

SUN - Toyo Seminar(27th May2023)

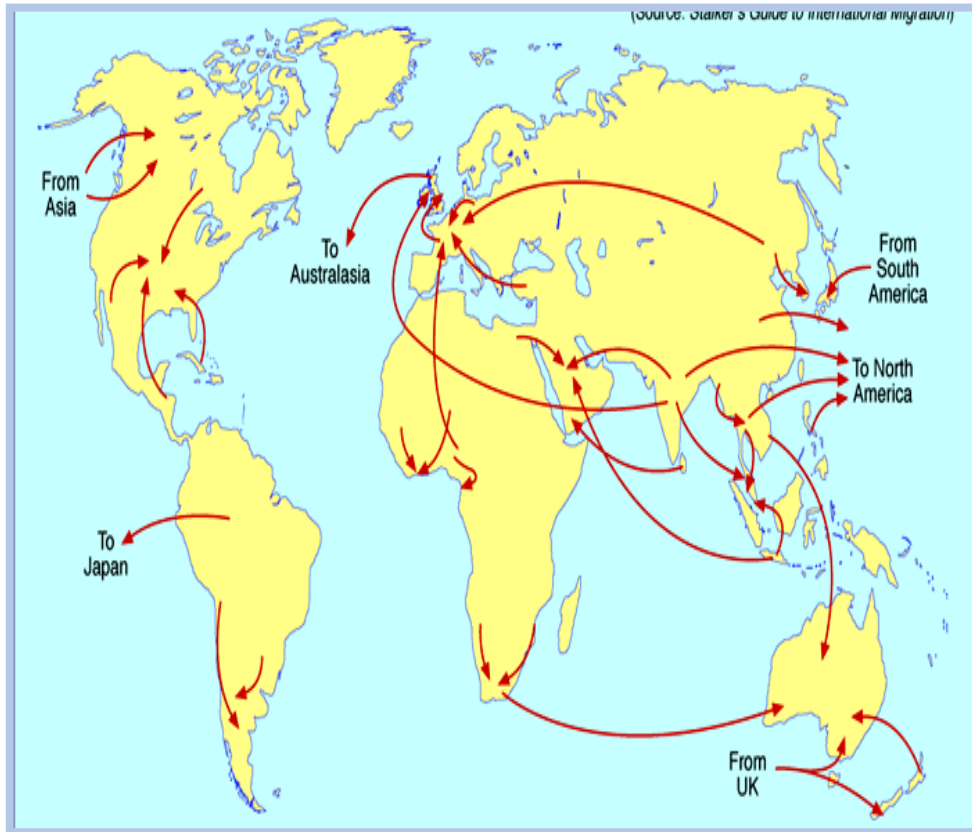
*Challenges of embracing diversity and
educational implication : A Qualitative Understanding
on Young Adults with an Immigrant Background*

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The World : Contemporary landscape

Global Migration and Interconnected life World : 'Border-Crossing'



Source: Stalker's Guide to International Migration

- Some 272 million international migrants in the world(UN , 2019)
- The case of Korea:
 - Foreign born residents making up 2.52 million (2020)
 - 4.9 percent(approximate) of the entire population of 51.7 million
- Global heterogeneity :
 - Race, Ethnicity, Nationality, Class, Gender, religion

Highly Increasing number of students from multicultural backgrounds in South Korea

- The number of students from multicultural backgrounds grew three times over the last 9 years to 160,000.
- The number of minors from multicultural backgrounds who are enrolled in elementary, middle, and high school increased from 46,954 (2012) to 160,058 in 2022
- In contrast, **low birthrate** led the total number of students to drop by 21 percent from 6.72 million to 5.32 million and **increased the proportion of multicultural students** from 0.7 percent to **3.0 percent**.

Source: Ministry of Education

Where have all the young adults with an immigrant background gone?



Source: Kyunghyang Shinmun

Japan's Racial Bias for Beauty Queens (2015, 2016)



Source: News1

Research goal and questions

Context

: Transition to a Multicultural Society

- According to the Ministry of Justice, the number of foreign residents now stands at over 2,524,656 approximately **4.9 percent** of South Korea's total population: An irreversible social phenomenon (Kim, 2016; Watson, 2010).

