Thesis for the Degree of Master of Education

Challenges in Raising Children as Immigrant Muslim Parents in South Korea
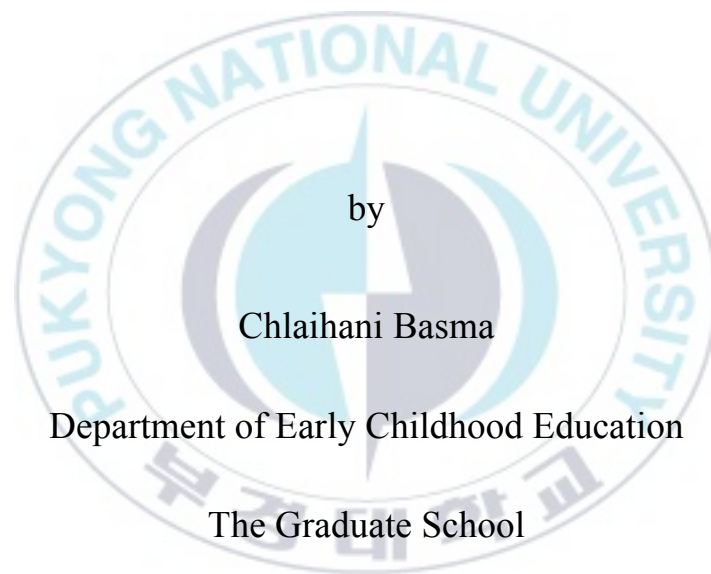
by

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August 24, 2018

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(한국의 무슬림 이민 부모로서 경험하는 자녀 양육 및 교육을 어려움)

Advisor: Prof. Lee Younwoo

by
Chlaihani Basma

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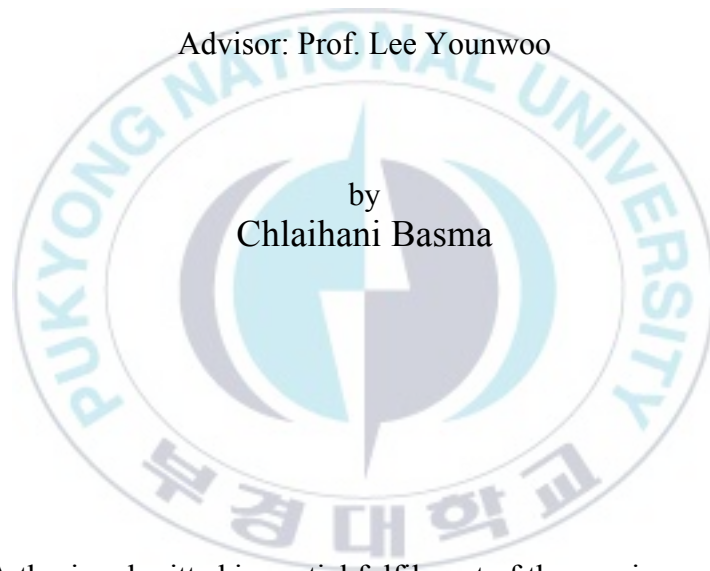
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A dissertation

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한국의 무슬림 이민 부모로서 경험하는 자녀 양육 및 교육을 어려움

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요약

한국의 무슬림 수는 1950 년대 이래로 증가해 왔다. 한국에서 생활하면서 무슬림 가족은 이민자로서의 종교적 요구와 삶의 균형을 유지하려고 노력한다. 문화적· 종교적 특수성을 유지하기 위하여, 이들은 일상 생활, 자녀 양육 및 교육 선택과 관련된 수 많은 문제에 직면한다. 이 질적 연구는 이 이슈에 관한 다섯명의 무슬림 이민자 부모의 경험을 탐구하는데 초점을 맞추었다.

이민에 대한 결과, 무슬림 이민자 부모들은 언어적, 재정적 및 종교적인 문제로 인해, 한국의 주류 문화에 통합되지 못하는 어려움에 직면하고 있었다. 양육에 대한 결과는 본국의 문화의 일부 관행은 완전히 유지되었고, 일부 관행은 통합되었으며, 한국 문화의 일부 관행은 완전히 거부되었음을 보여 주었다. 교육의 경우, 무슬림 이민자 부모들이 영유아 교육 및 보육 관행에 큰 가치를 두었다는 결론이 나왔다. 이 연구에 참여한 가족들은 비용, 언어, 교통 등과 같은 어려움에 직면한 것으로 보고하였다. 더욱이 이슬람 문화와 한국 문화가 특정 측면에서 다르므로 무슬림 이민 가정이 자녀가 다니는 학교와 협상을 시도 할 때 표면에 몇 가지 문제가 발생한다는 것을 알게 되었다.

연구 결과는 논의되었고 다문화 교육 및 다문화 교육 정책 실무자에게 향후 연구 및 권고 사항에 대한 시사점이 뒤 따랐다.

I.   Introduction

1. Need and Objective of the Research

Migration has been a constant and influential feature of human history. It has played a significant role in the support of the world's economic growth, in the evolution of societies, and in the enrichment of many cultures and civilizations. International migration is an important dimension of globalization and has become increasingly embedded in changes in global economic and social structures (Koser, 2008). International trends of migrations have led the receiving societies to create arrangements to accommodate the immigrants within their borders. These arrangements are a mixture of semi-formal and ad hoc interactions and are part of extended minority-majority relations that are broadly referred to as 'multiculturalism.'

Multiculturalism is defined as the philosophy that every culture is morally valid and no culture is to impose its values on another (Modood, 2007). According to Hall (2000), multiculturalism seeks to investigate

> how people from different cultures, different backgrounds, with different languages, different religious beliefs, produced by different and highly uneven histories, live together and attempt to build a common life while retaining something of their 'original identity' (p. 210).

While a policy discourse of multiculturalism surfaced in the 1970s in some countries, it was only in the 2000s that the multicultural discourse emerged in the South Korean society (hereafter, Korea). While Korea is probably not the most diverse society (Castles & Miller 2009), it has been witnessing since the 1990s waves

of diverse immigrants, making it one of the most dynamic environments in the world. It has grown to be one of the preferred destinations for students, workers and asylum seekers from different origins. The long-preserved homogeneous society is now faced with a multi-cultural, multi-ethnic amalgam. The profound belief its distinctiveness and its superiority makes the process of integration challenging for most immigrants (Castles & Miller 2009; Kelder, 2016; Watson, 2012, among others).

Since multiculturalism is a rather modern phenomenon, there have not been many inquiries that investigated Korean multiculturalism in depth. It is worth noting, though, that the existing scholarship on multiculturalism and the integration of immigrants into the Korean society centers on Korea's two largest groups of immigrants: Migrant workers and migrant brides. The body of research on these two groups tackles issues related to citizenship and ethnic nationalism (Chung & Kim, 2012; Lee & Park, 2005; Lim, 2003; Kim, 2007; Kim & Kwon, 2012). Other studies focus mainly on multicultural families (defined by the Multicultural Families Support Act as those established by the marriage of a Korean-born national to a foreign spouse) and address issues pertaining to their children's education, parenting, assimilation related topics, among others (Hwang, 2018; Jeon, Jung, & Lee, 2017; Park & Lee, 2015).

The education of children from multicultural families is taken care of with multicultural education policies. These aim to help accommodate the growing number of children from interracial families into mainstream Korean society by means of a variety of educational programs that focus on multicultural appreciation. Such programs are extra-curricular, directed towards children of multicultural families alone, and tend to be a one-time event (Cho, Park, Sung, Lee, & Park, 2010). Also, the policies tend not to distinguish between the different groups of immigrants in

Korea. This implies, as Watson (2012) stated, that these immigrants are thought of as a homogeneous group whose members have the same needs, rights and duties. Consequently, immigrants from specific backgrounds, such as Chinese tend to integrate easily in the Korean society, while others that have different cultural and/or religious backgrounds, like Pakistanis, may face challenges that hinder their integration and prevent them from adjusting smoothly to the Korean lifestyle (Ahn, 2012; Lee & Joh, 2012; Shahzad & Lee, 2016).

One of the migrant groups that are contributing the multiculturalism of the Korean society is Muslim immigrants. The influx of Muslim migrants to Korea has increased in the recent years (Jang & Choi, 2011). In fact, it is estimated that there are around 150000 residents that come from countries where Islam is the predominant religion. Because of the differences between the Islamic and the Korean cultures, the integration of Muslims into the mainstream Korean culture requires considerable effort from both sides.

One of the public services that could facilitate the integration of Muslim immigrants in the Korean society is education. Making the educational sector accessible to Muslim immigrants is a vital means for social integration and mobility in host societies (Schüller, 2013). Besides, the increasingly prominent roles that both Muslim immigrants and their children play in the Korean society demand that as many young newcomers join and succeed in early childhood education and care (ECEC, hereafter) programs.

However, the educational system in Korea was created by and for members of a homogenous culture and may not embody the needs of the present-day burgeoning Muslim immigrant population. Since the way whereby the school systems respond to migration affects the economic and social well-being of the communities they serve

and all their members, providing stable ECEC arrangements play a prominent role in the parents' academic and professional life.

This is why it is both highly relevant and timely to find out the challenges immigrant Muslim parents face: (1) While living in Korea, (2) when parenting their children, and (3) when trying to access ECEC services. This study explores the perspective and the experiences of these parents to understand the interplay among the issues of immigration, parenting, and childcare in their lives. After interviewing the parents, their stories were used to determine what living in Korea is like for them as a family, how they go about parenting their children in a society that is culturally different from theirs, and what their experiences of childcare are.

Shedding light on the challenges of raising children as immigrant Muslim families in Korea will expand our understanding of the factors that affect the practices and decisions pertaining to childrearing and childcare. The findings of this inquiry shall, therefore, have implications in multicultural education and multicultural education policies in Korea.

2. Research Questions

The present inquiry shall, therefore, attempt to answer the following questions:

1. What challenges do Muslim families face in their lives as immigrants in Korea?

2. What challenges do immigrant Muslim families face when parenting their children in Korea?

3. What challenges do immigrant Muslim families face when accessing early childhood education and care settings?

II.   Literature Review

The present inquiry seeks to identify the challenges that immigrant Muslim families face when raising their children in Korea. To put this study and its findings in context, reviewing research dealing with immigration, parenting and ECEC is essential. The following chapter, then, attempts to review the literature pertaining to the above mentioned issues in relation to the experiences of both immigrant parents and their children, in the Western and Korean contexts.

