options and make sure everything was suitable for my dietary needs."

Even though these digital platforms can guide women on where to find halal products, the physical inaccessibility of these resources in rural areas shows a gap that informal networks cannot fill. The geographic limitations of living far from city centers continue to impact migrant women's daily lives. This kind of challenge can only be overcome by formal institutional support. Also, Participant 7 highlighted another limitation related to the narrow scope of informal support networks:

"I didn't know about any other centers or communities... I assumed the Multicultural Center was the only option."

Her experience highlights another potential downside: It is certainly possible that these informal networks are not widely publicized or are not easy for people to tap into. It can prove difficult -even for those willing to find out about these networks, because some women may not know how to search, mainly if they are unfamiliar with the usage of digital platforms

or living in areas without many immigrant communities- to access this needed support. Additionally, while non-institutional support systems can help with cultural adjustments, they may not be as effective in addressing deeper family conflicts, as Participant 6 pointed out:

"During pregnancy... I stopped eating properly after my mother-in-law threw away the food I had been craving. No one really understood what I needed."

It proves that even informal networks do not suffice to manage the complexity of personal family dynamics and disputes. Although these networks offer support and provide needed emotional stability, they cannot intervene and resolve family conflicts rooted in culture and the hierarchy of the family.

Apart from giving a sense of support and belonging, the community admins also implement a very rigid check process and safety measures to ensure that women are in a safe environment to connect and share their ideas and opinions. For instance, participants joining these digital communities must be identified through identity verification steps like selfies to ensure that only real people, especially women, are allowed in - not men. These measures were implemented after incidents where men infiltrated the groups and made women uncomfortable and insecure because they would share private, sensitive experiences. These safeguards are crucial to maintain

a place for migrant women to speak freely and not feel afraid that someone out there might judge them or enter their inner world. With this comes another layer of protection and access control to these platforms, thus becoming safe places for women to connect, share experiences, and receive support when needed. There were stringent membership controls for the researcher to access the group. This explains the willingness of community admins to ensure that women can talk about all their challenges, cultural, religious, and personal, without fear and hesitation. These are essential platforms that give a sense of safety and belonging.

This chapter explores how supportive networks like digital platforms are integral to helping Uzbek migrant brides adapt to South Korea's lives. MUFKO, KOHAS, Bozor Aka, and informal Telegram and Facebook groups are digital communities that share access to virtual resources: halal products, places of prayers, and emotional support. These platforms also provide migrant women a way to connect and distract with someone who will not judge them beyond pragmatic advice and help migrant women get rid of feelings of loneliness and homesickness that floating to an entirely new country brings with it.

Digital platforms reduce the homesickness of migrant woman by creating bonds with their cultural roots and also reduce the stress of language and cultural barriers. Following Bastian et al. (2014), shared pain can also lead to social cohesion, and that is precisely how Uzbek brides rely on those communities when they need emotional support, exchange tips, and recount

the experience. These platforms then provide the social glue that helps the migrants adjust to the initial migration shock. These digital platforms, however, can provide both support and relational relief, but their abilities also bottom out, as theorized by secularization theory. For example, the lack of geographical access to halal resources and informal networks' ineffectiveness in attending to deeper family conflicts or cultural conflicts are limitations online communities cannot solve alone.

However, the pressure to learn a new language and culture will speed up the integration process and significantly increase stress. Digital support networks, however, mitigate these stresses, allowing women to confront these stresses alone and provide guidance when needed, but without feeling pressured to confront these issues on someone else's timetable. Digital non-governmental communities played the role of providing practical resources and moral support to migrant women. These essential tools will help the newcomer quickly take the life abroad. Still, they are no substitute for official institutional support. Such a balanced approach to integrating migrant women entails a combination of formal government and institutional resources and digital networks. It is a more sustainable and complex formula for realizing such integration.

Ⅶ. Conclusion

This paper aims to develop a deeper understanding of the

strategies of Uzbek Muslim marriage migrant women during their integration into South Korean society. The results call attention to the importance of religion, food, family, and gender roles as influencers of the acculturation experiences of those migrants. Because the study focuses on digital platforms, it has a significant contribution. It highlighted the emotional and psychological value of digital platforms for migrant brides. Using online platforms, women can connect with others from similar cultural and religious backgrounds providing a sense of solidarity and alleviation from feeling alone. Such social networks are especially important for women who struggle with language and cultural barriers, enabling participation and fostering integration. In particular, due to the state control of religion in Uzbekistan, it is important to know how religion influences Uzbek women's adaptation strategies.

