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Soontae AN

Sun Sun LIM
Singapore Management University, sunsunlim@smu.edu.sg

Hannah LEE

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Soontae An[a], Sun Sun Lim[b] and Hannah Lee[a]

[a]Communcantion and Media, Ewha Womans University, Seoul, South Korea; [b]Communication and Technology, Singapore University of Technology and Design, Singapore, Singapore

ABSTRACT

This study analyzed the role and impact of social media use on the daily lives of marriage migrants. We empirically examined a moderated mediation model by surveying 201 marriage migrants. This study focused on four key concepts: social stigma, empowerment, self-stigma, and social networks forged via social media such as Facebook, Kakao Talk, LINE, and Viber. The results confirmed that the detrimental effect of social stigma can be mitigated by robust social networks, and a greater feeling of empowerment resulted in less self-stigma. Consequently, social networks through social media acted as a buffer against negative public opinion or any belittling views. Furthermore, solid social networks were linked to feelings of support and empowerment.

Introduction

Marriage migrants are individuals, typically women, who migrate within countries or across borders due to marriage. South Korea's marriage migrant population has grown steadily (Lim, 2009), with the number of marriage migrants increasing by about 5% annually (Statistic Korea, 2017). These migrants mostly originate from economically less developed countries, and therefore, are often pejoratively labeled as 'helpless,' 'pathetic,' or 'sold' women (Seol, Kim, & Song, 2013). Stigma towards these marriage migrants is a pressing issue, as Korea becomes more culturally diverse yet not necessarily more inclusive (Cho & Song, 2011). Indeed, in addition to Korea, other societies are struggling with the ramifications of marriage migration and growing multiculturalism, underscoring the need for prompt academic investigation.

In particular, the antecedents of stigma towards migrants and its real-life consequences receive little attention. Most government and academic experts view stigma as a given, leading to predominantly paternalistic views and policies. Indeed, most extant studies (e.g. An & Cho, 2011; Kim & Jeong, 2012; Lee & Kang, 2011) regard migrant women as passive objects in need of protection and care. Consequently, limited efforts have been made to understand these women as individuals with unique coping strategies and mechanisms.

Currently, most migrants remain deeply connected to their home countries via social media platforms. Indeed, the notion that migrants are passive individuals who assimilate seamlessly into a host country and leave their home country behind has long been

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CONTACT Soontae An ✉ soontae@ewha.ac.kr 📍 52, Ewhayeodae-gil, Seodaemun-gu, Seoul 03760, Republic of Korea

disproven, with rapid advances in information and communication technologies (ICT) offering a multitude of options to communicate with family and friends back home. The role of ICT, particularly social media, in the daily lives of migrants and its impact on social networks with friends and family requires a comprehensive assessment. The results may be used to determine whether strong social networks empower migrants and increase their resilience in the face of social stigma that is increasingly pervasive in many societies.

We interviewed Vietnamese females, the largest group of marriage migrants in South Korea (Statistic Korea, 2017), to elucidate the role of social media in their daily lives. We investigated four key concepts: social stigma, empowerment, self-stigma, and social networks forged via social media such as Facebook, Kakao Talk, LINE, and Viber. We conducted empirical examination of a moderated mediation model, in which social networks played a moderating role, and empowerment was used as a mediator between social stigma and self-stigma. We first reviewed the relevant literature before presenting our methodology and findings, focusing on the potential of social networks in the internalization of social stigma. We identified the mechanisms underlying the transformation of social stigma to self-stigma as well as the mitigation of stigma internalization via social media use.

Literature review and theoretical framework

Migrants as transnational identity

Expert analyses and social discussions of migrant populations have adopted a rather paternalistic tone, viewing migrants as individuals in need of care and protection. Many empirical studies regarding migrants who face difficulties adjusting to life in Korea subscribe to the notion that these migrants should learn the Korean language to ensure successful adaptation to Korean society (e.g. An & Cho, 2011; Kim, 2008; Kim & Jeong, 2012). Although a few studies involving female marriage migrants (Jang, 2008; Kim, 2006; Seol et al., 2013) have significantly contributed to the development of migrant policies, they have often equated 'adaptation' with 'assimilation,' and reduced marriage migrants to 'passive beings' in need of social protection, without individuality.

To overcome that 'deficit' perspective of marriage migrants, we consider the Vietnamese migrants in our study as trans-migrants. The notion of transmigration rather than immigration views migrants as 'agents' linking the home and host countries (Castles, 2002; Piper, 2003). In the past, physical distance was a critical barrier limiting the frequency and strength of connectivity between countries. Therefore, migrants were viewed in terms of assimilation, leaving their home country completely and settling down in a new one (Glick-Schiller, Basch, & Blanc-Szanton, 1995; Takaki, 1993). However, recent advances in communication technologies have enabled convenient, inexpensive communication between countries. The idea of assimilation is thus no longer applicable to the migrants of the twenty-first century because migrants typically remain connected to their ethnic communities back home (Kim, 2013).

