

An Influx of Refugees into Jeju Island and its Effects on the Jeju Residents' Cultural Sensitivity

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ABSTRACT: This research investigated how recent issues surrounding refugees in Jeju had affected the residents' cultural sensitivity. The responses of 109 Jeju residents were used for an analysis. An independent *t*-test was conducted to see the difference in cultural difference in two groups: the residents who view refugees as potential neighbors and those who don't. Based on the result of Pearson's correlation analysis, a multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to see how refugee-related variables explain the change in residents' cultural sensitivity. The result revealed that people open to refugees have a higher level of cultural sensitivity, and women in Jeju fear refugees more so than men. Also, Korean identity is negatively correlated with cultural sensitivity. Most importantly, the findings of this research suggested that accepting refugees can foster Jeju residents' cultural sensitivity, which is vital to the Jeju economy and its community.

KEYWORDS: Refugees, Jeju Island, Cultural Sensitivity, Human Rights, Korean Identity

Introduction

To bridge Korea and the rest of the world, Jeju Island serves as a gateway through which foreigners come and experience Korean culture. Because the number of foreign visitors and immigrant has grown exponentially over the past decades, a series of new policies had been devised and implemented to improve the residents' acceptance about different cultures and their differences (Chung & Ko 2013). Because the Jeju economy is largely dependent upon tourism, the residents' genuine opinions about outsiders cannot surface explicitly. However, a recent influx of Yemeni refugees into Jeju has denuded the bare face of how the residents perceive of foreigners.

According to Jeju Immigration Service (JIS), the number of Yemeni refugees applied for a refugee status reached 549 as of June 2018. Compared to 42 in 2017, the number had grown more than ten times within a year. This exponential growth of Yemeni refugees had stirred Jeju community; having heard the news, an online Jeju community was flooded with anti-Yemeni or anti-Islamic postings (Oh, 2018). More than 220,000 people signed the Blue House Citizen's petition asking for the government to deport the refugees from Jeju (Park 2018).

When looking at the statistics regarding refugee status in Korea, more than 5,000 people applied for refugee status in Korea as of December 2012, but the status was granted to merely 324 of them (Ahn & Yoon 2013). Looking at 1143 refugee applicants of 2012, 348 of them applied for the status, seeking a political asylum; 291 of them did so because of religious persecution, 35 of them did it because of racial discrimination; 52 did because they were from a unique social group, 29 of them did so because they wanted to reunite with their family living in Korea; and 3 of them did so for Korean citizenship (Ahn & Yoon 2013).

Korea, an export-oriented economy, benefited immensely from globalization, which brought down fences around the world and raised the country from post-war devastation. Now, Korea is perceived to be one of the top economic powerhouses in the world. Therefore, how Korea will live up to the expectation of the international community as a responsible member is the question that must be addressed. To this end, a set of reliable evidence about the residents and their perception toward foreigners must be made available. This research, therefore, investigates how residents' cultural sensitivity with regard to refugees.

Literature Review

1. *Foreigners in Jeju*

From the 1980s, the number of people who live away from their countries of birth had increased to 191 million by 2005 (The Department of Economic and Social Affairs, UN 2006). An increasing ethnic or

racial diversity of a society is the byproduct of migration, making a previously uniform society into a multi-cultural (Lee 2016).

Looking at the influx of foreigners into Korea, Korea Immigration Service (KIS) has reported that 2,298,949 foreigners are found in South Korea as of July 2018. KIS reports that 431,335 of these people are those that have Korean ethnicity with foreign nationalities, 666,218 of foreigners are visiting Korea temporarily, and a total of 1,201,396 foreign residents are residing in Korea. Looking closely, approximately 46% of the foreigners are Chinese, 8% are Vietnamese, 8% are Thai, 7% are American, and 3% are Uzbekistani (Korea Immigration Service, 2018). Since the number of foreigners in Korea went beyond a million in 2007 (Roh 2013), the number more than doubled over a decade.

