ABSTRACT

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ACCULTURATIVE STRESS

AND SPIRITUALITY AMONG CHINESE IMMIGRANT

COLLEGE STUDENTS IN THE UNITED STATES

By

Winnie Wing-Yi Chau

May 2006

The purpose of this quantitative study was to examine the relationship between acculturative stress and spirituality among Chinese immigrant college students in the United States. The sample of this study was obtained by utilizing a convenience sample of 63 first-generation Chinese immigrant college students. The participants each received a self-administered questionnaire which was developed to measure their acculturative stress level and spiritual well-being level. The results indicated that there was a significant correlation between acculturative stress level and spiritual well-being. The respondents who had a higher level of spiritual well-being reported having a lower level of acculturative stress. Those who attended church activity on a regular basis, at least once a week, also reported a higher level of spiritual well-being. Findings from this study suggest that spirituality and church involvement could be used as a coping strategy in the face of acculturative stress among Chinese immigrant college students.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ACCULTURATIVE STRESS

AND SPIRITUALITY AMONG CHINESE IMMIGRANT

COLLEGE STUDENTS IN THE UNITED STATES

A THESIS

Presented to the Department of Social Work

California State University, Long Beach

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Social Work

By Winnie Wing-Yi Chau

B.A., 2002, University of California, Los Angeles

May 2006

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLES

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

According to the most recent United States Census report, Chinese Americans account for 1% of the total population in the United States. They compose the largest Asian American group residing in this country, representing 24% of the total Asian population. A total of 2.4 million people in the United States reported that they were of Chinese origin, with over four hundred thousand people reporting Chinese origin with a combination of some other ethnicities. Among this large cohort of Chinese Americans, 70.8% of these individuals were foreign born and immigrated to the United States as first generation immigrants (United States Bureau of the Census, 2000).

A substantial number of Chinese immigrants enter the United States during their teenage years and young adulthood to attend colleges and universities. While these individuals have to adopt a new life which is often flooded with unfamiliar American cultural practices, beliefs and values (Rodriguez, Myers, Morris, & Cardoza, 2000), they also experience difficulties in adjusting to school, the new educational system and stress in acquiring the English language (Perry & Weinstein, 1998). Changes in learning and teaching patterns, lack of social support as well as emphasis on academic excellence add more pressure to these Chinese immigrant college students (Zhou, Peverly, Xin, Huang, & Wang, 2003). Difficulties and stressors arising as part of this adaptation process constitute the construct of acculturative stress with a possibility of creating different types of mental illness (Joiner & Walker, 2002).

Unfortunately, the Chinese culture has a stigma in soliciting help for mental health issues. Kung (2003) showed that 75% of the Chinese respondents in her study did not seek any help when they had personal or emotional distress. Among those who did, informal help was most

solicited, such as herbalists, acupuncturists, fortune-tellers, or ministers (Sue, 1994a). As

spirituality and religion appear to play a role in emotional support, it is important for us to look

at how spirituality and church participation can be used as a buffer in acculturative stress

amelioration among Chinese immigrants. Researchers suggested that spirituality has a positive

association with psychological well-being (Sorenson, Grindstaff, & Turner, 1995) and religious

attendance can be used as a buffer to the effects of stress (Williams, Larson, Buchler, Heckman,

& Pyle, 1991). Despite a wealth of literature on the role of spiritual belief in the immigrant

communities, the relationship between spirituality and immigrants' experience has for a long

time been understudied (Warner, 1998). What appears to be a gap in the literature is with regard

to the relationship between acculturative stress and spirituality, especially the effect it has on

younger Chinese immigrant populations.

<p align="center">Problem Statement</p>

This quantitative study explored the relationship between the level of acculturative stress

and spirituality among Chinese immigrant college students in the United States. This study

examined the different types of acculturative stressors Chinese immigrant college students

experience and how spirituality and church involvement may be used to cope with these

stressors.

<p align="center">Definition of Terms</p>

Chinese immigrants are those who have migrated to the United States as first generation

Chinese and those who were born in foreign countries including China, Hong Kong, Macau,

Taiwan and other Asian countries.

Acculturative stress is defined as the difficulties and stressors that arise as a part of

acculturation and adaptation process (Joiner & Walker, 2002). It is a reduction in health status

<p align="center">6</p>

including psychological, somatic, and social aspects of individuals who are undergoing acculturation (Kuo & Roysircar, 2004).

Spirituality is the quality of being spiritual and refers to spiritual beliefs and practices. Spirituality in this research is measured by the respondent's relationship with God or Higher Power and the importance of religious beliefs in his/her life.

Church involvement is defined as how often the respondent attends church and religious activities, prays, reads the Bible, and has contact with other church members.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter addresses the history of Chinese immigration, the acculturation process as well as the acculturative stressors Chinese immigrant students experience. The second part addresses spirituality and the Church and how they may be used as a coping strategy to decrease acculturative stress in the process of acculturation among Chinese immigrant populations as well as other Asian American immigrant groups.

<u>History of Chinese Immigration in the United States</u>

The Chinese immigration history to the United States has never been easy, filled with change, adaptation and survival in the past 150 years. American immigration policies have resulted in three waves of Chinese immigration (Lee, 1996). The first, from 1852 to 1882, began after the gold rush in California and ended with the passage of the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act. During this period, young Chinese males were employed to extract minerals, construct a railroad network, reclaim swamplands, build irrigation systems, work as agricultural and fishery laborers, and operate labor-intensive manufacturing industries. The terms of their employment, along with strong anti-Chinese sentiment and government's refusal of citizenship, precluded most of the Chinese laborers from settling down in America (Wang, 1998).

From 1882 to 1965, anti-Chinese prejudice and political disturbance continued into the second period of Chinese exclusion. From 1882 to the 1920s, local governments continued to enact harsh discriminatory laws that evicted Chinese from jobs and from owning land or business. Many of them were forced to or chose to return to China. The declining population trend was slowly reversed in the 1920s by the arrival of exempt classes which included merchants, students, tourists, and diplomats, as well as their spouses and children under the

exclusion laws (Wang, 1998). With the passing of the Magnuson Act in 1943 (Tsai & Lopez, 1997), Congress finally repealed the Chinese exclusion laws, allowing a token of 105 Chinese to enter the United States to become naturalized citizens each year. Another 15,000 Chinese who had served in the armed forces during World War II and their wives also became eligible for American citizenship. Moreover, several thousand Chinese with strong educational, professional, and commercial backgrounds were admitted into the United States to gain further education (Wang).

The third period of Chinese immigration occurred after the passing of the 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act, which opened up the American borders for Chinese immigrants from China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Vietnam, and other Asian countries (Tsai & Lopez, 1997). The new immigration laws targeted the promotion of family reunification and the recruitment of skilled and professional personnel (Wang, 1998). The majority of the Chinese immigrants came in family units for family reunification and settled in or near Chinatowns in major metropolitan cities. Half of them were hired as service workers and laborers in labor-intensive and low-paying service jobs in garment sweatshops and restaurants (Lee, 1996). Moreover, many of the top Chinese students and intellectuals immigrated to the United States as well during this period. In 1987, there were approximately 67,000 Chinese students enrolled in American colleges and universities, comprising about one-fifth of all foreign students. Finally, this rapid increase of Chinese immigrants was also aided in part by the several hundred thousand ethnic Chinese among those refugees who were evicted or who escaped from anti-Chinese policy in Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia since 1975 (Wang).

A large number of Chinese continue to migrate to the United States in an attempt to seek better living standards and higher education for their children (Uba, 1994). According to the

2000 United States Census figure, there were 10,242,998 Chinese residing in the United States. Chinese Americans also account for the largest proportion in the Asian American population comprising 25% of the group (United States Bureau of the Census, 2000). The National Asian Pacific American Political Almanac (2000) also showed that there were 980,642 Chinese Americans residing in the state of California alone in 2000.

<p align="center">The Acculturation Process</p>

According to Marin (1992), acculturation is the multidimensional, psychological, and adaptive process that occurs when an individual interacts with another culture. Acculturation becomes the way in which an individual incorporates values and behaviors of the new culture into currently held values and behaviors. Acculturation involves the preservation of original cultural identity and values as well as an immigrant's relationship with the dominant society. The adaptation process includes four acculturative attitudes, and they are integration, assimilation, separation, and marginalization (Berry, 1998).

Integration occurs when the immigrants become proficient in the culture of the dominant group while retaining proficiency in the indigenous culture. This is also termed as biculturalism because the immigrants in this status are highly acculturated (Berry, 1998). Asian Americans who are in this stage are believed to be psychologically healthiest. They are more capable of handling the opposing demands of the two different cultural systems (Kim & Omizo, 2005). According to Sue and Sue (1973), individuals in the status of integration are classified as the Asian American group. These individuals seek to formulate an identity integrating the Asian culture with the dominant culture in their pursuit for meaning and self-identity. Asian Americans are likely to experience acculturative stress in both the family and extra familial relationships during the process toward integration (Sue & Sue).

Assimilation occurs when the individuals absorb the dominant culture while rejecting the indigenous culture. They are also highly acculturated. However, problems may arise if these Asian Americans also have frequent interactions with their indigenous communities (Kim & Omizo, 2005). Asian Americans in this status are categorized as the group of Marginal Man. They have internalized the stereotypes and negative concepts of their ethnic backgrounds (Sue & Sue, 1973). These individuals are caught between two cultural identities in a marginal position (Kim & Omizo) and they experience distress in the form of racial self-hatred and social isolation (Sue & Sue).

Separation occurs when the individuals only want to maintain their indigenous culture with no intent to learn about the dominant culture. Individuals in this status are not acculturated. They may experience difficulties when they have to interact with people outside of their ethnic background (Kim & Omizo, 2005). Asian Americans in the separation status are categorized as the Traditionalist (Sue & Sue, 1973). They have strongly internalized the values, attitudes, beliefs, and customs of their indigenous culture. Responsibility to parents is valued above their other roles. These individuals work hard in meeting the expectations of their parents and by doing this they gain their self-worth (Sue & Sue). Finally, marginalization occurs when individuals have no interest in maintaining or acquiring proficiency in either the dominant culture or the culture of origin. Separation and marginalization may be the most problematic of the four statuses since individuals in this status adhere to neither value systems (Kim & Omizo).

