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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ACCULTURATION AND
SUBJECTIVE WELL-BEING IN AN ASIAN-AMERICAN SAMPLE

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ABSTRACT

Asian Americans represent one of the fastest growing ethnic minority populations in the United States, making it increasingly important to understand this group's unique mental health concerns. One concept that has received significant attention with regard to the mental health of Asian Americans is the relationship between acculturation and mental health. Most of the focus in this line of research has been on negative aspects of mental health (e.g., depression, anxiety, somatization) while largely neglecting the positive aspects of mental health. The present study explored the relationship between acculturation and well-being among 102 Asian and Asian-American students. Individuals at either end of the acculturation continuum were expected to experience significant stressors associated with low and high acculturation (acculturative and bicultural stress, respectively) and therefore have lower levels of subjective well-being than Asian participants with intermediate levels of acculturation. This hypothesis was tested using a trend analysis looking for a quadratic relationship between well-being and acculturation (linear trends were also examined). While the hypothesis was not supported, individual elements of subjective well-being were found to have a positive linear relationship with acculturation.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES	iii
Chapter 1 Introduction	1
Acculturation	1
Acculturation, Stress, and Mental Health	2
Acculturation and Well-Being	5
Chapter 2 Methods	7
Participants	7
Procedure	7
Measures	8
Demographics Questionnaire	8
Suinn-Lew Asian Self-Identity Acculturation Scale (SL-ASIA).....	8
Ryff Scales of Psychological Well-Being (RPWB)	9
Data Analysis Plan	10
Chapter 3 Results	11
Preliminary Analyses	11
Primary Analyses	12
Moderation Analyses	13
Chapter 4 Discussion	15
The Relationship Between Acculturation and Well-Being	15
Moderators of the Relationship	17
Limitations and Future Directions	17
Chapter 5 Conclusion.....	19
Appendix A Demographics Questionnaire	20
Appendix B Suinn-Lew Asian Self-Identity Acculturation Scale	21
Appendix C Ryff Scales of Psychological Well-Being	25
References.....	31
VITA 35	

LIST OF TABLES

Table 3-1 Sample and ethnic group demographics and means (standard deviation) for primary dependent variables	12
Table 3-2 Linear and quadratic trend analyses for SL-ASIA and RPWB scores	13

Chapter 1

Introduction

Asian Americans represent one of the fastest-growing minority groups in the United States. In the decade leading up to the 2000 U.S. Census, the number of people reporting Asian ancestry increased by more than 50 percent, compared to a total population increase of only 13 percent (U.S. Census Bureau, 2002). Between 2008 and 2050, the Asian-American population is expected to increase from 15.5 million to 40.6 million, with its share of the total population growing from 5.1 percent to 9.2 percent (U.S. Census Bureau, 2008). Over half of the Asian-American population is foreign born, and many more are the children or grandchildren of immigrants (Lee & Mock, 2005). Consequently, Asian cultural traditions and values remain influential in the lives of many within this minority group. At the same time, other Asian Americans find themselves adopting the values and traditions of mainstream American culture. As this population continues to grow, it will be increasingly important to understand how this orientation toward either Asian or American culture uniquely impacts mental health. With that in mind, the present study examines the relationship between acculturation and subjective well-being among a sample of Asians and Asian Americans.

Acculturation

Acculturation is defined as the process of two cultural groups coming together and influencing one another, and it can be experienced on both a group and an individual level (Redfield, Linton, & Herskovits, 1936). For the individual, measuring acculturation is synonymous with measuring orientation toward the host culture. This can be thought of as either

a unidimensional or a bidimensional construct. Unidimensional models are linear, with orientation to native and host cultures representing opposite ends of a single dimension (Stonequist, 1964). Under a unidimensional model, stronger orientation toward the host culture necessitates weaker orientation toward the native culture. Bidimensional models, on the other hand, propose that orientations towards host culture and culture of origin represent orthogonal dimensions. Those proposed by Berry (1990), LaFramboise, Coleman, and Gerton (1993), and others consider orientation to native and host cultures to be separate, independent processes. For example, in Berry's model, an individual may be in one of four states of acculturation: integrated, or strongly identified with both native and host cultures; separated, or strongly identified with only native culture; assimilated, or strongly identified with only host culture; and marginalized, or not strongly identified with either culture. For Asian Americans specifically, both unidimensional and bidimensional models of cultural orientation have been empirically supported. Research by Krishnan and Berry (1992) supports the use of Berry's bidimensional model among Indian Asians. More recently, however, Berry's model has come under recent criticism questioning its validity, logic, and inconsistent empirical support (Rudmin, 2003). The commonly used Suinn-Lew Asian Self-Identity Acculturation Scale (SL-ASIA), which uses a unidimensional model, has also been shown to be reliable and valid among various Asian groups (Ownbey & Horridge, 1998; Ponterotto, Baluch, & Carielli, 1998), suggesting that to measure Asian acculturation, a unidimensional approach may be more empirically sound.

