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## A Qualitative Study on Married Migrant Women's Experience of Participation in Self-help Groups from the Perspective of Transformative Learning

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### Abstract

This study examined self-help groups for married migrant women which have not been discussed from the viewpoint of learning from the perspective of transformative learning and tried to suggest the direction of self-help groups. For this, the research question was set as 'What does married migrant women's experience of participation in self-help groups from the perspective of transformative learning?'. For the study, data were collected by arranging in-depth interviews with 7 married migrant women who participated in self-help groups for more than 2 years in the B Family Center in A City. And based on this, the in-depth meanings in the experience were analyzed. Based on the collected data, each three central meanings were drawn from the categories of experience by conversion stage, the level of conversion and introspection, and the results of the conversion. Married migrant women planned and attempted a meaning life by experiencing dilemmas and experienced problem solving through sympathy and cooperation in their self-help groups. It has found that the level of conversion and introspection appeared in the form of self-awareness, professional competency development, and introspection as migrant women and the results of the conversion

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appeared in the domain of individuals, families, and society. The above research results show that self-help groups promote the shift in married migrant women's perspectives and become the learning center that they can be expanded to individual and social growth. Based on the results of the study, it found educational implications of self-help groups for married migrant women and sought the direction for their development.

**Keywords:** Transformative Learning, Perspective Transition, Married Migrant Women, Self-help Group

## I. Introduction

Because learning is done during life without being limited to specific space and time, adults become important learners. Learning in adults has important significance because of continuing to develop their diverse talents and making them to participate in social development (Lengrand, 1970). Especially in case of migrants who should lead a life in a new environment, Our social representative migrant is married migrant women. And their Interest in learning (Kim, D. H., 2016; Kim, M. J. · Jeon, J. S., 2015; Kim, S. S. · Wang, G. S., 2021; Baek, E. S. · Han, S. G., 2017; Son, M. H. · Cho, H. Y., 2013) can be thought to be part of trying to understand how their life is changed and developed through learning. Human learning embraces both of formal and non-formal education done through their whole life beyond certain times and places (Dave, 1976). Especially because adult education is done in the field out of school including communities and public institutions and even through unofficial programs (Lee, H. C., 2012; Merriam & Bierema, 2016), self-help groups for married migrant women also can be understood as the chalkface that experience of learning occurs. Self-help groups are known as being run for the purpose of modifying specific problems' behaviors, overcoming psychological difficulties and improving adaptability (Park, H. S. · Lee, J. I., 2016), but they are expanded into small groups with a variety of needs as they are known as the core strategy to strengthen participants' capability (Lee, J. A. · Song, M. S. · Jeong, I. J., 2016).

In the meantime, various studies on how married migrant women have solved their personal problems and the problems that migrant women's communities faced have been done. Examining the main contents of the precedent studies which covered self-help groups for married migrant women, experience of participating in community activities with the countries where they come from as the center, children's education and leisure activities, and translation and interpretation activities has usually been covered (Seo, T. S. · Lee, Y. J., 2017; Lim, S. W. · Yun, H., 2017; Lee, C. Y. · Kim, S. M. · Lee, H. J., 2020; Choi, M. Y., 2021). The precedent studies are meaningful in that they covered the process to develop their individual capability through specific activities done in their self-help groups and the activities that communities for migrant women have a voice. And self-help groups become space for support that specific and

material meetings among the members are done as the places where practical education is done and were discussed as space for emotional support to be able to experience change of consciousness and psychological support (Kim, Y. O., 2010; Seo, T. S. · Lee, Y. J., 2017). However, they could not discuss effects of self-help groups on change in their meaning of life because they function as places for adult learning.