Among all four statuses of acculturation, acculturation theories contend that the integration or bicultural status is the healthiest status, followed by the assimilation status. These two modes of acculturative adaptation are constructive to the immigrant's mental health (Berry, 1998). LaFromboise, Coleman, and Gerton (1993) also supported that bicultural individuals

exhibit increased cognitive functioning in the face of adversity. In order to reach the status of integration, the immigrants undergo a process of bicultural competence, a process in which the individuals are able to successfully meet the demands of the two distinct cultures. Bicultural competence includes (a) knowledge of cultural beliefs and values of both cultures, (b) positive attitudes toward both cultural groups, (c) bicultural efficacy or belief that one can live in a satisfying manner within both cultures without sacrificing one's cultural identity, (d) communication ability in both cultures, (e) role repertoire or the range of culturally appropriate behaviors, and (f) a sense of being grounded in both cultures. The integration style of acculturation is identified to serve as a resilient buffer against the development of psychopathology among adult immigrants (Berry).

Conversely, the strategies of separation and marginalization produce poor adaptation in most circumstances (Berry, 1998). Individuals living in bicultural contexts tended to become maladjusted when they reject their culture of origin (Berry & Sam, 1997).

<center>Acculturative Stress</center>

Immigration is a stressful process for uprooted people adjusting to a new society (Kim, 1997). Oftentimes this difficult process is overwhelmed with psychological distress (Ritsner & Ponizovsky, 1999). Different cultural norms and social conditions may pose problems and psychological distress for immigrants who lack crucial information about the new American society (Joiner & Walker, 2002). Researchers showed that first-generation immigrants from different Asian samples reported high levels of stressful events and their psychological well-being was less than optimal in North America (Choi, 1997; Noh & Avison, 1992; Shin, 1994). Acculturative stress causes a reduction in health status including psychological, somatic, and social aspects of the individuals who are undergoing acculturation; and it is significantly

<center>12</center>

associated with depressive, suicidal, and anxious symptoms such as bulimic symptoms, substance use, and general distress (Kuo & Roysircar, 2004).

The specific acculturative stress Chinese immigrant college students experience include the adjustment to the discrepancies between the Chinese culture and the American culture, acquisition of and proficiency in the English language, lack of social support, changes in learning and teaching patterns, as well as Chinese emphasis on academic excellence. These different stressors are going to be discussed in the following sections.

Discrepancies of Chinese Culture and American Culture

Culture is a set of attitudes, values, beliefs, and behaviors that is shared by a group of people (Barnouw, 1973). Discrepancies between the Chinese culture and the American culture can place Chinese immigrant college students at risk of developing distress (Tabora & Flaskerud, 1994). Lum (2000) described Asian Americans as an ethnic group that contains a strong sense of collective cultural values. They value the importance of filial piety, mutual responsibility, cooperation, conformity, interpersonal harmony and interdependence among family and community members. Family interests are expected to be prioritized before one's own interest. Chinese culture also treasures the importance of hierarchical order, deference to authority figures, sensitivity to the feelings of others, respect, loyalty, indirect expression, righteousness and personal integrity (Casas & Mann, 1996; Kim, Atkinson, & Yang, 1999; Sue & Sue, 2003). Researchers showed that first-generation Asian Americans adhere to Asian cultural values more strongly than those who are several generations removed from immigration (Kim, Atkinson, & Umemoto, 2001).

Conversely, the American dominant society maintains values associated with individualism characterized by social assertiveness, independence, self-reliance, autonomy,

future orientation, competition, directness, openness, separateness, and survival of the fittest (Atkinson, 2004; Casas & Mann, 1996; Sue & Sue, 2003). With such dramatic differences between the Chinese and American cultures, the immigrant Chinese students are likely to experience difficulties in interacting with their American counterparts when cultural conflict arises (Constantine, Okazaki, & Utsey, 2004). Sue and Chin (1983) asserted that cultural conflict arises whenever the norms, values and behaviors of one culture clash with those of another culture. Psychological stress is often the product of such clash (Aldwin & Greenberger, 1987).

Moreover, cultural conflict does not only exist between two seemingly different cultures. It also occurs within the Chinese culture itself among its members (Lee, 2002). Many of the Chinese immigrant students accompany their parents to migrate to the United States. It is common to have Chinese parents who hold more traditional Chinese values than their children. The children usually reach the stage of acculturative integration at a faster pace when compared to their parents due to more frequent exposure to American dominant culture through school, peers and media (Lee). The immigrant students are torn between their parents' desire to pertain traditional cultural values and their new acculturating cultural identity (Constantine et al., 2004). A study of a sample of Korean American college students indicated that when the students personally endorsed American contemporary values, but thought their parents were holding onto traditional values, they were more likely to experience depressed feelings than those students who did not (Lee).

Acquisition of and Proficiency in the English Language

English speaking ability is one of the major sources of acculturative stress for many of the Chinese immigrant students because such ability affects their cultural adjustment process in

14

the United States (Casado & Leung, 2001). A study of 320 African, Asian, and Latin American international college students showed that students who rated their English skills as lower were more depressed (Constantine et al., 2004). This finding is consistent with the conceptualizations of acculturative stress among immigrants, which view lower English language proficiency as a significant source of stress (Lin & Yi, 1997; Nwadiora & McAdoo, 1996). In a sample of 506 Chinese immigrant adolescents in Canada aged 12 to 19, Kuo and Roysircar (2004) found that the respondents' higher English reading ability was strongly linked to more acculturation and lower acculturative stress. They found that better English proficiency increased the ability of an immigrant to acquire cultural knowledge of the American society, engage in cross-cultural interactions with the dominant group, and avoid cultural conflicts and misunderstandings (Kuo & Roysircar).

Communication difficulties encountered by the immigrant students also negatively affect the students' social self-efficacy. Social self-efficacy refers to a willingness to initiate behaviors in social situations (Sherer & Adams, 1983) and it is found to mediate the relationship between stressful life events and depressive symptoms (Maciekewski, Prigerson, & Mazure, 2000). With lesser degrees of social skill functioning and ability to seek social support when necessary, immigrant students are more likely to induce acculturative stress and other psychological symptoms (Constantine et al., 2004).

Lack of the English language proficiency also affects Chinese immigrant students in understanding academic lectures at American universities. Academic listening comprehension is often difficult for Chinese students for many reasons. A new word, an unfamiliar pronunciation, or a complex sentence structure can cause challenges for them in understanding an English lecture which may hinder academic success (Huang, 2005).

<u>Lack of Social Support</u>

Hovey and Magana (2002) showed that the lack of effective social support systems may also increase the symptoms of anxiety and depression an individual suffers in the process of acculturation. Immigrating to a new country removes immigrants from their previously established support system and makes them feel less confident, increasingly tense and confused (Hayes & Lin, 1994; Poyrazli, Kavanaugh, Baker, & Al-Timimi, 2004). Several studies (Abe, Talbot, & Geelhoed, 1998; Hammer 2002) confirmed that success of social adjustment to a new country is related to the quantity of both close and causal relationships immigrants have with people from the dominant culture. These relationships are also helpful in reducing cultural stress (Olaniran, 1993).

In the study of Poyrazli and colleagues (2004), the researchers suggested that students who primarily socialized with Americans reported a lower level of acculturative stress than those students who socialized with non-Americans. It also showed that Asian students reported greater acculturative stress than their European counterparts because European and American societies tend to have similar cultures that encourage independence and individual expression. This similarity of basic values and characteristics results in European students' better communications and connections with their American peers. Conversely, Asian cultures focus more on the values of dependence and conformity and they pose a greater difference to the American culture (Triandis, McCusker, & Hui, 1990). Asian students therefore experience a greater amount of acculturative stress due to encountering greater difficulties in building social networks with their American peers. (Poyrazli et al.).

Moreover, in a study of 273 high school students from former-Yugoslavian and Chinese cultural backgrounds, Sondereggar and Barrett (2004) observed similar results in which young

16

migrants from former-Yugoslavian background reported greater involvement with their host culture than the Chinese immigrant students. Characteristics that promote differences, like the diverse physical appearance between Chinese and Caucasians, also encourage migrants to feel less accepted and, therefore, interact less with people from the dominant culture (Greene, Jensen, & Jones, 1996). Chinese immigrant children also reported having significantly less tangible support when compared to their former-Yugoslavian counterparts as they had less social interaction with peers. The study demonstrated that Chinese students experienced greater difficulties in securing social interaction competence and peer acceptance in a predominantly Caucasian society (Sondereggar & Barrett).

Moreover, Asian international students who have limited English skills and who are unfamiliar with the educational system in the United States also struggle to gain the respect and trust of their American peers. Social relations in American college settings also create cultural adjustment stressors for many of these students. Related to limited English proficiency and a lack of familiarity with American social norms and customs, Asian international students find it difficult to make friends and establish a social support network in the United States (Mori, 2000).

Changes in Learning and Teaching Patterns as a Source of Stress

Academic learning varies depending on the cultural context (Tweed & Lehman, 2002). Acculturative stress can be induced by changes in learning and teaching patterns in a different cultural context when immigrant students first arrive at the United States (Kennedy, 2002). Chinese students' Confucian-oriented learning involves "effort-focused conceptions of learning, pragmatic orientations to learning, and acceptance of behavioral reform as an academic goal" (Tweed & Lehman, p. 93). Chinese students in general work more efficiently in a well-structured and quiet learning environment in which definite goals have been established for

them. Students are reluctant to express opinions in class and they unquestioningly accept the teacher's teaching (Bond, 1996). Teachers are regarded not only as authorities in their field of study, but also as the students' moral mentor (Fu, 1991). Chinese students also conform and act in the interests of the group aiming not to waste other students' class time by expressing independent judgment (Chang & Holt, 1994). This learning pattern promotes conformity and reinforces passive and compliant roles in class. Students are encouraged not to speak out, not to question and not to criticize inside classroom. Teaching is mainly didactic, rigid and focused on the textbook, with little time allocated for in-class discussion. In Chinese universities, teachers always write on the blackboard about the important and difficult points while lecturing. Blackboard writing is used to give students a deep impression and help them better understand a lecture (Ma & Huang, 1992).