Also, this paper shows the long-term effect of addressing the issues of marriage migration of Muslim women, especially on the future generations in South Korea. Knowing how migrant women experience life is essential in predicting the obstacles confronted by their children during the next 10-20 years. The results show how religion, gender, and ethnicity affect Uzbek women's acculturation and present a complicated picture of Berry's more traditional model of acculturation. According to the results, religious identity matters as it prevents culture from eroding and forms a barrier to full integration. For Uzbek Muslim women, who usually seek to separate from the host culture (while keeping their culture and religion) and to

integrate (while being a part of South Korean society), the culture of their homeland, language, and religion, in many cases, they tend to not adopt the host culture.

Thus, Berry's binary framework is challenged, and there is a need to understand acculturation theory in the context of gender and religious identity. Dietary restrictions and prayer schedules affect the acculturation outcomes. Because the religious, ethnic, and gendered dimensions of migrant adaptation are not considered in Berry's model. Traditional acculturation typologies are not enough to understand and analyze the complexities of religious identity as it preserves culture. It means that the support system for women migrants is essential and needs to be culturally sensitive to the religious and gendered needs of women.

Secularization theory helped to explain the decline in religious practices as migrants face challenges in a non-Muslim environment, while acculturation theory illustrated their adaptation strategies, from separation to integration and assimilation. The paper shows how these women balance cultural preservation with the pressures to integrate, emphasizing the emotional and practical costs of adaptation. This research extends aboved theories by demonstrating how family dynamics and social pressures shape their unique experiences.

This study is vital for South Korea's multicultural policy because it calls for the importance of addressing the special needs of Muslim marriage migrants. Adapting the counseling services at MFSC centers to the Islamic and cultural needs of

Muslim women, can reduce conflicting situations in interfaith marriages. MFSC's partnership with local mosques could be a starting point to alleviate the growing demand for services among expatriates, such as access to halal food prayer places in rural areas where such services are limited. MFSCs offering flexible hours and online education options would help overcome barriers such as childcare and transportation that hinder women trying to enter the workforce.

By formalizing digital communities and linking them with institutional resources, we could achieve greater transparency of information and greater community cohesion. There is a need for further study in the field of integration experiences of other migrant women from major Muslim countries and understanding how their acculturation in South Korea is influenced by their cultural, religious, and socioeconomic backgrounds. For future studies, it would also be useful to examine how acculturation strategies change at different stages of the migrant bride's life. Further research that provides insights into the role of male spouses in interfaith marriages would be useful.

This study concludes that migrant integration is multifaceted and that women face particular challenges due to culture, religion, and gender. The findings have practical implications for improving policies and interventions that support multicultural families. This article contributes to the literature on marriage migration, cultural transition, and the needs of migrant brides, especially those from Uzbekistan. At the same

time, it points out the importance of recognizing cultural differences, reducing prejudices, and promoting the acceptance of interfaith marriages in South Korea. It suggests that this information be used to develop future policies and services for migrants.

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한국의 우즈베키스탄 결혼 이주 여성의
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국문초록

이 연구의 목적은 한국 내 우즈베키스탄 결혼 이민자들의 문화적 및 종교적 적응을 분석하여, 사회통합을 위한 정책적 시사점을 도출하는 것이다. 이를 위해 이 연구는 한국으로 결혼이민을 온 우즈베키스탄 여성들을 인터뷰하여 그들이 한국 사회에서 겪고 있는 개인적·정책적·사회적 어려움을 파악했다. 또한, 어려움을 극복하기 위해 당사자들과 가족이 시도하는 노력과 성공적 통합을 위해 정부가 제공하고 있는 제도와 프로그램을 검토하여 의의와 한계를 파악했다. 연구 결과, 우즈베키스탄 결혼 이민 여성은 음식과 언어, 종교적 차이로 어려움을 겪고 있었고, 저항과 타협, 동화 과정을 경험하고 있었다. 그리고 이러한 과정에 가장 큰 영향을 미치고 있는 변수는 한국인 남편과 시부모, 우즈베키스탄 여성 온라인 커뮤니티였다. 남편과 시부모가 할랄 음식과 종교적 실천 등을 이해하고 한국 문화를 강요하지 않을수록 적응이 빨랐다. 반면 한국 정부가 제공하고 있는 '다문화센터'의 프로그램은 주로 언어교육이었는데, 음식과 종교적 실천을 위한 정보는 제공하지 않아 도움이 되지 않았다. 따라서 여성들은 디지털 네트워크를 통해 이 문제를 해결했는데, 이를 통해 식료품에 대한 정보를 얻고, 종교적·문화적 어려움을 공유하고, 정서적 안정감을 얻고 있었다. 따라서 우리 사회는 남편과 시부모 등 결혼 이민 여성을 가족으로 맞이한 한국인 가족에 대해 적절한 교육을 제공하고, 디지털 네트워크가 제공하고 있는 정보와 정서적 안정감을 제도적 차원에서 시행하여 이슬람 결혼 여성의 사회통합을 증진시킬 필요가 있다.

주제어: 결혼이민, 이슬람, 종교적 정체성, 우즈베키스탄, 한국