Adult learning improves migrants' quality of life and makes them enjoy equal rights by playing a pivot role of supporting migrants' adaptation to and change in new society from the perspective of lifelong education(Kim, J. H., 2016: 255). Understanding of Korean language and culture, child rearing and parent education, preparation in employment and foundation, and culture and art activities educate married migrant women's individual capability and at the same time, they establish a foothold to make them seek their duties and rights as the members of Korean society (Kim, Y. O., 2010; Ministry of Gender Equality and Family, 2022). And community-centered self-help groups which emphasize migrant women's attributes of community educate their growth and develop to establish their new position among individuals and in communities and furthermore regional communities through awareness and introspection of themselves. Married migrant women's concern about their identity after migration and introspection of and change in environment surrounded by themselves and relationships with other people can be an important realm in adult education. Therefore, it is required to study an effect of married migrant women's experience of participation in various types of self-help groups on their life by recognizing them as adult learners who grow and learn during their whole life.

This study tries to explore meanings in experience of participation in self-help groups from the perspective of transformative learning which suggested the shift in perspectives as the key process of adult development. Transformative learning understands individual experience as is thought to be utilized as an essential element of learning and is thought that adults' wide and deep experience can be utilized as learning resources of learners themselves and other people (Merriam et al., 2009: 126). The study tries to understand experience of participation in self-help groups by focusing on change and growth through the shift in perspectives shown before and after participation in self-help groups and in the

process to participate in them. The research question was set as 'What does married migrant women's experience of participation in self-help groups from the perspective of transformative learning?'

## **II . Theoretical Background**

### **1. Married Migrant Women and Self-help Groups**

Self-help groups mean voluntary alliances that people with common problems or needs gather to exchange information and resources with one another to solve problems jointly faced by them for the purpose of mutual aid for a certain period of time (Birchall, 2007). People get to participate in the process that the member who have common problems gather together and solve them to overcome difficulties in individuals' every day life. At this moment, interaction done in the groups represents possibilities of being connected to positive social change beyond individual growth and change (Smith & Pillemer, 1983).

Self-help groups for married migrant women are voluntarily run with the countries where they come from and regions as the center. But they are intensively done with each local government's family centers as the center. According to the family services in the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family (Ministry of Gender Equality and Family, 2022), self-help groups for married migrants aim to strengthen their adaptation to society and self-reliant capability. And the self-help groups make married migrants who participate in self-help groups the main agents of childcare, self-help activities, and information exchange. The family centers make it a rule to run them by opening their places for self-help group activities and collect the users' opinions. This means that the family centers provide the learning centers for them by supporting physical space and budget for self-help groups, but they should eventually make married migrant women lead them.

Self-help groups fulfill a function to support married migrant women to establish themselves healthily as the social members in addition to the purpose for support of their adaptation to Korean society (Kim, Y. O., 2010; Kim, E. J.,

2019, Ministry of Gender Equality and Family, 2022). Married migrant women overcome psychological and physical isolation by forming a relationship with their colleagues in them (Oh, E. J. · Go, J. H., 2021) and they come up with alternatives to solve problems in their real life by conceiving plants to solve personal problems jointly (Seo, T. S. · Lee, Y. J., 2017). And they prepare places for active activities required for satisfying their desire of social activities through self-help groups and form a mutual healthy social support system (Lim, S. W. · Yun, H., 2017).

The precedent studies on experience that domestic married migrant women participate in self-help groups have been done by focusing on the studies on the self-help groups as the communities that emphasize educational activities made by their voluntary formation and their collective activities rather than the educational programs provided by specific institutions including the family centers (Seo, T. S. · Lee, Y. J., 2017), Lim, S. W. and Yun, H. (2017) shows that self-help groups function as places for laying the groundwork for overcoming difficulties as the migrants and doing social activities through the examples that they run programs for children education for elementary school students and interpretation and translation by themselves. Kim, Y. O. (2010), Jeong, E. C. and Jeong, M. Y. (2018), Ahn, J. and Chae, Y. G. (2015), and Choi, M. Y. (2021) can be found that married migrant women overcome the limitations as the minorities, establish their identity, and actively practice participation in society through experience of their communities. The above preceding studies emphasize self-help groups' positive and developmental aspects and their active participation in communities by creating access points through communication with their communities, not the places for migrant women only and forming a network.