The notion of transmigration also emphasizes that migrants maintain close relations not only within their current society but also with their home country (Glick-Schiller et al., 1995; Parnwell, 2005). Most migrants recognize both countries as critical to their lives (Castles, 2002; Piper, 2003). During an in-depth interview with recently immigrated

brides from Vietnam, Kim (2013) found that they maintain a standing in both societies and formed transnational networks based on 'remittance.' Studies have confirmed that migrants continue to interact with people from their home country, as well as undertake long-term transnational activities (Kim, 2013; Seol et al., 2013).

Social media use and trans-migrant identity

The development of ICT contributes to transnational connections between migrant networks. ICTs facilitate mutual bonding between individuals (Gordon & Manosevitch, 2010; Gordon & Schirra, 2011). The emergence of the Internet and mobile media allow communication to transcend time and space affordably and easily. Individuals not only actively communicate with friends, family, and neighbors in remote locations via internet and mobile devices, but also expand their social capital by meeting new people (Campbell & Kwak, 2011; Hampton & Wellman, 2003).

Lee (2008) found that mobile phones were important tools, not only facilitating migrant women to communicate with family in their new country, but also as a means of sustaining relationships with their families left behind. Sustained communication with family in the home country provides psychological stability and contributes to maintenance of transnational identity. Despite studies of perception and reality in social media use (Lim, An, & Shin, 2012; Lim, An, Shin, & Hwang, 2012), very few studies have analyzed the factors underlying transnational identities of marriage migrants.

Social stigma and self-stigma: internalization of stigma

Due to the traditionally homogeneous nature of Korean society, the status of marriage immigrants itself is partly associated with stigma, increasing their vulnerability to stereotyping and labeling. This labeling attitude serves as a rationale distinguishing migrants from the rest of the population, leading to migrants engaging in a phenomenon of 'othering.' In Jeong's (2007) in-depth interviews with female marriage migrants, an interviewee confessed, 'As Korean society tends to understand international marriage as a distinct class we are often identified as victims in a difficult situation, or ignorant persons from a poor country.' Participants further stated that such identity issues represent the biggest challenge in their life in Korea (Jeong, 2007, pp. 115–116).

'Othering' by the marriage migrants suggests internalized stigma. This process is explained by a modified version of labeling theory proposed by Link, Cullen, Struening, Shrout, and Dohrenwend (1989) on mental patients. Modified labeling theory posits that internalizing social stigma as self-stigma could cause stigmatized individuals with mental disorders to feel threatened by interacting with others and experience negative consequences on their networks, jobs and self-esteem (Link et al., 1989; Link & Phelan, 2001; Vogel, Wade, & Hackler, 2007). A meta-analysis of studies on HIV and stigma by Smith, Rossetto, and Peterson (2008) also found that people with HIV could perceive a high level of HIV-related social stigma and thus, fear their health status and become less confident in eliciting social support.

Within the context of race, immigration and social stigma, people in mainstream society expect stigmatized individuals to remain within the boundaries of stigma, and the perceived identity of the individual is often limited to the same range. Stigmatized

individuals then imbibe and internalize the attitudes of the local community, developing a negative self-concept. Studies involving racial stigma towards immigrants in general have found that those who internalize social stigma stemming from their minority status (Blacks, Hispanics, & Asians) have a significantly lower self-esteem and poorer quality of life because of limited opportunities caused by passive attitudes (Howarth, 2006; Lenhardt, 2004; Twenge & Crocker, 2002). Given the pervasive social stigma against marriage migrants in South Korea, marriage migrants are likely to internalize perceived social stigma, so-called public stigma, as self-stigma (Vogel, Bitman, Hammer, & Wade, 2013). In other words, they could develop a set of beliefs about how others (individuals, groups, and the media) treat migrants in Korea, internalize them being labeled as 'migrants,' and consider themselves as targets of prejudice and discrimination.

Although various studies have researched Asian migrant women and social/internalized stigma, they tend to deal with HIV/AIDS (see for example Cao et al., 2010; Hong et al., 2010). Research specifically on marriage migrants in South Korea, their social support and mental health during the acculturation process, on the other hand, is growing but has focused on public health-related aspects such as marital satisfaction (Im, Lee, & Lee, 2013), anxiety (Lee, Park, Hwang, Im, & Ahn, 2012), life satisfaction and depression (Kim, 2011) and yet to delve into the roles that these marriage migrants' media use could have on their well-being. Therefore, this study concentrates on marriage migrants' social networks *via their social media use* (as opposed to social networks in general) and social/self-stigma.

Characteristics of social networks and stigmatization

Social capital is a resource created by continuous social relationships (Coleman, 1988). Broadly defined, social capital represents individual infrastructure, such as social networks and norms, as well as moral resources, such as trust (Woolcock, 1998). Studies show that social support received via online/offline networks linking the immigrant country with the home country promotes and strengthens the social adaptation of immigrants (Ye, 2006; Ying & Liese, 1991).

Migrants acquire information and emotional support via social relationships. Maintaining self-identity via community participation also increases social capital. Recent studies suggest that social capital has positive effects on the empowerment of migrants in a new society. Lee and Kim (2010) found that self-esteem and levels of depression suffered by migrant women reflect their social networks, including marital relations, relationships with parents and neighbors, and the number of friends. Yang (2010) reported that migrant women who actively engage in social activities expressed greater satisfaction with their lives. Park and Cho (2013) also confirmed that wider social networks indicated higher satisfaction with social support.

