

The Structural Relationship among Self-efficacy, Social Networks, Adaptation to Korean Society and Hope among Foreign Workers

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Abstract

This study was carried on “468” foreign workers from four areas of Chungnam province in Korea in order to verify the structural relationships among self-efficacy, social networks, adaptation to Korean society and hope. First, positive correlations were observed among self-efficacy, hope and social networks, with a negative correlation among the sub-areas of adaptation to Korean society. In addition, there was a negative correlation between adaptation to Korean society and pathway thinking. Second, self-efficacy had a positive influence on social networks and hope, while social networks also displayed a positive impact on hope. In addition, hope had a positive influence on adaptation to Korean society. Based on these results, policies to help foreign workers adapt in Korean society were suggested.

Keywords: Adaptation to Korean Society, Foreign Workers, Hope, Korea, Self-Efficacy, Social Networks

1. Introduction

Due to various factors of the industrial environment, especially changes in the labor market, such as rapid advancement of technology, low fertility and aging of the population, as well as increased demand for manpower in small enterprises and many other factors, Korea has been inviting foreign workers since the later 1980s¹. The number of foreigners staying in Korea has increased by more than 20% every year, from “678,687” people in 2003 to “1,756,031” measured in late November of 2014. This represents an increase by about 2.6 times in only 10 years. Among these foreigners, “617,194” are workers, which make up about 35% of domestically residing foreigners². However, some foreign workers who couldn't overcome the working environment, language barriers, discrimination, and other factors while adapting to Korean society have been turning into illegal residents, contrary

to the hope they held when they first immigrated (Korean Immigration Service, 2014 Statistical monthly report of November shows that there are “70,506” illegal residents). To foreign workers, hope often serves as motivation to overcome the difficulties of adapting to Korean society and to fulfill the responsibilities of supporting their families back home. Those with high hopes are open to challenges and perceive the possibilities of achieving their goals, while those with low hopes cannot perform their best^{3,4}. This emphasizes the importance of hope, demonstrating its effectiveness in immigrants when adapting to society and in different areas of life.

The hope of foreign workers also has a close relationship with self-efficacy; the self-efficacy of foreign workers often implies the faith one has in one's ability to accomplish work assigned by the company, and the recognition of one's level of work accomplishment ability⁵. Thus, when people with similar abilities are exposed to differ-

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ent environments, their work accomplishments will vary according to their levels of self-efficacy⁶. As a result, this predicts that self-efficacy, which includes the confidence and self-controlled efficacy of foreign workers, will function as an important factor in adaption to Korean society, along with another factor of hope.

Social network, which has been used as an important variable in recent studies on foreign workers, is defined as a set of personal relationships that are connected through immigrant workers and non-immigrants, as individual membership requirements in labor importing countries and exporting countries and other social mediums⁷. If one has many friends, family, or relatives to ask for help when facing difficulties, he or she tends to have lower psychological stress than others who do not have access to those people. It was clarified that this concept can be used more effectively to represent those who have limited social resources⁵. This makes it necessary to verify what effects the social network of foreign workers has on hope, which is the key motivation for overcoming the difficulties of adapting to Korean society.

Social adaptation, another variable affecting the adaptation of foreign workers, is a stage of maintaining order in a society by creating an agreement between personal psychological desires and social environment, which includes both personal and social ability. Thus, in a broader meaning, social adaptation is an interaction between personal and social environments⁸. Accordingly, to foreign workers, adaptation to the Korean society means communication and a successful personal relationship within and outside of the workplace. This has shown that hope, self-efficacy, and social network are deeply related.

To date, there have been many studies related to adaptation to Korean society^{9,10}. However, regarding studies related to hope, the previous research was based on teenagers, female adults, married female immigrants, seniors, and patients, while there are no studies at all based on foreign workers¹¹. In addition, the studies related to self-efficacy and social network were also based mostly on the abovementioned groups, while little attention has been given to foreign workers.

Therefore, the purpose of this study was to verify the structural relationships among self-efficacy, social networks, adaptation to Korean society and hope of foreign workers, and to suggest a policy to help foreign workers adapt to Korean society. In order to achieve these goals, the following questions were set: first, what correlations

are there among the self-efficacy, social network, adaptation to Korean society and hope of foreign workers? Second, what are the structural relationships among foreign workers' self-efficacy, social network, adaptation to Korean society and hope?