Self-help groups begin from a motive to solve married migrant women's personal and common problems, but they can develop into the stage which develops individual and communal capability through experience of mutual recognition and solidarity and is integrated to communities (Kim, S. H., 2017). Therefore, self-help groups for married migrant women should be understood as activities of independent learning that they create their meaning of life and the shift in the perspectives of solving their problems in life dynamically by uniting

together, not the activities for assimilation and adaptation (Kim, Y. O., 2010).

## 2. Transformative Learning

Transformative learning is about dramatic and fundamental change in the way we view ourselves and the world where we live (Merriam et al., 2009) and provided the integrated and general viewpoint for understanding adults' learning process (Cranton & Taylor, 2012). Transformative learning made adults' informal learning through their everyday life come to the fore by interpreting 'learning' the formation of meaning which produce change of consciousness (Jeong, M. S., 2010). The shift in the perspectives in transformative learning provides an important viewpoint for understanding of adult education of the socially and culturally underprivileged such as married migrant women (Kim, D. H., 2016).

Mezirow who set out a theoretical framework of transformative learning thought that it begins from confused dilemma situations experienced by adults and presented them by classifying them into 10 stages. The dilemma situations mean that crises in important personal lives are triggered, which include unemployment, acquaintances' death, and migration. Early studies were thought that dilemmas trigger the process of the shift, but later studies amended it so that accumulated experiences can cause the shift as they are integrated (Merriam & Bierema, 2016: 132). The stages after the dilemma situations are arranged by questions about the existing beliefs and introspection, critical evaluation of the existing suppositions, sharing the process of the shift with other people, relationships with new roles, explorations of acts and behavioral plans (Mezirow, 1995). Later Mezirow's theory which emphasized rationality and individual autonomy got to be criticized because it ignores subjective factors including emotions, relationships, intuition, and spirituality (Park, G. H., 2009). Taylor (2007) emphasized ownerships, shared experiential activities, critical introspection, contextual effects, and relationships as the main factors practiced in transformative learning (Kim, D. H., 2016). Especially, it is thought that transformative learning is promoted when it is based on reliable relationship among individuals that information's open sharing and mutual understanding can be done. And these relationships are at the core of women's transformative

learning (English & Irving, 2012) and it clarifies that meetings to share their stories with other people, form a friendship, and build up trust are important conditions for promoting transformative learning (Brooks, 2000).

The shift in the perspectives in transformative learning is connected to experience of structural change of the basic premise of thinking, emotions, and acts and means the shift of consciousness to change their life and existence ways. At this moment, the shift of consciousness is done through critical introspection and rational discourses of the existing suppositions set and experienced by themselves (Park, G. H., 2009) and seeks change in individual knowledge and attitudes. And they take note of possibilities of stable life that they can lead through this (Kim, H. B. · Heo, H. I., 2017). According to Mezirow, introspection can be divided into content reflection, process reflection, and premise reflection. And premise reflection is just connected to the shift in the perspectives<sup>1)</sup>. It was thought the shift in the perspectives can just be done through introspection of asking a question of 'why' about their experience (Merriam & Bierema, 2016: 133).

Transformative learning is about change as the learning process to find their experience's meaning. At this moment, change occurs at an individual and social level (Merriam & Bierema, 2016). The realm of transformative learning begins from individuals, but it can be accompanied through self-directed, experiential, or formal activities in classrooms, online and offline learning centers, workplaces, and communities (Merriam & Bierema, 2016). First, individuals are the most basic realm that transformative learning begins and the starting point of change begins from them including learners' self-awareness and introspection of situations.

The members of self-help groups find and are conscious of what their problems are for themselves. And the process to find solutions by cooperate with people with common problems is connected to growth that individuals and

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1) Mezirow understood introspection by dividing it into three things as follows: Content reflection is introspection of what happens as recognition and thought of actual experience and ideas of the feelings and behaviors. Process reflection is introspection of strategies for solving problems to handle applicable experience. Finally, premise reflection is introspection to inspect suppositions, beliefs, and values socially composed as a question of 'why' in their consciousness and behaviors (Mezirow, 2000).



communities' capability are developed. Finding individuals or communities problems—cooperation for solving the problems—growth and development through cooperation are connecting them to find transformative learning's core experience in the self-help groups. The transformative learning theory provides the theoretical foundation for understanding married migrant women's educational experience through activities in the self-help groups.