1. Immigration

Most studies related to immigration and immigrants' experiences in the host societies focus on the issues of interaction, discrimination, and acculturation. Muslim immigrants-focused studies have also sought to explore issues regarding families' access to different services in the host countries and their struggles to strike a balance between their cultural practices and their lives abroad. This section elaborates on these studies in the West and in Korea.

The Western context

Commonly, issues of intercultural relations between immigrants and original members of the host societies are of prevailing interest to social psychologists, policymakers, etc. (Berry, 1997; Farrugia, 2009; Horner & Weber, 2011; McPherson, 2010). When immigrants settle in an environment that is culturally different from what they grew to know, they experience 'assimilation.' Throughout the process of integration, they try to negotiate and strike a balance between their native and their

host cultures. During the integration process, the new immigrants go through a shift in ethnic identity associated with their sense of belonging to a specific ethnic and cultural group. They also experience a shift in attitudes towards being a member of a group, and in the degree of involvement in that group (Phinney, 1990). Formation of identity is exceptionally challenging for members of ethnic groups whose native culture differs significantly from the host country's (Sodowsky, Kwan, & Pannu, 1995). Typically, integration is deemed successful when both the economic as well as the sociocultural needs are met by reconciling the two cultures and achieving balance between adaptation and cultural maintenance (Ager & Strang, 2008).

Also, transnational migrants or refugees experience cultural adaptation stress when they move into a new society and construct their own cultural area and psychologically and physically withdraw into it. Lee (in Yun & Kim, 2017) argued that immigrants' incorporation into their own cultural community could be a valuable resource for helping adaptation into the host country. For example, the Korean community or the Korean Christian church plays an important role in reducing Korean immigrants' enculturation stress and assisting their successful relocation in the United States. Muslim communities and mosques in Western countries serve a similar role for Muslim immigrants and refugees (Stuart, 2014).

As far as children are concerned, McCarthy (2012) and Devine (2013) expressed that in the realm of migration, the position of children is frequently invisible. Levitt (1996) postulates that such a blatant picture of the indistinctness of children in the migration/immigration process is result of the deep-rooted traditional notion that children stay in the shadows of the immigrant parent's social locality.

That being said, a number of research sought to explore the experiences of immigrant children in the schools of the host communities. In the European contexts,

studies have focused on immigrant children's educational performance and achievement (Jonsson & Rudolphi, 2010; Kalmijn & Kraaykamp, 2003). Studies on immigrant parents and families as a whole in Europe, on the other hand, focused mainly on their life satisfaction, civic integration and their well-being (Joppke, 2007; Safi, 2010); their involvement in schools, their parental style and the role they play in the education of their children (Dahlstedt, 2009; Degni, Pöntinen, & Mölsä, 2006).

Research on Muslim immigrants in the Western context is relatively abundant. Interest in Islam and how Muslims organize themselves within the Western world has largely originated from the flow of Muslim immigration since the 1960s and the 1970s (Loobuyck, Debeer, & Meier, 2013). Islamic traditions are an essential aspect of the life of Muslim immigrant generations and an exceptionally respected element of the heritage culture (Güngör, Fleischmann, Phalet, & Maliepaard, 2013). Conversely, public debates over the integration of immigrants and the multiculturalism of host societies hinge on the incompatibility of the practices and traditions Islamic faith and the values of the Western culture (Foner & Alba, 2008). Since keeping the heritage culture alive and facilitating children's access to the host culture is one of the major commitments of immigrant parents (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2001), most parenting and ECEC practices and activities involve, among many things, forging a cohesive sense of self that encompasses affinity with the heritage culture and a sense of belonging to the host culture (Berry, Phinney, Sam, & Vedder, 2006; Hwang & Pang 2017). That being said, Skrobanek (2009) and Strabac & Listhaug (2008) pointed out that Muslim immigrant families tend to face numerous challenges during the process of assisting their young children's development of a bicultural identity. This is due to on-going discrimination practices against them and the difficulties they go through. As a result, Muslim immigrant

parents struggle in trying to join a strong heritage culture identity together with positive attitudes toward host societies that are seeking to strip them and their children of their identities and acculturate them to the dominant culture by force (Maes, Stevens, & Verkuyten, 2014).

The Korean context

Korea is not as popular of a migration destination as the U.S. is. However, the stock of foreign residents in Korea has been steadily increasing, and in 2015, it amounted to 2.9% of the national population. As reported by OECD, the International Migration Outlook (2017), in 2015, the number of migrants admitted into Korea for a permanent stay reached 80 700 (+7% compared to 2014). Of those permanent migrants for whom the reason of entry can be classified (46%), family migrants represented the highest percentage (37%) with labor migrants only 2%. The number of temporary migrants admitted fell from 206 000 in 2014 to 180 000 in 2015. Among them, 138 000 were temporary workers and 23 000 were international students.

With such rising numbers, it is worth reviewing the literature dealing immigrants' rights in Korea. Western literature about the promotion of migrants' rights has a tendency of highlighting the role of the international as well as local human rights regimes in this area (Boswell, 2007; Gurowitz, 1999; Hollifield, 2000; Soysal, 1994). Notwithstanding their differences, these inquiries share the presupposition of liberal democracy. Understandably, the existing research has relied primarily on the experiences of immigrants in Western countries; countries whose systems are built on liberal democracy and are set apart thanks to their liberal constitutions, respect for fundamental human rights, and vigorous political and civil societies. Consequently,

the significant role of the State and of universal human rights regimes in the promotion of the rights of immigrants is discernible and indisputable.

In contrast, Korean scholars have emphasized the role of pro-immigrant NGOs in not only the expansion of migrants' rights but also in the change of immigration policies in Korea (Kim, 2005; Lee & Park, 2005; Lim, 2003; Moon, 2000; Yoon, 2008). Other Korean research underlines the link between the State, pro-migration nongovernmental organizations, and international human rights conventions. In so doing, the literature brings international human rights conventions into the discussion of migration policies in the local context, deepening, thus, the level of analysis of the topic (Kim, 2005; Lee & Park, 2005). Korean studies on Muslim immigrants have focused mainly on comparing their settlement and conflicts in European settings to the Korean setting, the anti-Muslim sentiments by Koreans towards them, and pondering upon ways to include them to become active members in all aspects of the Korean life (Cho, 2008, 2009; Jang & Choi, 2011; Jang, Choi, & Kim 2012).

2. Parenting

Scholarship on parenting practices among immigrant Muslim families determines the parenting styles of immigrant parents, cultural facets of parenting, parenting stress, and the role of one parent, or both, in the education of their child.

The Western context

Parenting styles have been studied for years as they have an effect on children's emotions and behaviors (Demo & Cox, 2000; Lee, Daniels, & Kissinger, 2006). Recently, researchers have reported that the four parenting styles (authoritative,

authoritarian, permissive, and neglectful) identified by Baumrind (1971) have an effect on the social competence and emotional coping of children (Darling & Steinberg, 1993; McWayne, Owsianik, Green, & Frantuzzo, 2008). Baumrind's typology is frequently used by researchers, including scholars dealing with parenting across cultures.

Much of the research on parenting practices and strategies across cultures has focused on non-Muslim populations, and this lacuna results in a poor understanding of the practices and effectiveness of Muslim parenting (Wissink, Dekovic, & Meijer, 2006). However, there are some studies, which will be elaborated upon in this section, that use Muslims as samples.

Cultural differences in caregiving practices shape the specific experiences that parents structure for their children and the developmental outcomes of these experiences (Gaskins, 1996). Various theoretical and conceptual models attempted to explain the relationship between child rearing and culture (e.g., Bronfenbrenner, 1977; Lerner, 1978). These theories view parenting as a complex process; it goes beyond the parents providing mere food, shelter, and safety to their offspring to include dynamic and bidirectional interactions between the parent and the child. These interactions happen within the broader cultural context. Parents select the settings where the child resides, and these settings provide culture-specific experiences. The child rearing activities that take place in these settings are determined by cultural customs and parental ethno-theories (Super & Harkness, 1997).

Studies on child development and culture center around the various influences exercised on the parenting styles and decisions of parents residing within their culture of origin. They do not address the parenting practices and choices of immigrant

parents who belong to one culture but end up raising their children in their host society's culture, though.

As far as Islam is concerned, children are viewed as gifts that are entrusted to the parents (Beshir, 2007; Canan 2010). Islam regulates the parent-child relationship within the framework of rights and duties and calls for kindness, gentleness, and mercy to children (Schleifer, 1996). As far as communication is concerned, Beshir (2007) emphasized the importance of verbal and non-verbal communicative methods in Islam when parents are attempting to deal with their children, urging them to let their children express their feelings and share their happiness and pain. As for materialistic needs, Muslim parents are responsible for providing their children sustenance and housing, etc. Children, on the other hand, are to be respectful, obedient, and kind to their parents; are forbidden from raising their voices; and are to take care of their parents as they grow older (Akin, 2012).

As far as studies on Islamic parenting styles are concerned, few can be noted. Assadi et al. (2007) investigated the influence of socio-cultural context and parenting style on the academic achievement of Iranian children. They found that, using Buri's (1991) Parental Authority Questionnaire, wealthy and educated families were more authoritative, and that children whose parents adopt an authoritative parenting style have an academic achievement that is higher than that of children who were raised by authoritarian parents with lower income.

Dwairy, Achoui, Abouserie, & Farah (2006) studied the effect of parenting practices on Arab children, adolescents' well-being, and family connectedness. By using the Psychological State Scale (Hamuda & Imam, 1996), the Multigenerational Scale, and the Parental Authority Questionnaire (Buri, 1991), they discovered that

children who had authoritative parenting displayed greater connectedness with the family than those whose parents follow the other three styles.

However, some studies on Islamic parenting styles contradict the above findings. Dwairy (2008) found that some Arab Muslim families who adopted an authoritarian parenting style had fewer behavioral and emotional problems. By studying Palestinian-Arab children in Israel, Dwairy's (2008) inquiry found that children who had less depression and higher self-worth, were less stressed, and had fewer misconduct behaviors are children whose parents adopted an authoritarian style of parenting. Other research (Dwairy, 2004; Dwairy & Menshar, 2006; Dwairy, Achoui, Abouserie, & Farah, 2006; Kagitcibasi, 2005) also found out that authoritarian parenting styles were connected to the psychological well-being among Arab and Turkish children.