Since stigma is specific to social and cultural contexts in societies, the characteristics and levels of stigma differ with the society and cultural norms (Link & Phelan, 2001). The identity of an individual varies with his or her position in society, and therefore, oppression associated with their roles and ways of acceptance also differs (Fortier, 2000; Ganguly, 1992). In this context, transnational migrant women with greater social networks back home and in the migrant country may be more resilient in the face of stigma imposed by Korean society. Solid social networks offer social support and foster feelings of empowerment (Chen & Choi, 2011; Ellison, Steinfield, & Lampe, 2007; Hiller & Franz, 2004).

Smith et al. (2008) found that when HIV-positive people disclosed their status to more people, they reported more social support. However, whether a causal relationship exists between the variables is still unclear. If a person overcomes social stigma and then discloses his or her status, could social support be the source of empowerment to overcome stigma? Concurrently, research by Vogel et al. (2013) demonstrated the important role of interventions 'to interrupt the internalization of public stigma' (Vogel et al., 2013, p. 315). Therefore, in this study, we tested whether the detrimental effect of social stigma can be mitigated by high levels of social networks via social media use so that the increased feeling of empowerment reduced the self-stigma.

The current study: moderated mediation model

Stigmatized members of society could internalize *social stigma* into *self-stigma*. Individuals' *empowerment* can mediate internalization of social stigma through *social networks* equipped with social support. Highlighting the role of social networks via social media, this study delineates the process of empowerment of marriage migrants in South Korea and increased resilience against stigma. Specifically, we assessed the potential of online social networks to interrupt the internalization process. Robust social networks facilitate the coping mechanisms of the migrants with social stigma. An online social network, built around trust and shared norms, provides a buffer against the detrimental effects of stigma (Stanton-Salazar & Spina, 2005; Vinson, 2004). High levels of social networks are conducive to social support and psychological well-being, as evidenced by greater empowerment. However, individuals with limited social networks face internalization of social stigma as self-stigma and acute lack of empowerment. High levels of online social networks and a greater feeling of empowerment reduce the levels of self-stigma. The differential effect of social networks coupled with the mediating role of empowerment explains the mechanism of resilience of marriage migrants against pervasive social stigma. Therefore, we propose the following hypotheses:

H1. Perceived social stigma will be positively associated with self-stigma.

H2. Perceived social stigma will be negatively associated with empowerment.

H3. Empowerment will mediate the relationship between perceived social stigma and self-stigma.

H4a. The negative association between perceived social stigma and empowerment will be moderated by online social networks with Vietnamese.

H4b. The negative association between perceived social stigma and empowerment will be moderated by online social networks with Koreans.

Method

Participants and Procedure

A total of 201 Vietnamese marriage migrants were recruited from the Multicultural Family Support Center in Korea. The center oversees the operations of all multicultural family support centers across the nation, and paper-and-pencil surveys were conducted in

each center after obtaining informed consent. A cash incentive of $10 was given to each survey participant.

The survey questionnaire was developed in Korean and then translated into Vietnamese. Back translation procedures were used when translating the Korean version to Vietnamese. A bilingual communication researcher originally from Vietnam worked as a research assistant. Four key questionnaires including those related to social stigma toward migrant women, self-stigma, social networks, and empowerment, and a page requesting demographic information were provided to the participants. The order of the questionnaires was the same for all participants and all the data were collected between May and July 2016.

Measurements and Descriptive Statistics

(1) **Perceived social stigma**. Perceived social stigma toward migrant women was operationally defined by the negative attitudes of individuals within Korean society (Gu et al., 2010). Perceived social stigma was measured using four items: (1) Most Koreans think that migrant women are not trustworthy ($M = 2.43$, $SD = 1.11$); (2) Most Korean employers are reluctant to hire migrant women ($M = 2.44$, $SD = 1.02$); (3) Most Koreans do not like their children to get close to migrant women's children ($M = 2.40$, $SD = 1.09$); and (4) Most Koreans do not believe the words of migrant women ($M = 2.49$, $SD = 1.10$). All the items were measured on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). Cronbach's alpha of perceived social stigma was .892 ($M = 2.98$, $SD = .71$).

(2) **Self-stigma**. Self-stigma was defined as the stigma felt by migrants in response to stigma in Korea (Gu et al., 2010), and was measured by four items: (1) I think that I am seen as untrustworthy because I am a migrant woman ($M = 2.29$, $SD = 1.20$); (2) I think most Korean employers are reluctant to hire me because I am a migrant woman ($M = 2.19$, $SD = 1.00$); (3) Because I am a migrant woman, people do not want to hang out with me ($M = 2.26$, $SD = 1.13$); and (4) It is hard for my children to get close to Korean friends ($M = 2.18$, $SD = 1.11$). All the items were measured on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). Cronbach's alpha of self-stigma was .807 ($M = 2.43$, $SD = .60$).

(3) **Social networks.** Social networks refer to the supportive resources available via interaction using social media (Harpham, Grant, & Thomas, 2002). Although the definition and measurement of social networks differs among researchers, this study focused on the social networks that provide trust and support to individuals.