### **III. Research Method**

The study utilized a qualitative case research method to understand experience of transformative learning of married migrant women who participate in self-help groups. The case study is suitable for investigating specific phenomena in the context of the real world as the research method to describe and analyze single cases and phenomena and social units intensively and generally (Merriam, 1998). The study selected experience that married migrant groups who use the family center in B-gu, A City participated in a self-help group as a unit of case analysis. The selection of participants in the study and the data collection and analysis process in conducting the study are as follows:

#### **1. Participants in the Study**

The participants in the study are 7 married migrant women who participated in self-help groups run by the family center in B-gu, A City. In order to select the participants in the study who can understand and stage experience of participation in the self-help groups and the meaning of the experience, the participants were set on the basis of the persons who actively participate in more than one self-help group for more than two years and the persons who can communicate in Korean (TOPIK LEVEL 3). For the study, the researcher visited the family center located in A City, met a person in charge of the self-help groups and explained the purpose of the study to him/her, he/she introduced 10 married migrant women who are suitable for interviews to the researcher. The final 7 women who described rich experience suitable for the

subject of the study were selected as the final participants in the study after arranging a pre-interview with them in writing. The participants in the study are married migrant women from Vietnam and China and their residency is variously distributed as 7 to 17 years. The self-help groups that the participants in the study are participating in consist of a team of interpretation and translation activities, a preparation class for qualification examinations, a performance art team (traditional dance of the homelands and musical performances), and a joint infant care team. Basic information on the participants in the study is as shown in <Table 1>.

<Table 1> Basic information on the participants in the study

Participant in the study	Country where they are from	Age	Year of migration	Period of participation in self-help groups
1	Vietnam	28	2015	5 years
2	Vietnam	30	2016	2 years
3	Vietnam	27	2013	2 years
4	China	44	2005	5 years
5	China	42	2005	7 years
6	China	40	2005	7 years
7	China	39	2009	5 years

## 2. Data Collection and Analyses

The study collected data by utilizing written questionnaires and semi-structured questions. First, it checked comprehensive coverage of the motives of migration and participation in self-help groups, the contents of the activities, and change before and after doing it through the written questionnaire and in-depth interviews were arranged based on this. The in-depth interviews by participant were arranged for 2 hours twice through the face-to-face interview and untact video conference interview (zoom) for about 3 months from December 2021 to early February 2022. The 1st in-depth interview focused on rapport building and treated contents of migration, marriage, and self-help groups and the 2nd interview continued with in-depth questions by focusing on personal experience of participation in self-help groups and awareness of and change in the experience. After that, in the process to copy the contents of the interviews, the data were additionally supplemented

on the phone in case that the contents are ambiguous or the meanings are required to be checked. In addition to the in-depth interviews, photographs and videos related to the self-help groups and the data to run them were collected as the auxiliary data and the data collection ended when it was judged that the data reached saturation.

For the data analyses, codes were granted to repeated contents and meanings by collecting meaningful statements by participant and doing early open coding by focusing on the original data copied. By focusing on life and experience before and after participation in self-help groups, the meaningful things related to the process of change were analyzed by focusing on the stage and realm of transformative learning. After finishing open coding by participant in the study, central subjects were drawn by collecting and integrating the codes with similar meanings into one another by detailed meaning through a comparative analysis with the data of other participants in the study and collecting the related meanings by focusing on the research questions. For the feasibility of the study, it made 3 colleague researchers and 2 professors who study migrant women conduct cross-validation of the analyzed results.

The study tried to secure research ethics which meets the Bioethics Committee's standards in that it's the study targeting the married migrant women, the social minorities and vulnerable social group. Before starting the study, the researcher verbally explained the purposes, method, and procedure to the participants in it and again informed them of them in writing before starting the interviews. The researcher notified them of the right to participate in the study voluntarily, stop it, and refuse to answer the questions of the interviews before them, explained the utilization of the contents, records, and data of the interviews in the academic thesis to them for the data collection, and obtained their agreement. The researcher explained that the data would anonymously be treated and asked them to present minimum personal information to protect personal information. The procedure of the study and overall contents of personal information protection were prepared in writing and the researcher and the participant in the study respectively signed the two copies and kept each one. A prescribed reward was given to the participants in the study after finishing the two interviews.