This Chinese learning pattern often contradicts with the learning style practiced in the American classroom that focuses on Socratic-oriented learning with "overt and private questioning, expression of personal hypotheses, and a desire for self-directed tasks" (Tweed & Lehman, 2002, p. 93). There is a more equal relationship between teachers and students in which American teachers often use humor and varied informal teaching methods in the classroom. American teachers are not too concerned about getting sidetracked onto some other topics beyond the text. Also, they do not write much on the board while lecturing. Instead, they expect their students to do extensive reading and look for related information on their own outside of class (Upton, 1989). The emphasis on creativity, originality, critical thinking, active discussion and problem solving can cause an immeasurable amount of stress to those immigrant students who first get in touch with this unfamiliar American educational system (Salili, 1996).

The changes in learning and teaching styles experienced by Chinese immigrant students were demonstrated in a study of 78 Chinese immigrant college students and their perceptions toward the American classroom (Huang, 2005). Seventy-two percent of the respondents reported that American professors' failure to follow textbooks affected their lecture comprehension; 74% of them agreed that teachers' lack of writing on the board affected their understanding of the lecture; and 60% agreed that their American teachers' lack of lecture organization affected their understanding of the class materials. Different learning approaches negatively challenge the Chinese immigrant students' confidence and perceptions of their competence and lead to feelings of frustration, anxiety, and loss of interest in academic work and recreational activities (Zhou et al., 2003).

Chinese Emphasis on Academic Excellence

Before an individual entering the workforce, responsibility and obligation to the family are fulfilled through academic achievement. Chinese families have a strong family orientation. Students do not just work for themselves, but also for their family's honor. By excelling in school, the person brings honor to the family. In the Confucian tradition, children incur an enormous debt to their parents for giving birth to them. Academic achievement is the only way for students to repay the infinite debt to parents, of showing filial piety (Serafica, 1990). Combined with a belief in the efficacy of effort and hard work, Butterfield (1986) found that Asian American students work harder at academic pursuits and are more disciplined academically than those students of other ethnic backgrounds. Students may experience parental criticism if they do not meet their expectations (Sue & Okazaki, 1990). In Peng and Wright's analysis (1994) of 25,000 students in the National Education Longitudinal Study, Asian

Americans reported higher levels of perfectionism and greater concerns about meeting high parental expectations for success compared to other ethnic groups.

Moreover, knowing that their parents sacrificed a lot in their country of origin for them to have a good life in the America further induces feelings of guilt and anxiety in these students. Attribution theory suggests that children in this situation may internalize the cause of academic failure. Such internalization and self-blame, can generate internalized distress, negative self-perceptions, and social withdrawal (Cole, 1991; Connell & Wellborn, 1991).

McGrath (1983) was one of the early researchers who noted that mental disturbance and even suicide attempts are possible side effects of the intense academic pressure Asian students feel in the United States. Asian students in his study expressed that not studying hard enough brought deep guilt to them. Another research on test anxiety also yielded similar results. In a study of 312 college students at the University of Toronto, the findings showed that the Chinese students scored significantly higher on text anxiety then did students from European ethnic backgrounds, indicating disproportionately high levels of both academic success and psychological stress among Chinese and other Asian students in the United States (Dion & Toner, 1988). Chang (1998) further found that Asian American university students reported more doubts about their actions and more concerns about making mistakes and greater parental expectations. They also perceived more criticism from parents than Caucasian American students even though the two groups did not differ significantly in personal standards and organization.

<u>Mental Health Seeking Behaviors Among Chinese Americans</u>

Researchers suggested that Asian Americans and Asian international students with higher adherence to Asian cultural values tend to have a lower degree of positive attitudes toward seeking psychological help and a higher tendency to rely on informal supports such as family

and friends when they experience problems and distress (Atkinson, 2004; Kim & Omizo; 2003). In both of Kung's studies (2003; 2004), she pointed out that Chinese culture seems at odds with soliciting help for mental health issues. Many Chinese immigrants do not feel that personal and emotional issues are important. Seventy-five percent of the study's respondents did not seek any help when they needed any. Among those who did, informal help through family and friends was most solicited, followed by alternative help such as herbalists, acupuncturists, fortune-tellers, or ministers (Kung).

First of all, Chinese culture appears not to encourage the use of mental health services. Emotional distress is seen as a result of malingering bad thoughts, a lack of will power, and personality weakness (Narikiyo & Kameoka, 1992). Instead of seeking professional help, self control and solving one's own problems with passive coping strategies are emphasized (Boey, 1999; Zhang, Snowden, & Sue, 1998). Chinese Americans are also more likely to somatize emotional distress, emphasizing the physical expression of one's distressed states (Tseng, 2001; Zhang et al., 1998). Moreover, current mental health treatment approaches oftentimes may not suit Chinese Americans and their cultural values. A lot of psychotherapy requires exploration on one's thoughts and feelings and oftentimes it is client-driven. Yet, Chinese are more used to repress their emotions, especially morbid ones and prefer seeking for directive and tangible help (Leong & Lau, 2001; Sue, 1994b).

Apart from cultural barriers to using mental health services, practical barriers such as limited knowledge of how to access mental health service, limited spare time, money and English-language proficiency can also hamper the use (Sue, 1994b; Takeuchi, Sue, & Yeh, 1995; Uba, 1994). Therefore, it is important for us to look at how spirituality and church involvement can be used as a buffer in acculturative stress among Chinese immigrant populations.

Spirituality and the Church in the Chinese Community

There seems to be little consensus on the definition of spirituality and its relationship to religion. For example, Shafranske and Malony (1990) defined religion as an "adherence to the beliefs and practices of an organized church or institution" (p. 72). In contrast, Elkins (1990) described spirituality as "a way of being and experiencing that comes about through awareness of a transcendent dimension that is characterized by certain . . . values in regard to self, others . . . and whatever one considers to be the ultimate" (p. 4). In both definitions, spirituality can be characterized by a subjective experience that transcends religious affiliation (Fiorito & Ryan, 1998). According to the Association for Spiritual, Ethical, and Religious Values in Counseling, spirituality refers to "an innate capacity and tendency to move towards knowledge, love, meaning, hope, transcendence, connectedness and compassion. It includes one's capacity for creativity, growth and the development of a value system" (Fukuyama & Sevig, 1999, p. 66).

Migration and the process of acculturation entail both continuity and discontinuity in the immigrant's sociocultural world, including one's social network, cultural traditions, and sense of collective identity (Hurh & Kim, 1990a). In the analysis of a group of Chinese immigrant church members, the data showed that psychological symptoms associated with identity disorder, depression, and anxiety significantly decreased after the subjects began attending the Chinese ethnic church. All of the participants attributed this effect to having "found Jesus" or to "accepting Jesus into their heart" (Palinkas, 1982,   p. 237). Spirituality and the church provide not only existential meaning, but also belonging and comfort to the immigrant populations (Hurh & Kim). In another study of 75 Chinese members at a church in the Northwest, the relationship between spiritual well-being and self-esteem was found to be significantly positively correlated (Wong, 1989). For those who have a clear sense of purpose in life, they can make more sense

out of difficulties in life which may serve to protect their self-esteem rather than feeling hopeless (Wong).

Psychological well-being of individuals is positively related to their level of spirituality and church participation (Barcus, 1999). McCready and Greeley's study (1976) further confirmed the usefulness of spirituality and church involvement by stating that "religion has direct impact on life satisfaction, as well as indirect impact through its effect on psychological well-being" (p. 106). In a study of spiritual health among a sample of university students, McGee (1999) found that students who experienced higher level of spirituality demonstrated lower level of perceived stress; hence, a higher level of psychological well-being.

Existential Meaning

In the study of 465 Korean immigrant participants at a Korean ethnic church, Hurh and Kim (1990b) found that a majority of the respondents, 74% reported their primary motive for attending church was religious, such as "to worship god," "for strengthening faith," and "for eternal life and salvation" (p. 25). Spiritual and biblical teaching provides an explanation for the immigrants' trials and hardship during the process of acculturation. The church also provides a meeting ground for immigrant church members to share their immigration and acculturation experiences and to make sense out of the hardship and misfortune they are experiencing through personal testimonies and narrations of various experiences of how God has helped them through their trials (Palinkas, 1982). Members are also constantly confronted in the religious discourse when the church leaders address the social, cultural, and psychological conflicts the immigrant members face during the process of acculturation. In the face of adversity and the acculturative stress immigrants have to bear, the church members are encouraged to pray and to work for an uplifted church. This advice is demonstrated to be feasible and effective in solving the

immgrants' problems through biblical precedents and personal testimonies from church leaders and fellow members (Palinkas). The use of prayer is demonstrated to be a dominant factor in the positive relationship between religiosity and psychological well-being. Personal prayer has a powerful effect in helping church members to cope with difficulties (Maltby, Lewis, & Day, 1999).

Other than the explanation of life purpose and trials, spirituality and religion also provide a sense of security to the Chinese immigrants. As demonstrated in Ng's study (2002) on a group of Chinese immigrant church members at a Chinese ethnic church, the members' testimonies are filled with references to the practical blessings and protection they see coming from God. To the Chinese immigrants, God is perceived as a tutelary god who provides guidance and help in the midst of struggles during the acculturation process. Spirituality allows them to trust in God who would protect them in every difficulty they encounter and provide them with serenity and peacefulness, especially during the period of difficult adjustment to a new society (Ng). The testimony given by one of the church participants demonstrated this aspect of providence and security religion provides. In the testimony she stated, "I was anxious about my life in the United States all the time in the past, I sweated at the big stuff and the small stuff, but my heart has felt much better since I began to believe in God; I know he is looking after me. That's important. I now feel secure and at ease" (Ng, p. 203). The conversion to Christianity offers some of the immigrants to recognize one's powerlessness in a foreign environment, followed by the providence from God, the ultimate guardian. What motivates them to be resilient in the face of adversity is the belief that God would help them to overcome obstacles and misfortunes they themselves are too powerless to handle. The feeling of lack of control and power once again is conquered due to the protection and guidance secured from the Almighty God (Ng).

The Formation of Chinese Christian Identity

According to Palinkas (1982), the ethnic church serves to mitigate the psychological distress such as uncertainty, anxiety, and a crisis of identity experienced by immigrants. At the ethnic church, the immigrants' values are understood, their language is spoken, and their customs and traditional ethnic identity are preserved. Migration is one of the most obvious instances of complete disorganization of the individual's role system and some disturbance of identity and self-image is to be expected (David, 1969). The environment has changed and familiar patterns of behaviors no longer enable the individual to meet his or her expectations or to adjust to people, places and activities around him or her. For the Chinese immigrants in particular, the source of identity crisis is the disruption of the family unit as the foundation for social life (Palinkas).