First, we measured the network size, based on the scale of online network size adapted from Gil de Zúñiga, Jung, and Valenzuela (2012). Questions were as follows: 'How many Korean friends do you have on social media?' and 'How many Vietnamese friends do you have on social media?' Friends were defined as those they could draw on for help and feel comfortable with. Participants were asked to write down the number of friends they had. Respondents' answers were converted to a 7-point scale: 1 = 0 persons, 2 = 1 to 4 friends, 3 = 5to 9 friends, 4 = 10 to 19 friends, 5 = 20 to 49 friends, 6 = from 50 to 100 friends, and 7 = more than 100 friends (network size with Korean: M = 2.06, SD = 1.17, network size with Vietnamese: M = 3.05, SD = 1.81).

Next, we measured the quality of the social network, using scales for online social capital adapted from Williams' (2006). Three items were used as follows: (1) On social media, there are several people I trust to help solve my problems (Korean: $M = 3.31$, $SD = .95$; Vietnamese: $M = 3.58$, $SD = 1.14$); (2) When I feel lonely, there are several people I can talk to (Korean: $M = 3.29$, $SD = 1.30$; Vietnamese: $M = 3.92$, $SD = 1.59$); and (3) There are several people that I feel comfortable talking to about intimate personal problems (Korean: $M = 3.21$, $SD = 1.13$; Vietnamese: $M = 3.58$, $SD = 1.14$). These were all measured on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (not at all) to 5 (very much). The items were also divided into Korean (Cronbach's alpha = .775, M = 3.27, SD = .94) and Vietnamese (Cronbach's alpha = .767, $M = 3.63$, $SD = .90$). We created the total social network index by averaging the network size and quality.

(4) **Empowerment**. Empowerment was defined as control over one's life, achievement of goals, self-esteem, and self-efficacy (Greenaway, Louis, & Hornsey, 2013). This variable was measured by five items: (1) I generally accomplish what I set out to do ($M = 3.28$, $SD = 1.00$); (2) I have a positive attitude about myself ($M = 3.72$, $SD = 1.76$); (3) I am usually confident about the decisions I make ($M = 3.49$, $SD = 1.92$); (4) I am generally optimistic about the future ($M = 3.29$, $SD = 1.03$); (5) I am in control of my own life ($M = 3.54$, $SD = .98$). Cronbach's alpha of empowerment was 0.761 ($M = 3.44$, $SD = .85$).

Results

Sample characteristics

The average age of participants was 30.54 ($SD = 7.36$) years, and the average length of residence in Korea was 6.71 ($SD = 4.37$) years. Based on educational level, the following categories of participants were included: 81 (40.3%) high-school graduates, 61 (30.3%) middle school graduates, 24 (11.9%) college graduates and 18 (9.0%) with less than middle-school level of education. Table 1 shows the basic characteristics of the participants.

Bivariate correlations

Table 2 shows Pearson correlations between key variables. As expected, perceived social stigma was positively correlated with self-stigma ($r = .44$, $p < .001$). On the other hand, perceived social stigma was negatively correlated with empowerment ($r = −.15$, $p = .040$). Social networks with Vietnamese and Koreans were positively associated with an increased feeling of empowerment (Vietnamese network: $r = .24$, $p = .002$; Korean network: $r = .25$, $p = .001$) and negatively associated with self-stigma (Vietnamese network: $r = −.21$, $p = .004$; Korean network: $r = −.20$, $p = .006$). In addition, an increased feeling of empowerment was associated with low levels of self-stigma ($r = −.52$, $p < .001$).

Discriminant validity of scales: perceived social stigma v. self-stigma

We conducted a confirmatory factor analysis to verify the discriminant validity of two scales: perceived social stigma and self-stigma. A maximum likelihood estimation was conducted using AMOS software. The CFA results indicated an acceptable fit (CMIN/

Table 1. Participants' characteristics.

Variables	M (SD)	N (%)
Age	30.54 (7.36)	
Education Level		
Lower than middle school		18 (9.0%)
Middle school graduate		61 (30.3%)
High school graduate		81 (40.3%)
College graduate		24 (11.9%)
Missing		17 (8.5%)
Vietnamese Family Income		
Less than $100		0 (0%)
$100–$500		4 (2.0%)
$500–$1,000		3 (1.5%)
$1,000–$1,500		2 (1.0%)
$1,500–$2,000		21 (10.5%)
$2,000–$2,500		109 (54.3%)
More than $2,500		27 (13.4%)
Missing		35 (17.4%)
Korean Family Income		
Less than $1,000		25 (12.4%)
$1,000–$2,000		51 (25.4%)
$2,000–$3,000		64 (31.8%)
$3,000–$4,000		22 (10.9%)
$4,000–$5,000		13 (6.5%)
More than $5,000		7 (3.5%)
Missing		19 (9.5%)
Number of Children	1.49 (.64)	
Length of Residential Period in Korea	6.71 (4.37)	
Korean Language Competence		
The highest level		2 (1.0%)
High level		7 (3.5%)
Mid-level		43 (21.4%)
Mid-low level		85 (42.3%)
Low level		36 (17.9%)
The lowest level		12 (6.0%)
Missing		16 (8.0%)
Language for Social Media Use		
Korean		47 (23.4%)
Vietnamese		84 (41.8%)
Both		42 (20.9%)
Missing		28 (13.9%)

Table 2. Correlations between key variables.

