

# The Mediating Effects of Hope and Family Cohesion between Acculturative Stress and Depression of Immigrant Women for Marriage in Korea

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## Abstract

This study aimed to identify the depression level of 580 immigrant women in marriage, and the analysis was done on the structural relationship between the influencing variables on depression such as acculturative stress, hope, and family cohesion. We identified whether hope and family cohesion would have a mediating effect in the relationship between acculturative stress and depression. First, there was a positive correlation between acculturative stress and depression and a positive correlation between family cohesion and hope. Second, acculturative stress and hope and acculturative stress and family cohesion had a negative path coefficient. In contrast, acculturative stress and depression had a positive path coefficient. Hope and depression and also family cohesion and depression had a negative path coefficient. Third, this study found a mediating effect of hope and family cohesion, in the relationship between acculturative stress and depression.

**Keywords:** Acculturative Stress, Component, Depression, Family Cohesion, Hope, Immigrant Women for Marriage

## 1. Introduction

Acculturative stress is a reaction to everyday life event that takes place in intercultural contact<sup>1</sup>. It is a phenomenon which an individual immigrant or a group of immigrants experience when they adapt to a new culture<sup>2</sup>. This has received attention for the fact that this would be one of the main risk factors for mental health, rather than the purpose of revealing the level of stress<sup>3</sup>. Also, it has been reported that it could be mediated by several factors including type of cultural adaptation, previous experience of cultural adaptation, gender, age, educational level, religion, immigration motive, cultural distance, social support, attitude of country of residency, and characteristics of home country<sup>4</sup>. In addition, one of the previous studies assumed that the attitude of a country and the personal psychological characteristics, such as type of cultural adaptation, social support, attitude and nature

of country in accepting the immigrants, control material, and personality, could mediate acculturative stress<sup>5,6</sup>. On that account, another previous study reported that such acculturative stress would have a significant explanatory power for somatization symptom, anxiety, and depression<sup>7,8</sup>. Also, an increase in acculturative stress among the immigrant women in marriage would have a negative impact, such as anxiety and depression, on their everyday lives<sup>9</sup>. Furthermore, 4.6 percent of those immigrant women in marriage have experienced depression<sup>10</sup>. Considering the aforementioned previous studies, it is very important to conduct a study on the relationship between acculturative stress and psychological impact, such as depression, among immigrant women who are married in Korea; it will establish a measure for their adaptation in Korea.

Depression among the immigrant women in marriage has been acting as a factor of inhibiting the emotional and

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mental health for their social life<sup>11</sup>. The home-related variables can be taken into consideration as an influencing variable. For instance, the immigrant women in marriage accounted for only .3 percent of the entire number of divorces in 2002. However, in 2010, they accounted for 9.6 percent thereof. The number has increased by more than 32 times in 8 years. As a result, there are a lot of concerns about the seriousness of family breakdowns<sup>12</sup>. The breaking down of the families is a crisis that comes with serious impact on individuals and their family members; thus, it has a negative impact not only on the divorced individuals but also on the mental health of their children. Furthermore, the divorced individuals would likely suffer from depression, anxiety, loneliness, anger, sense of loss in their role as a family member, guilt towards their children, etc<sup>13</sup>. Therefore, it can be concluded that the perception of family system is the most prominent variable that influences such problems as family maladaptation of immigrant women in marriage, particularly the divorce.

The perception of family system facilitates creating meaningful changes within the system, while predicting the future interactions by analyzing an interaction between family members. In addition, if immigrant women in marriage are aware of the certain rules within their families, then they will be able to form a sense of comfort as to how their families look differently from other families, by becoming aware of the things that they did not know before<sup>14</sup>. Thus, it is possible to deduct that the depression among immigrant women in marriage can be reduced in accordance with the perception level of family cohesion, which is one area of family system perception.

