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**SHE IS NOT LIKE A 'TYPICAL' KOREAN
MOM: JAPANESE MARRIAGE
MIGRANT MOTHERS' ROLE IN
CHILDREN'S EDUCATION IN SOUTH
KOREA**

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SHE IS NOT LIKE A 'TYPICAL' KOREAN MOM: JAPANESE MARRIAGE MIGRANT MOTHERS' ROLE IN CHILDREN'S EDUCATION IN SOUTH KOREA

ABSTRACT

South Korean mothers are well-known for their intensive involvement in their children's education through sharing information among mothers, investment in private tutoring, and intervention in education-related decisions of their children. Likewise, Japanese mothers' involvement has gained comparable academic attention regarding the importance placed on their children's education. Given the growth of the Korean marriage market, owing to the increase in (mostly female) marriage migrants from adjacent countries including Japan, the question arises concerning whether Japanese female marriage migrants would display similar patterns of involvement in their children's education after relocating to Korea. Based on in-depth interviews conducted in 2014 with 21 Japanese-Korean young adults, who were all born to a Japanese-born mother and a Korean-born father, I demonstrate in this study the following. 1) Japanese-born mothers did not use networks among other mothers to obtain education-related information, nor did they intervene in the decision-making processes of their children; 2) fathers of interviewees were rarely involved in their children's education nor the childrearing, strengthening the conventional image of the father as being the breadwinner; 3) Japanese mothers' active religious involvement further strengthened the autonomy of their children in education.

Key words: Japanese mother, Japanese-Korean; maternal involvement; South Korea; autonomous learning; the Unification Church; marriage migrant

1. Background

International marriages have emerged as a solution to the difficulty that rural, older, and less-educated Korean men face in finding wives. About 70 per cent of international marriages are between Korean-born men and foreign-born women, many of whom hail from less-developed countries and regions. Such regions include China, particularly the north-eastern region of China where most Korean–Chinese people, *Joseonjok*, reside, Vietnam, and the Philippines (KOSIS 2017). Among the major sending regions, Japan is the only developed country and is originally home to the fourth largest population of female marriage migrants. Despite being the oldest group of marriage migrants (possibly the first generation of marriage migrants who came to Korea as a group), Japanese migrants, who are largely female, have not gained substantial attention outside of being considered as a part of the female marriage migrant population as a whole. While adaptation, household issues and health aspects of marriage migrants have been topics of interest in government policy, potentially differing childrearing styles and factors behind them have been rarely discussed in previous research.

Among various dimensions of child raising, past studies have heavily discussed the education-oriented parenting prevalent throughout East Asia, especially in South Korea (hereafter called Korea) and Japan. In these countries, maternal involvement in their children’s education often includes utilizing private tutoring services (*hakwon* in Korea and *juku* in Japan) in addition to regular schooling, closely monitoring their children’s academic progress and achievements in school and adopting an authoritarian style of parenting as to regulate their children’s education. Western literature tends to view East Asian parenting altogether as authoritarian and Western parenting as authoritative. However, few direct comparative studies have been conducted within East Asia to examine if authoritarian involvement is indeed uniformly observed throughout East Asia. While both Korea and Japan are known to have significantly education-focused mothers, higher degrees of “educational fever” among Korean mothers are observed compared to Japanese mothers (Byun, Schofer, and Kim 2012; Nakamura 2005; H. Park, Byun, and Kim 2011). Nonetheless, there is virtually no research on educational involvement patterns of female marriage

migrants in Korea. Focusing on the Korean society raises a number of questions. What maternal involvement patterns would Japanese marriage migrants show after their settlement in Korea? Will they display similar patterns to those of Korean-born mothers? Another issue related to maternal involvement in children's education is whether fathers in multicultural families¹ - specifically, unions of a female Japanese migrant and a Korean-born male and their children for the current study purposes - have peripheral roles in their children's education, as suggested in previous literature. In these two countries, the fathers' role is minimal in their children's education due to their restricted role of being breadwinners, who often face difficulty in allocating enough time to the education of their children (Shwalb et al. 2004; Moon and Shin 2015). Even though there have been governmental efforts to bring about ideational and institutional changes to create more egalitarian roles of the mother and the father, the long-lasting conception of role division between a wife and husband may delay the actual changes. These conventional, separated roles of a wife and husband may seem even stricter to marriage migrants with differing cultural backgrounds. Listening to the experiences of interviewees with their fathers in terms of not only education but also other life dimensions will help answer the question as to whether their fathers indeed reflect the typical image of a wage earner with little involvement in childrearing.