2. Methods

2.1 Research Model

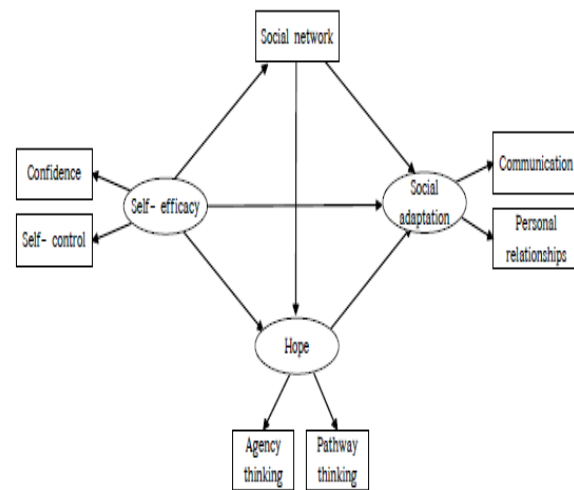


Figure 1. Research model.

2.2 Subjects and Data Collection

Considering the convenience of the research, this study was carried on “468” foreign workers from four counties and cities of Chungnam Province through use of a purposive sampling method. The data were collected through direct distribution of surveys to foreign workers who were participating in the Ministry of Justice’s Korea Immigration and Integration Program. The surveys were later collected from the participants. The foreign workers who were fluent in Korean answered Korean questionnaires, while those who struggle to understand Korean answered questionnaires that were translated into five different foreign languages. Specific characteristics of the subjects were as follows. Regarding gender, 85.3% were male, and 14.7% were female. Regarding education, 60.1% were high school graduates, making up the majority. For marriage status, 51.0% were married and 49.0% were unmarried.

2.3 Research Toolss

2.3.1 Adaption to Korean Society

In order to gain a comprehensive understanding of the degree of social adjustment, including workers' cultural and psychological adaptation, the scale employed in the research of Oh¹², Lee¹³, Park¹⁴ and Lee¹⁵ were employed after revision and supplementation to make it suitable for this specific research. It consisted of 12 questions measuring 'adaptation in communication' and 'adaptation in personal relationships', with higher scores representing better adaption to society. The reliability of adaptation in communication achieved Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.832$, while that of adaptation in personal relationships was "0.770".

2.3.2 Self-efficacy

The scale by Kim¹⁶ was used to measure self-efficacy. This consisted of 'confidence' and 'self-control efficacy', which can measure the level of self-efficacy performance. There were 11 questions in total, measured on a 5-point Likert scale, where higher point translated to higher self-efficacy. The Cronbach's α for confidence was "0.779", while that for adaptation in personal relationships was "0.776".

2.3.3 Social Network

The scale of support network developed by Scandura¹⁷ and Scandura & Ragins¹⁸ was used for measurement of social network after revision and supplementation. It consisted of 6 questions on a 5-point Likert scale, where higher scores indicated higher social networks. The reliability achieved Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.761$.

2.3.4 Social Network

For measurement of hope, the Korean Dispositional Hope Scale (K-DHS) by Choi et al¹⁹ was used, which is a validated version of the Dispositional Hope Scale (DHS) by Snyder²⁰. There were 8 questions in total, which were answered on a 5-point Likert scale. Higher points represented higher hope. Agency thinking had a Cronbach's α of "0.675", while that of pathway thinking was "0.698".

3. Results

3.1 Basic Analysis

Pearson's correlation analysis was carried out in order to determine the correlation between variables, as

Table 1. Correlation analysis

		Self- efficacy		Hope		Adaptation to Korean society		Social network
		Confidence	Self-control efficacy	Agency thinking	Pathway thinking	Communi-cation	Personal relationships	
Self- efficacy	Confidence	1						
	Self-control efficacy	0.711**	1					
Hope	Agency thinking	0.561**	0.529**	1				
	Pathway thinking	0.489**	0.544**	0.614**	1			
Adaptation to Korean society	Communi-cation	-0.231**	-0.113*	0.245**	-0.298**	1		
	Personal relationships	-0.022	-0.056	-0.067	-0.117**	0.465**	1	
Social network		0.551**	0.600**	0.526**	0.537**	-0.257**	-0.066**	1

**P<0.01

shown in Table 1. Self-efficacy, hope and social networks showed significant positive correlations, while the sub-factors of adaptation to Korean society, including hope, self-efficacy, and communication, displayed negative correlations. In addition, there was also a negative correlation between adaptation to Korean society and pathway thinking, which is a sub-factor of social networks and hope. However, no correlations were observed between personal relationships of adaptation to Korean society, and agency thinking of hope.

3.2 Verification of Research Model

Verification of the research model indicated χ^2 value of “39.292” ($df = 9$, $P < 0.05$), which indicates the overall degree of goodness of fit, and TLI of “0.946”, CFI of “0.977”, RMSEA of “0.083”. All values were acceptable, so it was concluded the model was appropriate. However, it was confirmed that there was no significance among self-efficacy, social network, and adaptation to Korean society. According to this result, modifications should be made, such as deleting the corresponding pathway. The results

of the modified model and the path coefficient are presented in Figure 2 and Table 2.