Other studies focused on the relationship between parenting among Muslim families and children's characters. For example, Zarnaghash and Samani, (2010) investigated the relationship between parenting practices and shyness among children of Iranian origins. They came to the conclusion that children who lived in authoritarian homes displayed higher rates of shyness than those living in authoritative households, suggesting that authoritarian parenting may have led to emotional problems like low self-esteem and self-confidence. The same study reported that children in authoritative households exhibited more psychological adaptation, higher motivation, and higher social efficiency.

Rosli (2014) posited that the inconsistency in the results of the research about the relationship between parenting styles in Muslim families and the children's emotional and behavioral problems could be due to the difference in the norms of the societies they belong to. This implies that though the participants in the above studies share the

same religion, the interpretation of the relationship between parenting styles and the children's emotions and behaviors differs depending on where the participants actually live.

The Korean context

As far as immigrant and multicultural families in Korea are concerned, research on parenting deals mainly with parenting stress, parenting efficacy, and parents' roles in the parenting process.

Lee & Choi (2016), for example, investigated the parental attitudes and parenting stress as well as the differences and similarities of child rearing and parenting practices among 217 multicultural mothers from Japan, China, and Vietnam. The study found that parenting attitudes and practices displayed significant differences depending on the mothers' nationalities, academic background, and Korean language skills. The study also showed that parenting stress and dysfunctional parent-child relationships differ per nationality.

Chung & Bang (2015) investigated the levels of parenting efficacy and health-promoting behaviors for young children among multicultural mothers, from China and Vietnam. The study also sought to explore the relationships between parenting efficacy and the behaviors of native Korean mothers and multicultural mothers in Korea. This inquiry found out that there were no significant differences in the parenting efficacy among these mothers, regardless of their countries of origin. However, the researchers indicated that health-promoting behaviors for the children were performed more frequently by Chinese mothers. The study concluded that there were positive links between parenting efficacy and maternal health-promoting behaviors for the children irrespective of the mothers' countries of origin.

Park & Lee (2012) investigated the perceptions of parents of children's education and the role of multicultural mothers from China, Japan, Mongolia and Vietnam. The study revealed that ages, incomes, educational backgrounds, and countries of origin determine the parents' views on children's education. The study also showed that the perceptions of parental roles among these multicultural mothers are influenced by their cultural background and experience as well as by the parenting styles, educational background and the parenting styles in the countries of origin.

As for studies that investigate exclusively the parenting practices of Muslim parents, only one study was found. Yuniar & Seo (2017) studied the involvement of one Indonesian mother in her child's education in Korean schools. The family in the study represents a Korea-Indonesia mixed marriage. The results of the study indicated that the mother's role in her child's education consisted in the teaching her child Islamic values and Bhasa, rewarding him for his achievements in schools and supporting him when feeling isolated because of the dietary habits in school. The mother in this study was also reported to have a major role in her son's discipline and socialization with other Muslim children.

3. Early Childhood Education and Care

Studies on ECEC are abundant and range from small case to large-scale longitudinal studies. Research on ECEC draws from many disciplines and has implications in a number of fields. The following section reviews literature that focuses on the importance and value of ECEC in general and among immigrant families and children in Western and Korean contexts.

ECEC and migration

The extent to which children have access to ECEC services to facilitate the acquisition of the skills and competences required to have a successful future is a burgeoning topic in the areas of education, developmental psychology, and child policy. In fact, research reveals that children who begin education behind their peers tend to have a hard time "catching up" later in schooling and are at-risk for lower academic achievement, grade retention, special education placement and intervention, and high school dropout (De Feyter & Winsler, 2009; Ramey & Ramey, 1998).

Though the research on childcare-related issues has been growing at a rapid pace with the trends of mothers' participation in labor force, welfare reform, and a belief in the significance of healthy development in the early years of children (Phillips & Adams, 2001), only a few of these studies were carried out with migrant families. The goal of ECEC services is to prepare children, immigrant or not, for primary and subsequent levels of education and assist them in their integration in the society where they live. Several members of ethnic communities, East and West, share the belief that language development is central to achieving this goal (Tobin, Wu, & Davidson, 1989).

These results are not surprising, as children from immigrant families tend to be less successful in school than their non-immigrant peers. When they enter preschool, they are tested in the official language of instruction. Consequently, they often have shortcomings in pre-reading and pre-arithmetic (Driessen, 1997). Their lagging behind children in the majority group continues regardless of their socio-economic level or level of education. Faced with a discontinuity between the schemas of their culture of origin and those of their host country and a weak knowledge of the official

language, children of immigrants encounter difficulties in their new acquisitions; such difficulties affect their school readiness and performance (Steele, 1997).

Besides, Bornstein (1991), Bornstein & Cheah (2006), and LeVine (1977) posited that cultural and socio-demographic differences may be a precursor towards diversity in the preschool experiences of children of immigrant families and may, subsequently, justify heterogeneity in their early development. This implies that immigrant parents' cultural and social beliefs play a prominent role in their children's development in the host countries (LeVine, Miller, Richman, & LeVine, 1996).

For teachers in societies that are host to many immigrants, preparing children for kindergarten and elementary schools is a major challenge given the multicultural composition of the community. Theorists, such as Vygotsky (1962), Bronfenbrenner (1992), and Rogoff (1990) greatly influenced their field of study by analyzing cognitive development in a socio-cultural context. In order to enrich the child's learning experience, the teachers are required to accept that each child operates on a distinct set of cultural beliefs. Besides, as Bronfenbrenner (1979) pointed out, the quality and frequency of home-school interactions carry significant implications for students, especially in the early school years. Students tend to display externalizing behaviors and suffer academically when there is an impoverished mesosystem with little or no home-school interaction between, or when the value systems endorsed by the parents and teachers are conflicting. Lasky (2000) reported that teachers were more at ease with parents who shared a value system congruent with theirs, but often became demoralized, angry, and discouraged with parents who held different values.

Studies pertaining to ECEC and children of immigrant families in the American context are particularly interesting. In the U.S., one in four children lives in an immigrant family (Hernandez, Denton, & Macartney, 2008). Actually, children in

immigrant families are less likely to enroll in center-based childcare and more likely to frequent home-based care (i.e., care from relatives or nonrelatives) than are children of non-immigrant or U.S.-born parents. This pattern is even more striking among children in immigrant families of low income (Brandon, 2004). Over half of young children of immigrants have at least one parent with limited English proficiency, which makes it difficult for parents to seek and find opportunities for childcare centers and/or preschools (Capps, Fix, Ost, Reardon-Anderson, & Passel, 2005; Capps, Fix, Passel, Ost, & Perez-Lopez, 2003). In addition, Matthews & Jang (2007) stated that immigrant families in the U.S. are often uninformed of the existence of ECEC settings, such as Head Start and prekindergarten programs as well as licensed childcare centers, and those who are aware of the availability of such settings are likely to be misinformed about the eligibility criteria. Furthermore, Lowe & Weisner (2004) disclosed that immigrant families who favor cultural consistency between home and ECEC settings are more likely to settle for home-based, rather than center-based, care for their young children, as the former is provided by relatives or nonrelatives who share the same cultural beliefs and peculiarities with the parents.

ECEC and Muslim immigrants

Other than income and lack of knowledge, Muslim parents have additional issues pertaining to religion and the education and care of their children. While a number of American public schools include Islam in their curricula, Hermansen (2003) and Kassam (2003) noted that the teaching of Islam often involves stereotypical portrayals of Muslims, distortions, omissions, and textbook inaccuracies. Besides, Muslim students often find it difficult to adhere to religious requirements due to conflicting school policies. For example, one of the conflicting policies that

contradicts Islamic cultural values, according to Zine (2001), is mandatory mixed gender physical education classes. Other examples, as Hoot, Szecsi, & Moosa (2003) pointed out, include prayer and food requirements for Muslims, as they have to pray five times a day and follow a strict diet based on religiously sanctioned *halal* (i.e., permissible) and pork-free food products. Although keeping such practices is not required before puberty, many Muslim parents encourage their children to adhere to them at a younger age.

Partly due to these challenges, a number of Muslim parents in the United States prefer and choose to send their children to private Islamic schools (Nimer, 2002). An overwhelmingly large number of Muslim parents seek any opportunity for their children to learn in a totally Islamic environment where all knowledge is imparted by means of an Islamic point of view. Islamic ethics, conducts, and practices that are often hard to observe in public schools are integrated into the daily lives of these students. For instance, Islamic schools set aside times for children to pray and offer *halal* food in their canteens, which makes parents worry less about their children's religious observances (Merry, 2005). Classes and activities are planned around Ramadan and other significant Islamic holidays that are celebrated widely. According to Al-Romi (2000), the approach of Islamic schools to moral issues (e.g., co-ed physical education classes and dress code) often matches the values taught in the children's homes. Finally, Islamic schools also encompass several features of Muslim cultural heritage that are otherwise inaccurately and inadequately represented in the curricula of public schools. For instance, the curricula of a number of American Islamic schools, according to Merry (2005), involve instruction in non-Western languages such as Arabic, Urdu, and Farsi.

Islamic schools are considered to be a safe haven for Muslim children and help them follow Islamic practices without worrying about the hostility from and animosity of school officials and other students (Merry, 2005). According to Badawi (2006), Muslim students have the chance to experience positive peer relationships and feel a sense of belonging, which constitutes a great comfort and relief for both Muslim parents and their children (Uddin, 2006), especially considering the current anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim climate that appears to be growing in the present-day American society. Lastly, Islamic schools emphasize reading, math, and science significantly and adhere to high academic standards (Al-Romi, 2000). Therefore, parents send their children to Islamic schools not only to learn Islamic values and practices, but also to guarantee that their children are fit to compete for jobs and prestigious colleges (Nimer, 2002). It must be noted, however, that even though Islamic schools exist in all major cities and several metropolitan areas where Muslim immigrants have chosen to settle in the United States, a great number of Muslim families still choose to send their children to non-Islamic public schools for a variety of reasons. As a result, some devout Muslim parents end up facing several challenges in their negotiations with teachers and school administrators with regards to their children's religious needs.

The Korean context

In the Korean context, and similar to other contexts, schools and other education and care facilities play the role of the first and, in many cases, primary entry point of children from immigrant families into mainstream Korean culture. The following section attempts to review research on multicultural education in higher levels of education as well as in early childhood education levels.