Throughout the study, I interviewed twenty-one Japanese-Korean young adults, all of whom were born to a Japanese-born mother and a Korean-born father. Interviewing the children of Japanese female migrants will enable an exploration of how these children perceive their mothers' involvement in the pursuit of education compared to their Korean counterparts. Children's perceived involvement of their mothers do not always match the mothers' self-reported involvement, and mothers' self-reported behaviour can distort what is actually felt by their children (Gecas and Schwalbe 1986; Cripps and Zyromski 2009). All of the interviewees belong to the Family Federation of World Peace and Unification religion, which

¹ "Multicultural family" is a term exclusive to the Korean context. It was created to appropriately refer to a family formed in Korea through cross-border marriage. Currently, the term is inclusive of various types of families such as foreign-worker families and North Korean escapee families. However, in some studies the definition is limited to families formed through cross-border marriage as in Song et al. (2008) and Heo (2017) for study purposes.

is seen heretical by both the general public and the Protestant Church of Korea (Min-ji Kim 2015; Heo 2017). It is the major religious institution to match cross-border marriages between Korean people and Japanese people. Talking with the interviewees enables me to explore the potential impact of the religion on Japanese mothers' involvement in their children's education.

A contextual background in which these Japanese-Korean individuals are placed, as well as their perceptions of their school peers' experiences, are provided to help understand their comparison of their own mothers' involvement to that of other mothers. As mentioned above, the perceptions of the interviewees about their mothers' behaviour are more relevant to various dimensions within their daily lives than the behaviour self-reported by the mothers (Gecas and Schwalbe 1986; Cripps and Zyromski 2009).

The current study attempts to explore the role of Japanese migrant mothers in their children's education focusing on answering the following questions. (1) Is the role of Japanese women in their children's education different from or similar to that of Korean women in terms of intensity and style? (2) What is the father's role in his children's education? Is it peripheral as previous literature suggests? (3) Does the religion of Japanese mothers have any intervening effect on their involvement in their children's education?

The present study sheds light on the role Japanese-born marriage migrant women play compared to Korean-born mothers in terms of their children's education. Further, this study provides an insight into potential challenges facing the Korean society in the near future.

2. Review of literature

In East Asia, especially Korea and Japan, the maternal role in children's education is seen as crucial, while paternal responsibility is considered minimal (Song et al. 2008; Holloway and Nagase 2014; K. K. Kim and Chung 2011; Moon and Shin 2015; Shwalb et al. 2004). With no further examination of differences in parenting, Asian parenting, particularly East Asian parenting with regards to children's education, has been seen as authoritarian, leaving little

room for children's autonomy, competition-oriented and suggestive of "tiger-parenting" (Juang, Qin, and Park 2013; Watabe and Hibbard 2014).

Types of parental involvement may differ depending on the educational system of a country (H. Park, Byun, and Kim 2011). Western literature discusses parental involvement in both home-based and school-based activities (Kathleen V. Hoover-Dempsey and Howard M. Sandler 1997; McNeal 1999), while parental involvement in school-based activities is rarely observable in the Korean and Japanese contexts. Traditionally, parents in Korea and Japan tend to trust school teachers; they tend not to intervene or question them, although this can vary depending on the socioeconomic status of the parent. Instead, maternal involvement in Korea and Japan has been largely demonstrated by the heavy utilization of private tutoring services (Bray 2006; Dawson 2010; Byun, Schofer, and Kim 2012) and maternal networking to obtain education-related information, especially in Korea (H. Park, Byun, and Kim 2011).

Consulting Baumrind's (1991) parenting typology, many scholars discussed parenting in East Asia in an almost uniformed fashion as being highly controlling (Watabe and Hibbard 2014; Juang, Qin, and Park 2013). Confucian traditions that place enormous value on education are deep-rooted in East Asia, especially in Korea and Japan, demonstrated by the dependence of parents and their children on private tutoring services, in hopes for higher academic achievements (Bray 2006). As there is a premium placed on educational excellence in both Korea and Japan, "educational zeal (or fever)"² often accelerates up until the time of the college entrance exam.

Nonetheless, differences and changes in behavioural patterns and in national emphases have been observed in the recent years (Watabe and Hibbard 2014; Shwalb et al. 2004). To be specific, being an authoritarian mother, or a "tiger mother", may not be so typical in these two countries as variations exist (Juang, Qin, and Park 2013). In both countries, different patterns of mothers' involvement in their children's education exist depending on

² The terms, "educational zeal" and "educational fever" refer to drastic parental interest in children's education commonly observed in rising industrial societies like Korea and Japan (Sorensen 1994; Seth 2002).

socioeconomic status (Yamamoto, Holloway, and Suzuki 2006), generation (Shwalb et al. 2004), and ethnicity (Juang, Qin, and Park 2013). Further, a few studies find that Korean mothers, compared to Japanese mothers, are more likely to show aggressive and intensive educational fever (Byun, Schofer, and Kim 2012; Nakamura 2005; H. Park, Byun, and Kim 2011).