Meanwhile, hope is the nature of human life itself, and it is the process of seeking possibilities and potential<sup>15</sup>. It allows us to find the meaning of growth and the lives of people in pain. In addition, those advocates of hope, such as Snyder<sup>16</sup>, recently reported that hope would have a positive impact on academic achievement, sports achievement, emotional health, adaptation to disease, and other difficulties. This indicates that people with a high degree of hope can handle stress well, when they encounter stress in their everyday life. Hope leads personal experience to a positive outcome regardless of personal situation, power, or weakness<sup>17</sup>. This is because those with a high degree of hope recognize that there should be many obstacles in a human life, even when they encounter a difficulty of fulfilling their goal. On the other hand, those with a low degree of hope deem that the obstacles are only happen-

ing to them<sup>16</sup>. In addition, hope is identified as having a mediating effect in the relationship between cultural adaptation stress and psychological sense of well-being. Thus, it was found that promoting hope could give a new life to immigrant women in marriage<sup>18</sup>. Thus, it is possible that hopes directly and indirectly influences on depression.

As a result of analyzing the related studies, a good number of studies were found<sup>19-29</sup> which focused on the depression level and their causes; however, there have been only a few number of studies that focused on acculturative stress<sup>30-32</sup>. Thus, it is still difficult to establish a relevant theory. Furthermore, there has not been any study that focused on family cohesion or hope as a variable related to depression among immigrant women in marriage.

Therefore, this study first aimed to identify the depression level among immigrant women in marriage, analyze the structural relationship between the influencing variables on depression such as acculturative stress, hope, and family cohesion, and identify whether hope and family cohesion would have a mediating effect in the relationship between acculturative stress and depression. This study was conducted with the purpose of providing preliminary data for the prevention and treatment of depression that may be found in the cultural adaptation process of married immigrant women in Korea.

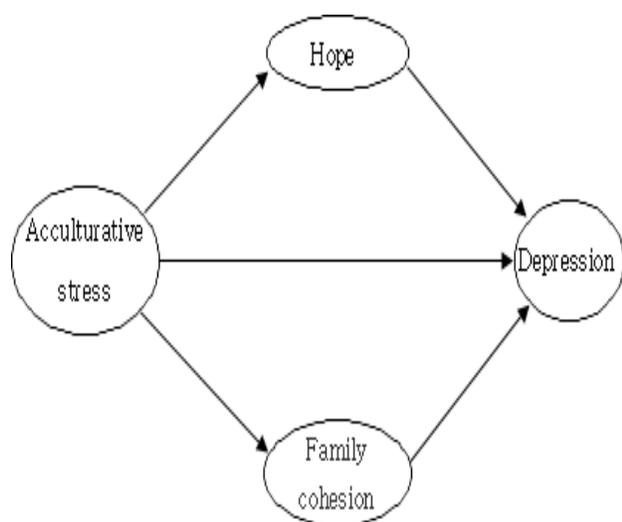
## 2. Methodology

### 2.1 Research Model

This study established a research model based on the previous studies that covered the relationship between acculturative stress, depression, hope, and family cohesion. This study established the research model as shown in Figure 1, on the basis of the relationship between acculturative stress and depression<sup>7,33</sup>, the relationship between acculturative stress and family cohesion<sup>34-36</sup>, the relationship between acculturative stress and hope<sup>37,38</sup>, the relationship between family cohesion and depression<sup>39</sup>, and the relationship between hope and depression<sup>40</sup>.

### 2.2 Subjects and Data Collection

This study selected the 4 cities and counties located in Chungcheongnam province on a purposive basis and conducted the survey on the immigrant women in mar-



**Figure 1.** Research model.

riage, who were participating in the multi-cultural family support center as trainees. A total of 1,000 questionnaires were distributed. This study utilized a total of 580 copies, after excluding the incomplete or unreturned questionnaires.

As for the country of origin of the subjects, Vietnam accounted for the largest proportion with 31.2 percent, followed by Philippines with 24.1 percent, Han Chinese with 17.9 percent, and Korean Chinese with 16.2 percent. As for the age, 30s accounted for the largest proportion with 43.1 percent, followed by 20s with 4.0 percent. As for the educational level, high school graduates accounted for the largest proportion, followed by college graduates and middle school graduates. As for the place of residency, the number of those living in a rural area was slightly more than the number of people living in an urban area. In regard to their religion, those without religion accounted for the largest proportion, followed by Buddhists and Catholics.