According to statistics, 1,161,677 foreigners, from the total of 52,857,893, were living in Korea as of 2016. In comparison, 19,593 foreigners were living in Jeju from its total of 661,190 (Government Policy Coordinator 2017). Compared to the fact that 2.2% of people living in Korea are foreigners, the foreigners in Jeju take up 2.9%. Not only are more foreigners living in Jeju, but more foreign travelers are coming to visit Jeju than anywhere else in the country. This means that the residents' cultural sensitivity is of critical concern that must be thoroughly explored and investigated so that the community can better understand how they perceive foreigners and take appropriate measures to promote accommodating air for foreigners.

2. *Xenophobia and Theories Pertaining to Refugee Crisis*

Known for a group threat theory, Blalock (1967) claims that when people native to a land feel like their interests are being threatened because of an influx of immigrants, they are inclined to take measures to protect themselves. Simply put, the group threat theory purports that culturally or ethnically distinct groups living in proximity causes hostility and conflicts (Roh 2013). If this group threat theory holds true and grows worse, the native may feel like they are the majority being threatened by a minority group, and this is called a predatory identity (Appadurai 2006).

Xenophobia—attitudes, prejudices, or behavior that reject or exclude people based on their origins outside of a community, society or a nation (ILO 2001)—is not a new social phenomenon. The history of human civilization is filled with stories by which immigrants had been hated or persecuted. Xenophobia differs from racism in that discrimination by race is derived from skin colors and outer appearances, whereas discrimination, a byproduct of xenophobia, is derived from repulsion stemming from regional, cultural, and ideological differences (Choi 2016). If this xenophobia is not successfully controlled for, it can lead to hate crimes by natives. And this hate crime has a broader impact on victims than ordinary crimes because it sends a message to an entire immigrant community (Lee 2016).

3. *Cultural Sensitivity*

Cultural sensitivity, or multicultural acceptability, is defined to be a community's degree of accepting disparate groups that have ethnic or cultural differences; it can also mean how much a government accepts multi-cultures or implements related policies (Bechetti, Rossetti & Castriota 2010; Lee & Kim 2012). Cultural sensitivity is also defined as an attitude accepting and advocating multiethnic and multicultural changes (Hwang et al. 2007). Yoon and Song (2011) defined it as a degree to which people in a community accept those with different ethnic or cultural backgrounds into the community.

Hwang et al. (2007) analyzed factors determining multicultural acceptability and found that the acceptability differs by age groups; those who were in the 20s or 30s were more open to multi-cultures, whereas those who were older than 40 showed limited, or negative attitude toward different cultures. Lee et al. (2010) investigated the correlation between people's educational background and social distance. They found that people with higher educational attainment show less social distance.

Federico (2005) found that people with high educational attainment internalize the value of accepting those with differences. Ahn's (2012) study revealed that people with low socio-economic status (SES), as compared to those with high SES, were less likely to accept multi-cultures. Choi (2016) argued that people with low SES would be less likely to receive multi-cultures because they

perceive foreigners or immigrants as potential competitors who threaten their job security and others. And followings are the research questions to be explored in this research.

Q1. Do people who accept refugees into their community have different levels of cultural sensitivity?

Q2. How does Jeju residents' demographics explain their cultural sensitivity?

Q3. How does Korean identity affect Jeju residents' cultural sensitivity?

Q4. How do Jeju residents' attitudes toward refugees explain their cultural sensitivity?