While cross-national discussions in terms of parenting do exist, few studies look into female migrants' educational involvement patterns in Korea. Existing studies on migrant mothers and their families tend to focus on general parenting difficulties, not specifically on parental involvement in their children's education. Governmental reports and academic articles in Korea have discussed maladjustment (Oh 2005; Jeon et al. 2013; Lee 2008) and inferior academic outcomes of children born to immigrant mothers (Cho 2012; Oh 2012; Jeon et al. 2013; Lee 2008); however, potential behavioural differences in parental involvement in their children's education were hardly a topic of focus. While the marriage migrant mother is naturally expected to be primarily responsible of childrearing due to patriarchal traditions being firmly upheld (Song et al. 2008), as in Korean native families, the involvement of migrant women might differ in style compared to that of Korean women. Potential differences in their styles of involvement in children's education are judged as ignorant, improper and maladjusted by others without further exploration of the mechanisms behind.

A notable factor outside of national/cultural differences in childrearing is the religious factor concerning Japanese marriage migrants in the current study. Compared to migrant women from other countries such as China, the Philippines, and Vietnam, Japanese women are more likely to be passionate about their religion, the Unification Church (Minjeong Kim 2012), which is the major religious institution enabling and matching cross-border marriages between Korean people and Japanese people in Korea. Female Japanese marriage migrants often assume a leading or active role in their local church and often emphasize to their children the importance of attending the church and of maintaining faith in their religion (Heo 2017). The time they allocate to church activities might surpass the amount of time spent on monitoring their children's education.

While mothers are mainly in charge of household matters and raising their children, the role of fathers in Korea is often to take care of “outside” issues, namely, earning income for their family. However, attitudes surrounding fathers’ involvement in childrearing have become more positive and accepting than in the past. This has also brought about ideational changes amongst the general public and recent policy changes to support work-life balance in both Korea and Japan. Nonetheless, visible behavioural changes have yet to occur. Long working hours in Korea and Japan, structural barriers in implementing institutional measures to support work-life balance, and reluctance from fathers participating in childrearing (Moon and Shin 2015; Holloway and Nagase 2014), which is also more or less the case in multicultural families (Cho 2012; Song et al. 2008), are the main impediments. The burden of childrearing on foreign-born women can be doubled without a clear understanding of the cultural context, adequate support provided by her husbands and in-laws (K. S. Kim and Kim 2014).

Throughout the current study, I assume that the role of Japanese mothers in education will be different in terms of intensity and patterns. To be specific, intensive intervention, monitoring, use of private tutoring and personal networking will be less frequently observed among Japanese mothers in comparison to Korean mothers. I additionally assume that this will naturally influence the learning styles of these Japanese mothers’ children throughout schooling years. More specifically, this will result in the children being more autonomous than dependent on their parents regarding education. Additionally, I assume that the fathers’ role will be minimal within these marriage migrants’ families.

3. Research questions

The current study focuses on answering the following questions.

1. Is the role of Japanese women in their children's education different from or similar to that of Korean women in terms of intensity and style?
2. What is the father's role in their children's education? Is it peripheral as previous literature suggests?
3. Does the religion of Japanese mothers have any intervening effect on the involvement in their children's education?

4. Data and methods

Recruitment

After IRB approval in 2014, I recruited my interviewees through snowball sampling. My acquaintance used her personal network from her local church to connect me to potential interviewees. Furthermore, the same acquaintance introduced me to an individual of a leading position in the Church, resulting in an expansion of the pool of Japanese-Korean individuals. I was able to reach interviewees living in five different cities.

Using the Church's network to recruit Japanese-Korean young adults was key for the current study. Most Japanese marriage migrants moving to Korea depend on a religious matching through the Unification Church. Even though it bears a limitation that the study sample is from a rather closed pool of second-generation Japanese-Korean individuals belonging to a single religion, it is notable that nearly 60% of the Japanese migrants used religious (church) connections for the arrangement of their marriage (Chung et al. 2016).

From May to July 2014, I interviewed twenty-one individuals in Korea, all of whom were the age of eighteen and older. They were all born to a Japanese mother and a Korean father. All of their immigrant mothers had lived in Korea for more than 20+ years. The interviews were conducted at different times on different days at the locations of their choice. All of the

interviews were audio-recorded. I also participated in their religious activities in the local churches to gain additional information and to acquire some religious context before I began analysing the data. Each participant received a gift card worth \$25 as compensation for their participation in the study.