Acculturation, Stress, and Mental Health

The relationship between acculturation and stress has been a popular area of research in recent years. For first-generation ethnic minorities (those born outside of the United States), learning to live in another culture presents a number of stressful challenges, such as difficulty

understanding cultural norms, changes in social status, and language barriers. Berry and Annis's concept of acculturative stress (1974) refers to stress that is rooted in the process of acculturation. Some of the proposed manifestations of acculturative stress include "lowered mental health status (especially confusion, anxiety, and depression), feelings of marginality and alienation, heightened psychosomatic symptom level, and identity confusion" (Berry, 1990, p. 246). Later-generation ethnic minorities (those born in the United States), on the other hand, suffer from bicultural stress, which refers to the feeling of conflict when an individual is a part of two contrasting cultures (Sodowsky, 1991). For many Asian Americans, bicultural stress involves traditional Asian values conflicting with modern U.S. values. For example, traditional Asian families regard the needs and wishes of the family unit as more important than those of the individual (Lee & Mock, 2005). Among highly acculturated Asian individuals, this value can clash with U.S. values of individualism and assertiveness and create bicultural stress. The feeling of bicultural stress may be interpersonal, as in the case of parents and children disagreeing on cultural issues, or it may be intrapersonal, as in ethnic identity conflict (Kiefer, 1974; Sodowsky & Lai, 1997). Keifer describes three forms of ethnic identity conflict: (a) cultural alienation, (b) cultural confusion, and (c) cultural conflict. Cultural alienation is the experience of not "fitting in" due to a change in cultural patterns and is associated with poorly developed self-image. Cultural confusion happens when one is exposed to multiple cultural norms and cannot successfully differentiate and negotiate these norms in given contexts. Finally, cultural conflict is a feeling of personal values and beliefs being incompatible within a particular social interaction.

Being that acculturative stress most affects those who are least acculturated, while bicultural stress (especially ethnic identity conflict) affects those who are most acculturated, intermediate levels of acculturation may be most adaptive for good mental health. To this end, a number of studies have sought to link these cultural transitions and negotiations to mental health outcomes. For example, using Berry's bidimensional model of acculturation, Wong (2001) found

that among inner-city Asian-American adolescents, depression rates were higher in individuals with high orientation toward ethnic culture and low orientation toward American culture (separated), compared to those with low orientation toward ethnic culture and high orientation toward American culture (assimilated). Westermeyer, Bouafuely, Neider, and Callies (1989) studied Hmong refugees and found an association between lower acculturation and higher somatization (psychological distress expressed as bodily complaints). Working on the assumption that birthplace is related to acculturation, Sue and Zane (1985) found that compared to Chinese students born in the United States, foreign-born Chinese students reported more socioemotional distress. These and other studies support the notion that cultural orientation plays a significant role in the mental health of ethnic minority populations.

Psychological distress, however, represents only one end of the mental health spectrum. According to the World Health Organization, health is defined as “a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being—not merely the absence of disease or infirmity” (World Health Organization, 1948, p. 1). Thus, the construct of well-being represents the other end of the mental health spectrum, taking into account not just the absence of mental illness, but also the presence of positive psychological functioning (Ryff & Singer, 1996). Subjective well-being is comprised of people’s own evaluations of their happiness, fulfillment, and life satisfaction (Diener, Oishi, & Lucas, 2003). It tends to be rather stable over time and correlates positively with certain personality traits, such as extraversion and agreeableness (Diener, Oishi, & Lucas, 2003; Lucas & Fujita, 2000; DeNeve & Cooper, 1998).

The construct of subjective well-being has been quantified in various ways. Researchers have measured subjective well-being using scales for satisfaction with life (Zheng, Sang, & Wang, 2004), self esteem (Yip & Cross, 2004), depressive symptoms and optimism (Romero, Carvajal, Valle, & Orduña, 2007), depression and happiness (Yasuda & Duan, 2002), psychosocial risk factors (Yu, Huang, Schwalberg, Overpeck, & Kogan, 2003), and positive and

negative affect (Yoon, Lee, & Goh, 2008). Ryff and Singer (1996), by synthesizing various theories of positive psychological functioning, identified six components of subjective well-being: self-acceptance, positive relations with others, autonomy, environmental mastery, purpose in life, and personal growth. These components provide the theoretical underpinning for the Ryff Scales of Psychological Well-Being, which may give a more comprehensive measurement of subjective well-being.

Acculturation and Well-Being

Although subjective well-being is relatively stable on an individual level, it tends to vary across national and cultural groups. Between nations, subjective well-being is strongly correlated with average levels of income (Diener, Diener, & Diener, 1995). This is probably reflective of the better human rights and democratic governance found in wealthier countries (Diener, Oishi, & Lucas, 2003). Some differences in subjective well-being between nations may be the result of culturally bound concepts of the self, such that Europeans, for example, may be more likely to give self-serving responses, while East Asians are more likely to be self-critical (Heine, Takata, & Lehman, 2000; Heine, Lehman, Markus, & Kitayama, 1999). Within subcultures of the United States, a similar effect is seen. Oishi and Diener (2003) found that when asked to analyze how well they had done on a task, European Americans tended to overestimate their performance, while Asian Americans usually underestimated. This may translate to a general tendency of Asian Americans to give more negative ratings of self-esteem, life satisfaction, and similar constructs, a concept supported empirically by Benet-Martínez and Karakitapoglu-Alygün (2003). Taken together, these findings indicate that culture has a variety of effects on subjective well-being.

The existing research documenting cultural influences on subjective well-being suggests a logical relationship between acculturation and subjective well-being. Research on the

relationship between these variables, however, has yielded inconclusive or conflicting results. For example, in a study of Chinese students in Australia, Zheng, Sang, and Wang (2003) found that integrated students (according to the Berry model) had significantly higher subjective well-being (measured as satisfaction with life, positive affect, and negative affect) than assimilated, separated, and marginalized students. Yasuda and Duan (2002), however, found no relationship between acculturation (measured using the SL-ASIA) scores and emotional well-being (depression-happiness scale) among Asian-American students. They did, however, find a positive correlation between well-being and ethnic identity, measured using the Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM; Phinney, 1992). These results are surprising given the conceptual overlap between acculturation and ethnic identity (e.g., as orientation toward the host culture increases, ethnic identity might be expected to decrease). Adding to these inconclusive results, Yip and Cross (2004) used the MEIM and found no significant differences between Chinese-oriented, American-oriented, and bicultural adolescents on a variety of psychological well-being components, including self-esteem, collective self-esteem, and mood.