## IV. Results of the Study

In the result which analyzed the collected data from the perspective of transformative learning, meanings of experience of self-help groups for married migrant women were drawn from three categories of experience by transformative stage, levels of the shift and introspection, and the results of the shift.

### 1. Stage of the Shift

#### 1) Founding Dilemmas That Migrant Women Experience

The participants in the study lost their value of existence during they were cut off from society and spent their time in infant care and housekeeping. Confused dilemmas experienced by the participants in the study included isolation due to social prejudices and language barriers as the married migrant women and their husbands and their families' attitude to be unable to understand cultures of their homelands. Confusion and conflicts which occur in individual and social environment surrounded by the participants in the study are applicable to the beginning stage of introspection that transformative learning begins.

Because I was 19 years old in those days, I was pregnant when I was 20 years old. So I read people's faces. Korean people do not get married quite young. People asked why I got married quite young despite I was so young. And a lot of people said that a child gave birth to a child. I got that a lot. (Participant 3)

My husband does not understand that I am only daughter. His sisters are blood-related. When I talk about his sisters first, he takes their side saying that they are not that kind of people. (Participant 7)

#### 2) Making a Meaningful Life

Participation in self-help groups functioned as the learning centers of acquiring action plans and knowledge for settling for the present and preparing for the future. Various forms of learning done in the self-help groups serve as

a momentum to inspire them with their will to live and make them recognize their value newly. Participant 1 personally tried to receive help of studying Korean language through the self-help groups for interpretation and translation and socially wanted to play a role of helping the community. Self-help groups make the participants having time to prepare their life in the future and become a path to inform Korean society of the homelands' culture and history as shown in Participant 6's example.

I began this the multiculture center wants a interpretation and translation team. Sometimes, events are held on Saturday, such as physical examination... There were a lot of events in the past so I interpreted as volunteer work. There is only one interpreter and translator in the center. So it is very good when we work together. And we gather and study together. Our interpretation is helpful for the center and we take a TOPIK test. The center support us for it, (Participant 1)

I cannot dance. But it's just a self-help group. It just show our culture to Korean people for and through a hobby. It is meaningful that our team just show this rather than doing good performances, (Participant 6)

### **3) Problem Solving through Sympathy and Cooperation**

The shift in the participants' perspectives was promoted by subjective factors including emotional exchange and supportive relationships among the members as well as critical introspection and rational discourse of individual experience. The participants in the study existed as other people as Korean society objectify them as married migrant women. But they overcame alienation of the existence by experiencing 'us' in the self-help groups. They experienced sympathy with the married migrant women who are in a similar position sharing difficulties and worries due to their children, husbands, and husbands' families, and the migrants. Sympathy among the members became a dynamic force for being able to arise again as it became emotional comfort and supportive resources. And cooperative work done in the self-help groups eventually attracted the members' individual growth as it served as a momentum to heighten the sense of accomplishment and stir their desire for growth.

We can sympathize with one another because we are from the same country. When I say, "It's the hardest thing that I am lonely," the words like "Yes, it is, me, too." and "how hard it is for you." made me encouraged. (Participant 5)

When I work alone even with a subject, it is difficult because teaching methods of several countries are different from one another. It is good that several people come up with ideas rather than doing them alone. We made teaching aids together. (Participant 6).

Activities in self-help groups become a tool to restore self-confidence that they lost due to discrimination and prejudices beyond acquiring knowledge and technical skills and make them find them. The participants in the study made participation in self-help groups a turning point as a springboard for overcoming confused dilemma situations and leading a better life. The points that they found dilemmas, planned and tried their meaningful life, and solved problems through cooperation in the process of participation in the self-help groups are similar with the general stage presented by Mezirow, but they can be found that cooperation and support among the members of the self-help groups rather than individual capability as a factor of change play a role of driving growth by stage.