Theory and discourse

: Inclusive lifelong learning for ALL engaging with multicultural configurations

- the national vision of “**lifelong learning society where no one is alienated**”
- Korea gradually focuses on people with immigrant background as one of vulnerable groups of its citizens. But there is few research on education and learning related to young adults with an immigrant background (“Young Immigrants”).

Research goal and questions

Focus

- **How Young Immigrants navigate through their young adulthood which involve with identity, education and career, and social integration as grown-up members of Korean society?**
- **It is significant to explore the lives of Young Immigrants in local level and to analyze their particular learning needs that meet their developmental tasks in young adulthood**

Definition: two pillars

Korean Born – Foreign Born: similarities & heterogeneity

- **Korea-born: one group of young adults was born and raised in ‘multicultural families’ that mainly refers ties made by international marriage of Korean men and foreign women. complex identities**
- **Foreign Born: this group also belongs to multicultural families but they entered in Korea in their teens by their (mainly) mothers’ remarriage with Koreans. Few experience on Schooling in Korea**
- **Race/Ethnicity, Language and Culture : drawn by immigrant background whether it is their parents’ or their own.**

Research Methodology

- Employing a qualitative case study design to explore the features and issues of learning experience of Young Immigrants(Creswell 2007; Kim, 2016).
- A qualitative field research for 7 months in 2020 across nation(the metropolitan area, Gyeongsang area, Chungcheong area, and Jeolla area)
- Face to face in-depth interview, semi-structured interviews under the limitations of the COVID-19 pandemic,
- Participants: 20 Young Immigrants*(from early 20s to their early 30s) +10 activists

** Age: “members of multicultural families aged 19 to 34,” considering the policy philosophy and practical tasks of ‘Youth Basic Act’ in South Korea(2020).*

** Diversity : country of birth, nationality, educational background, and work experience*

Major Findings

Estimation of the number of young adults with an immigrant background

- Data source: The National Survey of Multicultural Families (2018)
- Selection criteria: Young adults aged 19-34 from multicultural families
- Used the design weights to estimate the size and characteristics of young adults with an immigrant background.
- Totals

	Number of all children from multicultural families	Number of children aged 19-34 from multicultural families (young adults with an immigrant background)
Native-born	249,275 (94.2%)	9,808 (58.2%)
Foreign-born	15,458 (5.8%)	7,053 (41.8%)
Total	264,733 (100.0%)	16,861 (100.0%)

Descriptive statistics for the sample of young adults with an immigrant background

		All young adults with an immigrant background	Native-born young adults with an immigrant background	Foreign-born young adults with an immigrant background
Gender	Male	9,559 (56.7%)	5,590 (57.0%)	3,969 (56.3%)
	Female	7,301 (43.3%)	4,217 (43.0%)	3,084 (43.7%)
	Total	16,860 (100.0%)	9,807 (100.0%)	7,053 (100.0%)
Age	19-24	9,612 (57.0%)	7,469 (76.2%)	2,143 (30.4%)
	25-29	4,843 (28.7%)	1,987 (20.3%)	2,856 (40.5%)
	30-34	2,407 (14.3%)	352 (3.6%)	2,055(29.1%)
	Total	16,862 (100.0%)	9,808 (100.0%)	7,054 (100.0%)
Educational Attainment in Korea	None	4,404 (26.1%)	248 (2.5%)	4,156 (58.9%)
	Primary education	72 (0.4%)	69 (0.7%)	3 (0.0%)
	Lower-secondary education	252 (1.5%)	208 (2.1%)	44 (0.6%)
	Upper-secondary education	4,426 (26.3%)	3,275 (33.4%)	1,151 (16.3%)
	2-year higher education	2,382 (14.1%)	1,979 (20.2%)	403 (5.7%)
	4-year higher education	5,153 (30.6%)	3,935 (40.1%)	1,218 (17.3%)
	Graduate school or more	171 (1.0%)	93 (0.9%)	78 (1.1%)
	Total	16,862 (100.0%)	9,808 (100.0%)	7,054 (100.0%)