An explanation for these inconsistent results may be the inconsistent ways in which subjective well-being was measured, many of which only address one or two components of the construct. Consequently, using the multi-faceted Ryff Scales of Psychological Well-Being may provide a clearer indication of how acculturation and subjective well-being are empirically related. Because the negative socioemotional effects of acculturative and bicultural stress exist at either end of the unidimensional model of acculturation, I hypothesized a quadratic relationship between acculturation and well-being such that Asian Americans with intermediate levels of acculturation would have the highest subjective well-being, while those with low and high acculturation would have equally lower scores on subjective well-being.

Chapter 2

Methods

Participants

Participants in this study were 102 Asian students (55 women, 45 men, and 2 unspecified) enrolled in various psychology courses at The Pennsylvania State University. All participants were recruited via a centralized, on-line recruitment system. Of the 100 who specified, 57 (32 women and 25 men) were born in the United States (U.S.) and 43 (23 women and 20 men) were born outside of the U.S. in one of several Asian countries. The mean age of the sample was 19.16 ($SD=1.44$). Their ethnicities included Indian ($n=28$, 27.5%), Korean ($n=26$, 25.5%), Other Asian ($n=21$, 20.6%), Chinese ($n=20$, 19.6%), and Cambodian ($n=7$, 6.9%). Of the 102, 40.2% ($n=41$) indicated that they were first-generation Asian Americans, 53.9% ($n=55$) were second generation, 4.9% ($n=5$) were third or fourth generation, and one participant was unsure.

Procedure

Participants interested in participating in a study on “coping and affect” were directed to a web page (hosted via SurveyMonkey.com™ or PsychData™) where they could complete several questionnaires over the span of 30–45 minutes. Once they were ready to complete the questionnaires, they were presented with an informed consent statement. Consent was implicitly provided by agreeing to continue with the online study. Upon completion, participants were then

provided with a debriefing statement on the screen. They received course credit for their participation.

Measures

Demographics Questionnaire

All participants were asked to complete a demographic screener that asked about their place of birth, parents' and grandparents' places of birth, and parents' and grandparents' ethnicities. In addition, the demographic screener also asked about religious affiliation, languages spoken, and the ethnicities of their childhood friends and neighbors, although these data were not used in the analyses presented.

Suinn-Lew Asian Self-Identity Acculturation Scale (SL-ASIA)

The SL-ASIA is a 21-item questionnaire that measures acculturation among people of Asian descent. It was modeled after a measure of acculturation for Mexican Americans that has been widely used and shown to be reliable and valid (Acculturation Rating Scale for Mexican Americans; Cuellar, Harris, & Jasso, 1980). The SL-ASIA incorporates multiple dimensions of acculturation including cognitive, behavioral, and attitudinal areas (Suinn, R.M., et al., 1987). The questions are answered using a 5-point Likert scale and cover the following topics relevant to acculturation: language, identity, friendship choice, behaviors, generation/geographic history, and attitudes. The SL-ASIA uses a unidimensional model of acculturation, with low scores representing strong Asian identification and high scores representing strong Western (or American) identification. Mid-range scores represent a relatively balanced orientation toward

both cultures. A sum of the scores from all items gives the SL-ASIA total score, which ranges from 21 to 105.

The SL-ASIA has been shown to have good reliability, with Cronbach's alpha ranging between 0.88 and 0.91 (Suinn, R.M., et al., 1987; Suinn, R.M., Ahuna, C., & Khoo, G., 1992). Its construct validity has also been supported, with significant correlations between SL-ASIA scores and demographic factors related to acculturation, such as length of U.S. residence (Suinn, R.M., et al., 1992). The reliability for the SL-ASIA for the present sample was .94.

Ryff Scales of Psychological Well-Being (RPWB)

Drawing on various theories of positive psychological functioning, Ryff and Singer (1996) developed this six-dimensional well-being scale (Ryff, 1989; Ryff & Keyes, 1995). The Ryff Scales of Psychological Well-Being consist of 84 items that ask individuals about their feelings toward themselves, other people, and the surrounding world. The items are rated on a 6-point Likert scale and are divided into six subscales: autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations with others, purpose in life, and self-acceptance. The responses are summed, with higher scores on the subscales reflective of more positive well-being. For this study, an overall composite Well-Being score was calculated for each participant by summing the standardized scores (z-scores) from each of the individual subscales. The overall scale has been shown to have high internal consistency reliability (alpha range=0.86–0.93) and test-retest reliability (coefficient range=0.81–0.88). It has also been shown to correlate modestly and positively with other measures of positive mental health, such as life satisfaction and self-esteem (Ryff, C.D., & Singer, B., 1996). The reliability for the overall RPWB composite for the present sample was .91.

Data Analysis Plan

Before testing my primary hypothesis I computed descriptive information for the overall sample on acculturation and well-being. To test my hypothesis, a trend analysis was conducted to test for a quadratic association between scores on the SL-ASIA and the RPWB composite score, as well as the six RPWB subscales. I also tested for a linear relationship given that previous studies have largely examined linear relationships between acculturation and well-being. In addition, I compared the different ethnic groups on these same variables to determine whether the participants could be treated as a single homogeneous Asian group or whether there existed important differences between the ethnic groups in the sample. When significant differences emerged, I combined those ethnic groups that were most similar to one another and used this resulting grouping to look for moderation in my primary analyses.