The transformation of Korea from a "pure-blood," ethnocentric society into a "mixed-blood", multicultural one (Han, 2007) has led the Ministry of Education and Human Resources in 2007 to underscore multicultural education in its newly revised curriculum. Once the Korean government initiated multicultural education policies, scholars and researchers began to pay close attention to students from multicultural families in the educational system. Multiple studies have been conducted on multicultural education programs, policies, and textbooks.

As far as the programs are concerned, there are two major studies that attempted to analyze multicultural programs in schools: Cho, Park, Sung, Lee, & Park (2010) and Park (2009). Both inquiries conducted a frequency analysis in terms of multicultural education programs and categorized them under six groups: Promoting multicultural understanding, promoting communal sprit, cultural education, language education, self-identity, and adaptation to academic life. The two studies reported that the main multicultural programs were cultural education and language education; that, the majority of the programs were tailored to children of multicultural families, rather than native children or both; and that most programs were conducted once rather than multiple times or were on-going programs. While these studies helped understand the type of multicultural education programs and their frequency, they did not show how these programs performed in schools and how they affected both types of students.

Cho et al. (2010) also indicated that multicultural education was delivered to students from multicultural families mostly in forms of extracurricular activities, school events or afterschool programs. Ji (2015) analyzed multicultural education in Korean elementary schools and observed that providing separate multicultural education classes to children from multicultural families was a form of exclusion,

rather than inclusion. Ji (2015) added that such programs add to the stigma of difference and affects both children from multicultural families and native children.

As for policies, Park & Sung (2008) investigated multicultural policies as well as multicultural education policies and grouped them in accordance with their objectives, subjects, and institutions. Their inquiry reported similar results to Cho et al. (2010) and Park (2009). In other words, the focus of most multicultural education programs was on Korean language course aimed at students of multicultural backgrounds. The study also reported that no multicultural education program was geared towards native students, implying a one-way understanding of multiculturalism.

As for the textbooks, Cho & Park (2014) analyzed how multicultural content is covered in elementary and secondary schools in Korea. The researchers analyzed 52 textbooks (social studies, ethics and Korean language from third to ninth grade) using two analytical frames: Multicultural content analysis frame (MCAF) multicultural description analysis frame (MDAF). The study revealed that the distribution of multicultural content presented a number of characteristics with regards to the following categories: Identity, diversity and pluralism, and social justice, as obtained by MCAF; and balance of material distribution, accuracy and scope of information, distortion and stereotypes, perspectives balance, and Korean-ethnic centeredness, as obtained by MDAF.

Other studies have examined the roles and perspectives of teachers on multicultural education. Lee (2013) examined how Korean elementary school teachers recognize multicultural contents in textbooks and how they analyze and communicate them in class. Cho (2016) examined the distinguishing features of Korean elementary teachers' beliefs about the goals of multicultural education and

explored how individual teachers' underlying beliefs about the goals of multicultural education interacted with the practices of classroom-based multicultural curriculum reform.

As for early childhood education and care, studies pertaining to multicultural education have dealt mainly with children's books and picture books. For example, Kim (2011) analyzed 17 studies published in Korean journals, focusing mainly on multicultural education through books in early childhood education. This inquiry found that 97 multicultural picture books were used in these studies; 10 of which dealt with African/African-American people and their culture. Other related studies have also pointed out the scarcity of quality multicultural picture books available in Korea (Jeong & Park, 2009; Yoon, Joo, & Lee, 2009).

Other studies focused on how multicultural literature affects children's understanding and attitudes toward other cultures in Korea. Lee & Kim (2010) found that after educational activities using multicultural picture books with 3-year-old children were carried out four times a week for 9 weeks, the children's anti-bias recognition and prosocial behaviors increased significantly. Similarly, Hyun & Park (2003) examined the utilization of an 8-unit multicultural education program using picture books, which they found positively affected children's racial attitudes. Kim, Wee, & Lee (2016) examined Korean kindergartners' literary discussions about racial/cultural diversity during a whole-group read-aloud session. The study found that the children exhibited a biased attitude toward African characters and that their stereotypical views reflected their allegiance to their social/cultural contexts. The study also found that literary discussions about race provided the children with valuable opportunities to explore racial diversity, equality, injustice, and freedom;

and that reading multicultural literature helped the children develop and practice their racial language and literacy skills.

Finally, research on multicultural education practices that are geared towards young children from Muslim families in Korea is nonexistent. Compared to the U.S., Muslim parents in Korea do not have much choice regarding Islamic and non-Islamic schools because Islamic schools and preschools are not as abundant as they are in the U.S. even though the Muslim population in Korea has been steadily growing since the 1950s (Jang & Choi, 2011). According to Choi (2003), the mosques in Korea play the role of educating Muslims and keeping them abreast with the religion, replacing in that sense official educational institutions. Parents, therefore, consider mosques a vital source or religious childhood education and socialization, as supported by Shahzad & Lee (2016) who noted that in the mosques in the cities of Daegu and Incheon, children of Pakistani Muslims study Quran and other religious teachings.

As mentioned earlier in this research, multicultural education does not necessarily imply the accommodation of young children from immigrant Muslim families. This is why several challenges rise to the surface when immigrant Muslim families attempt to negotiate with their children's schools. Because the commitment to Islamic cultural values play a prominent role in the education of Muslim children, not receiving a formal education that is catered to the culture they come from creates an extra challenge for the parents, especially the mothers who take upon themselves the task of striking the balance between the Islamic and Korean values (Chung & Kim, 2013). Thus, future research should tackle how multiculturalism education can accommodate children from Muslim families and their parents and how to cater to their cultural and religious needs and requirements.

III. Research Methodology

The following chapter describes the paradigm and methodology used in the processes of data collection, data analysis, and interpretation of research findings throughout this inquiry. Detailed information about the research approach used during the different phases of this inquiry is also included.

1. Research Paradigm

To describe and interpret situations in migration and early childhood education and care, qualitative research approach, elements of naturalistic inquiry, a holistic view, purposive sampling, and inductive analysis were used during the processes of data collection, analysis, and interpretation of findings throughout this research (Patton 1980; Porter, 1982). Since the intersection between migration and early childhood education and care is an area about which research is uncommon, the researcher's objective was to listen to the informants' voices and build a picture based on their stories, ideas and suggestions (Glaser, 1992). In accord with the methodological assumptions of qualitative research, the literature was inspected inductively so that it did not take the lead of the researcher's analysis (Creswell, 1994). The results of the current research are compared and contrasted with relevant literature related to both migration and early childhood education and care is included in the discussion section.

The current investigation adopted a naturalistic inquiry paradigm as outlined by Lincoln and Guba (1985). This paradigm focuses on the way whereby people behave when absorbed in genuine life experiences and seeks to develop statements, specific

to the context of the participants, about their multiple, constructed realities (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, & Allen, 1993). The aim of naturalistic inquiries is to develop interpretations and local theories by means of exploring words, actions, and communications in different narratives. Thus, such inquiry is conducted in the field and naturalistic researchers study research problems and questions that are initially stated broadly then gradually narrowed during the course of the study.

The researchers also employ purposive, rather than representative or random, sampling methods and the participants are selected based on the overall objective of the study and the questions under investigation, which were defined as the study proceeds. Thanks to this strategy, the possibility of unusual cases being identified and included in the study is higher. The basics and the characteristics of a naturalistic inquiry study are described in details in Strauss & Corbin (1998), Frey, Botan, & Kreps (1999), and Prus (1996).

2. Sample Description

The participants

Five immigrant Muslim families, from Indonesia (2), Jordan (1), Pakistan (1), and Bangladesh (1), were interviewed for the purpose of this research. The families were recruited by contacting Islamic communities' members. The participants responded to an initial survey to determine their eligibility to be included in the study. The researcher then contacted the respondents who met the inclusion criteria via social media applications and set up a meeting to interview them in their respective cities.

To be included in the research, the families had to be Muslim, living in Korea for at least 2 years, and have children who are/were enrolled in any early childhood education and care setting in Korea.

Prior to meeting the participants, they were sent a document explaining the nature and the content of the study. The document included the way whereby the interview would be conducted and the data transcripts would be used. The document also explained that participation was voluntary and that the interviews were to be audio-recorded. Furthermore, the participants were given assurance that their answers to the interview would remain confidential.

The five families live in different parts of Korea (Seoul, Busan, Daejeon, and Incheon) and each have one to four children between ages two through 10 years. The five fathers in the families have also reported that they had jobs in their countries, and that their current economic status to be fair and four of them noted that they would be leaving Korea to go back to their countries within the next 3 years. The tables below describe the profile of the parents (Table 3.1) and the children (Table 3.2).

Table3.1: Descriptive Profile of the Five Participants –Parents

Family codes	Age (H-W)	Country of Origin	Education level	Current Occupation	Languages spoken	City of residence	Year of migration to Korea
A	37-37	Indonesia	PhD - BSc	Lecturer - Housewife	Bhasa, English	Busan	2015
B	33-28	Indonesia	MSc - MSc	PhD cand. - PhD std.	Bhasa, English, Basic Korean	Seoul	2014
C	30-27	Jordan	MSc - BSc	PhD cand. - MSc std.	Arabic, English, Basic Korean	Seoul	2011
D	44-36	Pakistan	BSc - BA	CEO - Housewife	Urdu English, Korean, Arabic, Punjabi, Hindi	Incheon	1996
E	40-39	Bangladesh	Post-Doc - PhD	Company employee	Bangla, English, Hindi, Basic Korean	Daejeon	2008

Table3.2: Descriptive Profile of the Five Participants –Children

Family codes	Number (sex) of children	Country of Birth	Languages spoken
A	2 (m)	Indonesia	Bhasa, Korean
B	1 (f)	Korea	Bhasa Korean
C	1 (f)	Jordan	Arabic, Korean
D	4 (2m,2f)	Korea	Urdu, Korean
E	1 (m)	Bangladesh	Bangla, Korean, English

The interview

The main instrument employed for collecting data was a semi-structured, face-to-face interview. This interview took sixty to ninety minutes to complete, and was conducted in English, Arabic, and Bangla with both parents together at their houses or a location of their choice. Three out of the five interviews took place in the participants' places of residence. The remaining two interviews were conducted in a quiet mosque.