The Chinese church may assist its members to establish a Chinese Christian identity through the processes of identification and identity formation. Identification is accomplished through several devices inside the ethnic church (Palinkas, 1982). Kinship terms like brothers, sisters, aunts, and uncles are often used when church leaders and members address each other, stressing the congregation is like one big family. Quotations of Chinese proverbs and sayings are also incorporated in sermons. Analogies of stories and personal testimonies concerning some tragedy or misfortune are employed both to facilitate understanding of some Christian principles and to relate to each other's experiences. In a Chinese immigrant church, the church leaders seek identification with the Chinese members, leading to the formation of Chinese Christian identity among the immigrants (Palinkas). The identification unites a Chinese and a Christian world view together through defining the environment as chaotic, disorderly, filled with the potential for personal ruin, and the belief that the family and a unified church are the effective ways to

achieve stability and security. It gives an interpretation of reality and meaning of life to the

Chinese immigrants who are in the struggle of defining identity for themselves (Palinkas).

The formation of the Chinese Christian identity also assists the Chinese immigrants to

define who they are. Three sets of oppositions are employed to establish the boundaries of a

Chinese Christian identity through teachings in the sermons (Palinkas, 1982). They include

Chinese Christian vs. non-Christian Chinese, Christian vs. non-Christians, and Chinese vs. non-

Chinese. These sets of opposite identities provide guidelines for the Chinese immigrant church

members to define who they are and who they are not. They are "righteous people" and they are

"saved" both from the present trials and the tribulations to come (Palinkas, p. 248). They also

possess common values such as the love for God, the observance of filial piety, and the desire to

acclimate to the new environment while maintaining their traditional values and customs

(Palinkas). Through creating a new identity at a new home away from home, the Chinese

immigrants are more able to cope with the demands of acculturation in the United States (Mol,

1976).

The Chinese ethnic church and teaching of Christianity also provide different identity

options for the church members (Palinkas, 1982). Rather than merely emphasizing on one's

identity as Chinese, a variety of new traits and social roles are articulated. These new roles

include parent, child, American resident, citizen, voter, taxpayer, family member, worker,

student, and Christian. By the presentation of these different roles, the immigrant members are

reminded of the options that either were lost during the process of migration or those which are

available in the new environment (Palinkas).

The Church as Social Support

      Religious affiliations serve as a purpose to meet the individuals' needs for comfort, fellowship, and a sense of belonging. The church serves a particular function in meeting the need for primordial ties for the immigrants who are separated from their relatives and friends whom they maintained closest ties with (Min, 1992). In the process of immigration and integration into a new society, oftentimes immigrants are bombarded with a feeling of alienation in a foreign land. Association with co-ethnic members is shown to be essential for coping with this alienation in the Korean ethnic church (Min). In a study of the participants in 131 New York City Korean churches, Min concluded that one of the major social functions the ethnic churches provide to their people is the benefit of fellowship. During the weekly fellowship time, church members exchange greetings and enjoy informal talks with fellow members. Special events, outdoor and sports events, celebrations for Asian traditional and religious holidays, birthday parties, and Bible study are also organized by the churches. The ethnic churches act as a pseudo-extended family for many Asian immigrants (Kim, 1997).

      Apart from the social support and the interactions inside the church, church members also enjoy intimate friendship networks outside of the church (Min, 1992). It is important to note that 45% of those Korean immigrant respondents in Chicago reported making friends from attending church (Hurh & Kim, 1990b). Asian ethnic churches also assist fellow members to foster good interactions and support systems by dividing the members into several different subgroups. For each subgroup, it holds regular district meetings combining religious service and dinner party. By doing this, it offers ample opportunity for informal social interactions and creates even closer bonding among the members (Min). More than half of the Korean churchgoers, most of whom work long hours, also participate in a district meeting biweekly or monthly, in addition to

attending regular Sunday services. This further supports the importance of friendship ties, mutual assistance, outlets for releasing tensions and feelings of alienation the subgroups and church district meetings provide to their fellow church members (Min).

Another study further confirms the importance of social support the ethnic church provides to the immigrant populations. In an examination of a Chinese ethnic church called the Chinese Christian Church and Center located in Philadelphia, Ni (2000) concluded that apart from the spiritual and emotional support the church provides for its members in an unfamiliar environment, the church also renders practical support such as social support and networking for its church members. The author stated that "the church plays a central role in the social organization of the entire Chinese community. It provides a major focus for social integration among all Chinese in Philadelphia. Among Chinese in the local community, the church has become the most important mutual assistance association for them, giving aid and comfort to the individuals as well as representing the community's interest to the larger society" (Ni, p. 29). In the middle of damaged self-esteem and emotional stress during adaptation to a new culture, the church acts as a substitute for the traditional kinship system the immigrants once left behind during migration (Ni).

It is also interesting that the Chinese church serves as a common meeting ground for Chinese immigrants migrating from different areas like Mainland China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Vietnam, the Philippines, Malaysia, Indonesia as well as Chinese American born in the United States (Ni, 2000). The church advocates "unity in diversity" to bring Chinese from different backgrounds together under the same roof (Ni, p.30). The Church is able to provide its members with a chance of interaction with their own people in a foreign country and an opportunity to develop a new kinship system. Supported by more familiar people and similar cultural values,

Chinese immigrant members are protected in the church from the outside demands of

acculturation from the dominant society. Thus, the immigrants are able to create a home away

from their homelands and extend both the traditional kinship system and the clan associations in

a new environment (Ni).

Maintenance of the Chinese Cultural Tradition

Min (1992) stated that another major social function of the immigrant church is to help

the immigrants to maintain their cultural traditions. First of all, in the Korean immigrant

churches he studied, the Korean language and cultural practices are preserved inside the church.

Sermons are delivered in Korean and all Korean immigrant churches interviewed claimed that

they celebrate religious and traditional holidays through serving a variety of Korean traditional

food and wearing traditional Korean attires (Min). The Korean cultural traditions are preserved

in Korean ethnic churches because of their emphasis on the Korean traditional and cultural

values including the sermon contents. Korean cultural tradition is further maintained when

pastors from these churches frequently relate certain Korean traditional values to a teaching from

the Bible and direct church members to preserve those Korean values to live as devoted

Christians (Min). Finally, the Korean immigrant churches also help to maintain ethnic identity

of their members by drawing their attention to what is going on in their homeland. Through

sermons and prayers, members are constantly guided to pray for the social and political needs of

Korea such as relief of natural disaster in a certain area in Korea and the unification of the two

Koreas (Min). Pastors also relate their sermon topics to Korea on Korean national holidays such

as the March First Independence Movement Day along with special commemoratory services.

Furthermore, Korean churches foster maintenance of cultural traditions and a sense of cultural

identity among its members by inviting ministers and professors from Korea to give sermons and lectures (Min).

Based on an ethnographic study of a Chinese immigrant church located in a metropolitan area in the America Mid-West, Ng (2002) demonstrated that the ethnic church also provides for the Chinese immigrants a free social space to practice their own Chinese culture and a place for social networking to relive some of their traditional cultural practices during celebrations of Chinese traditional festivals. One interesting point to note is that Chinese ideographic characters are one of the major cultural symbols recognized on these occasions to emphasize the members' shared cultural traits and backgrounds (Ng). Through displaying Chinese calligraphy, playing Chinese lantern riddles and putting up Chinese Bible verses on red paper during Chinese New Year, a powerful cultural symbol of shared heritage is emphasized (Ng). This also provides a familiar close-to-home environment for the immigrants to experience cultural traditions that they are familiar with in the midst of acculturation stress. The universality of the Chinese writing also brings people from different geographical regions together. There are so many different Chinese dialects; however, the written language is the same among all these different spoken Chinese dialects. Thus, the written language can serve the purpose of bringing people together and emphasizing cultural sameness (Ng).

The Role of Spirituality in the Preservation of Ethnic and Cultural Identity

Ethnic identity refers to the way in which ethnic minority group members negotiate with their own group as a distinct subdivision of the dominant culture (Phinney, 2003) and it is "one's sense of belonging to an ethnic group and the part of one's thinking, perception, feelings, and behavior that is due to ethnic group membership" (Rotheram & Phinney, 1987, p. 13). Ethnic identity is fostered and strengthened through the practices of the Chinese cultural

traditions like eating practices, communication styles, fashion styles, and mannerisms (Ng, 2002).

The results from two researches indicated that African Americans view spirituality as an important source of coping and as a protective factor (Resnicow, Braithwaite, & Kuo, 1997; Moore & Glei, 1995). Spiritual involvements like church prayers and revival meetings are sources of social support for the ethnic minority groups (Mays, Caldwell, & Jackson, 1996). These studies offered support for the importance of spirituality in acting as a buffer for psychological distress for the ethnic minorities in the United States. Markstrom (1999) further demonstrated that frequent attendance at spiritual activities like Bible study was associated with higher ethnic identity scores in a group of African Americans. In another study of Jewish adolescents, the participants who were more likely to rely on their spiritual faith as coping mechanisms also scored higher in ethnic identity scores (Dubow, Pargament, Boxer, & Tarakeshwar, 2000).

Another exploratory study of the relationship between ethnic identity and spiritual development among several ethnic minority groups revealed that spirituality is positively correlated with ethnic identity (Chae, Kelly, Brown, & Bolden, 2004). The researchers (Phinney, DuPont, Espinosa, Revil, & Sanders, 1994) proposed that in order to buffer the negative effects of the different stressors experienced in the process of acculturation, one strategy used by the ethnic minority groups is to increase one's sense of affirmation and belonging to one's group identity. "When one's ethnic group faces rejection and discrimination, a common strategy to preserve one's self-respect is to reaffirm and strengthen ethnic group identity, through movements which stress ethnic pride" (Phinney et al., p. 179).