Chapter 3

Results

Preliminary Analyses

Overall sample means on level of acculturation and well-being are presented in Table 3-1. The table also shows comparisons between ethnic groups on age, percentage who are foreign born, SL-ASIA scores, and RPWB composite and subscale scores. An analysis of the participants' birthplaces showed that those of Cambodian, Chinese, and Korean origin tended to be born outside of the United States, while participants of Indian and Other descent tended to be born within the United States. A chi-square analysis comparing the mean percentage of foreign born participants among the former groups (57.7%) relative to the latter groups (27.1%) confirmed this observation, $\chi^2(100) = 9.54, p < .01$. Furthermore, those groups that were predominantly born outside of the U.S. were significantly older than the Indian and Other Asian ethnicity participants, $t(86.77) = 2.46, p < .05$. These analyses suggested that there might be two distinct groupings within our Asian participants based on birthplace and age. Therefore, I created a new variable to distinguish between these two ethnic subgroups. The first ethnic subgroup comprised participants of ethnicities that were predominantly older and foreign born (Cambodian, Chinese, and Korean), while the second was comprised of those that were predominantly younger and U.S. born (Indian and Other). I tested whether this variable moderated any of the relationships examined in the primary analyses described above.

Table 3-1 Sample and ethnic group demographics and means (standard deviation) for primary dependent variables

	<i>Overall</i>	Cambodian	Chinese	Korean	Indian	Other	<i>F(df)</i>
Mean Age	19.16 (1.44)	20.43	19.00	19.58	18.83	18.76	2.943* (4, 100)
SL-ASIA	3.10 (0.69)	2.55	2.95	3.02	3.21	3.37	2.587* (4, 101)
RPWB Composite	-1.43 (4.46)	-2.82	-0.92	-2.33	-1.52	-0.22	0.884 (4, 101)
Self-Acceptance	58.84 (10.68)	55.57	60.30	56.31	59.32	61.05	0.857 (4, 101)
Personal Growth	69.61 (8.44)	67.00	69.80	69.00	68.25	72.86	1.171 (4, 101)
Positive Relations with Others	64.25 (9.68)	62.00	66.20	62.27	64.18	65.71	0.682 (4, 101)
Autonomy	58.76 (9.97)	56.29	58.75	59.58	59.54	57.57	0.260 (4, 101)
Environmental Mastery	62.91 (11.47)	60.00	65.40	60.27	62.46	65.38	0.945 (4, 101)
Purpose in Life	63.04 (8.67)	62.43	62.50	60.77	62.93	66.71	1.441 (4, 101)

* $p < .05$

Note. SL-ASIA=Suinn-Lew Asian Self-Identity Acculturation Scale; RPWB=Ryff Scales of Psychological Well-Being.

Primary Analyses

My primary hypothesis predicted a quadratic relationship between acculturation and subjective well-being. Table 3-2 lists the results of linear and quadratic trend analyses between the SL-ASIA and the composite RPWB scores as well as the individual subscales. An examination of the table reveals that there was no significant quadratic relationship between the SL-ASIA and the composite RPWB score or any of its six subscales. Thus, the hypothesis was not supported. However, a significant and positive linear relationship was found between scores on the SL-ASIA and the self-acceptance subscale of the RPWB ($R^2 = .050$, $\beta = .224$, $t = 2.301$,

$p=.023$). There was also a marginally significant and positive linear relationship between the SL-ASIA and the personal growth subscale of the RPWB ($R^2=.032$, $\beta=.178$, $t=1.811$, $p=.073$).

Table 3-2 Linear and quadratic trend analyses for SL-ASIA and RPWB scores

	Linear Trend Analysis			Quadratic Trend Analysis		
	R^2	β	t	R^2	β	t
Composite RPWB score	.02	.16	1.6	.03	-.50	-6.49
Self-Acceptance	.05	.22	2.30*	.05	.56	.73
Personal Growth	.03	.18	1.81†	.04	1.00	1.30†
Positive Relations with Others	.01	.10	.96	.01	.14	.18
Autonomy	.00	.06	.64	.06	.08	.10
Environmental Mastery	.00	.05	.51	.01	.73	.93
Purpose in Life	.01	.10	1.02	.01	.49	.63

* $p < .05$; † $p < .10$

Note. SL-ASIA=Suinn-Lew Asian Self-Identity Acculturation Scale; RPWB=Ryff Scales of Psychological Well-Being.

Moderation Analyses

I wanted to test whether the relationship between acculturation and well-being was moderated by the ethnic subgroup variable differentiating the predominantly older and foreign born Asian participants from those that were predominantly younger and U.S. born. To do so, I computed the ethnic subgroup x acculturation interaction term and reran my primary analyses including this variable in the model. A significant interaction emerged when predicting the personal growth subscale of the RPWB, $R=.28$, $\beta=-1.32$, $t=-2.07$, $p < .05$. Among the Cambodian, Chinese, and Korean participants, there was a strong and positive linear relationship between

acculturation and personal growth, $R = .36$, $F(1,51) = 7.43$, $p < .01$. Among the Indian and Other Asian participants, personal growth was not related to acculturation, $R = .10$, $F(1,47) = .45$, *ns*.

Chapter 4

Discussion

Past studies of the relationship between acculturation and subjective well-being in Asian Americans have found inconsistent results (Yasuda & Duan, 2002; Yip & Cross, 2004; Zheng, Sang, & Wang, 2003). The present research sought to clarify this relationship through the use of the Ryff Scales of Psychological Well-Being, a multi-faceted and comprehensive measure of subjective well-being. Because of the negative emotional effects of both acculturative and bicultural stress, which may be strongest in individuals at either extreme of the acculturation scale, I predicted a quadratic relationship between SL-ASIA and RPWB scores such that Asian Americans with medium levels of acculturation would have the greatest subjective well-being. Results showed no evidence for a quadratic relationship between acculturation and subjective well-being, but instead demonstrated a linear relationship between SL-ASIA scores and two of the RPWB subscales.