The interview guide was designed to allow for an exploration of the choices and judgments that immigrant Muslim parents make with respect to their young children's rearing and education and care in Korea. This research methodology seeks to comprehend the experiences as closely as possible as the parents' feel or live them (Sherman & Webb, 1988). Additionally, part of the interview was to administer a family information form, in order to help collect demographic information about the participating parents and their children (cf. Tables 3.1 and 3.2).

While both parents were invited to take part in the interview, one mother was reluctant to speak English. Therefore, the data from the interviews that was used to understand the experiences of immigrant Muslim families in Korea with childcare and education of their young children came from both parents in four families and a father in one family.

Table3.3: The Interview Protocol

Immigration
- Tell me about growing up in your home country.
- Tell me about your experience of migrating to Korea.
- Tell me about your life as a Muslim family in Korea.
- Tell me about your dream for a Muslim-friendly Korea.

Parenting
- Tell me about your child.
- Tell me about how your child behaves in different settings (public/private spaces).
- Tell me about your concerns about your children.
- Tell me about your expectations of your children.
- Tell me about your experience of raising your child in Korea.
- Tell me about your impression on the Korean parenting style.

Childcare
- What experience did you have before enrolling your child in an ECE setting?
- Tell me about the process of enrolling your child in the ECE setting.
- Tell me about the ECE setting (environment, materials used, teachers, staff, etc.).
- Tell me about your impression about the curriculum and the educational activities.
- Tell me about your child's performance in the ECE activities.
- Tell me about your role in your child's ECE.
- Tell me about how you would make a Korean ECE setting Muslim-friendly or ideal for immigrant Muslim families.

3. Data Collection Procedures

The interviews were conducted over a three-month period (February-April).

As mentioned earlier, the interview guide was based on a series of questions, divided into three major categories: Immigration, parenting, and early childhood education and care (cf. Table 3.3). The questions were developed for the purpose of gaining insight into the lives of immigrant Muslim families with children in Korea, their child rearing practices and their experiences with Korean ECEC settings.

The questions of the interview were translated into Arabic and Bangla. The three versions (the English version included) were piloted. Two pilot interviews were conducted before meeting the participants. The responses to the pilot interviews helped modify and tailor the questions of the final version of the interview. As the

participants found some of the original to be either difficult or abstract, some questions were rephrased and some were omitted. After these modifications, two more interviews were conducted to verify the intelligibility of the questions. Consequently, this final version of the interview was maintained to collect the data for this study.

At the beginning of each interview, the participating parents were reminded of the purpose of current study and of the importance of their views. They were given a hard copy of the "research content" to read one more time before the interview. The participants were also urged to ask questions about the details of the research.

As pointed out earlier, the duration of the interviews ranged from sixty to ninety minutes, depending upon how detailed the participants were in their answers. At the end of each interview, the participating parents were asked whether they wished to add further details related to the research that had not been covered by the interview questions. After the interviews, the participating parents were thanked and the significance of their contribution to the present inquiry was emphasized, following the suggestions of Rubin & Rubin (2012).

4. Data Analysis

The process of analysis included transcription, coding and analysis. As mentioned earlier, inductive thematic data analysis was employed to describe and explain the heart of childcare experiences in the participants' lives based on their narratives. The themes and patterns were extracted from the data and were not, in any way, imposed prior to data gathering (Janesick, 1994). By means of using the participants' own

words and actions, descriptive qualitative inquiries offer perspectives that quantitative, grouped data fail to present (Porter, 1982).

Moustakas's (1990) heuristic approach to inductive analysis was utilized across five phases. First, the process began with the immersion in the data. Second, the incubation process made room for thinking, becoming attuned to nuances and meanings, as well as capturing intuitive insights to attain understanding. Third, the phase of illumination consisted of expanding awareness. Fourth, the phase of explication allowed for description and clarification to capture the experiences of the participants. Finally, in order to bring together each family's story as a whole, creative synthesis was carried out.

Following the directions provided by Weiss (1994) and Gibbs (2008), initial codes were extracted by the researcher by means of open coding of all five interviews. The responses of the parents were initially indexed, based on the topic under which the responses were given.

The mechanical tasks of the data analysis process, such as extracting codes and identifying themes and patterns in the transcripts, were carried through with the help of the computer software program NVivo 12 Mac. The analysis started off with a line-by-line coding of a couple of interview transcripts, which involved open coding and themes' identification. The initial coding was performed to sort out the data. It gradually became interpretive as patterns and relationships among patterns emerged.

The analysis also adopted the constant comparative method of analysis. This method allowed for continuous comparisons across cases and incidents in the data analysis process. The constant comparative method was considered to be appropriate because each of the five families were seen as a separate source of data. The interviews carried out constituted enough data to make multiple comparisons of

individual experiences. Comparisons across the interviewed families allow for a comprehensive examination of the way each and every family's story and experience are both similar to and different from those of every other family (Snyder, 1992).

Internal validity and reliability

Internal validity is concerned with whether or not the findings of a certain research are congruent with what really happened (Merriam, 2001). Member checking and peer examination of findings were utilized to enhance internal validity. Member checking was conducted by selecting a family, at random, and asking them to discuss the findings of the present study. The selected parents generally agreed with the interpretations of their interview. As for peer examination, the researcher had a graduate student in the department of Sociology at Cadi Ayyad University in Morocco read the uncoded interview transcripts and inspect the codes and themes that were generated. This was done to increase the reliability of the author's categorizations. The reviewer had few observations and concurred with the majority of the thematic categories.

IV. Research Findings

Based on the overall analysis, the following thematic categories emerged as primary to the immigration, parenting and childcare experiences of the interviewed families. The broad themes pertaining to immigration were: Socioeconomic factors and cultural/religious dimensions. The themes that surfaced regarding parenting were: Sources of information, physical care, and discipline and socialization. Finally, the thematic categories regarding early childhood education and care were: Pursuing ECEC, selecting the ECEC setting, experiences with ECEC settings, value of ECEC, and cultural and religious dilemmas and discrepancies.

1. Immigration

Based on the narratives of the participants, the following categories emerged with regards to immigration: Socioeconomic factors, cultural/religious factors.

Socio-economic factors

As stated in an earlier chapter, all the interviewed families described their economic status to be fair. All the families live in apartments ranging from one-bedroom to three-bedroom structures, cook their own food, and had no complications during the migration process.

Most families expressed that the living costs in Korea are quite high, compared to their countries of origin, and could barely make ends meet. As three out of the five families are made up of graduate students, their main income is the scholarships provided to them by the universities where they study. With rent, food, childcare

arrangements, and other engagements, the parents reported that it was hard to lead a stress-free life. Father E, who came as a student first but is now an employee, commented:

> Everything was expensive. I didn't know how to afford the house rent, the living expenses, my son's education. Sometimes we'd borrow money from others and it was very difficult for the first four or five years. Everything now is stable, so no more borrowing. (Family E, 08/04/2018).

Cultural/religious factors

Other than the living costs, the parents reported that what they make their lives hard are language, food, and praying spots.

All the families, but one, stated that they face linguistic difficulties. They commented that they were expecting Korea, as a developed country, to be using English in a wider way than it actually does. Yet, the families discovered that the majority of Koreans prefer speaking Korean to English, which made the parents withdrawn and rarely interact with the Koreans outside university and work. The linguistic difficulties affected the family's access to health services as well. While the parents who gave birth to their children in Korean clinics and hospitals praised the quality of healthcare and recommended the services to their friends, they reported that because of the language barrier, they could not access health services whenever they needed to.

Additionally, some parents reported that because Koreans either do not know or are misinformed about Islam, some of the disagreement they have with them are related to the Hijab. The mothers in Families A and B, reported regarding their Hijab

and the *ahjummas* [Korean old women] that the old ladies try to take off their Hijab or ask them to wear it in their own countries.

Also, because the participants are Muslims, they have to follow a special diet that is *halal*. Halal means permissible, and halal food is food that meets the dietary standards prescribed in the Quran (the Muslim scripture). Finding *halal* food in Korea is particularly challenging because Koreans do not seem to understand the concept. Father C said:

> They don't know enough about our religion. They have no idea what halal and not halal are. When I ask them what halal is they would say that fruit is halal, or that such and such clothes are halal. (Family C, 31/03/2018).

Father A added:

> KMF [Korean Muslim Federation] is doing a good job examining the products stamped halal. They found some fake halal a while ago. I don't think they [Koreans] understand Islam; they think that halal is just a stamp. KMF found that some business owners stamped pork with the halal stamp. (Family A, 26/03/2018).

Finally, the issue of praying came up often during the interviews. The participants that live far from the mosques indicated that it was very challenging for them to pray on time. Some parents, however, indicated that their professors or bosses were quite open-minded and let them pray in their place of study or work. Father B indicated:

> Usually, when we go out, it's quite hard to find some places for *Salat* [prayer]. So we usually choose a park or an emergency exit or a changing room in a department store. Luckily, we can go to a nursing room, now. There is a nursing room in every station or mall. We have a baby so we can use it and pray in it. (Family B, 30/03/2018).

2. Parenting

As mentioned earlier, the thematic categories that have emerged from the interviews were: Sources of information, physical care, and discipline and socialization. These categories will be elaborated upon in this section.

Sources of parental information

All the parents in this study reported that they improvise when it comes to parenting, but some of them noted that at some point, they relied on books or had to look up information regarding issues ranging from health to positive upbringing. The interviewed parents have identified two sources of information regarding parenting: Books or parental influences. As far as early childhood and parenting related books are concerned, mother B commented: "At first, we relied on books. But not now we're improvising. We followed books word by word in the first year, especially regarding heath and early development." (Family B, 30/03/2018).

As for parental influences, the majority of the parents noted that they were raising their children the same way their parents raised them. For example, father C commented on his parenting style by saying:

> I'm very influenced by my mother. She cared so much. For example, she wouldn't sleep if I am sad or sick. So that's how I behave with my daughter. If something happens to her or if I raise my voice and she gets sad, I can't sleep. (Family C, 31/03/2018)

Family A reported that the husband was influenced by his parents' attitude-focused parenting and that the wife was influenced by her parents' religion-centered upbringing.

It is worth noting, though, that though some parents reported that they were influenced by their parents regarding childrearing decisions, other parents, within the same families, reported that they do things differently from their parents. Mother B reported that she does things differently from her mother.

> She [my mother] was very strict with us. […] She's not very affectionate but that might be due to the fact that she is in the army. Yeah, we know that she loves us but she never tells us that or show affection. (Family B, 30/03/2018).