5. Method of analysis

I transcribed each of the twenty-one audio-recorded interviews. Then I coded them with Atlas.ti. I first transcribed each of the audio-recorded interviews into a text file. Then I started “Initial Coding” (Saldaña 2009, 81). In this initial phase, going through each text file, I gave each unit or part of the data a unique code. In the second phase, I bound several quotations into each larger, refined code. Next, I categorized the codes under broader categories as more refined categories. After multiple categorizing processes, the above-mentioned categories were then collapsed into just four themes, namely, Mothers’ prioritizing; Perceived attitudes and behaviour of mothers; Father’s role in children’s education; Impact of mothers’ religious devotion on the learning style of the child.

Translation

I checked the appropriateness of the translation of my data from Korean to English. My acquaintance introduced me to a bilingual individual, who is fluent in both English and Korean and has a college degree in English education.

Demographic characteristics of interviewees

Prior to moving on to the analysis, a demographic profile of the interviewees provides background information as to establish a better understanding of each one. Names of all interviewees are pseudonyms. In terms of job status, “Military” means that the interviewee was serving in the military at the time of interview (every Korean man has a military duty). See Table 1.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Interviewees

	Joonha	Minjae	Dongmin	Hyomin	Jia	Boyoung	Jeemin	Hyesun	Nahee	Mina	Gajin
Age	19	22	20	23	20	20	21	18	22	20	24
Gender	Male	Male	Male	Male	Female	Female	Female	Female	Female	Female	Female
Birth place	Korea	Korea	Japan	Korea	Japan	Japan	Korea	Japan	Korea	Korea	Korea
Job status	Military	Military	Military	College inactive	College	College	College	High school	College	Un-employed	Employed
Class*	Middle	Middle	Middle	Middle	Middle	Lower Middle	Middle	Middle	Lower	Middle	Lower
Mother's education	College	High school	2-year College	High school	College	High school	Master's	College	Master's	College	Middle school
Father's education	College	College	2-year College	High	High	College	Master's	High School	College	High School	High School
	Changmo	Arin	Hyunsoo	Somee	Lia	Sangjee	Semi	Taeyoung	Kiyoung	Juno	
Age	21	19	23	19	19	19	19	18	22	20	
Gender	Male	Female	Male	Female	Female	Female	Female	Female	Male	Male	
Birth place	Korea	Russia	Korea	Korea	Korea	Korea	Korea	Korea	Japan	Korea	
Job status	College	College	College inactive	College	College	College	College	College	College	College	
Class	Lower middle	Lower middle	Middle	Lower	Lower middle	Middle	Middle	Middle	Upper middle	Lower	
Mother's education	College	High school	College	High school	High school	High school	High school	College	College	College	
Father's education	High School	Master's	High School	High School	High School	2-year College	College	College	College	High School	

* This refers to the interviewees' subjective feelings about economic status of their households.

6. Interview questions

Below are example questions of my interview sessions. The following list is not at all exhaustive; the list shows an outline of the questions. I had more or less different questions for each interviewee depending on pace, interviewee's involvement, quality of answers, and new information from their last answer.

Table 2. Type and examples of interview questions

Theme	Item	Example question
Mothers' prioritizing	Relationship with mother; priorities in childrearing	"How is your relationship with your mother in general?" "What was most important to your mother when raising you?" "Could you order her priorities?"
Perceived maternal attitudes and behaviour	Private tutoring experiences; decision-making as for the use of private tutoring; mothers' networking with other mothers	"Have you ever attended a private tutoring institute for supplementary classes?" "Did your parents have any parental network for information-sharing?" "How do you compare your mother's involvement in your education to the mothers of your peers?"
Father's role in children's education	Relationship with father; father's role in children's education	"How is your relationship with your father in general?" "What was most important to your father when raising you?"
Impact of mothers' religious devotion on learning style of child	Mother's religious devotion; mother's role in the church	"Were your parents devoted to the religion?" "How important was the church to your parents?"

7. Results

In this section, a few themes are formed based on the categorizing process. The main themes are as shown in

Table 2: Mothers' prioritizing; Perceived maternal attitudes and behaviour; Father's role in children's education; Impact of mothers' religious devotion on the learning style of the child.

Mother's role in children's education

The Japanese-born mothers of interviewees indeed played the primary role in the entire childrearing process. Nonetheless, the role they played in their children's education seemed to differ in many ways compared to their Korean-born counterparts'. To understand better the context where they were not typical "Korean-style" mothers regarding their children's education, I first demonstrate how Japanese mothers prioritize for their child raising process.