The Relationship Between Acculturation and Well-Being

In general, the lack of any relationship between the subjective well-being composite and acculturation was somewhat surprising given previous findings relating acculturative and bicultural stress to negative psychological functioning (Berry & Annis, 1974; Romero et al., 2007). It is possible that the well-being measure used in this study may not adequately capture a sense of well-being among many Asian cultures. In fact, many of the subscales of the RPWB may not allow for a sense of well-being that stresses individual achievement and success in the service of one's immediate in-group. This may have undermined the ability to find the quadratic

relationship between acculturation and well-being that I proposed as such a nuanced relationship would certainly depend on the scale being fully applicable to the population of interest.

While I failed to find support for my hypothesis, I did find a significant and positive linear relationship between acculturation and the self-acceptance subscale. There was also a marginally significant and positive linear trend between the personal growth subscale and acculturation. Because acculturative stress decreases as acculturation increases, it is possible that this reduction in stress allows individuals to feel more at peace with themselves (and others), and their improved ability to navigate between the two cultures may result in increased feelings of self-acceptance among more acculturated participants.. This gradual transformation process may in turn be experienced as a form of personal growth as these individuals feel stronger and wiser for having gone through the challenges associated with acculturative stress (Berry, 1990; Berry and Annis, 1974), although future work is needed to replicate this particular finding.

The linear rather than quadratic relationship between these variables suggests that, contrary to my hypothesis, bicultural stress has relatively little influence on subjective well-being (specifically self-acceptance and personal growth) compared to the influence of acculturative stress. While some level of acculturative stress is frequently experienced by first-generation ethnic minorities (Berry, 1990), it is possible that bicultural stress is a less universal experience among later generations. For instance, while an Asian immigrant likely experiences daily acculturative stress due to language difficulties, his highly acculturated grandchildren may not experience cultural conflict between their friends and family, or bicultural stress, with the same frequency and intensity.

Moderators of the Relationship

When participants were clustered according to ethnic subgroups that were similar in age and birthplace, a linear relationship between personal growth and acculturation was strong within the Cambodian, Chinese, and Korean group but nonexistent within the Indian and Other group. These results suggest that the process of acculturation is viewed as a form of personal growth only among those who are relatively new to the process or not too far removed. Changes made early in the acculturation process, such as attaining fluency in English and changing one's diet, may be more conspicuous than those made later, such as the gradual evolution of personal values. If this is the case, Asian Americans in the later stages of acculturation may not notice these subtle changes, let alone recognize them as a form of personal growth.

Limitations and Future Directions

There are a number of limitations of the present study that may have influenced the findings or their interpretation. First, the study sample consisted of largely first- or second-generation Asian Americans and may not have included sufficient variability in levels of acculturation to be able to detect a strong pattern in the relationship between acculturation and subjective well-being. Second, the RPWB may not accurately measure subjective well-being as it is experienced by Asian Americans, possibly reflective of differences between Asian and American personal and family values (Lee & Mock, 2005). For example, it is possible that the self-acceptance scale was measuring shifting of values (from more group-oriented to more self-oriented) rather than an actual change in well-being. Third, well-being and negative psychological functioning may operate independently among Asian Americans, as suggested by Arthaud-Day,

Rode, Mooney, and Near (2005) in their research on the convergent and discriminant validity of the subjective well-being construct. Thus, although increased acculturation (and presumably less acculturative and bicultural stress) has previously been shown to predict decreased negative psychological functioning (Yu et al., 2003), an individual sense of well-being may depend on other factors beyond the removal of negative stressors.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

The relationship between acculturation and subjective well-being among Asian Americans remains unclear. Indeed, these data demonstrate the complexity of this relationship as even within a single study the findings diverge depending on which aspect of subjective well-being is considered. For Asian Americans, acculturation may only be relevant to aspects of well-being that focus on the self, suggesting that other aspects of well-being (social, environmental, etc.) may be less affected by cultural transitions. As the field moves forward, considering the broader meaning of well-being for Asian Americans versus other populations will be an important challenge in understanding the interrelationship between acculturation and mental health.

Appendix A

Demographics Questionnaire

Were you born in the United States? Yes No
 If no, where were you born? _____

Have you ever moved out of the United States as a child? Yes No
 Did you graduate from high school in the U.S.A.? Yes No

Where were both of your parents (primary guardians) born?
 a. Mother: Indicate State/Region/Country _____
 b. Father: Indicate State/Region/Country _____
 c. What is your mother's ethnic/cultural background? _____
 d. What is your father's ethnic/cultural background? _____

What are your grandparents' ethnicities?
 a. Maternal GM _____
 b. Paternal GM _____
 c. Maternal GF _____
 d. Paternal GF _____

Where were your grandparents born?
 a. Maternal GM: Indicate country _____
 b. Paternal GM: Indicate country _____
 c. Maternal PM: Indicate country _____
 d. Paternal PM: Indicate country _____

What is your religious affiliation now? _____
 Religious affiliation while you were growing up? _____

Do you consider yourself bilingual? Yes No
 If so, are you fluent in your second language? Yes No

What percentage of your close friends growing up were of the same ethnic/cultural background as you?
 Please circle one:
 0 -10% 11-20% 21-30% 31-40% 41-50% >50%

What percentage of your neighborhood while growing up was of the same ethnic/cultural background as you? Please circle one:
 0 -10% 11-20% 21-30% 31-40% 41-50% >50%

Appendix B

Suinn-Lew Asian Self-Identity Acculturation Scale

Instructions: The questions which follow are for the purpose of collecting information about your historical background as well as more recent behaviors which may be related to your cultural identity. Choose the one answer which best describes you.