Father D, on the other, emphasized that there was no need to read about parenting or seek other sources on the subject because Islam has provided Muslim parents with all the tools needed to raise children properly. He said:

> I am a Muslim and we have a very authentic format of parenting. We have all the teachings of Islam so we don't need to look for new ones. Our basic parenting should center around that then we can fill in the blanks according to our instincts. (Family D, 01/04/2018)

Physical Care

One of the themes that emerged during the analysis of the data was physical care. This included sleep regulation and feeding practices. While some parents reported that they do not force their children to observe religious rituals because of their age, other parents insist that the children, regardless of their age, follow them.

For praying on time, some parents were reported to wake up their children at dawn to pray the *Fajr* prayer with them and make sure to maintain this habit throughout the

year. Mother A said: "We wake them up at 5 am, they pray and have breakfast and prepare for school. We have a complete list." (Family A, 26/03/2018).

As for feeding practices, all the parents, but one, take extra measures so that their children follow the religious diet advocated by Islam. The four parents (Families A, B, D, E) informed the day-care centers and kindergartens that the children cannot consume pork and non-halal meat and made sure that the children get the required amount of protein at home. The fifth parent (Family C) informed the day-care center that his daughter can eat everything except pork. He explained his decision by saying:

> I tell them that she has a ham allergy. She also has a mango allergy. So we tell them about this. We don't really tell them about the other meat because she's underage. She needs these things. So beef is fine, but ham is a no no. (Family C, 31/03/2018).

Discipline and socialization

Discipline techniques, religious and social rituals, and communication are all part of this thematic category.

In terms of the goals of discipline, the participants reported that there probably are not many differences between the two cultures. The parents said that both they and the Korean parents look at discipline resulting in responsible, good mannered, independent children, leading to good citizens of the world. One Indonesian father tells his children Koreans are good at following the rules, that they are well-disciplined, and that they should learn from them.

Some parents, however, identified a number of differences in the disciplining styles of Muslim and Korean parents. Mother C, for example, indicated that the

Korean children are "loners," and that "They're sociable with one another, but not with foreigners. Unlike us!" (Family C, 31/03/2018).

The interviewed parents have all reported that they do not use their hands with their children. Rather, they specified that they used Time-out and rewards and punishments when children misbehave or when they needed to instill certain behaviors in their children. Father A, for example, indicated: "When they break rules, they're not allowed to play games from 1 to 3 hours. But we also reward them when they behave properly. Like when he recited the Quran from memory." (Family A, 26/03/2018). When asked to recount what happens when her daughter behaves inappropriately, mother C commented: "We put her on the punishment chair. She would get sad and start crying but after the punishment time is over we talk to her and ask her to apologize for she did." (Family C, 31/03/2018).

As for the religious and social rituals, there are two main religious celebrations that are celebrated by all Muslims which are called Eid Al-Fitr, which celebrates the end of Ramadan (the month of fasting), and Eid Al-Adha, which is the yearly sacrifice that Muslims do in honor of the Prophet Ibrahim. The interviewed parents make sure to participate in the religious celebrations related to these two holy holidays in the mosques near them. They reported that they also frequented the mosques the rest of the year because they wanted to introduce their children to their culture and religion of origin and help them feel a sense of community. Father A said

> My wife and I are concerned about religion so we try to go to *Dusil* at least
> once a month. There are so many Indonesians there, right? We go there for
> the children because we need to introduce the Islamic values to my children.
> (Family A, 26/03/2018).

Some of the parents also reported that not everything about the Korean culture is teachable to children. One father commented that he had to explain to their children that not all behavior is tolerated by Islam and that only the good aspects of the Korean culture, being punctual, mainly, should be adopted. Father A added: "Ladies and boys are kissing everywhere so I ask my sons not to look at that." (Family A, 26/03/2018).

Father D stated, regarding the differences between the Korean culture and the Islamic cultures and their effects on parenting his children:

> Their TV programs and eating habits show that alcohol is like any other beverage. So these things concern me. If children have such knowledge or exposure, as we can't control everything all the time, then they would be in trouble later. Another concern is the Korean females [wardrobe] in the summer. [...] everyone dresses in an open way. (Family D, 01/04/2018).

3. Early Childhood Education and Care

The themes that surfaced during the analysis of the interviews regarding early childhood education and care were: Pursuing ECEC, selecting the ECEC setting, experiences with ECEC settings, value of ECEC, and cultural and religious dilemmas and discrepancies. This section shall elaborate on the parents' experiences with regards to these themes.

Pursuing ECEC

This category investigates the need to seek childcare, the sources of information about ECE, mainly the people who were involved in the ECEC setting selection, and

the problems encountered in the process of enrolling the children in the chosen ECEC setting as well as the type of ECEC setting selected.

The need to focus on employment or to pursue education made all five families consider childcare. The parents received information about the facilities they ended up selecting from professors, lab mates, and same-country communities. The Internet was the main source of information for one family as they printed out a list of childcare centers available nearby and contacted them one by one. Only two parents reported they visited the childcare settings before making a final decision.

The parents have given a number of reasons for putting their children in center-based care as opposed to home-based relative care. Apart from one family, home-based relative or friend care was not available. The parents added that center-based childcare was the only option available to them and their children. The childcare centers provided a haven with their scheduled timing and flexibility. As father C explained: "Sometimes we'd be in exams and could not pick up our daughter. Her teacher would even stay with her over time and tell us not to worry about her and to just concentrate on our exams." (Family C, 31/03/2018).

Family B, reported that they selected the childcare center operated by the university they go to because of its experience with foreign children and the fact that they could get in touch with their daughter's caregivers anytime.

Care by relatives was preferred either as the main or alternative type of care by three families. This reflected a continuation of the childcare practices from their countries of origin where family members, friends and neighbors provided childcare help and offered to watch over the child when the parents are engaged in their academic and/or professional lives. As parent A said: "In our country, we raise our children for more than 4-5 years, in the family: 2 years with the mom breastfeeding

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him, and 3 years with other family members and relatives. We call them, *rahem* [Lit. womb, metaphor for blood relatives]." (Family A, 26/03/2018).

Mother E added: "I was living in my in-laws' house in Bangladesh, so I had a lot of support, but when I came here, I had to deal with him alone." (Family E, 08/004/2018). These parents favored childcare by a family member, a relative, or a friend because of the shared religious and cultural beliefs as well as the trust that the caregiver would treat their child with love and kindness and would provide safety and security just like the child's mother. Mother B commented:

> Actually, last semester, my mom came to Korea and took care of her [the daughter] because she didn't get a seat in any day-care center. That was the best period for us because mom helped us as well, but life must go on. She cannot stay here for the whole 3 years. (Family B, 30/03/2018).

Home-based relative/friend care was most sought when: The parents could not afford paid childcare, the parents did not know about the day-care settings, and the parents were put on the waiting list. Some of the problems that the parents faced during the process of seeking and obtaining childcare were: Lack of knowledge about the different types of settings due to their limited Korean language skills, the cost of the services provided by the setting, and the lack of financial support for foreign parents.

Selecting the ECEC setting

The interviewed parents directly and indirectly identified a numbered of factors that went into the process of the selection of the ECEC setting. The following factors were taken into consideration while selecting the ECEC setting.

Cost

The cost of childcare was an important factor in the choice of the setting for almost all parents. When asked about why the chosen day-care center was selected, Father A responded promptly by saying that "it was the cheapest one." (Family A, 26/03/2018). Family C shared that they had to transfer their daughter because of a sudden rise in the tuition fees. They said:

> It was very expensive. It doesn't provide the basic care for my daughter […]. We had to transfer her from there after a year because they raised the price, suddenly, to 600000. We used to pay 300000 so they told us to either pay 600000 or look for a new center. (Family C, 31/03/2018).

Experience with foreign children and ease of communication with the staff

A childcare setting that has history and experience of dealing with foreign children was thought to be a good option for some parents. Foreign children's needs are different from those of local children. Thus, selecting a setting that has experience with foreign babies and where communication with the caregivers and administrators is feasible was seen to be very practical. Family B expressed that their choice of the setting was influenced by stories from their friends. They recounted that a friend of theirs had sent his child to a private day-care center that did not have a prior experience with foreign children. They stated:

> The caregiver was an *ahjumma* [Korean old woman] and she was not patient enough to deal with a foreign child and she spoke no English at all. My friend's child had a trauma and didn't want to go to school. After that they applied for a public day-care center because it's better because the teachers are usually younger and they can speak basic English, and are more open to a

foreign baby. Because of such stories, we also picked SNU day-care center. […] And my professor also sends his kid to the same day-care center and he told me that there are many foreigners in SNU day-care center, so the teachers are more familiar with how to handle foreign babies. (Family B, 30/03/2018).

Quality of the facilities

Having good facilities was one other factor that the parents considered when making a decision about the selection of ECEC setting. Good facilities include, but are not limited to, the size of the building, the number of classrooms, and the teacher-children ratio. The quality of the facilities also encompasses the amount and diversity of the material used. For example, father D expressed:

[Sic] Sometimes, I accompany parents to kindergartens and translate what the administrators say, and I notice that the kindergartens are either small or not have many classrooms. The one my children go to is a proper kindergarten, in my opinion. (Family D, 01/04/2018).

Proximity of the ECEC setting or availability of transportation

The parents also took into consideration the proximity of the childcare setting as a factor during the process of selection. Only one of the families owns a car and sees distance to be no issue. Proximity of the ECEC setting or the availability of transportation for the four other families played an important role in their decision making. Father C stated: "We found many day-care centers but the problem is that we didn't have a car. Getting a car would have been more expensive. So one of the criteria we were looking for is the bus." (Family C, 31/03/2018).

Flexibility and openness to religious practices

As all the families are Muslim, one major concern of the families was the religious practices of their children. These include dietary needs as well as religious celebrations. Muslims cannot consume pork and other non-halal meat, or meat whose preparation does not adhere to Islamic law. Similarly, Muslims do not celebrate Christmas, Halloween and other non-Muslim festivities that are otherwise well celebrated in Korean ECEC settings. Therefore, the families were relieved that the administrations were quite understanding of these restrictions and saw no harm in accepting children of different faith. Father A stated:

> The administration here was very good. They asked me, for example, what we cannot do, like eating pork. And we told them that Halloween parties are not allowed in Islam, right? So, we just explain that we cannot join in Christmas and Halloween parties. They saw no problem in that. (Family A, 26/03/2018).