	1	2	3	4	5
1. Perceived Social Stigma	1				
2. Social Network with Vietnamese	.06	1			
3. Social Network with Koreans	.07	.06	1		
4. Empowerment	−.15*	.24**	.25**	1	
5. Self Stigma	.44***	−.21**	−.20**	−.52***	1

*p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001

df = 2.63, CFI = .98, TLI = .96, IFI = .98 and RMSEA = .06). To evaluate discriminant validity, a comparison of each construct's Average Variance Extracted (AVE) versus the squared correlation between the constructs was completed. As shown in Table 3, all the AVE values were higher than the square correlations that perceived social stigma has with self-stigma. Therefore, the discriminant validity was demonstrated.

Table 3. Results of CFA for discriminant validity.

Constructs	Item	Factor Loading	S.E	t	p	Composite Reliability	AVE	Square Correlations
Perceived social stigma	SO_S1	.79				.75	.69	.57
	SO_S2	.98	.08	15.18	***			
	SO_S3	.79	.08	12.20	***			
	SO_S4	.73	.08	11.05	***			
Self-stigma	SE_S1	.90				.77	.77	
	SE_S2	.89	.06	15.67	***			
	SE_S3	.83	.06	15.01	***			
	SE_S4	.88	.08	12.87	***			

***$p < .001$.
Loading of AVE should be $\geq .50$. The cutoff value for CRI is $\geq .70$ (cf., Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

Moderated mediation model: Social network with Vietnamese

The hypothesized model was examined using the SPSS PROCESS macro model 7 (Hayes, 2013). Age, length of residential period in Korea, Korean language competence and educational level were entered as covariates. We used list-wise deletion for handling missing data. First, we confirmed that the relationship between perceived social stigma and empowerment was moderated by social networks with Vietnamese ($R^2 = .47$, F (7, 177) = 22.08, $p < .001$). Social networks with Vietnamese ($t = 9.07$, $p < .001$) significantly predicted empowerment, but perceived social stigma did not ($t = -1.01$, $p = .316$). More importantly, the effect of interaction between perceived social stigma and social networks was significant ($t = 2.24$, $p = .027$). As illustrated in Figure 1, the negative effect of perceived social stigma on empowerment was stronger among those with few social networks than among those with a large number of social networks. When participants had a larger number of social networks with Vietnamese, their feelings of empowerment did not change significantly in relation to their perceived social stigma.

We analyzed the conditional direct and indirect effects of social stigma. The mediation model was significant and accounted for 73.1% of the variance in self-stigma (F (6, 178) =
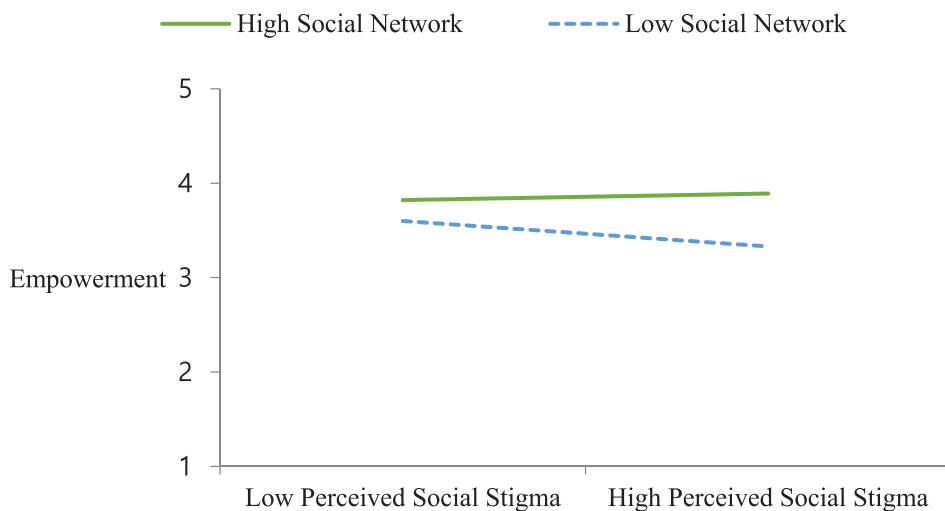

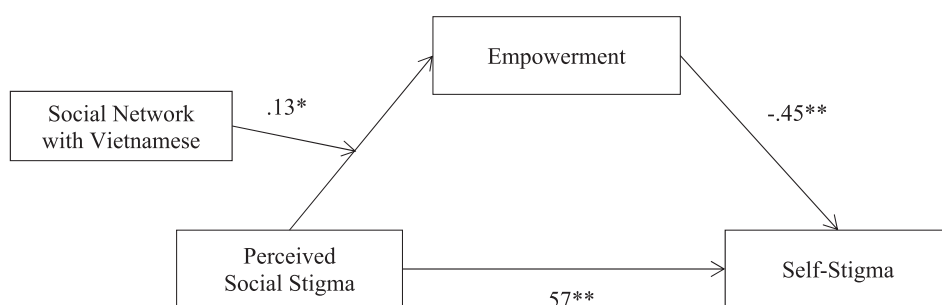**Figure 1.** Interaction effect of social networks on empowerment (Social network with Vietnamese).