Mothers' prioritizing

As the actual behaviour of the parent is based on his or her beliefs (Goodnow 1988), in this section I explore what priorities (ordered goals in raising a child) the Japanese migrant mothers had when raising their children. It is notable though that there might be some inconsistencies between parental goals and actual behaviour. For example, Park and Kwon (2009) pointed out an inconsistency in Korean mothers; while mothers believe that securing interpersonal skills is most important in their children's development, their actual behaviour mostly emphasized academic achievements of their children. Further, even though parents' great emphasis on education attainment and excellence is not specific to Korea, it has been reported that "educational fever" or "educational zeal" in Korea might excel that in Japan (Nakamura 2005, 2003; Byun, Schofer, and Kim 2012). This is demonstrated by the huge investments poured into private tutoring and the utilization of mothers' networking (Park, Byun, and Kim 2011).

To the question on priorities of their mothers when raising them, their responses were surprisingly uniform in content. Most common answers were to ensure their children develop a good personality, are healthy, are committed to their religion, and have various

life experiences. 19-year-old college student, Sangjee, and many other interviewees talked about their mothers' non-academic focuses. For example, Sangjee's mother wanted her daughter to have good relationships, various life experiences and religious devotion. This point may be related to the tendency of Japanese mothers, despite their educational fever similar to that of Korean mothers, to not require their children to secure a lifestyle of high income or advanced education, but rather an ordinary one, especially for girls (Yamamoto, Holloway, and Suzuki 2006). In the interviews carried out for the current study, however, this pattern was observed regardless of gender. It seems that the mothers of interviewees in general would rather their children become a wholesome person than a competent person. This tendency might be also reflect recent ideational changes in Japanese parenting, moving towards relaxed education (Watabe and Hibbard 2014).

Perceived maternal attitude and behaviour

A commonly observed theme throughout interviews with Japanese-Korean individuals was an autonomous decision-making throughout years of schooling. For instance, Kiyong recalled that his mother was supportive of whatever he wanted to do and that she did not put pressure on him to study harder. Similarly, Lia told me that even though her mother was more interested in her education than her father was, it was her mother who enabled her to develop a "self-oriented learning style". Lia independently made decisions about her education while her parents would mentally and financially support her.

In comparison, Korean mothers have a different style of childrearing that is highly focused on education. With relatively clear role divisions set up among family members, mothers are thought to be in charge of household matters, which include their children's education. They are often referred to as authoritarian and as constantly putting pressure on their children. The desire for their children to have higher academic achievements comes from the parents, not really from the children themselves. This is also related to the idea that children's success is directly related to the family's retaining of the status quo (Sorensen 1994).

For the mothers of the interviewees, pressuring their children was a rare occurrence because their priorities regarding childrearing differed from those of "typical Korean mothers", a term my interviewees frequently mentioned distinguishing their own mothers

from the Korean-born mothers of their school peers. Below is Hyunsoo emphasizing this point.

Hyunsoo: My mother was not like “typical Korean mothers.”... My mother’s priority was to have us exercise regularly and maintain good relationships. There was nothing like “chee-ma-pa-ram [a term referring to intense involvement of the mother in their children’s education, which literally means the wind caused by a woman’s skirt]” ... She had the “Japanese style” in educating children. Her [Japanese] friends were mostly the same. Their children tended to do things on their own. She didn’t push me to do anything. ... [She was] influenced by the Japanese culture.

The mothers’ general attitudes and behaviour toward their children’s education is revealed from the children’s comparison of their mothers to mothers of their school peers and from what the mothers told their children about school and studying. Interviewees pointed out a few differences between their mothers and other mothers throughout their time at elementary and high school.

Lia, Juno and Nahee clearly reveal their mothers’ attitudes toward their education below. Recall that their priorities in childrearing did not include high-level involvement in their children’s education; their children’s autonomy was guaranteed throughout schooling years. Furthermore, in Nahee’s words, we can observe the pressure from the mothers of her school peers.

Lia: My mother’s “educational zeal” was nothing like Korean mothers’. The education zeal of Japan is lower than that of Korea.

Juno: My parents didn’t put pressure on me about studying. They would occasionally tell me to study, but it wasn’t to the point that it bothered me.

Nahee: My mom wasn’t concerned about my studies much... I even at one point wished my mom pushed me more [to study harder]. My friends were jealous of me... Their moms’ priority was to make sure they study hard.

It is notable that my interviewees never mentioned academic success or their competence as their mothers’ priorities. The mothers’ attitudes toward their children’s education are

further observed in their view of the schooling system. Semi remembers her mother's complaints about the curriculum of Semi's school.

Semi: My mom told me that my school curriculum doesn't have enough physical activities classes. My mom had a swimming class and was in a baseball club in both her middle school and high school. She didn't understand the way the Korean education curriculum is designed.