## 2.3 Survey Tools

### 2.3.1 Acculturative Stress

To measure acculturative stress, this study utilized the scale of Lee<sup>41</sup> that measured the stress of foreign students, by translating the Acculturative Stress Scale for International Students developed by Sandhu and Asrabadi<sup>42</sup>. This scale has a total of 36 questions. It consists of the sub-factors as follows: perceived discrimination and bias, homesickness, perceived hatred from others, fear for personal safety,

cultural shock or adaptation to a new culture, guilt from leaving their family and friends in their home country, linguistic challenge or inferiority complex, social isolation, etc. The scale was conducted using Likert 5-point scale. A higher score indicated a higher degree of acculturative stress. As for the reliability of each sub-domain, Cronbach's  $\alpha$  was 0.884, 0.708, 0.855, 0.643, 0.638, 0.692, and 0.905 for perceived discrimination, homesickness, perceived hatred, fear, cultural shock, guilt, and others, respectively. All of  $\alpha$  values exceeded 0.6; thus, they were at an appropriate level.

This work uses HCFC-141b (1,1-Dichloro-1-fluoroethane) as the working fluid in the system, because of its better thermo physical properties, non-flammable liquid, non-destructive to the atmosphere, high molecular mass and a low boiling point. Figure 3 shows the test rig components and experimental flow diagram. The experiment was carried out the four test conditions. The heat inputs of the vapor generator are 70, 80, 90, and 100°C. Temperature, pressure, torque, and rotation shaft speed can be measured by measuring device. The performance estimation of the ORC system is determined from the experiment data which comparing the outlet turbine, pressure, working fluid flow rate, and inlet and outlet temperatures. Following example information is the input/output result obtained from an experiment setting at generator and condenser i.e., 90°C and 30°C respectively.

### 2.3.2 Depression

Beck's Depression Inventory-II was used in this study to measure the depression that refers to the outcome of negative perception in the adaptation process, resulting in stress. It is the scale developed by Beck, Steer, and Brown<sup>43</sup>. In this study, weight loss and physical obsession were removed, while psychomotor agitation, sense of worthlessness, reduction of energy, and degraded concentration were added anew to the study. It was further modified to measure both the decrease and increase in the sleep and appetite items. The respondents were instructed to select one question that could best describe the past 2 weeks including today. They were also instructed to evaluate their feelings by using the 4-point scale, from 0 point at minimum to 69 points at maximum, for a total of 23 questions. A higher score meant a higher degree of depression. As for the reliability of each sub-domain, Cronbach's  $\alpha$  was 0.873, 0.823, and 0.655 for perceived

cognitive depression, emotional depression, and physiological depression, respectively.

### 2.3.3 Family Cohesion

This scale was used to evaluate the types of family system perceived by individuals. This scale was originally developed by Olson, Portner, and Lavee<sup>44</sup> and was translated by Hahn<sup>45</sup>. This study measured the family cohesion, by composing 10 questions only representing family cohesion using 5-point Likert scale. A higher score indicated a higher degree of family cohesion. As for the reliability of this study, Cronbach's  $\alpha$  was .718.

### 2.3.4 Hope

To measure hope, this study utilized the Korean version of hope scale (K-DHS), which Choi<sup>46</sup> validated based on the hope scale of Snyder<sup>47</sup>. This scale was based on 5-point Likert scale. A high score indicated a higher degree of hope. As for the reliability of each sub-domain, Cronbach's  $\alpha$  was 0.611 and 0.733 for pathway thinking and agency thinking, respectively.

## 2.4 Data Analysis

This study utilized SPSS Win. 21.0 program for frequency analysis, one-way analysis for variance, and correlation analysis and AMOS 21.0 program for verification of structural equation model. This study also utilized Sobel's test<sup>48</sup> for the verification of significance level, for the indirect effect of independent variables on dependent variables through mediating variables.