1. What language can you speak?
 1. Asian only (for example, Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Vietnamese, etc.)
 2. Mostly Asian, some English
 3. Asian and English about equally well (bilingual)
 4. Mostly English, some Asian
 5. Only English

2. What language do you prefer?
 1. Asian only (for example, Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Vietnamese, etc.)
 2. Mostly Asian, some English
 3. Asian and English about equally well (bilingual)
 4. Mostly English, some Asian
 5. Only English

3. How do you identify yourself?
 1. Oriental
 2. Asian
 3. Asian-American
 4. Chinese-American, Japanese-American, Korean-American, etc.
 5. American

4. Which identification does (did) your mother use?
 1. Oriental
 2. Asian
 3. Asian-American
 4. Chinese-American, Japanese-American, Korean-American, etc.
 5. American

5. Which identification does (did) your father use?
 1. Oriental
 2. Asian
 3. Asian-American
 4. Chinese-American, Japanese-American, Korean-American, etc.
 5. American

6. What was the ethnic origin of the friends and peers you had, as a child up to age 6?
 1. Almost exclusively Asians, Asian-Americans, Orientals
 2. Mostly Asians, Asian-Americans, Orientals
 3. About equally Asian groups and Anglo groups
 4. Mostly Anglos, Blacks, Hispanics, or other non-Asian ethnic groups
 5. Almost exclusively Anglos, Blacks, Hispanics, or other non-Asian ethnic groups

7. What was the ethnic origin of the friends and peers you had as a child from 6 to 18?
 1. Almost exclusively Asians, Asian-Americans, Orientals
 2. Mostly Asians, Asian-Americans, Orientals
 3. About equally Asian groups and Anglo groups
 4. Mostly Anglos, Blacks, Hispanics, or other non-Asian ethnic groups
 5. Almost exclusively Anglos, Blacks, Hispanics, or other non-Asian ethnic groups

8. Whom do you now associate with in the community?
 1. Almost exclusively Asians, Asian-Americans, Orientals
 2. Mostly Asians, Asian-Americans, Orientals
 3. About equally Asian groups and Anglo groups
 4. Mostly Anglos, Blacks, Hispanics, or other non-Asian ethnic groups
 5. Almost exclusively Anglos, Blacks, Hispanics, or other non-Asian ethnic groups

9. If you could pick, whom would you prefer to associate with in the community?
 1. Almost exclusively Asians, Asian-Americans, Orientals
 2. Mostly Asians, Asian-Americans, Orientals
 3. About equally Asian groups and Anglo groups
 4. Mostly Anglos, Blacks, Hispanics, or other non-Asian ethnic groups
 5. Almost exclusively Anglos, Blacks, Hispanics, or other non-Asian ethnic groups

10. What is your music preference?
 1. Only Asian music (for example, Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Vietnamese, etc.)
 2. Mostly Asian
 3. Equally Asian and English
 4. Mostly English
 5. English Only

11. What is your movie preference?
 1. Asian-language movies only
 2. Asian-language movies mostly
 3. Equally Asian/English English-language movies
 4. Mostly English-language movies only
 5. English-language movies only

12. What generation are you? (Circle the generation that best applies to you)
 1. 1st generation = I was born in Asia or country other than U.S.
 2. 2nd generation = I was born in U.S., either parent was born in Asian or country other than U.S
 3. 3rd generation = I was born in U.S., both parents were born in U.S. and all grandparents born in Asia or country other than U.S.
 4. 4th generation = I was born in U.S., both parents were born in U.S. and at least one grandparent born in Asia or country other than U.S. and one grandparent born in U.S.
 5. 5th generation = I was born in U.S., both parents were born in U.S., and all grandparents also born in U.S.
 6. Don't know what generation best fits since I lack some information.

13. Where were you raised?
 1. In Asia only
 2. Mostly in Asia, some in U.S.
 3. Equally in Asia and U.S.
 4. Mostly in U.S., some in Asia
 5. In U.S. only

14. What contact have you had with Asia?
 1. Raised one year or more in Asia
 2. Lived for less than one year in Asia
 3. Occasional visits to Asia
 4. Occasional communications (letters, phone calls, etc.) with people in Asia
 5. No exposure or communications with people in Asia

15. What is your food preference at home?
 1. Exclusively Asian food
 2. Mostly Asian food, some American
 3. About equally Asian and American
 4. Mostly American food
 5. Exclusively American food

16. What is your food preference in restaurants?
 1. Exclusively Asian food
 2. Mostly Asian food, some American
 3. About equally Asian and American
 4. Mostly American food
 5. Exclusively American food

17. Do you
 1. Read only an Asian language?
 2. Read an Asian language better than English?
 3. Read both Asian and English equally well?
 4. Read English better than an Asian language?
 5. Read only English?

18. Do you
 1. Write only an Asian language?
 2. Write an Asian language better than English?
 3. Write both Asian and English equally well?
 4. Write English better than an Asian language?
 5. Write only English?

19. If you consider yourself a member of the Asian group (Oriental, Asian, Asian-American, Chinese-American, etc., whatever term you prefer), how much pride do you have in this group?
 1. Extremely proud
 2. Moderately proud
 3. Little pride
 4. No pride but do not feel negative toward group
 5. No pride but do feel negative toward group

20. How would you rate yourself?
 1. Very Asian
 2. Mostly Asian
 3. Bicultural
 4. Mostly Westernized
 5. Very Westernized

21. Do you participate in Asian occasions, holidays, traditions, etc.?
 1. Nearly all
 2. Most of them

Appendix C

Ryff Scales of Psychological Well-Being

The following set of questions deals with how you feel about yourself and your life. Please remember that there are no right or wrong answers.