She added that her mother was more interested in the well-being of her daughter. Overall, the idea of ensuring their children maintained outstanding academic achievement was almost absent among the mothers' priorities. As cultural background shapes parental beliefs (Peterson, Steinmetz, and Wilson 2003), the mothers' negative view of the current Korean education system is based on their own experiences with the education system in their home country, Japan. Similarly, the study of Pak and Oh (2012) found that, among Japanese migrant mothers, a common criticism regarding the Korean education system was that it is too competitive.

In the Korean context, the two distinct types of mothers' involvement in their children's education are information-sharing with other mothers and heavy use of private tutoring. I asked interviewees if they have ever seen their mothers socialize with other parents and, if so, who they were and what they did together. The answers from them were strikingly similar. Below is Hyesun explaining her mother's absence of "educational zeal", unlike other mothers.

Hyesun: [There was] no such thing for my mom. My hometown was close to factories and there was no "educational zeal" type atmosphere in town. ... [There was] no information about private academies or tutors... I was asking myself once "is it because my mom was raised in Japan and is that why she didn't care about hanging with other mothers to get information?"... The Japanese culture is different from the Korean culture.

It seemed that the mothers of the interviewees did not interact with other Korean mothers to exchange information regarding their children's education. If anything, interviewees recall seeing their mothers occasionally meet with other Japanese mothers. However, those

gatherings were mainly for socializing, rather than sharing education-related information. Mothers of the interviewees in general did not have close relationships with Korean mothers, nor did they have the opportunity to socialize with them in the first place.

Somee: Mom would get along with Japanese mothers only. I never saw her hang with Korean mothers. I don't know if she was exchanging information with other mothers because they talked in Japanese, but it felt more like social hangouts than an educational-information-sharing network.

Sangjee: My mom didn't communicate with Korean mothers. She was far from being those Korean mothers. She never interacted with other mothers to share information about where some private academies are. I was the one to find out about hakwon (private tutoring institute) I ended up going to.

Lia: My mom got along only with other Japanese mothers who were also members of the Church. ... There was one occasion where she did have a chance to meet Korean mothers in a mothers' quilting club through my middle school. My mom became a little close with them in it. ... Not too close.

In contrast, Korean mothers' networking with other mothers is a prevalent form of a mother's involvement in her children's education. As implied in the study of Park, Byun and Kim (2011), information sharing among parents about private tutoring institutions is crucial for them to decide to which private cram school they will send their children. The quality of information shared in parental networks depends on how much time and money the parents can spend. Some mothers decide to stay home and give up on their full-time work in order to be fully involved in their children's education (Park, Byun, and Kim 2011).

Even though mothers of the interviewees seemed to have an apparent commonality in respecting their children's free will, there are other factors that need to be taken into account to explain their stance, such as their own education level. In the study of Seo and Oh (2012), immigrant mothers with higher education levels were more likely to find fault with the current Korean education system, criticize the importance given to education, and care more about their children's overall well-being. In contrast, mothers with lower education levels were frustrated by not being able to live a financially comfortable life and sometimes gave up on following the lead of Korean mothers, who seemed successfully involved in their children's education. Among the 21 mothers of the interviewees in the

current study, twelve of them were college-educated or higher, eight of them were high school graduates and one of them was a middle school graduate (none of the interviewees were from a separated or divorced family). There was only one interviewee whose mother was highly concerned with his studies, often pushing him to study harder. Other than that, the other mothers' attitudes toward their children's education were almost uniform, shown as their respect for their children's autonomy.

Another factor is language proficiency. Insufficient language skills of the mother hinders her integration (Pak and Oh 2012) and inclusion in networks among Korean mothers. While there are other variables, such as discrimination, which affect how immigrant mothers interact with other mothers, fluency in Korean can boost confidence in socializing with native Korean mothers, allowing them to share information more easily. In the current study, the participants rated their mothers' Korean skills with middle to upper levels, and two of them said their mothers' Korean was so fluent that others did not notice their mothers' foreign nationality. However, most of the mothers still had an accent. Insufficient language skills might have affected the Japanese mothers' integration.

Nonetheless, there are exceptions. According to Kiyong, there are indeed Japanese mothers who take their children's education very seriously and have a much stricter approach, compared to his open-minded mother. They might be examples of mothers who are more adapted to the Korean education system and have assumed the role of an education-oriented mother. Nonetheless, he added that Korean-born mothers in general are extreme compared to Japanese mothers. Meanwhile, Hyomin revealed that his mother was highly passionate about his education and involved in an educational information-sharing circle of Japanese mothers. They seem to prefer to rely on their own social capital and people of the same ethnicity rather than being included in a circle of Korean mothers. Her network of Japanese mothers might be the result of choice or a perceived exclusion by Korean mothers, which is not in the scope of the current study.