## 3. Results of Study

### 3.1 Correlation, Mean, Standard Deviation, Skewness, and Kurtosis between Variables

The correlation coefficient, mean, standard deviation, skewness, and kurtosis are as shown in Table 1. To identify the correlation between the variables, this study conducted the Pearson bivariate correlation. As a result, this study found a significant positive correlation in both sub-domains of acculturative stress and depression. In contrast, this study found a partially significant negative correlation in each of the following sub-domains: acculturative stress, depression, family cohesion, and hope. Family cohesion and hope had a negative correlation. In

addition, the size of effect between acculturative stress and depression (effect size<sup>49</sup>;  $r=0.193$ ,  $p<0.01$  ~  $r=0.859$ ,  $p<0.01$ ) was larger than the size of effect between acculturative stress, depression, and hope ( $r=-0.085$ ,  $p<0.05$  ~  $r=-0.285$ ,  $p<0.01$ ), based on the absolute value of correlation coefficient.

As a result of the frequency analysis, homesickness accounted for the highest proportion, with a mean of 3.0922 points followed by cultural shock with 2.7195 points, in relation to the acculturative stress among immigrant women in marriage. In general, all of the other variables had a lower value than the mean, with the exception of homesickness. As for depression, physiological depression was the highest followed by cognitive depression and emotional depression. Family cohesion was higher than the mean score. The agency thinking and pathway thinking of hope were also higher than the mean score.

For the verification of normal distribution, this study deducted the skewness and kurtosis. As a result, there was no value whose absolute value of skewness was higher than 3 or whose absolute value of kurtosis was higher than 7. Therefore, each variable of this study was found to satisfy the requirements of normal distribution<sup>50</sup>.

### 3.2 Analysis of Research Model

The goodness of fit index of research model is presented in Table 1. As a result of estimating the goodness of fit in the research model by leveraging the maximum-likelihood classification,  $\chi^2$  value of 211.155 was significant at the degree of freedom of 61; thus, its goodness of fit was relatively low. However,  $\chi^2$  value was sensitive to the sample size and number of measured variables<sup>51</sup>. Thus, this study utilized the other index for the determination. TLI and CFI exceeded the standard value of goodness of fit that was 0.9, as they were 0.923 and 0.948, respectively. RMSEA was 0.088; thereby, showing a good goodness of fit<sup>52</sup>.

The structural equation model and standardization coefficient were presented in Figure 2.

There was a significant difference in all of the paths between the variables, based on the path coefficients of research model. More specifically, acculturative stress and hope ( $\beta=-0.154$ ,  $p<0.01$ ) and acculturative stress and family cohesion ( $\beta=-0.146$ ,  $p<0.001$ ) had a negative path coefficient. In contrast, acculturative stress and depression ( $\beta=0.390$ ,  $p<0.001$ ) had a negative path coefficient. Hope