Table and figures

The data collected by the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family (MOGEF) and the Korean Women's Development Institute (KWDI) had been used in this analysis. 4,000 people from 17 cities and provinces across the Republic of Korea had been collected over three weeks from September 1st, 2015. This door-to-door survey had been collected every three years to examine the trends of cultural diversity, multicultural resistance, Korean identity, perception toward the multicultural environment. Therefore, the population from which this sample was drawn consisted of men and women aged 19 through 74 in Korea. Because this research was targeting Jeju residents specifically, the original sample was sorted to extract Jeju responses only. As a result, the remaining 109 responses collected in Jeju were used in this analysis.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics

	N	Mean	SD	Minimum	Maximum
Age	109	44.35	14.97	19	74
Gender	109	1.55	0.50	0	1
Job Priority to Koreans	109	0.56	0.50	0	1
Can live with Refugees	109	0.63	0.48	0	1
Refugee's Human Rights	109	2.66	0.58	1	4
Korean Identity	109	2.88	0.55	1	4
Global Citizenship	109	2.92	0.48	1.67	4
Cultural Sensitivity	109	3.26	0.71	1	5
Valid(listwise)	109				

1. Controlling Variable Explained

Table 2. Importance of Korean Identity Variable

In the list below, indicate the importance of each factor to be recognized as a Korean in a 4 point scale	Completely Unimportant	Unimportant	Important	Very Important
1. Having born in Korea	1	2	3	4
2. Having the same ancestry	1	2	3	4
3. Biological father being a Korean national	1	2	3	4
4. Biological mother begin a Korean national	1	2	3	4
5. Spending most of one's life in Korea	1	2	3	4
6. Sharing Korean cultural traditions	1	2	3	4
7. Speaking Korea	1	2	3	4
8. Respecting Korea's law and political system	1	2	3	4
9. Feeling like a Korea	1	2	3	4
10. Having a Korean citizenship	1	2	3	4
11. Contributing to the development of Korea's politics, society and culture.	1	2	3	4

As illustrated in *Table 2*, the total of 11 questions indicating Korean identity were used as a controlling variable included in a regression analysis below. Cronbach's coefficient *alpha* was .908; therefore the 11 questions had been merged together into a single variable. Korea has prided in its singular ethnic composition and its resilience despite hundreds of invasions from the outside. Given this national pride and emphasis on uniformity, Korean identity variable was deemed necessary to be controlled for.

Table 3. Global Community

How much do you agree with the following?	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1.I consider myself to be a citizen of global community	1	2	3	4
2.I consider myself to be a part of Northeast Asian community	1	2	3	4
3.I consider myself to be a part of Korean community	1	2	3	4
4.I consider myself to be a part of local community	1	2	3	4
5.I consider myself to be a part of my family	1	2	3	4
6.I consider myself to be an independent being	1	2	3	4

Six question items indicating the respondents' sense of community was measured. Cronbach's coefficient alpha of the four items was .813; as a result, they were also merged into a single variable. People in Jeju have more chances to meet and interact with foreigners because, unlike mainland Korea, no visa is required to enter Jeju. That is, they have more chances to see the outsiders; through them, Jeju residents have more chances to foster global citizenship.

Table 4. Care about Human Rights of Refugees

How much do you agree with the following?	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1.Korean government's acceptance standard must be a more lenient embrace more refugees.	1	2	3	4
2.Korean government must provide medical insurance, social welfare as a humane gesture to those who are granted refugee status and those who are under review.	1	2	3	4
3.I consider myself to be a part of Korean community	1	2	3	4
4.I consider myself to be a part of local community	1	2	3	4
5.I consider myself to be a part of my family	1	2	3	4
6.I consider myself to be an independent being	1	2	3	4

Four question items indicating different degrees of accepting refugees were measured. Cronbach's coefficient *alpha* of the four items was .844; as a result, they were merged into a single variable. This variable must not be confused with the other dummy variable asking whether or not the respondents want to be neighbors with refugees. The refugees' human rights variable is more about viewing refugees as those who are entitled to the same degree of care and protection that Korean citizens are enjoying.

Prior to running an analysis, the questions asking respondents whether or not they want to live with people with following characteristics were carefully examined: Drug addicts, those with different races, AIDS patients, immigrant or migrant workers, homosexuals, people with different religious beliefs, alcoholics, singles, and refugees.