There are other dimensions of involvement frequently discussed in previous literature, such as, parents' help in children's school work, preschool reading, and parents' participation in school activities. However, the former two types of parental involvement tend to disappear,

with varying degrees, as children proceed through school (Tan and Goldberg 2009; Skaliotis 2013). As expected, interviewees reported that their parents tended to help them with school work when they were in elementary school; however, later on the interviewees sought help with difficult subjects from their classmates, teachers and/or private tutors rather than their parents. Parents' participation in school activities, another type of parental involvement, is not commonly observed among Korean or Japanese parents because there are few school activities or decision-making processes that require parental intervention (Park, Byun, and Kim 2011) and also because, overall, parents trust the school they send their children to (Yamamoto, Holloway, and Suzuki 2006). Indeed, patterns of maternal involvement in children's education are country- or culture-specific.

Father's role in children's education

As expected, the involvement of fathers in education or the entire childrearing process was minimal. Most of the interviewees told me that growing up they felt closer to their mothers than fathers; they interacted more frequently with their mothers on a daily basis. While talking to their mother felt natural for interviewees, they felt that the way in which their fathers interacted with them did not seem to be based on empathy. This tendency might be related to previous literature on Korean fathers, which suggests that the mother is primarily responsible for raising the children and the father is the provider. Fathers of the interviewees were generally "too busy to nag about studying", as Sangjee's explained, or didn't communicate with their children frequently in any case. Fathers in the current study, in general, were self-perpetuating the conventional image of a father as a breadwinner.

Hyesun: "I am closer to my mom than my dad because we share lots of things. We can sympathize with each other. Also, we have similarities as women. I talk with her about every little thing. I don't do so with my dad. [He would]... always try to give me a solution first even before listening to what I say."

Nonetheless, a few interviewees revealed that each parent was concerned with different areas of their life. For example, while their mothers mostly discussed daily concerns, things that happened in school, friends and religiosity, their fathers were more interested in giving advice concerning career or college options. For instance, Changmo said his father was more

interested in discussing major educational or life decisions (mostly telling him to study harder) while his mother talked to him about religion and daily matters.

Although there were three fathers found to be passionate about their children's studies and academic achievements, they were rarely involved in parental networks, sought educational information or taught them how to study effectively. Rather, they verbally pushed them to study harder. Their interest in their children's education, displayed by their encouragement for higher academic achievements, was particularly evident when the national college entrance exam approached. Like other parents, their main concern was to send their children to a prestigious college, despite the lack of discussions they had. It appears that the fathers might not have realized the lack of interaction they had with their children. As most childrearing responsibilities are assumed by mothers, fathers often do not realize their capability to provide their children with emotional warmth and attachment (Wilson and Prior 2010).

Impact of mothers' religious devotion on the learning style of the child

All of the interviewees were official members of the Unification Church regardless of religiosity. This is mainly because I recruited my interviewees based on the Church network, from which I could locate Japanese-Korean individuals. All of the interviewees said that their mothers were highly involved in church activities. They were eager to share their world view based on religious teachings and reminded their children to attend church regularly. Mostly, the mothers were more devoted to the Unification Church than the fathers were. This might be related to the reported tendency found in past studies of older Korean males, who have a hard time finding a Korean spouse, to use matchmaking agencies and religious institutions (particularly the Unification Church) largely for marriage purposes; their religious belief might not have been as prominent as their spouses (Heo 2017). Below is Hyesun supporting this point.

Hyesun: Fathers in general don't like the church because they need to spare their money for regular church offerings. The church has a different meaning to each."

Interviewees reported that their mothers spent more time than their fathers in the local church carrying out church activities. Some interviewees stated that their mothers were too busy with church work to be highly involved in their education. Indeed, Japanese women and other foreign women, such as Filipinas, were often active participants in religious events and cultural performances, designers of programs, volunteers for preparing meals on Sundays and teachers, providing religious lessons to new members of the local churches I visited. Interviewees expressed that sometimes it seemed that their mothers placed a higher value on their religion than their children's education.

Through daily interactions, mothers helped their children to maintain their religiosity, especially when they were younger. Interviewees' exposure to their religion was maintained as they attended the church regularly with their family, participated in religious youth retreats, socialized with church members, and shared similar concerns with other Japanese-Korean youth. Consequently, their religion seemed to come naturally to them.

In contrast, for Japanese mothers in the current study, ensuring heavy involvement in their children's education was unnatural behaviour and even after living in Korea for over ten years, some remained critical of the educational system. As a result, the interviewees naturally became more autonomous in terms of their education rather than relying on pressure from their mothers. Lia termed her learning style as "self-oriented". Sangjee and Jeemin expand on this point below.

