

“I feel free here”: An intersectional study of ethnic minority migrant women in the UK

Ms. Seonyoung Hwang, Dr. Alexandra Beauregard

Abstract

Previous intersectional research on ethnic minority women has largely focused on challenges associated with the intersection between gender and ethnicity. We go beyond this "problem" perspective to demonstrate that East Asian migrant women benefit from various resources stemming from both their home and host cultures. Interviews with 43 female migrant workers from China, Japan, and Korea living in the UK reveal demands arising from their double minority status such as negative ethnic stereotyping at work and family pressures to conform to traditional values. However, participants also avail themselves of resources such as positive ethnic stereotyping and UK norms for gender egalitarianism, individualism, and work-life balance to increase their sense of agency and enhance their work-related well-being and satisfaction. We argue that the career experiences of ethnic minority women need to be understood from the intersectional perspective of 'otherness', rather than the traditional approach to intersectionality focusing exclusively on 'multiple jeopardy'.