Figure 2. Moderated mediation model (Social network with Vietnamese).

Note. All path coefficients represent unstandardized regression weights. *p < .05, **p < .01.

73.10, p < .001). The results revealed a significant direct effect of perceived social stigma on self-stigma (t = 15.30, p < .001), which remained significant after the inclusion of empowerment in the model (t = −6.84, p < .001; see Figure 2). Finally, a test of moderated mediation confirmed the role of empowerment as a mediator and the moderating role of social networks with Vietnamese (Index = −.06, SE = .02, 95% CI [−.10, −.02]) (Tables 4 and 5).

Moderated mediation model: Social network with Koreans

To test the moderated mediation model of social network with Koreans, we also used the SPSS PROCESS macro Model 7 (Hayes, 2013). Covariates were age, length of residential period in Korea, Korean language competence and education level. Missing data were handled with list-wise deletion of cases. Similar patterns of relationships were found involving significant main effects of social networks (t = 3.74, p = .00, p. 2) on empowerment (R^2 = .30, F (7, 177) = 10.75, p < .001). Further, the effect of interaction between perceived social stigma and social networks was statistically significant in influencing empowerment (t = 4.60, p < .001) suggesting that the negative effect of perceived social stigma on

Table 4. Results of Process Model 7 (Social Networks with Vietnamese).

Mediating Variable: Empowerment	B	SE	t	LLCI	ULCI
Constant	3.69	.17	21.84	3.36	4.02
Perceived Social Stigma	−.04	.04	−1.01	−.11	.03
Social Network with Vietnamese	.35	.04	9.07	.27	.42
Social Stigma x Social Network with Vietnamese	.13	.06	2.24	.02	.24
Age	−.00	.01	−.40	−.01	.01
Length of Residential Period in Korea	−.04	.02	−2.20	−.07	−.00
Korean Language Competence	−.04	.02	−1.84	−.07	−.00
Education Level	.07	.02	2.98	.02	.11
R^2 = .47, F (7, 177) = 22.08, p < .001					
Dependent Variable: Self-Stigma	B	SE	t	LLCI	ULCI
Constant	3.30	.30	10.86	2.70	3.90
Empowerment	−.45	.07	−6.84	−.58	−.32
Perceived Social Stigma	.57	.04	15.30	.49	.64
Age	.01	.01	2.31	.00	.03
Length of Residential Period in Korea	.03	.02	1.65	−.01	.07
Korean Language Competence	.17	.22	7.51	.12	.21
Education Level	−.08	.03	−3.31	−.13	−.03
R^2 = .71, F (6, 178) = 73.10, p < .001					

Table 5. Results of Moderated Mediation (Social Networks with Vietnamese).

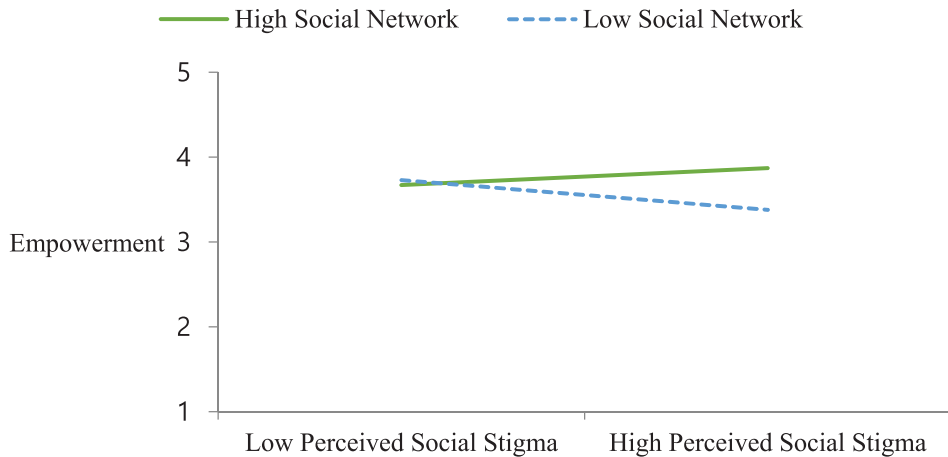| Mediating Variable	Conditional Indirect Effect of Perceived Social stigma on Self-Stigma according to Values of Social Network with Vietnamese				
	Moderating Variable	Effect	Boot SE	Boot LLCI	Boot ULCI
Low	−.64	.05	.02	.02	.09
Average	.00	.02	.02	−.02	.04
High	.64	−.02	.02	−.07	.02

Figure 3. Interaction effect of Social Networks on Empowerment (Social network with Koreans).

empowerment was greater among those with fewer social networks. The lowest level of empowerment occurred when participants perceived high levels of perceived social stigma but with limited social networks involving Koreans (see Figure 3). Feelings of empowerment did not change substantially based on perceived social stigma among those who entered into large social networks with Koreans.