Circle the number that best describes your present agreement or disagreement with each statement.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Disagree Slightly	Agree Slightly	Agree Somewhat	Strongly Agree
1. Most people see me as loving and affectionate.	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. Sometimes I change the way I act or think to be more like those around me.	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. In general, I feel I am in charge of the situation in which I live.	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. I am not interested in activities that will expand my horizons.	1	2	3	4	5	6
5. I feel good when I think of what I've done in the past and what I hope to do in the future.	1	2	3	4	5	6
6. When I look at the story of my life, I am pleased with how things have turned out.	1	2	3	4	5	6
7. Maintaining close relationships has been difficult and frustrating for me.	1	2	3	4	5	6
8. I am not afraid to voice my opinions, even when they are in opposition to the opinions of most people.	1	2	3	4	5	6
9. The demands of everyday life often get me down.	1	2	3	4	5	6
10. In general, I feel that I continue to learn more about myself as time goes by.	1	2	3	4	5	6
11. I live life one day at a time and don't really think about the future.	1	2	3	4	5	6
12. In general, I feel confident and positive about myself.	1	2	3	4	5	6
13. I often feel lonely because I have few close friends with whom to share my concerns.	1	2	3	4	5	6

Circle the number that best describes your present agreement or disagreement with each statement.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Disagree Slightly	Agree Slightly	Agree Somewhat	Strongly Agree
14. My decisions are not usually influenced by what everyone else is doing.	1	2	3	4	5	6
15. I do not fit very well with the people and the community around me.	1	2	3	4	5	6
16. I am the kind of person who likes to give new things a try.	1	2	3	4	5	6
17. I tend to focus on the present, because the future nearly always brings me problems.	1	2	3	4	5	6
18. I feel like many of the people I know have gotten more out of life than I have.	1	2	3	4	5	6
19. I enjoy personal and mutual conversations with family members or friends.	1	2	3	4	5	6
20. I tend to worry about what other people think of me.	1	2	3	4	5	6
21. I am quite good at managing the many responsibilities of my daily life.	1	2	3	4	5	6
22. I don't want to try new ways of doing things - my life is fine the way it is.	1	2	3	4	5	6
23. I have a sense of direction and purpose in life.	1	2	3	4	5	6
24. Given the opportunity, there are many things about myself that I would change.	1	2	3	4	5	6
25. It is important to me to be a good listener when close friends talk to me about their problems.	1	2	3	4	5	6
26. Being happy with myself is more important to me than having others approve of me.	1	2	3	4	5	6
27. I often feel overwhelmed by my responsibilities.	1	2	3	4	5	6
28. I think it is important to have new experiences that challenge how you think about yourself and the world.	1	2	3	4	5	6
29. My daily activities often seem trivial and unimportant to me.	1	2	3	4	5	6
30. I like most aspects of my personality.	1	2	3	4	5	6

Circle the number that best describes your present agreement or disagreement with each statement.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Disagree Slightly	Agree Slightly	Agree Somewhat	Strongly Agree
31. I don't have many people who want to listen when I need to talk.	1	2	3	4	5	6
32. I tend to be influenced by people with strong opinions.	1	2	3	4	5	6
33. If I were unhappy with my living situation, I would take effective steps to change it.	1	2	3	4	5	6
34. When I think about it, I haven't really improved much as a person over the years.	1	2	3	4	5	6
35. I don't have a good sense of what it is I'm trying to accomplish in life.	1	2	3	4	5	6
36. I made some mistakes in the past, but I feel that all in all everything has worked out for the best.	1	2	3	4	5	6
37. I feel like I get a lot out of my friendships.	1	2	3	4	5	6
38. People rarely talk to me into doing things I don't want to do.	1	2	3	4	5	6
39. I generally do a good job of taking care of my personal finances and affairs.	1	2	3	4	5	6
40. In my view, people of every age are able to continue growing and developing.	1	2	3	4	5	6
41. I used to set goals for myself, but that now seems like a waste of time.	1	2	3	4	5	6
42. In many ways, I feel disappointed about my achievements in life.	1	2	3	4	5	6
43. It seems to me that most other people have more friends than I do.	1	2	3	4	5	6
44. It is more important to me to "fit in" with others than to stand alone on my principles.	1	2	3	4	5	6
45. I find it stressful that I can't keep up with all of the things I have to do each day.	1	2	3	4	5	6
46. With time, I have gained a lot of insight about life that has made me a stronger, more capable person.	1	2	3	4	5	6
47. I enjoy making plans for the future and working to make them a reality.	1	2	3	4	5	6

Circle the number that best describes your present agreement or disagreement with each statement.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Disagree Slightly	Agree Slightly	Agree Somewhat	Strongly Agree
48. For the most part, I am proud of who I am and the life I lead.	1	2	3	4	5	6
49. People would describe me as a giving person, willing to share my time with others.	1	2	3	4	5	6
50. I have confidence in my opinions, even if they are contrary to the general consensus.	1	2	3	4	5	6
51. I am good at juggling my time so that I can fit everything in that needs to be done.	1	2	3	4	5	6
52. I have a sense that I have developed a lot as a person over time.	1	2	3	4	5	6
53. I am an active person in carrying out the plans I set for myself.	1	2	3	4	5	6
54. I envy many people for the lives they lead.	1	2	3	4	5	6
55. I have not experienced many warm and trusting relationships with others.	1	2	3	4	5	6
56. It's difficult for me to voice my own opinions on controversial matters.	1	2	3	4	5	6
57. My daily life is busy, but I derive a sense of satisfaction from keeping up with everything.	1	2	3	4	5	6
58. I do not enjoy being in new situations that require me to change my old familiar ways of doing things.	1	2	3	4	5	6
59. Some people wander aimlessly through life, but I am not one of them.	1	2	3	4	5	6
60. My attitude about myself is probably not as positive as most people feel about themselves.	1	2	3	4	5	6
61. I often feel as if I'm on the outside looking in when it comes to friendships.	1	2	3	4	5	6
62. I often change my mind about decisions if my friends or family disagree.	1	2	3	4	5	6
63. I get frustrated when trying to plan my daily activities because I never accomplish the things I set out to do.	1	2	3	4	5	6