Nationality and foreign experiences of young adults with an immigrant background

		All young adults with an immigrant background	Native-born young adults with an immigrant background	Foreign-born young adults with an immigrant background
Current Nationality	Foreign country	4,062 (24.1%)	13 (0.1%)	4,049 (57.4%)
	Korea	12,798 (75.9%)	9,794 (99.9%)	3,004(42.6)
	Total	16,860 (100.0%)	9,807 (100.0%)	7,053 (100.0%)
Age at the first entry to Korea	0-2	424 (5.9%)	123 (68.3%)	301 (4.3%)
	3-6	157 (2.2%)	4 (2.2%)	153 (2.2%)
	7-12	962 (13.3%)	26 (14.4%)	936 (13.3%)
	13-15	712 (9.8%)	0 (0.0%)	712 (10.1%)
	16-18	1,330 (18.4%)	4 (2.2%)	1,326 (18.8%)
	19-22	1,927 (26.6%)	4 (2.2%)	1,923 (27.3%)
	23-30	1,672 (23.1%)	19 (10.6%)	1,653 (23.4%)
	31-34	49 (0.7%)	0 (0.0%)	49 (0.7%)
	Total	7,233 (100.0%)	180 (100.0%)	7,053 (100.0%)

Young adults in Metropolitan Area : Identity formation and quality of life (1)

- All participants have complex and diverse identities.
- They are psychologically independent and struggle to lead their lives without their parents' support.

“Family is something someone can belong happily and comfortably. But I hardly have experienced such since young. Now mom and dad each has their own family and I belong neither.”

(Participant E, Foreign-born)

Young adults in Metropolitan Area : Identity formation and quality of life (2)

- Korea-born participants grew with labeling and feel uncomfortable about the prejudices on them.
- Foreign-born participants are keenly aware of various discrimination on them and their parent(s) based on language and culture.

“Ignored and discriminated many times, I now can clearly feel what a life of minority is like in Korea. Now I see everyone is equal and needs to be treated such.”

(Participant E, Foreign-born)

Young adults in Metropolitan Area : Learning Life and Educational Needs (3)

- Multicultural backgrounds more or less affect their choice of career and higher education.
- All made their efforts to invest learning to gain ‘decent jobs’ and economic independence is their immediate life goal.

“I studied hard to get a good job. I don’t like working in a factory like migrant workers who should return to their countries.”

(Participant E, Foreign-born)

Young adults in Metropolitan Area : Learning Life and Educational Needs (4)

- Learning of foreign-born participants at initial settlement period are intense in learning many in a short-time period.
- Participants who were/are in universities had/have little support on their academic projects and campus life.

“Attending a Korean university means much to me since I want a good employment between Korea and Vietnam. But I do everything all alone and have no one to ask about homeworks, midterms and final exams.”

(Participant C, Foreign-born)

Young adults in Gyeongsang Area : Identity formation and quality of life (1)

- The identities of young adults with multicultural backgrounds are generally not stable.
- They want to live as 'Koreans' with a healthy multicultural identity despite differences in objective circumstances.

“I didn't have anything in China. This is the country where my mother is. A new life, a feeling of being reborn again. My first impression was that I got off at Gimhae Airport. ... It was very good. ... I think I'm Korean now. I think I've become a lot (Korean).

(Participant C, Foreign-born)

Young adults in Gyeongsang Area : Identity formation and quality of life (2)

- The foreign-born participants had a chaotic and neglected childhood, experiencing family dissolution, neglect or abuse in relatives and new family relationships. They long for economic and psychological independence.

“It's hard to live together all of a sudden. ... I lived at my aunt's house, but I came out again because it was uncomfortable for my uncle, so I lived alone for a long time. ... I went because my mom told me to come, but I didn't get along with my stepdad, so I came out again.”

(Participant B, Foreign-born)

Young adults in Gyeongsang Area : Identity formation and quality of life (3)

- Korea-born participants had many experiences of being uncomfortable with the word 'multicultural' during their growing up.
- They are/were regarded as 'alien' and 'peripheral beings' that are distinguished from ordinary Koreans in various parts of society throughout their lives.
- Participants form a new identity through life events that positively recognize their multicultural backgrounds.

“When I was in elementary school, I did not say that I was a child of a multicultural family. ... I was hurt by what my friends said.”

(Participant E, Korea-born)

Young adults in Gyeongsang Area : Learning Life and Educational Needs (4)

- Foreign-born participants have educational needs of linguistic and cultural communication skills, social relationship formation, and career development. In particular, participants who did not complete secondary education need supplementary education.
- However, the learning opportunities that meet the educational needs of these multicultural background youth are very limited. The obstacles that limit these young adults' access to educational opportunities are lack of information, time constraints, institutional barriers, and language barriers.