The Church as Social Services Referral Source

During the period of initial immigration and later acculturation and adjustment stages, the immigrants need different kinds of information and services to aid them in settling down in this new society. According to Min (1992), few formal social service agencies in the Korean immigrant community are available to the immigrants. The Korean ethnic church seems to be the only social institution that the immigrants can turn to for useful information and services. First, church leaders offer informal help to church members by providing information and counseling on education, employment, business, housing, healthcare, and social security (Min). They also help the members to interpret and fill out application forms for those with language difficulties. The research statistics also showed that each pastor interviewed reported helping church members with their problems on an average of 50 times in one year (Min). Another major way the Korean church helps its members is through the provision of formal programs such as the Bible school, language program seminars and conferences. Topics such as health, insurance, American laws, income taxes, marital adjustment, and American educational system are all covered by the seminars and the lectures in the ethnic church (Min).

In the Chinese Christian Church and Center in Philadelphia, the church leaders and many members in the church also organize programs and participate in volunteer work to serve those immigrants who need assistance (Ni, 2000). For example, programs like English as a second language classes, citizenship classes, college entrance classes, tutoring classes, art classes, career seminars, youth community services, weekend programs and summer programs are offered to people in the community (Ni). English classes also provide an opportunity for the Chinese immigrants to practice their English skills in front of a Chinese audience who might be more sympathetic when the speakers make mistakes (Ng, 2002). In a more informal way, the church leaders and the fellow members also assist the new immigrants to learn about the American

culture. One of the examples Ng gave was the education on how to watch American football and the Super Bowl. Members are also familiarized with the American holidays through the celebrations of Christmas, Easter, and Thanksgiving during church gatherings (Ng).

The Church as a Provider of Social Status

Social status is also an important social function that the church provides to the immigrant populations (Min, 1992). Being an immigrant and an ethnic minority in the United States, most of the immigrants experience downward mobility after migrating to the United States due to language barrier and other disadvantages. For those Americans in the dominant society, they may enjoy relatively higher status by playing leadership roles in voluntary associations even they hold low status jobs. However, few Asian immigrants have secured leadership roles due to their marginal status in the America. The ethnic church seems to be able to offer meaningful positions to meet the status needs of some immigrants (Min). In the Korean community, the ethnic churches provide professional occupations with respected status for Korean ministers, pastors and lay evangelists (Min). In the Korean churches surveyed in New York City, Min discovered that each church provides nearly 80 lay positions to its members, which account for 32 percent of the total adult church members among the churches surveyed. Although most of these lay positions are not paid, the survey showed that these lay leaders spend comparatively more money and time in doing their duties in these positions. These lay positions as elder, exhorter, or deacon fulfill the immigrants' needs for social status, which could not be met in the larger society (Min).

Apart from the religious positions, the ethnic churches also offer a number of nonreligious administrative and organizational positions in the publication, fellowship, education, social concern, and financial committees, choir, Bible school, and language school.

All these provide a lot of administrative and professional positions for the church members (Min, 1992). Another study showed that Korean male immigrants who held staff positions in the ethnic church showed a lower level of depression and a higher level of life satisfaction than those who did not (Hurh & Kim, 1990b).

<div align="center">Conclusion</div>

This review of the literature touched on some of the problems of acculturation and some of the resources found within local ethnic churches. The following chapter outlines the methods used to further explore the perceptions of immigrant Chinese Americans about the relationships between acculturation factors and spiritual practices.

CHAPTER 3

METHODLOGY

<u>Research Design</u>

This study employed a descriptive research design. The purpose of the study was to examine the relationship between acculturative stress Chinese immigrant college students faced in their lives and whether spirituality and church involvement helped to reduce such stress. This study utilized two self-administered questionnaires including the Acculturative Stress Scale for International Students (Sandhu & Asrabadi, 1994) and the Spiritual Well-Being Scale (Ellison, 1983).

<u>Sample Selection</u>

This study used convenience sampling. It was appropriate to use this sampling method because the researcher already had regular contact and access to Chinese immigrant college students who attended Christian church or fellowship. It was therefore able to provide a convenient and substantial pool of study participants for the research. The study subjects were recruited from two Chinese churches named First Evangelical Church of Diamond Bar and Sunrise Christian Community of Southern California. In order to participate in the research, the participants were required to be first-generation Chinese immigrants who were at least 18 years of age. They were also required to be either attending a two-year community college or a four-year university in the United

States at the time of this study; or they had to have recently graduated within five years of taking the survey. Sixty-three questionnaires were collected for analysis.

Data Collection

The researcher first contacted the supervisors from the two churches in Los Angeles County asking for their permission to conduct the survey. Once approved, the researcher attended a Sunday worship service and a fellowship gathering at the two churches. Once the church groups were finished with their events, representatives from the churches introduced the researcher to the participants. The researcher then explained the purpose of the study to the participants and asked them to partake in the self-administered survey. The participants who wished to participate were asked to sign an informed consent (Appendix A). Once all informed consent forms were collected, participants were given questionnaires to complete. They were provided as much time as they needed to complete the questionnaires. While the participants were filling out the surveys, the researcher waited outside the room. Finally, the participants were instructed to return the questionnaires to the collection box placed at the front of the room once they were done.

Variables

For the purpose of this study, the two key variables which were measured were acculturative stress and spiritual well-being. The Acculturative Stress Scale for International Student (Sandhu & Asrabadi, 1994) was used to measure acculturative stress level of the study participants. Spiritual well-being of the study participants was measured using the Spiritual Well-Being Scale (Ellison, 1983).

Instrument and Measures

The self-administered questionnaire consisted of three sections including respondent's demographic information and the two scales measuring the two variables of acculturative stress and spiritual well-being (Appendix B). The first part aimed to collect the participant's demographic information including gender, age, marital status, length of residency in the United States since immigration, country of origin, living arrangement, level of education, and frequency of church activity attendance.

The second part of the questionnaire utilized the Acculturative Stress Scale for International Students developed by Sandhu and Asrabadi (1994). This is a 36-item scale designed to measure acculturative stress in the American society on a five-point Likert-type scale (1=Strongly Agree, 5=Strongly Disagree); lower scores reflected higher acculturative stress. The Acculturative Stress Scale had an excellent reliability and validity with a Cronbach's coefficient alpha of 0.95 (Zalaquett & Wood, 1997).

The third part of the questionnaire consisted of the Spiritual Well-Being Scale developed by Ellison (1983). This was a 20-item scale designed to measure spiritual well-being of the respondents. The scale was also developed to measure two constructs including spiritual and existential well-being. Each item on the scale was rated on a six-point Likert-type scale (1=Strongly Agree, 5=Strongly Disagree); higher scores reflected higher level of spiritual well-being. The scale received excellent reliability and validity with a coefficient alpha of 0.92 (Ellison).

Data Analysis

Quantitative data analysis procedures were employed in this study. The respondents'

demographic information, along with scores from the two scales, Acculturative Stress Scale for

International Students and Spiritual Well-Being Scale, were computed in the Statistical Package

for the Social Services (SPSS) for descriptive statistics. Frequencies, percentages, means and

Standard Deviations were analyzed for the collected data. Pearson's *r* correlation procedures

were performed to examine (1) the strength of the relationship between acculturative stress level

and spiritual well-being level, and (2) the strength of the relationship between respondents'

length of stay in the United States and their level of acculturative stress.

Independent sample *t*-tests were also used to determine differences in level of

acculturative stress and level of spiritual well-being by the respondents' marital status and

frequency of church activity attendance. Finally, One-Way ANOVA procedures were performed

to examine differences in level of acculturative stress and level of spiritual well-being by the

respondents' living arrangement and education level.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

Demographic and Descriptive Characteristics of the Respondents

The demographic and descriptive characteristics of the respondents are reported in Table 1. The total number of respondents for this research was 63. Twenty-nine (46.0%) of the respondents were male and 34 (54.0%) were female. Age of the respondents ranged from 18 to 40 with a mean of 25 years old (SD= 4.50). Almost half of the respondents (n= 28, 44.4%) were between 23 and 27 of age, followed by 18-22 years old (n=15, 23.8%) and 28-32 years old (n=15, 23.8%). A majority of the respondents (n= 57, 90.5%) were single. The respondents' length of stay in the United States ranged from three months to 23 years with a mean of 10 years (SD= 6.14).

The largest number of respondents (n= 21, 33.3%) reported living in the United States for five years or less. Seventeen of the respondents (27.0%) lived in the United States for six to 10 years and 15 of the respondents (23.8%) lived in the U.S. for 11 to 15 years. A majority of the respondents (n= 46, 73.0%) immigrated to the United States from Hong Kong. More than half of the respondents (n= 37, 58.7%) lived with family member(s) and 12 of the respondents (19%) reported living alone. More than half of the respondents (n= 36, 57.1%) obtained an undergraduate degree or were attending a four-year university when the survey was taken. A majority of the respondents (n= 54, 85.8%)

TABLE 1. Demographic and Descriptive Characteristics of Respondents (N= 63)

Characteristics	f	%
Gender		
Male	29	46.0
Female	34	54.0
Age[a]		
18-22	15	23.8
23-27	28	44.4
28-32	15	23.8
33-42	2	3.2
Marital Status		
Single	57	90.5
Married	5	7.9
Divorced/ Separated	1	1.6
Years in the United States		
Less or equal to 5	21	33.3
6-10	17	27.0
11-15	15	23.8
16-20	8	12.7
21-25	2	3.2
Country of Origin		
China	7	11.1
Hong Kong	46	73.0
Taiwan	5	7.9
Macau	4	6.3
Vietnam	1	1.6
Living Arrangement		
Family Member(s)	37	58.7
Friend(s)	3	4.8
Roommate(s)	11	17.5
Living by oneself	12	19.0

TABLE 1. Continued

Characteristics	f	%
Highest Level of Education		
High School	7	11.1
Community College/ Associate Degree	6	9.5
University/ Undergraduate Degree	36	57.1
Graduate School or Higher	14	22.2
Frequency of Attending Church Activities		
Daily	3	4.8
Several Times a Week	32	50.8
Once a Week	19	30.2
Several Times a Month	3	4.8
Once a Month	2	3.2
Several Times a Year	3	4.8
Never/ Almost Never	1	1.6

[a] Contained missing data.

attended church activities at least once a week with 35 of them (55.6%) reported attending church activities daily or several times a week.

<center>Respondents' Acculturative Stress Level</center>

The respondents' level of acculturative stress is depicted in Table 2. The largest number of the respondents strongly agreed or agreed that they miss the people and country of their origin (n= 31, 49.2%), that they feel nervous to communicate in English (n= 26, 41.2%), and that they worry about their future and not being able to decide whether to stay here or to go back (n= 22, 35.0%).