**Table 1.** Correlation, mean, standard deviation, skewness, and kurtosis of all the measured variables

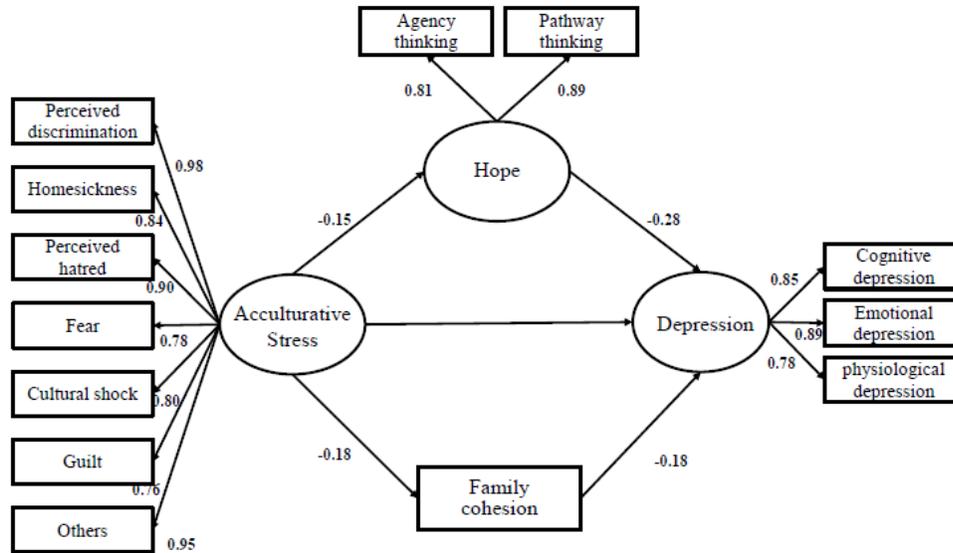
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1	1												
2	0.574**	1											
3	0.859**	0.524**	1										
4	0.726**	0.492**	0.705**	1									
5	0.739**	0.612**	0.713**	0.645**	1								
6	0.676**	0.547**	0.697**	0.638**	0.629**	1							
7	0.890**	0.628**	0.855**	0.738**	0.748**	0.728**	1						
8	0.376**	0.277**	0.385**	0.338**	0.349**	0.307**	0.417**	1					
9	0.287**	0.255**	0.314**	0.300**	0.304**	0.269**	0.360**	0.745**	1				
10	0.290**	0.269**	0.291**	0.279**	0.274**	0.193**	0.342**	0.624**	0.690**	1			
11	-0.179**	0.017	-0.185**	-0.161**	-0.137**	-0.160**	-0.165**	-0.285**	-0.227**	-0.224**	1		
12	-0.150**	-0.007	-0.103	-0.124**	-0.144**	-0.145**	-0.166**	-0.285**	-0.232**	-0.204**	0.408**	1	
13	-0.092*	-0.085*	-0.077	-0.111**	-0.129**	-0.070	-0.141**	-0.268**	-0.291**	-0.219**	0.335**	0.727**	1
Mean	2.589	3.092	2.497	2.360	2.720	2.347	2.596	3.861	3.636	4.387	3.555	3.574	3.523
Standarddeviation	0.741	0.778	0.807	0.842	0.783	0.907	0.727	4.518	4.018	3.316	0.54842	0.641	0.657
Skewness	0.292	-0.105	0.449	0.538	0.130	0.562	0.326	1.280	1.311	0.600	-0.521	-0.319	-0.041
Kurtosis	0.283	-0.340	0.158	0.237	-0.264	0.071	0.229	1.040	1.404	-0.084	0.416	0.125	-0.257

\*p < 0.05, \*\*p < 0.01.

1. Perceived discrimination, 2. Homesickness, 3. Perceived hatred, 4. Fear, 5. Cultural shock, 6. Guilt, 7. Others, 8. Cognitive depression, 9. Emotional depression, 1. psychological depression, 11. Family cohesion, 12. Agency thinking, 13. Pathway thinking

**Table 2.** Goodness of fit index of research model

X <sup>2</sup>	df	TLI	CFI	RMSEA (Lo 90. Hi 90)
211.155***	61	0.923	0.948	0.088 (0.079 - 0.098)

**Figure 2.** Result of research model analysis.

and depression ( $\beta = -0.238$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) and family cohesion and depression ( $\beta = -0.132$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) had a negative path coefficient. In particular, acculturative stress was a relatively more influencing variable on depression, since the path coefficient between acculturative stress and depression was relatively higher than the other path coefficients between the endogenous and exogenous path coefficients.

The direct effect, indirect effect, and total effect between the potential variables were presented in Table 4. First, the acculturative stress among immigrant women in marriage generated a total effect of -0.154, -0.184, and 0.451 for hope, family cohesion, and depression, respectively. In particular, there was an indirect effect of 0.061 in the relationship between acculturative stress and depression. In addition, hope and depression generated a total effect of -0.238, whereas family cohesion and depression generated a total effect of -0.132.