The verification from each path shows that the self-efficacy of foreign workers was notably affected by both social network ($\beta = 0.683$, $P < 0.001$) and hope ($\beta = 0.501$, $P < 0.001$), which were confirmed to be statistically significant. This indicates that the social network and hope standard will rise, depending on the degree to which foreign workers believe in themselves. Social network showed a significant influence on hope ($\beta = 0.202$, $P < 0.001$), indicating that hope will rise with increase in the foreign workers’ social networks. In addition, since hope was also found to have a significant influence on adaption to Korean society ($\beta = -0.728$, $P < 0.001$), the higher the standard for hope, the higher the adaption to Korean society. However, unlike the research model, social network of the foreign workers was not found to have a positive influence on adaption to Korean society, and self-efficacy was also not observed to have a positive influence on adaption to Korean society.

Table 2. Verification results of the goodness of fit of the modified model

	χ^2	df	TLI	CFI	RMSEA
Modified model	39.295	9	0.946	0.977	0.083

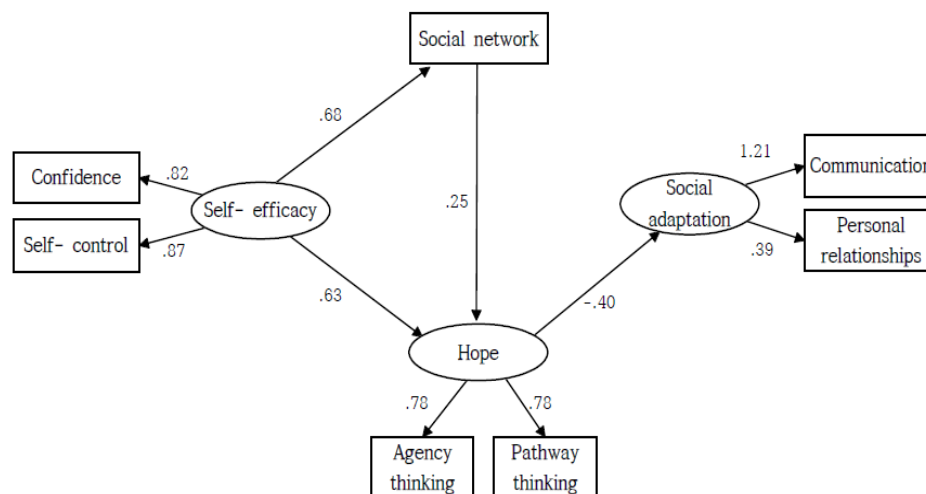


Figure 2. Modified model.

Table 3. Path of modified model

Path between variables			β	S.E.	t
Self- efficacy	Social Networks	0.666	0.683	0.044	15.169***
	Hope	0.501	0.629	0.055	9.083***
	Adaptation to society	0.336	0.235	0.132	2.538
Social Networks	Hope	0.202	0.248	0.048	4.184***
	Adaptation to society	-0.148	-0.101	0.082	-1.802
Hope	Adaptation to society	-0.728	-0.405	0.180	-4.053***

***P<0.001

4. Conclusion and Discussion

This study revealed positive correlations among self-efficacy, hope and social networks, and negative correlations among the sub-areas of adaptation to Korean society. In addition, there was a negative correlation between adaptation to Korean society and pathway thinking under hope. Previous studies³ identified a positive correlation between hope and factors such as social adaptation; however, the present study showed a contrasting results. These results were concluded to be due to the negativity shown on the surveys due to difficulties in adapting to Korean society.

Second, self-efficacy had a positive influence on social networks and hope, while social networks also had a positive impact on hope. In addition, hope displayed a positive influence on adaptation to Korean society. However, unlike the research model, both the social network and self-efficacy of foreign workers were shown not to have any significant influence on adaptation to Korean society. Therefore, in adaptation to Korean society, which contains the sub-areas of personal relationships and communication, hope was the only significant predictor. This was different from the observations of preceding studies. This is because, as shown in correlation analysis, difficulties in adapting to Korean society were presented as dissatisfaction in the surveys. Thus, specific studies about which group has the most difficulties in adapting to Korean society, and plans to support the stable adaptation of those groups to Korean society are needed. Also, since hope was proven to be an important factor, plans

for raising hope to serve as motivation for life in Korean society are also needed. The lower the hope, the more non-accommodative actions occur. Furthermore, the government shouldn't fail to notice that this can be the cause of foreign crime.

Last, the scale of adaptation to Korean society that was used in this study needs to be reviewed to determine whether it is appropriate for use in measurement of the adaptation of foreign workers. Furthermore, an appropriate scale that can measure adaptation to Korean society should be developed, considering the differences between groups of foreign workers and groups of married female immigrants.

Despite these limitations, this research has great significance because it serves as an important starting point for further studies. 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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