## **2. The level of the Shift and Introspection**

### **1) Self-awareness and Discovery**

Participation in self-help groups became experience of raising their eagerness to find who they are and re-establishing their present position newly. Migration made them experience cutting off their life, but experience of participation in self-help groups became the process to inspect their present situations and find what their desire is by themselves. The participants in the study were finding their real selves escaping from the situations that they shrank and were satisfied with the process to enjoy and create their own cultures. The sites of self-help groups were given by the center, they became experience of adding meanings to learning and finding themselves through the process to create the process of learning by themselves.

When a leader of the self-help team for interpretation and translation was selected, nobody answered to a question of who would be and everybody was silent, I wanted to challenge. I was originally talkative, but I got to be introverted after I came here. I challenged because I wanted to get back to my old self. (Participant 1)

Our group just watch videos together without learning from someone. And we make minor changes. In the past hula dance group, an instructor taught us. We wanted to come to the self-help group autonomously, but our pride was hurt and we were upset when she criticized us. It could not be maintained because we got stressed when we heard that we are bad dancers despite we did to enjoy it. So it soon stopped. Now, it is very good that we do by ourselves (Participant 5).

## 2) Development of Professional Capability

The participants in the study tried to develop their professional capability by utilizing their mother languages. The participants' Korean language ability was applicable to the higher level, but they continued to participate in the interpretation and translation group to learn vocabularies and expressions in news, newspapers, and professional areas. And they were active in various educational institutions by preparing employment by utilizing their mother languages and cultures including education instructors of multicultural understanding, multicultural bilingual instructors, and foreign language instructors. The participants' continuous and active challenge and accomplishment of learning can be understood as the stage of transformative learning to establish their ability and self-assurance.

I should be more professional. I should again study. (Ellipsis) I do not have any problem in speaking Korean now. By the way, terminology is not enough. I think I need to continue to study Korean language in the interpretation and translation team because I do not know much about it. (Participant 4)

I think the only thing that I do well is Chinese. So I studied hard through the multicultural center and my friends. (Ellipsis) A Chinese license and several things, a license for folding origami, and children's psychology... (Participant 6)

### 3) Introspection as Senior Migrant Women

The participants in the study have participated in various forms of informal learning through their everyday life until now before and after migration. Especially, participation in self-help groups became a launch pad for overcoming difficulties that they experience as the migrants including psychological isolation, emotional cutoff, language barriers, and social discrimination. The participants in the study introspected their life as the married migrant women who live in Korean society telling about the motives, process, and results that they got to participate in the self-help groups. The participants found that 'attempts to find what they like,' 'transferring their mother languages,' and 'studying and growing together' are wisdom of life.

I was worried about that my child would be bullied just when speaking Chinese. So I did not teach it to him/her from the beginning. I feel sad. Now, I know. Now, it should be changed. My children should speak Chinese when they are born (emphasizing it).  
(Participant 4)

I am a Chinese, but I do not know everything. What we are doing is a multicultural instructors, but we learn hard and are educated every day like this. It is very hard to study alone. It is easier and we can get more ideas from one another when working together. I get to know more about my country and study it participating in the self-help group.  
(Participant 5)

The level of the shift and introspection through participation in self-help groups is different depending on individual awareness, experience of adaptation, and several situations. Informal learning which is done with married migrant women who feel a kinship with one another escaping from their individual life has found to seek their social roles through introspection to reflect on who they are, professional knowledge, and development of their capability. And they have found the life lessons with learning through self-help groups reflecting on their life generally as the married migrant women.



### 3. The Results of the Shift

#### 1) Recovery of Self-confidence and Establishment of Their Identity

The results of the shift of the participants in the study have found as follows: First, it has found that the participants in the study individually recovered self-confidence and established their identity. They gained self-confidence through experience of improving their Korean language ability, passing qualification examinations, and acquiring licenses and felt satisfaction with their existence and took pride in doing them. The self-help groups became learning to gain 'self-confidence by filling in what they are lacking' and recover self-confidence to be able to show their identity as their migrant mothers to their children honorably. This shows that accomplishment and positive interaction with other people in the process to experience participation in the self-help groups rather than the programs and contents themselves attract change in the perspectives of recognizing themselves and the world and their lifestyles.