Table 5. Categorical Variables

Variables	Do not want to live	Want to live
Drug addicts	100%	0%
Those with AIDs	95%	5%
Alcoholics	84%	16%
Homosexuals	79%	21%
Refugees	37%	63%
Singles	34%	66%
Those with different race	31%	69%
Those with different religion	27%	73%
Immigrants or Migrant workers	22%	78%

As illustrated in Table 5, all respondents did not wish to live together with drug addicts. 95% of the respondents said that they do not wish to live with AIDS patients. 84% of them said they do not wish to live with alcoholics. 79% of them said they do not want to live with homosexuals.

On the other hand, 63% of the Jeju residents said they want to live with refugees. 66% of them said they want to live with singles. 69% said they want to live with people of different race. 73% said they could live with people of different religions. 78% of them said they can also live with immigrant or migrant workers. All these variables were recorded to be used as categorical variables for further analysis. Since the focal point of this research was to examine the residents' perception toward refugees, two groups were divided into those who do not want to live and those who want to.

Table 6. Giving Job Priority to Koreans over Foreigners

How much do you agree with the following?	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
“When jobs are scarce, job priority must be given to Korean citizens over foreign nationals.”	1	2	3

This variable illustrated in Table 6 was recoded into a categorical variable to be included as a controlling variable. Giving job priority to Koreans was considered by far the most representative indicator as viewing refugees not as an outsider but as a genuine neighbor. Out of 109 respondents, only 3 people disagreed with giving priority to Koreans and 45 people stayed neutral when jobs opportunity is limited.

2. Dependent Variable Explained

Table 7. Cultural Sensitivity

The following questions are asking you about an increased interaction between Korean and immigrants	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Average	Agree	Strongly Agree
1.An increasing racial, religious, and cultural diversity strengthens our nation's competitiveness	1	2	3	4	5
2.In any country, racial, religious and cultural diversity is desirable	1	2	3	4	5
3.An increase number of foreign immigrants will make Korean culture more fertile than now.	1	2	3	4	5
4.Accepting foreign born immigrants to Korea will debilitate our country's unity	1	2	3	4	5
5.Korea's long-lasting genealogy and single identity is something that its citizen must be proud of.	1	2	3	4	5
6.Korea	1	2	3	4	5

When the validity of the six question items illustrated in Table 4 was examined, the upper three from the lower three items did not seem to share a common psychological construct. The first three questions seemed to ask about the desirability of racial, religious, and cultural diversity, whereas the other three (questions 4,5,6) seemed to indicate the opposite. Cronbach's coefficient alpha of all six question items was .660, which corroborated this doubt. When the reliability of the first three questions was measured, the Cronbach's coefficient alpha was .845.

Based on this figure, the first three questions were merged into a single variable indicating the respondents' cultural sensitivity.

Table 8. *t-test* for who want to be neighbors with refugees and those who do not.

		Can Live w/ Refugees (n=69)	Cannot Live w/ Refugees (n=40)	Mean Difference	t	p-value
Job Priority to Korea	Means (SD)	0.507(0.504)	0.630(0.483)	-0.143	1.464	0.147
Refugees' Human Rights	Means (SD)	2.678 (0.611)	2.631(0.543)	-0.046	-0.397	0.692
Global Citizenship	Means (SD)	2.964 (0.441)	0.2850 (0.531)	-0.114	-1.204	0.231
Cultural Sen	Means (SD)	3.401 (0.692)	3.017 (0.688)	-0.384	-2.801	0.006

When compared the mean differences between people who do *not* want to be neighbors with refugees and those who do, *no* statistically significant difference was found for giving job priority to Korean over foreigner, people perception toward refugees' human rights, and their global citizenship. However, the

cultural sensitivity of the people who wish to be neighbors with refugees was higher than that of those who do not wish to live together with refugees, $t(109) = -2.801, p = 0.006$