Table 6. Results of Process Model 7 (Social Networks with Koreans).

Mediating Variable: Empowerment	B	SE	t	LLCI	ULCI
Constant	3.96	.21	18.53	3.54	4.38
Perceived Social Stigma	−.05	.04	−1.36	−.13	.02
Social Network with Koreans	.05	.01	3.74	.02	.07
Social Stigma x Social Network with Koreans	.08	.02	4.60	.05	.12
Age	.01	.01	.83	−01	.02
Length of Residential Period in Korea	−.07	.02	−3.80	−.11	−.04
Korean Language Competence	−.06	.02	−2.49	−.10	−01
Education Level	−.00	.03	−.14	−.06	.05
$R^2 = .30$, $F (7, 177) = 10.75$, $p < .001$					

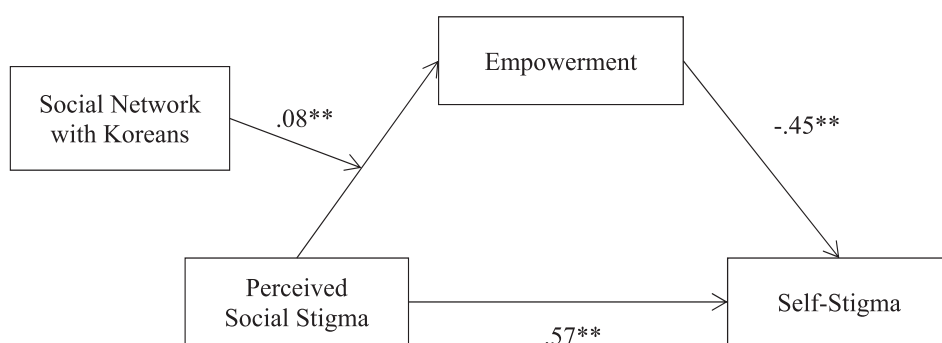| Dependent Variable: Self-Stigma	B	SE	t	LLCI	ULCI
Constant	3.30	.30	10.86	2.70	3.90
Empowerment	−.45	.07	−6.84	−.58	−.32
Perceived Social Stigma	.57	.04	15.30	.49	.64
Age	.01	.01	2.31	.00	.03
Length of Residential Period in Korea	.03	.02	1.65	−.01	.07
Korean Language Competence	.17	.22	7.51	.12	.21
Education Level	−.08	.03	−3.31	−.13	−.03
$R^2 = .71$, $F (6, 178) = 73.10$, $p < .001$					

Figure 4. Moderated mediation model (Social network with Koreans).

Note. All path coefficients represent unstandardized regression weights. *$p < .05$, **$p < .01$.

Table 7. Results of Moderated Mediation (Social Networks with Koreans).

Mediating Variable	Conditional Indirect Effect of Perceived Social stigma on Self Stigma according to Values of Social Network with Koreans				
	Moderating Variable	Effect	Boot SE	Boot LLCI	Boot ULCI
Low	−2.33	.11	.03	.06	0.16
Average	.00	.02	.02	−.01	.06
High	2.33	−.06	.02	−.11	−.02

Next, we analyzed the mediation effect of empowerment. As shown in Table 6, the direct effect of perceived social stigma on self-stigma was significant ($t = 15.30$, $p < .001$). The indirect effect of perceived social stigma on self-stigma via empowerment was also significant ($t = -6.84$, $p < .001$). More specifically, higher levels of perceived social stigma resulted in a low degree of empowerment, which, in turn, heightened self-stigma. The moderated mediation model was significant (Index = −.04, SE = .01, 95% CI [−.05, −.02]; see Table 7), as illustrated in Figure 4.

Discussion

This study examined the role and effect of social media on the daily lives of migrants, using quantitative approaches. Results confirmed the internalization of perceived social stigma as self-stigma, the moderating role of social networks, and more importantly, the value of the proposed moderated mediation model. The relationships with both Koreans and Viet-namese showed that the detrimental effect of perceived social stigma was mitigated by high levels of social networks, and a greater feeling of empowerment diminished the extent of self-stigma.

Findings provide useful inroads for policy interventions that can more sensitively and constructively support migrants as they adapt to the host country. Significantly too, it points to the liberating potential that ICT have in terms of providing a 'safe haven' for new entrants to a society to make new co-national and local friends and augment their overall construction of social networks, thereby diminishing the impact of social stigma-tization. Non-governmental organizations that offer assistance to migrants can also there-fore leverage social media to connect with migrants and help them build up their social networks to better assimilate them.

The study results also underscore the notion of trans-migration suggesting that migrants maintain close relations not only with their current society but also with their home country thanks to social media being readily available and low-cost (Glick-Schiller et al., 1995; Parnwell, 2005). Results are consistent with previous studies (Castles, 2002; Kim, 2013; Piper, 2003; Seol et al., 2013) showing migrants' constant interaction with similar ethnic groups from their home country, as well as their long-term transnational activities. Given the limited number of studies investigating the role of social media among marriage migrants, the current study is significant in extending the notion of trans-national identities of migrants via social media use.