Safety and security

A couple of parents identified safety and security to be some of the most important factors they took into account while selecting the ECEC setting. By safety and security, these parents implied the fear of violent acts that some caregivers may perform against their children. As Father D put it: "They [the teachers] are very careful; they don't beat the children. There are cameras everywhere so I'm not afraid of that as I was before. I do have a concern but it doesn't scare me, Alhamdulillah." (Family D, 01/04/2018).

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Two families (A and B) have chosen childcare centers that are operated by the universities they attend because they perceived them to be safer. Family B, prior to enrolling their child to an ECEC setting, had the safety of the child in mind when they chose a home-based friend care. Generally, the parents made sure that the place was safe by either visiting the ECEC setting, relying on their friends' experiences, or asking and talking to their children.

Other factors

Some other factors that the parents took into consideration were: Hygiene and sanitary conditions, the passion and kindness of the teachers and the child's comfort level and interest in the setting, space for play and naps, the activities the children engage in inside and outside the settings and the qualifications of the caregivers. The presence of an English-speaking teacher or administrator in the setting was considered to be a plus for the parents' whose Korean skills are modest.

Experiences with ECEC settings

The interviewed parents reported a range of issues regarding the childcare centers they chose. Family C expressed that while they felt like a family with the first day-care center they were in, the second day-care center where they enrolled their daughter was the worst of the total four. They said that the staff "were not friendly and used informal language." (Family C, 31/03/2018). They added that the day-care center did not meet their expectations in the sense that the caregivers

> […] didn't do anything out of the kindness of their hearts, it was just what
> their contracts dictate them to do. There was no close connection between her

and the teacher, and no personal reports to the parents, just general things like the time my daughter eats and draws. That was all. (Family C, 31/03/2018).

One other issue that some parents faced was language. The parents expressed that the contracts they signed with the providers were 100% in Korean and that they would have no knowledge of what they actually agreed to had it not been for their colleagues. Some of the parents stated that because of the language barrier, they did not have a clear idea what their rights and duties are vis-à-vis childcare. Also, when it comes to correspondence, one of the means of communication with the parents that some of the childcare providers use is the application: Kids Note. The parents commented that their understanding of the messages received through that App relied heavily on the presence of their Korean colleagues, who would translate the messages for them.

Value of ECEC

The interviewed parents talked about the value of early childhood education and care in their lives in Korea by focusing on its positive and negative influences on their and their children's lives as well as their involvement in the ECEC services.

Benefits to Children

The children were reported to have gained a number of benefits from childcare. While the parents expressed that informal care provided by relatives or friends would have been more beneficial religion and language wise, they were satisfied with what center-based childcare had offered (or is currently offering) their children. The parents were happy that their children got to learn the Korean values and were exposed to the Korean educational culture of learning through play. The parents were

also glad that their children picked up the Korean language and the Korean etiquette as well as values that will help them adjust and acculturate better.

Some parents talked about the importance of early childhood education and care for their immigrant children concerning the educational input and social skills they gained making them ready for school. Father D said:

> They've been going to kindergarten from a young age so their Korean skills are good. They have their own timetable and follow their own curriculum. I sent my older son to kindergarten when he was two years and a half. He's been there from an early age which was good for him, as well. He acquired learning skills from Koreans. I never tried but I think his math problems would be very hard for me to solve. (Family D, 01/04/2018).

Additionally, the participants stated that their children learned valuable skills in the ECEC settings that would have been otherwise hard to acquire at home. Nearly all the interviewed parents reported that their children learned social skills, physical skills, creative skills, and intellectual skills, in addition to the Korean language. Most of the children enjoyed being at the childcare settings and showed their delight by talking about their day with their parents.

Negative Influences

Some of the participating parents reported that there were certain negative aspects to sending their children to center-based childcare. The children learned neither their native languages nor the English language, and this was repeatedly cited as a major disadvantage of formal ECEC. Father B expressed his concerns by saying that "to enter elementary school in Indonesia, they have a test already. […] There was no

competition. […] Now, they have a test, for those 6-year-old children. They have a language and mathematics test." (Family B, 30/03/2018).

Another concern that the parents expressed is the religious aspect. The parents referred to the fact that their children's lack of awareness of the Islamic manners, the prayer times, the recitation of the Quran, among others, is due to the inexistence of Islamic education in the ECEC settings. Mother E added that the Islamic diet (a.k.a Halal food) was one of her major concerns. Although she explained what a halal diet means, she expressed that "children see sparkly food and want to eat it, whether it's halal or not," and suggested that making all the food Halal would save the parents' and the teachers' time: "The teachers wouldn't need to call us and confirm with us before giving the children food." (Family E, 08/04/2018).

Another concern of some families is the social hierarchy in the relationships among Koreans. While Islam preaches that all people are equal, the Korean social etiquette dictates that age be considered when dealing with others. Mother C said:

> They are taught to follow many rules and respect ridiculous age differences. For example, I once went to the day-care center and told my daughter "Look, here is your *chingu* [friend]." Her friend said: "I'm not her *chingu*, I'm her *eonni* [elder sister]." They're just little girls. They're taught not to mingle with one another. (Family C, 31/03/2018).

Parental Involvement in the ECEC Setting

Most of the interviewed parents stated that they attended parent-teacher meetings and gave feedback to the school through the communication books provided by the centers. Some of the parents also made sure to participate in some of the events at their children's kindergartens to support their children during their performances.

Mother E said: "The kindergarten invited us once to participate in some sport activity and so we went with his grandparents and played with him different kinds of games." (Family E, 08/004/2018). On the other hand, parents whose Korean skills are limited preferred not to take part in the events organized by their children's day-care centers.

The parents were all involved in the childcare settings by talking to the administrators and staff about their concerns, in order to resolve adjustment and food-related problems. Some of the parents could interact with the other parents but only if the latter could speak English. None of the parents, however, reported meeting outside the center or calling other parents to discuss concerns.

Some parents reported that their children have many Korean friends and that they visited them at home often and played with their children. Additionally, most parents felt that both the mother and the father should get equally involved in the activities set by the childcare centers. Father D said that it was necessary for both parents to take part in their children's academic lives, attend the parent-teacher meetings, and be involved in other activities organized by the ECEC settings.

Cultural and Religious Dilemmas and Discrepancies

The participating parents made several references to the cultural and religious conflicts and differences they noticed and went through. Adjusting to an ECEC environment is one of the first steps that children take towards integration. The cultural and religious conflicts that arose in the interviews were language, food, and values. Mother B said, about her daughter's first weeks in the day-care center:

She was crying, shouting, screaming hysterically in the first two weeks and then when I ask her why she cried she'd answer "Yes mommy because I

don't understand what the teacher say. I don't understand what the children say. I just want to stay home with you." (Family B, 30/03/2018).

The same mother (B) added, concerning food:

When we told them that my daughter doesn't eat pork, I thought that they would change the menu. They didn't. They just take it out. Sometimes all my baby gets is rice and vegetables, that's all. No protein! They don't change the menu. (Family B, 30/03/2018).

Father A commented on the amount of festivities in the childcare center in which his son is enrolled by saying:

They have so many Christian activities to introduce Christianity to Korean people, because they're not concerned about religion. So in English classes, they would sing about Jesus. I think they follow every religion celebration except Islam in the day-care center, I think, like Halloween and Christmas. I don't know why they don't include *Eid Al-Fitr*. (Family A, 26/03/2018).

Other parents were also concerned about the lack of diversity in the ECEC settings, making references to the quotas abided by the childcare centers. They expressed that due to such lack, their children may feel isolated and be looked upon differently.

V. Concluding Remarks

The five Muslim families are but a sample of other Muslim families that have immigrated to Korea in many of the considerations that guide their choices regarding their life in a foreign country, their parenting, and their childcare. The parents try as much as possible to strike a balance between the requirements of their religion and their life in Korea. As they navigate their life in Korea, the parents were reported to facing a number of challenges ranging from financial issue to religious issues. Despite that, the families make sure to abide by the Islamic rules in living, parenting, and caring for their children. They continue to observe the religious rituals of praying, fasting, and eating a halal diet, together with their children. The mothers that wear hijab continue to wear it regardless of the gaze they get from old Korean women. They try their best to be good parents, by imitating their parents' parenting styles sometimes, and by improvising other times. The parents also make sure not to hit their children and help introduce them to and strengthen their bond with Islam by visiting the mosques and socializing with other Muslim Children. And as far as childcare is concerned, the parents were aware of the value of the ECEC settings and how they influence their life and their children's. While seeking the ideal childcare arrangement, the parents relied on their friends' information and experiences, factored in cost, experience, quality, proximity, and other conditions, and tried to make compromises with the providers regarding cultural and religious discrepancies.

Overall, the foreign life experiences of these parents and their choices regarding parenting and childcare are heavily influenced by their religious beliefs and their desire to look for what is best for their children. Implications for research on

multicultural early childhood education and care policies, programs, and curricula are discussed with regards to the life of immigrant Muslim families in Korea.

1. Discussion and Implications of the Findings

Given that the number of Muslim immigrants in Korea is growing, it is important that immigration, parenting, and early childhood education and care related services be accessible to these families. Various studies indicate that providing information about parenting facilitating access to childcare services facilitate the acculturation and integration process of the immigrant parents. Enrolling children of immigrants in early childhood education and care settings of the host communities has been reported to be a significant step towards integration and acculturation of the children as well as their parents (Bradley, 2011; Matthews & Ewen, 2010; Moinolmolki, Gaviria-Loaiza, & Han 2016).

The current inquiry extends our understanding of the experiences of Muslim Indonesian, Jordanian, Pakistani, and Bangladeshi immigrant families in four cities in South Korea, regarding immigration and parenting. The study also sheds light on the early childhood education and care practices among and arrangements available to them. The experiences of these five immigrant Muslim families demonstrate the factors that play a significant role in their general day-to-day life activities, their parenting and their childcare choices.

Immigration

As far as immigration is concerned, the current study supports the claim that integration is multifaceted. Consistent with Oyserman, Elmore, & Smith (2012) and

Waterman (1999), the findings show that familial, social, economic and religious roles are what constitute the participants' self-identities in this new country. These dimensions play a significant role in their life as immigrant Muslim families, be them students or workers, in Korea, since they determine their relationship with their Korean peers, inside and outside their place of word and/or study.