Around half of the respondents were neutral to statements that they are treated differently in social situations (n= 33, 52.4%), that they feel sad to consider their people's problems (n= 32, 50.8%), that they feel angry that their people are inferior here (n= 30, 47.6%), that multiple pressures are placed upon them after migration (n= 30, 47.6%), that it hurts when people do not understand their cultural values (n= 29, 46.8%), that others are sarcastic toward their cultural values (n=29, 46.0%), that they feel that they receive unequal treatment (n= 29, 46.0%), that they are denied what they deserve (n= 29, 46.0%), that many opportunities are denied to them (n= 28, 45.2%), that they feel that their people are discriminated against (n= 28, 44.4%), and that they feel intimidated to participate in social activities (n= 26, 41.3%).

Moreover, more than half of the respondents strongly disagreed or disagreed that they feel guilty that they are living a different lifestyle here (n= 45, 71.4%), that they feel low because of their cultural background (n=43, 68.3%), that they frequently relocate for fear of others (n= 42, 66.7%), that people show hatred toward them through actions

<center>42</center>

TABLE 2. Respondents' Responses on the Acculturative Stress Scale (*N*= 63)

Item	*M*	*SD*	*f*	%
I miss the people and country of my origin.	2.51	0.98		
Strongly Agree			11	17.5
Agree			20	31.7
Neutral			21	33.3
Disagree			11	17.5
Strongly Disagree			0	0.0
It hurts when people do not understand my cultural values.[a]	2.77	0.80		
Strongly Agree			3	4.8
Agree			19	30.6
Neutral			29	46.8
Disagree			11	17.7
Strongly Disagree			0	0.0
Multiple pressures are placed upon me after migration.	2.86	0.90		
Strongly Agree			3	4.8
Agree			18	28.6
Neutral			30	47.6
Disagree			9	14.3
Strongly Disagree			3	4.8
I worry about my future for not being able to decide whether to stay here or to go back.	2.90	1.25		
Strongly Agree			11	17.5
Agree			11	17.5
Neutral			22	34.9
Disagree			11	17.5
Strongly Disagree			8	12.7
I feel nervous to communicate in English.	2.94	1.12		
Strongly Agree			5	7.9
Agree			21	33.3
Neutral			15	23.8
Disagree			17	27.0
Strongly Disagree			5	7.9

TABLE 2. Continued

Item	M	SD	f	%
I am treated differently in social situations.	2.95	0.79		
Strongly Agree			1	1.6
Agree			16	25.4
Neutral			33	52.4
Disagree			11	17.5
Strongly Disagree			2	3.2
I feel intimidated to participate in social activities.	3.06	0.91		
Strongly Agree			1	1.6
Agree			17	27.0
Neutral			26	41.3
Disagree			15	23.8
Strongly Disagree			4	6.3
I feel angry that my people are considered inferior here.	3.08	0.85		
Strongly Agree			3	4.8
Agree			10	15.9
Neutral			30	47.6
Disagree			19	30.2
Strongly Disagree			1	1.6
I feel sad to consider my people's problems.	3.21	0.74		
Strongly Agree			0	0.0
Agree			10	15.9
Neutral			32	50.8
Disagree			19	30.2
Strongly Disagree			2	3.2
Many opportunities are denied to me.[a]	3.23	0.89		
Strongly Agree			0	0.0
Agree			13	21.0
Neutral			28	45.2
Disagree			15	24.2
Strongly Disagree			6	9.7

TABLE 2. Continued

Item	M	SD	f	%
Homesickness bothers me.	3.23	1.07		
Strongly Agree			1	1.6
Agree			18	28.6
Neutral			18	28.6
Disagree			17	27.0
Strongly Disagree			9	14.3
I am denied what I deserve.	3.25	0.76		
Strongly Agree			0	0.0
Agree			10	15.9
Neutral			29	46.0
Disagree			22	34.9
Strongly Disagree			2	3.2
I feel that I receive unequal treatment.	3.29	0.81		
Strongly Agree			0	0.0
Agree			10	15.9
Neutral			29	46.0
Disagree			20	31.7
Strongly Disagree			4	6.3
I feel that my people are discriminated against.	3.30	0.87		
Strongly Agree			1	1.6
Agree			9	14.3
Neutral			28	44.4
Disagree			20	31.7
Strongly Disagree			5	7.9
I feel sad living in unfamiliar surroundings.	3.33	0.92		
Strongly Agree			1	1.6
Agree			11	17.5
Neutral			22	34.9
Disagree			24	38.1
Strongly Disagree			5	7.9

TABLE 2. Continued
_____

Item	M	SD	f	%
I am treated differently because of my race.	3.35	1.00		
Strongly Agree			3	4.8
Agree			10	15.9
Neutral			17	27.0
Disagree			28	44.4
Strongly Disagree			5	7.9
I feel sad leaving my relatives behind.	3.35	1.00		
Strongly Agree			1	1.6
Agree			13	20.6
Neutral			20	31.7
Disagree			21	33.3
Strongly Disagree			8	12.7
I do not feel a sense of belonging here.	3.35	1.03		
Strongly Agree			1	1.6
Agree			13	20.6
Neutral			22	34.9
Disagree			17	27.0
Strongly Disagree			10	15.9
I feel some people do not associate with me because of my ethnicity.	3.35	1.03		
Strongly Agree			2	3.2
Agree			11	17.5
Neutral			22	34.9
Disagree			19	30.2
Strongly Disagree			9	14.3
I feel guilty to leave my family and friends behind.	3.37	0.92		
Strongly Agree			1	1.6
Agree			10	15.9
Neutral			23	36.5
Disagree			23	36.5
Strongly Disagree			6	9.5

TABLE 2. Continued

Item	M	SD	f	%
I generally keep a low profile due to fear.[a]	3.37	0.96		
Strongly Agree			1	1.6
Agree			10	16.1
Neutral			24	38.7
Disagree			19	30.6
Strongly Disagree			8	12.9
Others are biased toward me.	3.40	0.93		
Strongly Agree			0	0.0
Agree			11	17.5
Neutral			24	38.1
Disagree			20	31.7
Strongly Disagree			8	12.7
Others are sarcastic toward my cultural values.	3.44	0.86		
Strongly Agree			0	0.0
Agree			7	11.1
Neutral			29	46.0
Disagree			19	30.2
Strongly Disagree			8	12.7
I feel that my status in this society is low due to my cultural background.	3.44	0.89		
Strongly Agree			0	0.0
Agree			11	17.5
Neutral			19	30.2
Disagree			27	42.9
Strongly Disagree			6	9.5
I feel uncomfortable to adjust to new cultural values.	3.48	0.91		
Strongly Agree			1	1.6
Agree			9	14.3
Neutral			18	28.6
Disagree			29	46.0
Strongly Disagree			6	9.5

TABLE 2. Continued

Item	M	SD	f	%
I feel insecure here.	3.49	0.95		
Strongly Agree			0	0.0
Agree			12	19.0
Neutral			16	25.4
Disagree			27	42.9
Strongly Disagree			8	12.7
I am treated differently because of my color.	3.51	0.90		
Strongly Agree			0	0.0
Agree			8	12.7
Neutral			24	38.1
Disagree			22	34.9
Strongly Disagree			9	14.3
People show hatred toward me nonverbally.	3.62	0.79		
Strongly Agree			0	0.0
Agree			4	6.3
Neutral			24	38.1
Disagree			27	42.9
Strongly Disagree			8	12.7
People show hatred toward me verbally.	3.62	0.94		
Strongly Agree			1	1.6
Agree			6	9.5
Neutral			20	31.7
Disagree			25	39.7
Strongly Disagree			11	17.5
I fear for my personal safety because of my different cultural background.	3.63	0.96		
Strongly Agree			0	0.0
Agree			8	12.7
Neutral			20	31.7
Disagree			22	34.9
Strongly Disagree			13	20.6

TABLE 2. Continued

Item	M	SD	f	%
Others do not appreciate my cultural values.	3.65	0.81		
Strongly Agree			0	0.0
Agree			4	6.3
Neutral			23	36.5
Disagree			27	42.9
Strongly Disagree			9	14.3
I feel uncomfortable to adjust to new foods.	3.68	0.96		
Strongly Agree			0	0.0
Agree			8	12.7
Neutral			18	28.6
Disagree			23	36.5
Strongly Disagree			14	22.2
People show hatred toward me through actions.[a]	3.73	0.85		
Strongly Agree			1	1.6
Agree			2	3.2
Neutral			21	33.9
Disagree			27	43.5
Strongly Disagree			11	17.7
I feel low because of my cultural backgrounds.	3.81	1.03		
Strongly Agree			2	3.2
Agree			5	7.9
Neutral			13	20.6
Disagree			26	41.3
Strongly Disagree			17	27.0
I feel guilty that I am living a different lifestyle here.	3.83	0.87		
Strongly Agree			0	0.0
Agree			6	9.5
Neutral			12	19.0
Disagree			32	50.8
Strongly Disagree			13	20.6

TABLE 2. Continued

Item	M	SD	f	%
I frequently relocate for fear of others.	3.83	0.93		
Strongly Agree			0	0.0
Agree			6	9.5
Neutral			15	23.8
Disagree			26	41.3
Strongly Disagree			16	25.4

[a] Contained missing data.

Note: Means reflect a scale of: Strongly Agree= 1; Agree= 2; Neutral= 3; Disagree= 4; Strongly Disagree= 5.

(*n*= 38, 61.2%), that they feel uncomfortable to adjust to new foods (*n*= 37, 58.7%), that others

do not appreciate their cultural values (*n*= 36, 57.2%), that people show hatred toward them

verbally (*n*= 36, 57.2%), that people show hatred toward them nonverbally

(*n*= 35, 55.6%), that they feel insecure here (*n*=35, 55.6%), that they fear for their personal safety

because of their different cultural background (*n*= 35, 55.5%), that they feel uncomfortable to

adjust to new cultural values (*n*= 35, 55.5%), that they feel that their status in this society is low

due to their cultural background (*n*= 33, 52.4%), and that they are treated differently because of

their race (*n*= 33, 52.3%).