“I'm 25, and I'm embarrassed to go to school. As I get older, I want to learn to become a better me, but because of my age ... I don't even have a high school diploma, and I think it's too late.”

(Participant B, Foreign-born)

Young adults in **Gyeongsang Area** : Learning Life and Educational Needs (5)

- Participants want to develop their potential and their vocational skills that fit their interests and aptitudes, but educational opportunities for their career exploration are limited.

“It costs a lot of money to learn art. I didn't try it because I didn't have time to do anything else and it would cost a lot of money. I became a hanker of things I couldn't do when I was young, so when I grow up and earn a lot of money, I want to learn it.”

(Participant D, Korea-born)

Young adults in Chungcheong Area : Identity formation and quality of life (1)

- All participants recognized their 'difference' in Korean society in their childhood or adolescence.
- They suffered identity confusion regardless of whether they were born in Korea or abroad.

“I felt for a long time that there was an invisible line between my friends and me.”

(Participant A, Korean-born)

Young adults in Chungcheong Area : Identity formation and quality of life (2)

- Korean-born participants felt that they were not fully recognized as Koreans.
- Foreign-born participants felt identity confusion and isolation in an unfamiliar environment.

“I was born in Korea, but my friends told me to go back to your country.”

(Participant B, Korean-born)

“I was confused whether to call myself a Korean or a foreigner, and I worried a lot about my exotic appearance.”

(Participant C, Foreign-born)

Young adults in Chungcheong Area : Identity formation and quality of life (3)

- Participants built a positive self-image with the support and cheer of their family/friends during their growth process.

“When I was young, I was a little uncomfortable with the fact that my mother was a foreigner, but now I am rather proud. I think it is my privilege to be able to speak another language.”

(Participant D, Foreign-born)

Young adults in Chungcheong Area : Learning Life and Educational Needs (4)

- Participants still have a high demand for learning after becoming adults for many reasons, such as exploring jobs, finding better jobs, and growing themselves.

“My friends who live in my country of origin already have married and had children. I thought I should live for achieving self-realization and with doing what I wanted to do.”

(Participant E, Foreign-born)

Young adults in Chungcheong Area : Learning Life and Educational Needs (5)

- Participants are most concerned about their career path.
- Whether participants go to school or work, they hope for a stable and decent job, but there is a lack of specific information.

“I hope there will be job preparation education or job counseling support. But I've never been helped so far, and I don't know where I could get help.”

(Participant B, Korean-born)

Conclusion and Implication

*“Much more than just a multicultural issue;
It’s about type of people, who stand for
different things and represent **different** cultures,
generations, ideas, and thinking”*

(Llopis, 2011)

Diversity Management as a Social Capital

Formation process of Self identity

- Korea-born path: negotiating process of identity (complexity)
- Foreign-born Path : adjusting process to settle down(re-socialization)
 - Reflection on their hybrid identities as “Multi-culturalists”

Learning life: re-construction of experience

- Korea-born path : recognition with racial difference, learning events with racism, Strangers in-between borders
- Foreign-born path : building up social relation, “foreigner”, citizenship

Importance of the right to access to life learning as a public good and their capacity building

- Most Young Immigrants, regardless their birth-place and nationality, confront challenges to navigate their learning trajectory due to racial background.
- There are people who can manage their learning in a way that is conducive to their experience actively and growth as they go through the stages of life, but those who find it difficult to select life's learning tasks and convert them to learning by themselves due to the given life context such as immigrant background. These people need support of lifelong learning in order to build up their capacity and live a new phase of life meaningfully (Han, 2006).
- Therefore, it is required that lifelong learning system could empower these people providing inclusive learning opportunity.

Move forward

- Foreign-born young adults constitute a significant portion of young adults with an immigrant background in Korea at the moment.
 - Lifelong education for such young adults must reflect their needs and characteristics (e.g., low language proficiency)
- However, the portion of native-born will grow and become the majority of the population in the future.
 - A long-term and flexible policy plan for lifelong education that can embrace different types of young adults and integrate them into Korean society is needed.
- More statistical resources that can shed light on young adults with an immigrant background (particularly aged 19-34) should be established.
- A longitudinal survey that follows young adults with an immigrant background after they separate from their families of origin should be developed.

Thank You



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