Such dimensions also function as a constructive quality for those in the process of integration into a host society by enabling them to maintain self consistency while considering new possibilities (Schwartz, Montgomery, & Briones, 2006). This implies that they serve as a force for commitment and can become inner potentials and abilities for greater responsibilities (Adams & Marshall, 1996). Constructing a healthy and balanced self-identity in a host society, by accommodating socioeconomic and cultural needs, would not only serve as an anchor amid rapid transformations and discontinuities but also act as a guideline for a more satisfying life in the new society. This will be manifested in the families' motivation to participate more in the host society (Schwartz, Montgomery, & Briones, 2006).

However, because of the religious differences, paired with lack of linguistic skills, some of the families seem to have adopted separationist attitudes. Some of the teachings of Islam contradict the aspects of Korean life and, so, the families choose to isolate themselves either by dealing minimally with Koreans, and socializing mainly with same-religion or same-country communities; or by physically staying near mosques and religious spots. This, most certainly, reflects on their acculturation and integration attitudes. Conversely, one of the many functions of living in a society is to enable individuals to interact with one another and establish a sense of rapport and affinity with the other members of the community (Rotman, Goldbeck, & Preece, 2009). Yet, the low language proficiency and the low levels of contact with the larger

society among some of the interviewed families indicate less culturally appropriate knowledge and fewer skills to interact with the host culture, hence, greater sociocultural integration difficulty.

Parenting

As far as parenting is concerned, the results of this inquiry indicated that the religious beliefs of the interviewed parents dominate all the categories extracted related to parenting. However, these parents have shown that they are striving to retain the original cultural and religious identity to a great extent and to adapt to their child rearing routines some of the practices of the host country that they deemed appropriate and Islam-friendly. By using the acculturation strategies model provided by Berry & Sam (1997), these families could be described to be an integrated population.

The parents were also observed to have a child-centered approach to their parenting. Their physical care of their children and their socialization strategies all amount to the same reason: Wanting their children to develop a bond and a sense of security with them and with the religion they practice. This idea of comfort and closeness to the child was discussed by Morelli, Rogoff, Oppenheim, & Goldsmith (1992). According to them, choices related to the child's parenting arrangements reflect the values and goals of the community as well as the culture of the parents. The idea of parenting in accordance with the Islamic teachings, on the other hand, has been discussed by Franceschelli & O'Brien (2014). The authors discussed the role of Islam in the parenting of immigrant Muslim families living in countries where Islam is not the dominant language. Similar to this inquiry, Islamic values and ways of parenting were mobilized by the parents to guarantee the transmission of a sense of

morality, support the children's education and reinforce their ties with religion and with their families.

ECEC

This study uncovered numerous realities about immigrant Muslim families and their childcare experiences. For instance, this study helped understand the factors determining the choices that Muslim parents make regarding childcare, constraints and difficulties that they usually face, and the role of their religious backgrounds in childcare decisions. The study found that Muslim families place importance on the acquisition of Islamic ethics, conducts, and practices provided by the educational settings. Because early childhood education and care services in Korea fail to meet this religious requirement and because there are not many alternatives to where Muslim families could enroll their children, the immigrant families in the present study reported that the childcare arrangements they settled for are the best options available. They also emphasized the need for incorporating cultural and religious education in the existing public kindergartens and childcare centers.

In general, the most common forms of child care available to immigrant families, regardless of their faith, are: (1) licensed family childcare providers (which offer services in the providers' own homes), (2) childcare centers, (3) preschool programs (which are usually school based and run only during the school year), (4) unlicensed or "informal" family childcare providers, (5) informal "kith-and-kin" care provided by relatives, and (6) informal care provided by nonrelatives such as neighbors (Gross & Ntagengwa, 2016).

The non-parental childcare arrangements in these five immigrant Muslim families can be better understood by means of the ecological perspective, as provided by

Bronfenbrenner (1986) and Bubolz & Sontag (1993). The early childhood education and care arrangements as well as the experiences that accompany the processes of obtaining and maintaining childcare were discovered to have a direct and indirect influence from a number of familial (e.g., family income, parental beliefs) and extra-familial (e.g., Korean culture) factors. The experience of the five Muslim families that have been interviewed for this research is similar to the experiences of other immigrant and non-immigrant families, in the sense that they all experience the need to find ECEC while juggling the demands of their positions as students or workers and their personal life. The parents interact with multiple environments like the university and/or work environment, ECEC environment, and other social and religious institutions as well as immigrant community organizations.

Additionally, a number of inquiries were found associated with parental satisfaction with childcare arrangements (e.g., Atkinson, 1996; Kisker & Ross, 1997) and childcare as a pathway to help immigrant children acculturate (Bradley, 2011; Brandon, 2002). Other than presenting the challenges that immigrant Muslim families face in the process of accessing ECEC settings and services in Korea, the present study contributes to our understanding of the positive and negative effects of childcare services that are not Islam-oriented for immigrant Muslim families. The studies also show how the childcare arrangements benefit both the parents and their children.

Furthermore, most studies handle childcare and childcare-related practices as a women's issue whereas men and children are rarely represented (Allin, West, & Curry, 2014; Penn & Mcquail, 1997). In this study, however, the voices and preferences of the fathers are quite loud and clear and played major roles into decisions about childcare arrangement. The fathers, in this study, were very vocal and

presented valuable insight into the role they play in their children's childcare arrangement that are not dictated by tradition or stereotypes. Future inquiries on access to childcare services should include the voices of families, as a whole, including the children's.

Besides, most parents in this study identified interaction with early childhood education and care setting, and Korean children and their parents as way to understand and integrate better in the Korean society. The findings are consistent with previous research done on the role of childcare services in the integration of immigrant families and their parents in host societies (Heer, Larkin, & Rose, 2015; Linton, Choi, & Mendoza, 2016; Yesil-Dagli, 2011). The parents identified that starting by learning the Korean language at an early age and making Korean friends is the best way to understand the nuances of the Korean culture and assimilate to its society. Albeit, this study only included five Muslim immigrant families in four big cities in Korea, the five parents agreed that some of the aspects of the Korean culture will be quite useful to their children in the long run. This implies that mastering the language of the receiving countries remains the number one facilitator of integration, as discussed in previous research (Lee & Choi, 2016; Tobin, Wu, & Davidson, 1989). Future studies need to include multiple generations of immigrant Muslim groups to corroborate these findings.

Limitations of the study

Before moving to recommendations, it is worth mentioning that this study has three limitations.

First, the participants in this inquiry all live in Korea's biggest metropolitan cities. These cities are characterized by the abundant number of foreigners and the existence

of Islamic centers and Mosques. This implies that, theoretically, the life of immigrant Muslim families is easier are more comfortable in these cities than that of those living in smaller cities with no religious outlets.

Second, the educational levels of the parents that participated in this study is quite high. This reflects on their openness to the Korean culture, their parenting choices, and their attitudes towards ECEC providers.

Third, the participants' mother tongue is not English. While some of the interviews were conducted in three languages, other interviews were conducted in English. With one family's limited English skills, there is a possibility that their answers were not exhaustive enough.

2. Recommendations

There is a number of suggestions that can be derived from this study. As far as research is concerned, Korean scholarship needs to address further issues pertaining to Muslim families and the parenting and education of their children. Also, to make up for the limitations of this study, research about immigrant Muslim families and their children should be encouraged to be carried out in smaller cities, with parents with lower educational levels and in the mother tongues of these families.

As mentioned earlier, a number of studies were conducted on multicultural education programs, policies, and textbooks in Korea. Recommendations pertaining to immigration, parenting and childcare practices among immigrant Muslim families in Korea are made within the field of multicultural education.

Multicultural education programs should include information on Islam and Islamic practices, should be directed towards both native and Muslim children, and should

encompass more than just Korean cultural education and Korean language education. Also, for more and lasting benefits, multicultural programs should run multiple times or be on-going programs, embedded in the curricular activities. The programs' efficacy should also be evaluated constantly to measure its success and include improvements, if need be.

As for multicultural education policy, public policies that incite Muslim parents' access to high quality and affordable ECEC programs in Korea are needed. The interviewed parents have all reported that the costs of childcare are particularly high. Higher childcare fees are driving lower and middle-income Muslim parents away from quality programs into affordable and less effective options for their children; options such as relative-based childcare, which may hinder the integration of both the parents and their children in the Korean society. Settling for such options may reflect negatively on the children's educational outcome and social behavior should the parents choose to reside longer or permanently in Korea. Government subsidies and tax breaks are, therefore, needed so that low-income Muslim parents can afford quality childcare. As Kuhlthau & Mason (1996) pointed out, if policies are indirectly discouraging the use of childcare provided by relatives, immigrant parents may find center-based care a more viable option.

Additionally, local ECEC providers and national policy directors need to ensure that their programs meet the needs of the growing number of immigrant Muslim families in their communities and work to overcome the barriers that keep these families from enrolling in ECEC services. Long waiting lists, unavailability of openings, and lack awareness among childcare providers of Islamic practices and values were cited as major issues by the Muslim parents in the present inquiry. Efforts should, therefore, be directed towards increasing the supply of religiously-

appropriate ECEC facilities and expanding the resources and support to ECEC providers that offer what immigrant Muslim families seek.

As for multicultural education in textbooks and in young children's literature, and in light of Cho & Park (2014) and Kim (2011), it is recommended to multiply the quantity of the literature dealing with multiculturalism and reflect Muslim identity in the texts and characters of these books. The authors of such literature also need to remain unbiased and try as much as they can to avoid stereotypes towards children of different cultures so that not to affect children's racial attitudes.

As for ECEC practitioners, the following suggestions can be made. First, parents information resources, in their native languages, that address the needs of immigrant Muslim families should be developed to be used by ECEC settings and other social services and migration organizations professionals who work with immigrant families (e.g., availability of public and private childcare centers, formal versus informal ECEC services etc.). Second, ECEC counsellors need to be aware of the needs of immigrant Muslim parents and allot ample time to them to discuss childcare options and parental needs, as well as time to help them negotiate with the system to achieve balance between educational and religious needs. Third, parents tend to rely on informal ways of getting information about ECEC services. Therefore, information dissemination of related information through less formal channels (e.g., ethnic grocery store kiosks, community associations) can be used. Finally, professionals working in the fields of ECEC (administrators, teachers, etc.) need to develop cultural competence to their ability to relate and communicate effectively with immigrants from different culture, ethnicity, or language groups, not only Muslims. It is essential to understand that each ethnically diverse family has its own cultural values and ideas about child rearing.

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