Since there was an indirect effect of 0.061 in the relationship between acculturative stress and depression, this study verified whether there was a mediating effect

resulting from hope and family cohesion in relation to the relationship between these variables. As for the verification method, this study conducted Sobel's test to verify whether a given indirect effect was statistically significant<sup>48</sup>. As a result, hope had  $z = 2.7877$  ( $p = 0.0053$ ); thus, it was significant since it was higher than the threshold value  $z = 1.96$ . Also, depression had  $z = 2.6378$  ( $p = 0.0083$ ); thus, it was significant similar to hope. On that account, this study found that hope and family cohesion had a mediating effect in the relationship between the acculturative stress and depression among immigrant women in marriage.

## 4. Discussion

First, there was a positive correlation between acculturative stress and depression; however, there was a partially significant negative correlation between the sub-domains of the acculturative stress and depression and also the family cohesion and hope. There was a positive correla-

**Table 3.** Path coefficient of research model

Paths between the variables		Unstandardized coefficient(B)	Standardized coefficient( $\beta$ )	S.E.	Value z	Note
Acculturative stress	→ Hope	-0.114	-0.154	0.035	-3.256**	
Acculturative stress	→ Family cohesion	-0.146	-0.184	0.033	-4.416***	
Hope	→ Depression	0.270	0.390	0.029	9.173***	
Hope	→ Depression	-0.221	-0.238	0.041	-5.386***	
Family cohesion	→ Depression	-0.115	-0.132	0.035	-3.320***	

\*\*p < 0.01, \*\*\*p < 0.001.

**Table 4.** Direct effect, indirect effect, and total effect of research model

Paths between the variables		Direct impact	Indirect impact	Total impact
Acculturative stress	→ Hope	-0.154***		-0.154***
Acculturative stress	→ Family cohesion	-0.184***		-0.184***
Acculturative stress	→ Depression	0.390***	0.061	0.451***
Hope	→ Depression	-0.238***		-0.238***
Family cohesion	→ Depression	-0.132***		-0.132***

\*\*\*p<0.001

tion between family cohesion and hope. These results were generally consistent with the results of the previous studies<sup>7,18,33-36,39</sup>.

Second, as a result of analyzing the path coefficients of research model, acculturative stress and hope and acculturative stress and family cohesion had a negative path coefficient. In contrast, acculturative stress and depression had a positive path coefficient. Hope and depression and also family cohesion and depression had a negative path coefficient. These results were partially consistent with the results of the previous studies on the relationship between acculturative stress and depression<sup>7,33</sup>, the relationship between acculturative stress and family cohesion<sup>34-36</sup>, the relationship between acculturative

stress and hope<sup>38</sup>, the relationship between family cohesion and depression<sup>13</sup>, and the relationship between hope and depression<sup>40</sup>. Therefore, these findings imply that the depression among immigrant women in marriage directly depends on the acculturative stress; however, depression may be alleviated through hope and family cohesion.

Third, this study found a mediating effect of hope and family cohesion in the relationship between acculturative stress and depression. This result was consistent with the result found in the study of Park & Lee<sup>18</sup>. From this result, one can conclude that hope is a positive status with motivation which allows us to ponder over an alternative in order to cope with the present difficulty for a better life, as a way of reducing acculturative stress<sup>53</sup>. Another

way is family cohesion. The perception of family system analyzes an interaction between family members and predicts a future interaction. Also, it facilitates creating meaningful changes within the system. In addition, family cohesion implies that it is imperative for immigrant women in marriage to realize the fact that they may gain a sense of comfort, regarding the difference in their families from other families, by becoming aware of the things that they did not know before such as certain cultural rules in their families<sup>54</sup>. Moreover, it is necessary for them to join a meeting with other married immigrant women or people from their home country, so that they can receive social support from those people other than their spouse or family members. This would play an important role in relieving the acculturative stress and depression, as it becomes a support that will have a positive impact to help them overcome emotional difficulties in their adaptation process to Korean society<sup>55</sup>. A conclusion section is not required. Although a conclusion may review the main points of the paper, do not replicate the abstract as the conclusion. A conclusion might elaborate on the importance of the work or suggest applications and extensions.

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