Table 9. Pearson's Correlation of included Variables

	Age	Gender	Job Priority	Live w/ Refugee	Refugee' Rights	Korean Identity	Global Citizenship
Gender	.027						
Job Priority	.173	.016					
Live w/ Refugee	.068	-.191*	-.139				
Refugees' Rights	-.039	-.012	-.303**	.038			
Korean Identity	-.005	.351**	.154	-.135	-.116		
Global Citizenship	.231*	-.019	-.094	.116	.333**	-.047	
Cultural Sensitivity	.093	-.172	-.379**	.261**	.505**	-.278**	.391**

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$

Followings are the Pearson's correlations of the variables incorporated in this analysis:

1. Age is correlated with global citizenship ($r = .231, p = .016$).
2. Gender is correlated with the desire to be neighbors with refugees ($r = -.191, p = .047$) and Korean identity ($r = .351, p < .001$). Since men are coded as 0, we can see that females are less likely to want to be neighbors with refugees. However, females show a stronger Korean identity.
3. Job priority variable is correlated with refugees' human rights ($r = -.303, p = .001$) and cultural sensitivity ($r = -.379, p < .001$). This means that those who advocate giving job priority to Korean are less likely to care about refugees' human rights, and these people also show less cultural sensitivity.
4. As illustrated in the t -test (See Table 8), those who wish to be neighbors with refugees are correlated with cultural sensitivity ($r = .261, p = .006$).
5. Refugees' human rights variable is correlated with global citizenship ($r = .333, p < .001$) and cultural sensitivity ($r = .505, p < .001$). This means that the refugee human rights advocates have much higher global citizenship and higher cultural sensitivity than those who are indifferent about the human rights.
6. Korean identity variable is correlated with cultural sensitivity ($r = -.278, p = .003$). This means that those who place a greater value on Korean identity tend to have lower cultural sensitivity.
7. Global citizenship is correlated with cultural sensitivity ($r = .391, p < .001$). Therefore, those who have higher global citizenship tend to have a stronger cultural sensitivity.

Table 10. Regression analysis of Cultural Sensitivity

	Unstandardized Coefficient		Standardized	t	p-value
	B	Standard Error	Beta		
Constant	1.803	.489		3.685	.000
Want to Live with Refugee	.250	.112	.170	2.237	.027
Refugee Acceptance	.413	.101	.340	4.112	.000
Agree with Giving Job Priority to Koreans	-.291	.113	-.204	-2.574	.011
Korean Identity	-.224	.093	-.174	-2.293	.024
Global Citizenship	.345	.118	.231	2.909	.004

Dependent Variable: Cultural Sensitivity

After I fitted a regression model predicting the participant's cultural sensitivity, F-statistics (5,103) is 4.726 ($p < .001$), meaning that the above model's predictability is higher than a model using mean values of the independent variables to predict cultural sensitivity. The intercept shows that the level of cultural sensitivity is approximately 1.803 when the rest of the variables are zero, $p < .001$. The result of the analysis has revealed the followings:

1. Those who want to live with refugees have .250 higher cultural sensitivity than those who do not wish to live with refugees ($p = .027$) when holding the other variables constant.

2. When the hospitability toward refugees increases by one-point, cultural sensitivity is expected to increase by .413 ($p < .001$) when holding the rest of the variables constant.
3. Those who agree with giving Koreans job priority over foreign or immigrant workers are expected to have .291 ($p = .011$) lower cultural sensitivity than those who either disagree or have a neutral position when holding the rest of the variables constant.
4. When the importance of Korean identity increases by one, cultural sensitivity is expected to decrease by .224 ($p = .024$) when holding the rest of the variables constant. (5) When global citizenship increases by one, cultural sensitivity is expected to increase by .345 ($p = .004$) holding the rest of the variables constant.

Though not presented in Table 10, the R-squared value is .432, meaning that about 43% of the variance in cultural sensitivity is associated with the variables included in the regression model. To check the assumptions required of a sound regression model, the scatterplot (See <Figure 1>) has been examined, and the linearity assumption is not violated. Also, the histogram (See <Figure 2>) seems to show that residuals have a normal distribution, and the P-P plot (see <Figure 3>) indicates that the values fall neatly over the line. Therefore, no concern for normality or homoscedasticity is present.