Sangjee: My mom was like, "you live your own life and I live my own life". My mom would let me become whatever I want to be. [Both my parents] didn't really intervene in my studies. If anything, my parents were anxious for me to remain religious rather than to study harder.

Jeemin: I was expected to take care of my own studies. My parents didn't really force me to study or go to hakwon but told me to get information myself if I need to go to one. My parents were always busy taking care of church-related stuff.

Both of Jeemin's parents have a Master's degree and hold leading positions in the local church in one of the metropolitan cities in Korea. Her mother has also been working as a Japanese language teacher in a college, further reducing the time spent with her daughter.

Jeemin emphasized that her mother respected her autonomy more than her father did. However, there was not any systematic involvement from her father either; she described her father's verbal concerns simply as "nagging", rather than heavy monitoring of her education.

Overall, the mothers' frequent participation in the church had an impact on their children to develop autonomous decision-making habits regarding education. Mothers participated in church activities more intensively than in their children's education and guided their children to maintain their faith. They lived their own lives and let their children live their own lives as well. As a result, interviewees were trained to independently make decisions concerning their future, how to resolve issues, and how to seek information about private tutoring and college and career options. Even though one interviewee revealed that she once wished her mother were more like a "typical Korean mother" when she was younger, interviewees now seemed contented with the way their mothers had raised them.

8. Discussion and implication

While both Korea and Japan are known for "educational zeal" and the extensive involvement of mothers in their children's education, the current study found that the Japanese marriage migrant mothers of my study participants were not as involved as native Korean mothers. Both the mothers and fathers helped the study participants with homework and school subjects at home; however, that did not last as interviewees grew older. Intensive use of tutoring services and networks among mothers, the two most distinct types of parental educational involvement in Korea, were not at all prevalent among the Japanese mothers.

Overall, Japanese marriage migrants emphasized the autonomy of their children in making their own educational decisions. Growing up, the mothers did not put pressure on interviewees to study harder, to obtain better grades, or to register at private tutoring institutions for supplementary study sessions. Some mothers even criticised the Korean education system to their children. Raising their children, the Japanese mothers were more interested in their children's health, relationships with others, faith in their religion, and various life experiences.

The fathers' involvement in their children's education, as well as the entire childrearing process, was found to be minimal, if any, which strengthens the conventional role of a husband/father as a provider. As interviewees' interactions with their fathers were not frequent, they did not feel as close to their fathers as they did to their mothers. If a father's involvement in education existed at all, it tended to focus on different areas such as the child's career and college options, as opposed to the mothers' concerns, which revolved around daily matters, friendships, dating and religion. The conventional belief that the mother is solely responsible for childrearing was upheld strongly within families of the interviewees.

Their mothers' heavy religious involvement had a positive effect on not only the autonomous decision-making habits of the interviewees in terms of education, but also other areas of life. Their mothers did not have much time to spend on their children's education because of their extensive participation in church activities. For the mothers, making sure that their children attended a prestigious college was not among their priorities. Also observed from the religious participation of the mothers was the active role they assumed in something outside their family. In the local church, these women, who tend to be considered only as homemakers, had the chance to spend their time on something for themselves, not for their families. This may be demonstrating Japanese migrant women "living their own life", as an interviewee, Sangjee, suggested.

Growing up, interviewees were expected to gather information themselves regarding their education, such as, information on the college entrance process and private tutoring services. There was no expectation that their mothers would collect this information on behalf of them. Interviewees often compared themselves to their school peers, recalling how their peers were jealous of their relatively stress-free environment at home.

The sample used in the current study is limited to individuals from the same religion. Future studies can explore behaviour linked to the educational involvement of various Japanese marriage migrants, such as those who are not members of the Unification Church, those who belong to other religious institutions and those who are not religious at all, along with diverse socioeconomic backgrounds. Furthermore, there can be greater differences in the

educational involvement patterns found amongst Japanese marriage migrant women. The study sample in the current study did not fully capture these differences and their potential impacts. Other marriage migrants from other countries may have different dynamics in terms of their involvement in their children's education.

The adaptation of marriage migrants to Korean society has been studied intensively in academia, as well as at a governmental level. Amongst these studies, the focus tends to be on income, employment, childrearing, language skills, discrimination experiences and other adjustment issues. However, there are cultural differences in childrearing that need to be noted. Further, strict patriarchal values act as an obstacle to raising a child in a balanced way and to the communication between a wife and husband and a wife and her in-laws. Abundant evidence emphasizes the importance of a father's role in his children's development, and it will become more important as the paternal role develops alongside societal changes (Wilson and Prior 2010).

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