After participating in the self-help group, I think I should study very much. And I gained self-confidence. My friends who study together continue to cheer me and make up for what I lack. (Ellipsis) It's been 5 years since I came to Korea. I think I should be hard at things. I participated in them and accumulated different experiences. My seniors helped me very much to teach me. (Participant 2)

I am happy when doing volunteer work, I feel good, I did because other people need my help. (Participant 7)

#### 2) Families' Recognition and Formation of Intimacy

Second, it's experience of change in family relationships. The participants in the study commonly experienced their families' support and formation of intimacy. Their families recognized their participation in self-help groups, encouraged them to participate in them, and were interested in and participate in their wives and mothers' learning and activities. The participants in the study got to be confident before their children and have self-confidence to be able to talk about Korean society with their husbands equally as the activities done in

the self-help groups are naturally connected to their families. Individual change through the self-help groups expanded into positive change in families as it becomes a connection to the families' recognition and formation of intimacy.

It was fun to learn history. When my children sometimes ask me about it, I tell them about it. When they talk about who they are, I understand them. My husband likes history. (Participant 3).

I can tell my children confidently that I am a Chinese. When the school instructs them to bring accessories of China which is a neighboring country to it, I gave them to them. It's because I have a lot of these accessories being a multicultural instructor. If necessary, I made my children wear the clothes. So they did. (Participant 5)

### 3) Seeking a Roles as the Members of Society

The results of the shift of the perspectives are shown as change to be able to integrate openness in the relationships with other people and fragmented experience of life into meaningful and general relationships as well as change in the perspectives of looking at the world (Kim, D. H., 2016). The participants in the study tried to find and practice their roles in their communities by becoming 'the people who give,' not staying in 'the people who receive'. Their examples show that transformative learning is not simply limited to the psychological and individual realm, but expand into growth to seek social and cultural change.

After coming to Korea, we received a lot of help. we do volunteering work as much as we can... (Ellipsis) We receive a lot of benefits. So, we hope that our volunteer work will be very helpful by doing what we can do for society and displaying our advantages. (Participant 4)

I have also received things while I have lived in this area in Korea. But there are the parts that we can do. When bazaars or events to share things are held by connecting them to the administrative welfare center, it will be good that multicultural families are invited to make and share dishes together. (Participant 6).

Transformative learning is about change as the process of learning to find the meanings of experience of the participants in the study by themselves. At this moment, there can be change at the individual and social level (Merriam &

Bierema, 2016). In these examples, the participants in the study individually recovered self-confidence and appeared as change of establishing their identity as the migrant women. And this change has found to be connected to gradual change in the families and social realm.

## V. Conclusion and Discussion

The study is meaningful in that it analyzed the meanings of experience of participation in self-help groups of married migrant women who are alienated from main discourse of adult learning from the perspective of transformative learning and highlighted their value as informal learning of the self-help groups for them. The married migrant women participated in the self-help groups with various forms of dilemmas as a momentum in the process of settlement after migration and plans and attempts for meaningful life in the self-help groups become experience of solving individual and common problems. The shift and introspection through the self-help groups appeared as self-awareness, self-development, and development of professional capability, and introspection of life as the migrant women. These results were connected to change in the individual realm that they recover self-confidence and establish their identity, the families' recognition and formation of intimacy, and the supposition of seeking a role as the member of society. The followings are discussion based on the results of the study.

First, the self-help groups become the places for learning to solve dilemmas of life which occur due to migrants' position. Unlike the dilemmas shown in the precedent studies on experience of transformative learning which usually reflect problems of life according to developmental cycles of growth including middle age and old age (Kim, Y. J. · Park, J. Y., 2019; Park, G. H., 2009; Jeong, G. Y. · Park, H. Y., 2015), married migrant women's transformative learning has differences that unfamiliarity as the migrants and social prejudices and restrictions work as the dilemmas. Plans, challenge, problem-solving methods for overcoming the dilemma situations were just married migrant women's experience according to their individual and social context. This can be thought

that learning is inner directed and individual, but it is the results to reflect the process which occurs in the social context. The examples of the study imply that they contain significance of transformative learning in that experience of participation in the self-help groups accompanies change in the perspectives of the context of their own life in the social context that the individuals are located in.