Finally, the largest number of respondents strongly disagreed or disagreed that they are

treated differently because of their color (*n*= 31, 49.2%), that they feel sad living in unfamiliar

surroundings (*n*= 29, 46%), that they feel guilty to leave their family and friends behind (*n*= 29,

46%), that they feel sad leaving their relatives behind (*n*= 29, 46%), that they feel some people

do not associate with them because of their ethnicity (*n*= 28, 44.5%), that others are biased

toward them (*n*= 28, 44.4%), that they generally keep a low profile due to fear (*n*= 27, 43.5%),

that they do not feel a sense of belonging here (*n*= 27, 42.9%), and that homesickness bothers

them (*n*=26, 41.3%).

<u>Respondents' Spiritual Well-Being Level</u>

The respondents' responses on the spiritual well-being scale are displayed in Table 3. A

majority of them agreed or strongly or moderately agreed that they believe that God loves them

and cares about them (*n*= 60, 95.3%), that their relationship with God helps them not to feel

lonely (*n*= 57, 95%), that they have a personally meaningful relationship with God (*n*= 59,

93.7%), that they believe that God is concerned about their

51

TABLE 3. Respondents' Responses on the Spiritual Well-Being Scale ($N= 63$)

Item	M	SD	f	%
I believe that God loves me and cares about me.	1.73	1.02		
Strongly Agree			35	55.6
Moderately Agree			15	23.8
Agree			10	15.9
Disagree			2	3.2
Moderately Disagree			0	0.0
Strongly Disagree			1	1.6
I believe there is some real purpose for my life.	1.94	1.09		
Strongly Agree			30	47.6
Moderately Agree			13	20.6
Agree			16	25.4
Disagree			3	4.8
Moderately Disagree			0	0.0
Strongly Disagree			1	1.6
I feel most fulfilled when I am in close communion with God.	2.03	1.02		
Strongly Agree			26	41.3
Moderately Agree			14	22.2
Agree			18	28.6
Disagree			5	7.9
Moderately Disagree			0	0.0
Strongly Disagree			0	0.0
I believe that God is concerned about my problems.	2.05	1.16		
Strongly Agree			26	41.3
Moderately Agree			16	25.4
Agree			17	27.0
Disagree			2	3.2
Moderately Disagree			0	0.0
Strongly Disagree			2	3.2

TABLE 3. Continued

Item	M	SD	f	%
My relation with God contributes to my sense of well-being.	2.11	1.02		
Strongly Agree			22	34.9
Moderately Agree			18	28.6
Agree			18	28.6
Disagree			4	6.3
Moderately Disagree			1	1.6
Strongly Disagree			0	0.0
I have a personally meaningful relationship with God.	2.16	0.94		
Strongly Agree			19	30.2
Moderately Agree			19	30.2
Agree			21	33.3
Disagree			4	6.3
Moderately Disagree			0	0.0
Strongly Disagree			0	0.0
My relationship with God helps me not to feel lonely.[a]	2.20	0.97		
Strongly Agree			18	30.0
Moderately Agree			16	26.7
Agree			23	38.3
Disagree			2	3.3
Moderately Disagree			1	1.7
Strongly Disagree			0	0.0
I feel that life is a positive experience.	2.32	1.27		
Strongly Agree			20	31.7
Moderately Agree			19	30.2
Agree			13	20.6
Disagree			8	12.7
Moderately Disagree			1	1.6
Strongly Disagree			2	3.2

TABLE 3. Continued

Item	M	SD	f	%
I feel good about my future.[a]	2.58	1.06		
Strongly Agree			13	21.0
Moderately Agree			12	19.4
Agree			27	43.5
Disagree			8	12.9
Moderately Disagree			2	3.2
Strongly Disagree			0	0.0
I feel a sense of well-being about the direction my life is headed in.	2.79	1.03		
Strongly Agree			7	11.1
Moderately Agree			15	23.8
Agree			29	46.0
Disagree			9	14.3
Moderately Disagree			2	3.2
Strongly Disagree			1	1.6
I feel very fulfilled and satisfied with life.	2.90	1.35		
Strongly Agree			11	17.5
Moderately Agree			14	22.2
Agree			19	30.2
Disagree			10	15.9
Moderately Disagree			7	11.1
Strongly Disagree			2	3.2
I feel unsettled about my future.	3.52	1.41		
Strongly Agree			5	7.9
Moderately Agree			10	15.9
Agree			16	25.4
Disagree			19	30.2
Moderately Disagree			5	7.9
Strongly Disagree			8	12.7

TABLE 3. Continued

Item	M	SD	f	%
I feel that life is full of conflict and unhappiness.[a]	4.11	1.29		
Strongly Agree			3	4.8
Moderately Agree			3	4.8
Agree			12	19.4
Disagree			19	30.6
Moderately Disagree			16	25.8
Strongly Disagree			9	14.5
I do not get much personal strength and support from my God.	4.37	1.31		
Strongly Agree			3	4.8
Moderately Agree			4	6.3
Agree			4	6.3
Disagree			20	31.7
Moderately Disagree			20	31.7
Strongly Disagree			12	19.0
I do not find much satisfaction in private prayers with God.	4.56	1.15		
Strongly Agree			2	3.2
Moderately Agree			9	14.3
Agree			22	34.9
Disagree			12	19.0
Moderately Disagree			18	28.6
Strongly Disagree			0	0.0
I believe that God is impersonal and not interested in my daily situations.	4.68	1.33		
Strongly Agree			3	4.8
Moderately Agree			1	1.6
Agree			5	7.9
Disagree			17	27.0
Moderately Disagree			15	23.8
Strongly Disagree			22	34.9

TABLE 3. Continued

Item	M	SD	f	%
I do not have a personally satisfying relationship with God.[a]	4.74	1.08		
Strongly Agree			1	1.6
Moderately Agree			0	0.0
Agree			5	8.2
Disagree			20	32.8
Moderately Disagree			17	27.9
Strongly Disagree			18	29.5
Life does not have much meaning.	4.84	1.23		
Strongly Agree			1	1.6
Moderately Agree			1	1.6
Agree			7	11.1
Disagree			16	25.4
Moderately Disagree			11	17.5
Strongly Disagree			27	42.9
I do not know who I am, where I am from, or where I am going.	4.86	1.27		
Strongly Agree			1	1.6
Moderately Agree			0	0.0
Agree			12	19.0
Disagree			9	14.3
Moderately Disagree			13	20.6
Strongly Disagree			28	44.4

[a] Contained missing data.

Note: Means reflect a scale of: Strongly Agree= 1; Moderately Agree= 2; Agree= 3; Disagree= 4; Moderately Disagree= 5; Strongly Disagree= 6.

problems (*n*= 59, 93.7%), that they believe there is some real purpose for their lives (*n*= 59, 93.6%), that their relation with God contributes to their sense of well-being (*n*= 58, 92.1%), that they feel most fulfilled when they are in close communion with God (*n*= 58, 92.1%), that they feel good about their future (*n*= 52, 83.9%), that they feel that life is a positive experience (*n*= 52, 82.5%), that they feel a sense of well-being about the direction their lives are headed in (*n*= 51, 80.9%), and that they feel very fulfilled and satisfied with life (*n*= 44, 69.9%).

Moreover, a majority of the respondents also disagreed or strongly or moderately disagreed that they do not have a personally satisfying relationship with God (*n*= 55, 90.2%), that life does not have much meaning (*n*= 54, 85.8%), that they believe that God is impersonal and not interested in their daily situations (*n*= 54, 85.7%), that they do not find much satisfaction in private prayer with God (*n*= 52, 82.5%), that they do not get much personal strength and support from their God (*n*= 52, 82.4%), that they do not enjoy much about life (*n*= 51, 81%), that they do not know who they are, where they came from, or where they are going (*n*= 50, 79.3%), that they feel that life is full of conflict and unhappiness (*n*= 44, 70.9%), and that they feel unsettled about their future (*n*= 32, 50.8%).

<div align="center">

Relationship Between Respondents' Acculturative Stress Level and
Spiritual Well-Being and Length of Stay in the United States

</div>

Total scores for the acculturative stress level and the spiritual well-being level were calculated. The possible score range for acculturative stress level was from 36 to 180, with a lower score indicating higher acculturative stress level. For the respondents of this particular research study, the scores for the acculturative stress level ranged from 88 to 166, with a mean of 120 (*SD*= 18.35), indicating a low level of acculturative stress. For the spiritual well-being level, the possible score ranged from 20 to 120, with a higher score indicating a higher level of spiritual well-being. Reliability was reported as relatively high with an alpha of 0.75. The respondents of

this research scored from 46 to 120 for the spiritual well-being level, with a mean of 91.33 (*SD*= 16.96), representing a high level of spiritual well-being.

Pearson's *r* correlations were used to determine the associations between acculturative stress level and spiritual well-being level as well as the respondents' length of stay in the United States (Table 4). The results indicated that there was a significant relationship between the level of acculturative stress and the level of spiritual well-being (*r*= .589, *p*= .000). Specifically, those respondents who scored higher in spiritual well-being had a lower level of acculturative stress. There was also a significant relationship between the acculturative stress level and the length of stay in the United States (*r*= .250, *p*= .048). Those respondents who have been living in the United States for a longer period of time also had a lower level of acculturative stress.

<div align="center">Influence of Marital Status on Levels of Acculturative Stress
and Spiritual Well-Being</div>

Independent-samples *t*-tests were conducted to assess the influence of marital status on level of acculturative stress (Table 5) and spiritual well-being (Table 6). The results of the *t*-tests indicated that there were no significant difference in the acculturative stress level as well as in the spiritual well-being level between those who were single or married.

TABLE 4. Correlations of Acculturative Stress Level with Spiritual Well-Being and Length of Stay in the United States (N=63)

Variable	r	p
Spiritual Well-Being	.589**	.000
Length of Stay in the United States	.250*	.048

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).
** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

TABLE 5. *t*-Tests for Acculturative Stress Level by Marital Status and Church Activity Attendance (*N*=63)

Variable	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*p*
Marital Status				-1.408	.164
Single	58	119.05	18.49		
Married	5	131.00	13.51		
Church Activity Attendance				2.582	0.12
At Least Once a Week	54	122.33	18.36		
Less Than Once a Week	9	106.00	10.98		

TABLE 6. *t*-Tests for Spiritual Well-Being Level by Marital Status and Church Activity Attendance (*N*=63)

Variable	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*p*
Marital Status				-1.741	.087
Single	58	90.26	17.02		
Married	5	103.80	11.03		
Church Activity Attendance				3.677	.001
At Least Once a Week	54	94.26	16.33		
Less Than Once A Week	9	73.78	7.68		

<u>Influence of Church Activity Attendance on Levels of</u>
<u>Acculturative Stress and Spiritual Well-Being</u>

Independent-samples *t*-tests were conducted to assess the influence of frequency of church activity attendance on levels of acculturative stress (Table 5) and spiritual well-being (Table 6). The results of the *t*-test indicated that there was no significant difference in the acculturative stress level between those who attended church activity at least once a week or less than once a week.