Ultimately, in a globalized world, it is entirely plausible and possible for people to sustain various identities that reflect membership in more than one community in more than one geographical location. This ability to demonstrate allegiance to a few 'imagined communities' is in many ways enabled and facilitated by ICT. Platforms such as social media make it possible to transcend geographical and cultural barriers, and for people with cosmopolitan existences to assert and enact a range of identities, while consuming a diversity of local and international media content. Migrants in particular can therefore draw their self-perceptions from both their homeland as well as their host country which in many ways helps them to reconcile themselves to their transient status and build a more coherent sense of self. Again, migrant support groups can utilize this useful insight to apprise migrants of the fact that their multiple allegiances should not be a source of internal conflict but can well assist them as they seek to come to terms with their feelings of attachment to both home and host countries.

The key finding derived from the study is the significance and value of transnational activities via social media. Most of all, in addition to the virtual companionship and a sense of belonging, social media were found to empower migrants via daily greetings and updates about significant others, as well as support and encouragement, which, in turn, enhanced their psychological well-being while coping with challenges in Korea. Social media provided a shield against the internalization of perceived social stigma, functioning as a critical infrastructure for migrants' social networks. This finding is consistent, too, with previous studies (Chen & Choi, 2011; Ellison et al., 2007; Hiller & Franz, 2004).

The limitations of the study are as follows. The current study is based on young female Vietnamese migrants. Therefore, its findings might not be extrapolated to other ethnic groups, nor can they be generalized to individual migrants with different demographic profiles, such as gender and age. In terms of stigma scale, we used the current scales for general populations, suggesting that specific scales targeting Vietnamese migrants might be more accurate in delineating perceived social stigma as well as internalization of such stigma. Further, results are limited to the use of social network sites as Facebook and Instant messaging platforms including Kakao Talk. The use of other social media might highlight different dimensions of migrants' transnational activities.

Despite its limitations, this study does demonstrate the potential value of social media to migrants. Previous studies (Link & Phelan, 2001; Vogel et al., 2013) indicated that because stigma develops socially and is transmitted via social interactions, stigmatizing labels lead to passive acceptance of identity conferred by society. This study, however, revealed the coping mechanisms contributing to resilience against social stigma among migrants. In particular, the empirical results highlighted the potential benefits of transnational social networks in empowering migrants against the internalization of social stigma,

suggesting that maintaining social networks via social media offer migrants an opportunity to become agents of their own lives. Our results not only enhance our understanding of the mechanisms underlying the transformation of perceived social stigma to self-stigma, but also provide insights into the mitigation of stigma internalization via social media use, as opposed to past research on marriage migrants in South Korea that has not highlighted the role of media use in building social networks for their acculturation (Im et al., 2013; Kim, 2011; Lee et al., 2012).

Additional investigation is needed to determine the ways to promote solid social networks among migrants to build social support and psychological well-being. Significantly, the question of digital divide should be carefully revisited in the field of social media, targeting individuals with limited social networks. The study results also raise a red flag for the internalization of perceived social stigma and the lack of empowerment among those who are less connected and more detached from the sources of social support. Further research is needed to determine alternate interventions for those who are less connected and isolated from transnational social networks. Such digital divide between haves and have-nots inhibits social cohesion and adversely affects the wellbeing of marriage migrants. Therefore, adequate and appropriate support should be provided to those with limited social networks, in light of intervention programs and policies.

As Korea transforms into a multicultural society, embracing migrant populations is critical to its survival and success. Most of all, the well-being of female marriage migrants is essential not only for the fulfillment of migrant potential, but also for future generations in Korea. Stigma toward marriage migrants, which prevents them from fulfilling their full potential, warrants more systematic and thorough investigation.

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Notes on contributors

Soontae An (Ph.D., University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill) is a Professor in the Division of Communication and Media at Ewha Womans University. Her research expertise is in the area of health communication and social marketing. Studies on vulnerable populations such as children, youth, minority women, and seniors have been of her research interest. She has published more than 90 peer-reviewed articles in journals including *Journal of Advertising*, *Journal of Advertising Research*, *Psychology and Marketing*, *Psychiatry Research*, *Archives of Suicide Research*, *International Journal of Advertising*, *Health Communication*, *Journal of Health Communication*, *Health Marketing Quarterly*, *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly*, *Journal of Media Economics*, and *Communication Law and Policy*.

Sun Sun Lim (Ph.D., London School of Economics) is a Professor of Communication and Technology and Head of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences at the Singapore University of Technology and Design. Her recent research has focused on understudied and marginalized populations including young children, youths-at-risk and migrant workers. She also conducts research on new media

literacies, with a special focus on literacy challenges in parental mediation and young people's Internet skills. She has published more than 70 book chapters and articles in notable edited volumes and international journals including the *Journal of Computer Mediated Communication*, *Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media*, *Computers in Human Behaviour*, *Communications of the ACM*, *Telematics & Informatics*, and the *Asian Journal of Communication*. She serves on the editorial board of 10 journals.

Hannah Lee is a doctoral student in the Division of Communication and Media at Ewha Womans University. She has studied stigma towards social minorities such as suicidal people, migrant women and young children. Her recent research focuses on the relationship between culture and stigma.

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