Second, the level of the shift and introspection shown in the self-help groups reflects married migrant women's desire for education and learning according to their residency in Korea and life experience. In the period that childbirth and child rearing were concentrated in the initial stage after migration, the change in self-awareness and discovery was done in isolated environment. And after the period of intensive child care in early childhood, they tried to participate in various forms of learning and develop their professional capability. Finally, in the period of having jobs and being socially active, they did the integrated shift to agonize about migrant women's identity and seek social roles (Kim, Y. S. et al, 2019). This is in the same vein that Baek, E. S. · Han, S. I. (2017) suggested the need of providing various types of education for married migrant women by considering their residency and experience. These results show that types and contents of self-help groups need to consider phased support and intensified activities which reflect married migrant women's reality and desire.

Third, participation in self-help groups includes families and communities' change with the shift at the individual level. In the study, the married migrant women experienced change and growth in the realm of individuals and families including self-awareness, positive change in the family relationships, and the expectations on participation in society and showed their desire for trying to change people's awareness of them and their positions by using this as a steppingstone. These results are the same as Kim, M. J. · Jeon, J. S. (2015) that the married migrant women who participated in education of bilingual instructors experienced broadening their horizons of life by contributing to the individuals and other people's growth through other social activities with the bilingual instructors. However, the examples of the study have found to be a limit that change in individual awareness is connected to the social level. The participants in the study hoped to participate in their communities as the

members by using their individual capability as a stepping-stone, but it was the small part that they expanded into the level of social change because there are many cases that they just stayed in individual learning and family activities except the performance-centered self-help groups. Self-help groups formed in a form of communities show a distinct difference from becoming active citizens from minorities (Kim, J. S., 2012), aiming at the same rights and responsibilities as the former inhabitants (Kim, Y. O., 2010), and practicing as the main agents (Ahn, J. · Chae, Y. G., 2015). This means the limit that influence of the self-help groups in the centers done in a form of programs usually stays in the individual realm.

The ultimate purpose of self-help groups is to accomplish social integration through individuals and communities' growth (Korean Institute for Healthy Family, 2021). Therefore, capability and technical skills developed through the self-help groups should be connected to social practice, life, and the occupational world. Social integration can be realized when migrants enjoy their rights as the members of the communities, not migrants and residents' psychological and physical harmony. Therefore, the self-help groups can act as a mediator to support married migrant women to function as the members of their communities and be actively utilized as the human resources from their individual growth and development (Jeong, Y. R., 2014).

For this, the migrant women's efforts to create an access point with Korean society through the open and cooperative system by having the communities and networks (Seo, T. S. · Lee, Y. J., 2017) are required and their ability developed in the process to cooperate with the regional communities should actively be utilized. And married migrant women's professional capability needs to be strengthened by professional support according to the characteristics of self-help groups. The partial participants in the study mentioned the need of organizational and systematic management to make their learning have professional capability. Therefore, the centers should reflect the participants' demand and necessity for professional support which meets them. The centers should not stay in providing places for them. For example, according to the family centers' operational guidance (Ministry of Gender Equality and Family, 2022), it can be difficult for working women to participate in self-help groups

because the centers' places are just allowed to be used just on weekdays. Therefore, in order to revitalize self-help groups, flexibility of the utilization of the centers' places needs to be secured. In addition, efforts to compose useful and practical programs which consider married migrant women's desire, needs, and realistic setting, not the program unilaterally provided, are also required.

Married migrant women are important adult learners in our society and self-help groups function as the important learning centers to gain a foothold of adult learning. It is expected that all the matters to make married migrant women lead an active life, have rights, and fulfil responsibility as the members of society through various forms of self-help groups.

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