*Below is the regression equation

$$\hat{Y} = 1.803 + .250(\text{Live with Refugees}) + .413(\text{Refugee Acceptance}) - .291(\text{Job Priority to Korean}) - .224(\text{Korean Identity}) + .345(\text{Global Citizenship})$$

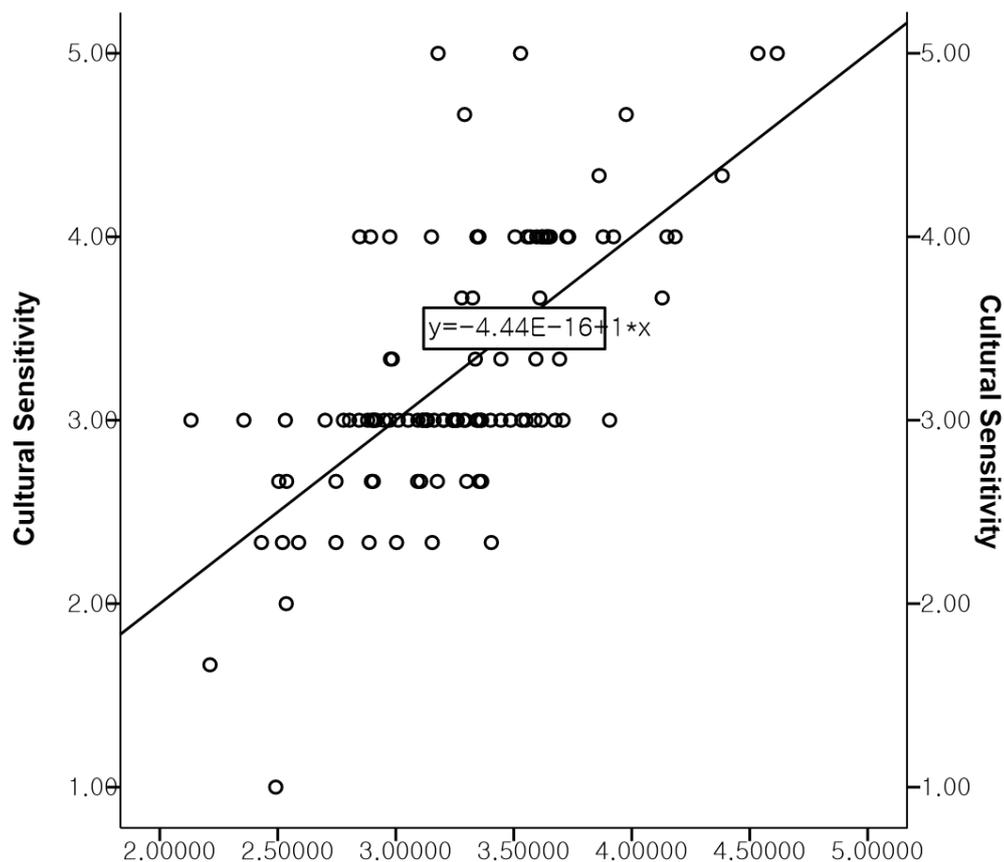


Figure 1. Scatterplot for Checking Linearity Assumption

Histogram

Dependent Variable: Cultural Sensitivity

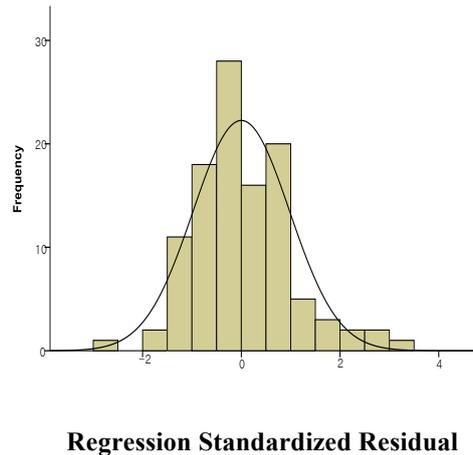


Figure 2. Histogram for Checking Normality Assumption

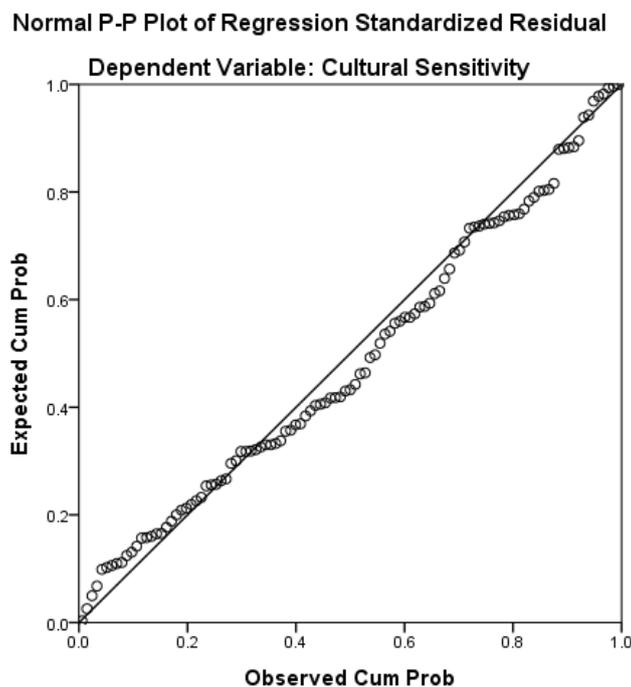


Figure 3. P-P Plot for Checking Homoscedasticity Assumption

Conclusions

Q1. Do people who accept refugees into their community have different levels of cultural sensitivity?
 People who answered that they wish to live with refugees have higher cultural sensitivity, or multicultural acceptance, than those who did not. Whether or not people want to live with refugees has nothing to do with global citizenship and the concern for the refugees’ human rights.

Q2. How does Jeju residents’ demographics explain their cultural sensitivity?
 Though it is widely known that young people better identify themselves as global citizens because they are exposed to multicultural offerings more than the older generation, this notion doesn’t seem to apply in Jeju because the data show that older people in Jeju are more likely to have higher levels of global citizenship.

Women in Jeju are less likely to want to live with refugees. Carefully, one can argue that women in Jeju have more xenophobia than men. But women have a stronger sense of Korean

identity. Future research must be conducted to investigate this relationship and Jeju women's xenophobia.

Q3. How does Korean identity affect Jeju residents' cultural sensitivity?