Circle the number that best describes your present agreement or disagreement with each statement.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Disagree Slightly	Agree Slightly	Agree Somewhat	Strongly Agree
64. For me, life has been a continuous process of learning, changing, and growth.	1	2	3	4	5	6
65. I sometimes feel as if I've done all there is to do in life.	1	2	3	4	5	6
66. Many days I wake up feeling discouraged about how I have lived my life.	1	2	3	4	5	6
67. I know that I can trust my friends, and they know they can trust me.	1	2	3	4	5	6
68. I am not the kind of person who gives in to social pressures to think or act in certain ways.	1	2	3	4	5	6
69. My efforts to find the kinds of activities and relationships that I need have been quite successful.	1	2	3	4	5	6
70. I enjoy seeing how my views have changed and matured over the years.	1	2	3	4	5	6
71. My aims in life have been more a source of satisfaction than frustration to me.	1	2	3	4	5	6
72. The past had its ups and downs, but in general, I wouldn't want to change it.	1	2	3	4	5	6
73. I find it difficult to really open up when I talk with others.	1	2	3	4	5	6
74. I am concerned about how other people evaluate the choices I have made in my life.	1	2	3	4	5	6
75. I have difficulty arranging my life in a way that is satisfying to me.	1	2	3	4	5	6
76. I gave up trying to make big improvements or changes in my life a long time ago.	1	2	3	4	5	6
77. I find it satisfying to think about what I have accomplished in life.	1	2	3	4	5	6
78. When I compare myself to friends and acquaintances, it makes me feel good about who I am.	1	2	3	4	5	6
79. My friends and I sympathize with each other's problems.	1	2	3	4	5	6
80. I judge myself by what I think is important, not by the values of what others think is important.	1	2	3	4	5	6

Circle the number that best describes your present agreement or disagreement with each statement.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Disagree Slightly	Agree Slightly	Agree Somewhat	Strongly Agree
81. I have been able to build a home and a lifestyle for myself that is much to my liking.	1	2	3	4	5	6
82. There is truth to the saying that you can't teach an old dog new tricks.	1	2	3	4	5	6
83. In the final analysis, I'm not so sure that my life adds up to much.	1	2	3	4	5	6
84. Everyone has their weaknesses, but I seem to have more than my share.	1	2	3	4	5	6

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EDUCATION

The Pennsylvania State University, The Schreyer Honors College, expected August 2010

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Valedictorian

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Research Assistant *February 2009–August 2010*

The Culture, Health, and Emotion Lab

Principal Investigator: José Soto, Ph.D., Penn State University

- Prepared participants for measurement of physiological response to stimuli
- Led participants through studies of emotion regulation
- Conducted literature searches for the planning of future studies

Research Assistant *June 2008–July 2008*

The Center for Addictions, Personality, and Emotions Research

Principal Investigator: Stacey Daughters, Ph.D., University of Maryland, College Park

- Led research participants through computer and paper tasks to study adolescent drug use and risky behavior
- Collected participants' saliva samples for cortisol analysis
- Edited faculty research papers for publication in major psychology journals
- Conducted online journal searches for literature relevant to faculty research publications
- Conducted phone interviews to determine eligibility for studies

Research Assistant *February 2007–December 2007*

The Identity and Social Justice Lab

Principal Investigator: Philip Atiba Goff, Ph.D., Penn State University

- Led research participants through studies focusing on racial prejudice and race relations
- Participated in weekly lab meetings to discuss current and historical issues of social justice, including race identity, gender identity, socioeconomic problems, stereotypes, and the language of race relations
- Completed various readings relating to social justice concerns
- Entered research data into spreadsheets
- Edited video for use in professional presentations
- Actively recruited eligible research participants for study

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Undergraduate Intern *June 2009–August 2009*

The Center for Mental Health at Quittie Glen, Annville, PA

- Observed clinical evaluations conducted by psychiatrists and clinical social workers
- Participated in weekly case conferences
- Assisted in designing, planning, and creating a therapeutic exercise and wellness trail

Staff Assistant *June 2005–Present*

Penn State Continuing Education, Penn State College of Medicine

- Assist conference coordinators in delivering continuing medical education programs to health-care professionals and the lay public
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- Answer telephones and e-mail, handle or refer requests for information, sort and distribute mail and faxes
- Compose, type, and edit correspondence, reports, and forms
- Prepare applications for professional credits to be awarded to conference participants
- Enter registrations into database, update attendance records and print credit transcripts
- Prepare printed handout materials, name badges, and certificates of attendance
- Assist in on-site registration at conferences
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RESEARCH INTERESTS

Healthy and unhealthy relationships with food; the mechanisms of food choice; attitudes toward fitness, nutrition, and personal efficacy in regard to health; physical disease and mental health; the interrelationship of culture, well-being, and health.

ACADEMIC WRITING AND PRESENTATION

Completed an empirically researched undergraduate thesis entitled “The Relationship Between Acculturation and Subjective Well-Being in an Asian-American Sample,” under the supervision of Dr. José Soto, for honors in Psychology.

Presented thesis research at the Penn State Undergraduate Research Exhibition in April 2010, winning honorable mention for Information Literacy.

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Proficient in French with some knowledge of Spanish.

AWARDS AND HONORS

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