Apparently, Korean identity is negatively correlated with cultural sensitivity. And people who prioritize Korean in job opportunity seem to care less about refugees' human rights. Though job opportunity is hardly categorized into the human rights' issues, the variable that meant placing Korean before foreigners is correlated with human rights issues. In addition, people who have higher cultural sensitivity are less likely to believe that job priority must be afforded to Koreans over foreigners.

Also, it is unclear whether global citizenship and cultural sensitivity foster human rights awareness, or it is the other way around. But the result that refugees' human rights awareness is strongly correlated with cultural sensitivity suggests that we should investigate more about this finding through further research.

Q4. How do Jeju residents' attitudes toward refugees explain their cultural sensitivity?

The primary focus of this study is the refugee crisis, and one can see that accepting refugees does explain the of cultural sensitivity. Also, people who see refugees as potential neighbors have a higher level of cultural sensitivity. Based on this finding, we can cautiously argue that accepting refugee can promote cultural sensitivity, or multicultural acceptance, throughout Jeju.

As is argued above, cultural sensitivity is more important for Jeju than elsewhere in Korea. Because of religious, cultural, and ethnic differences, some people are reluctant to view the refugees as potential neighbors. If, however, people in Jeju have a chance to live together with the refugees and see for themselves that they are harmless friends, they may be able to foster a rich cultural sensitivity, thus making Jeju more inclusive, more accommodating, more like a paradise.

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