However, a significant difference was found between those who attended church at least once a week and those who attended church less than once a week on the level of spiritual well-being ($t= 3.677$, $p= .001$). The respondents who attended church activity at least once a week scored higher on spiritual well-being level ($M= 94.26$, $SD= 16.33$) than those who attended church activity less than once a week ($M= 73.78$, $SD= 7.68$).

<u>Differences in Acculturative Stress Level and Spiritual Well-Being Level</u>
<u>by Living Arrangements and Level of Highest Education</u>

One-Way ANOVA was used to determine differences in acculturative stress level by the respondents' living arrangement and their highest education level (Table 7). No significant differences were found.

Another One-Way ANOVA analysis was also conducted on the spiritual well-being level by the respondents' highest level of education. The results are depicted in Table 8. No significant difference was found as well.

TABLE 7. One-Way ANOVA for Acculturative Stress Level (*N*=63)

Variable	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*F*	*p*
Living Arrangement				.347	.708
Family member(s)	37	121.22	18.83		
Friend(s)/Roommate(s)	14	120.14	15.84		
Living Alone	12	116.08	20.48		
Highest Education Level				.234	.792
High School/ Community College	13	117.46	19.06		
Undergraduate	36	120.00	16.58		
Graduate or higher	14	122.36	22.78		

TABLE 8. One-Way ANOVA for Spiritual Well-Being Level (*N*=63)

Variable	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*F*	*p*
Highest Education Level				1.213	.30
High School/ Community College	13	84.85	18.53		
Undergraduate	36	93.19	15.57		
Graduate or higher	14	92.57	18.67		

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between acculturative stress and spirituality among Chinese immigrant college students in the United States. This chapter provides a summary of the findings, limitations of the study, and implications for future research and social work practice.

Summary of Findings

More than half of the respondents were female and almost half of the respondents were between 23 and 27 of age. A majority of the respondents were single and more than half of them lived with family member(s). The largest number of respondents, accounting for one third of the respondents, reported living in the United States for five years or less, and a majority of the respondents came from Hong Kong. More than half of the respondents have obtained an undergraduate degree or were attending a four-year university when the survey was taken. A majority of the respondents attended church activity at least once a week.

Concurring with the existing literature on how spirituality and church involvement can be used as a buffer to psychological distress, the findings of this study also indicated that those respondents who scored higher in spiritual well-being had a lower level of acculturative stress. This finding supports previous research on the positive relationship between psychological well-being and spirituality and church participation (Barcus, 1999). This finding also yielded similar results to previous research on how spirituality and church participation can be used as a coping strategy among Chinese immigrant populations, as well as other Asian immigrant populations (Hurh & Kim, 1990b; Palinkas, 1982; Wong 1989).

The positive relationship found in this study between acculturative stress and spiritual well-being further confirmed that spirituality and church involvement provide not only existential meaning (Hurh & Kim, 1990b; Ng, 2002) but also belonging and comfort to the immigrant populations, especially among the subgroup of Chinese immigrant college students (Min, 1992; Ni, 2000). The effectiveness of spirituality and church participation in ameliorating acculturative stress can further be demonstrated through another finding from this study. Results showed that for those respondents who attended church activity at least once a week on a regular basis, they scored higher on level of spiritual well-being as well as reported a lower level of acculturative stress than those who attended church activity less than once a week.

Another major finding from this research was the significant correlation between acculturative stress level and length of stay of the respondents in the United States. To be specific, the longer the respondent has been living in the United States, the lower the acculturative stress he or she experienced. This finding corresponded to previous research on the process of acculturation and bicultural competence (Berry & Kim, 1998). When immigrants have lived in the United States for a longer period of time, further away from the beginning when they first had contacts with this foreign country, they become more adjusted and feel more comfortable about the American culture, the English language, and the American learning and teaching patterns. They also have secured a local social support system through years of living in this society. As a result, they become more integrated into the American society; hence, a lowered level of acculturative stress. For these immigrant individuals who have reached the status of integration in acculturation, they have gained or have gotten closer to bicultural competence in which they are able to successfully meet the demands of the American as well as their indigenous cultures (LaFromboise et al., 1993). Integration in acculturation serves as a

resilient buffer against the development of psychopathology among the immigrant population (Berry 1990; Berry 1998).

Moreover, the importance of social support in ameliorating acculturative stress in the process of acculturation was also shown in the findings of this study. The mean scores on acculturative stress indicated that those who were married and those who lived with family members or roommates had a lower level of acculturative stress, when compared to their single counterparts who lived by themselves. These findings on social support and its effect on acculturative stress amelioration concurred with previous research, showing that success of social adjustment to a new country is related to the quantity of both close and casual relationships with people from both the dominant and indigenous cultures (Abe et al., 1998; Hammer, 2002). These social relationships obtained both from family and marriage are helpful in reducing acculturative stress (Olaniran, 1993). The church also provides a good common ground for the immigrants to meet and build new social support networks.

In terms of education level, findings from this study also demonstrated that those who have gone through four years of undergraduate study and additional years of graduate study in the American universities displayed a lower level of acculturative stress compared to those whose highest education level obtained was high school or two-year community college. As suggested by previous research on changes in learning and teaching patterns as a source of acculturative stress, findings from this study agreed that different learning approaches of the immigrant students negatively challenge their confidence and perceptions of their academic competence and lead to feelings of frustration, anxiety and other psychological distress (Huang, 2005; Kennedy, 2002; Zhou et al., 2003). Conversely, when the immigrants have gotten more familiar to the American classroom and its teaching and learning styles after years of

immigration, they can handle the requirements from school better and therefore lowering their acculturative stress level.

Limitations

A limitation of this study was the convenience sampling method. Since the two selected churches are located in the greater Los Angeles area, sampling was limited to those Chinese immigrant college students who resided in or close to the Los Angeles area. The study's findings therefore could not be applied to the larger population of Chinese immigrant college students over the nation. However, the sample cohort was selected based on accidental or convenience sampling with minimal biases from the researcher. The sample cohort was chosen simply because it appeared to provide study subjects that met the participant criteria of this study. As a result, this study can also lend some meaningful insights to the subjects being studied, even if it might only be suitable to apply the results on a micro and local level.

Implications for Future Research

Despite a wealth of literature on the role of spiritual belief in the immigrant communities, the relationship between spirituality and immigrants' experience has for a long time been understudied (Warner, 1998). What appears to be a gap in the literature is in regard to the relationship between acculturative stress and spirituality, especially the effect it has on Chinese immigrant college students. Due to the lack of research regarding the relationship between acculturative stress and spirituality among the Chinese immigrant populations, the researcher suggests that this study could be a good stepping stone for future research. Different coping strategies used by immigrant populations, the student subgroup to be specific, can be further explored to assist immigrant populations to better adjust in the process of acculturation.

Implications for Social Work Practice

Little is known about how spirituality can be used as a buffer to cope with acculturative stress among Chinese immigrants. Also, since the college student cohort is highly educated compared to other age groups among Chinese immigrants, little research is conducted with this group regarding the difficulties they face. Previous research also showed that Chinese culture seems at odds with soliciting help for mental health issues (Kung, 2002; 2003). Chinese immigrants tend to seek informal help from family and friends. Therefore, by better understanding the acculturative stress Chinese immigrant college students face and how spirituality can be applied as a coping strategy, social workers can better recognize and serve the needs of this population.

Findings from this research may also be applied in a very limited manner to the immigrant populations from other ethnic groups as well since they also undergo similar acculturative stress discussed in this research. Professionals working with the immigrant populations in the United States can also make use of spirituality as a coping strategy for immigrants in generally, no matter where they come from and what ethnicity they belong to. In general, spirituality can serve as an important asset for the psychological well being of the immigrant communities.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

INFORMED CONSENT

Informed Consent for Research Participants

My name is Winnie Chau and I am a Candidate for a Master's of Social Work from the Department of Social Work, California State University, Long Beach. I am collecting data for my thesis project on the acculturative stress and spirituality of Chinese immigrants. I invite you to participate in my study if you are 18 years or older and a Chinese immigrant. If you agree to participate in the study, you will be asked to complete a self-administered questionnaire. You will be asked about personal information, personal rating in regards of stress during acculturation and your feelings towards your spiritual well-being. The questionnaire should take approximately 20 minutes to complete.

There are no direct benefits to you for participating in the study, yet the information you provide may be a great help to social workers and other professionals who are working with immigrants. The information may also assist the community to understand Chinese immigrants better, the stress they encounter during acculturation and how they cope with the difficulties.

Your participation is entirely voluntary and you will not be penalized in any way if you prefer not to participate. Your current status with the church will remain unaffected regardless of your participation, withdrawal from the study, or choose not to participate. Your answers will remain completely confidential. When the study results are reported, your name will not be revealed. The consent forms and questionnaires will be kept in a locked file for three years, at which they will be destroyed by the researcher.

The risk of participating this study, if any, would be minimal. The minimal risks could be questions that might cause you to become upset or distressed. If you feel uncomfortable when taking the questionnaire, you are free not to answer a question or to discontinue participating in the study. In the event that you do become distressed or upset, the researcher will provide counseling referrals to you.

Participation or nonparticipation in this study will not affect your relationship with your church or any other personal consideration or right you usually expect.

If you have any questions about the study, please feel free to call me at (626) 453-6070 or my thesis advisor, Dr. Rebecca Lopez, at (562) 985-5175. If you have questions about your rights as a participant in this research, you may contact the Office of University Research, California State University, Long Beach, 1250 Bellflower Blvd., Long Beach, CA 90840; Telephone: (562) 985-5314 or email to research@csulb.edu. Thank you very much for considering participating in the study. If you are willing to participate in the questionnaire, please print and sign your name and date below.

_____
Print Name of Participant

_____   _____
Signature of Participant   Date
Approved from January 6, 2006 to January 5, 2007 by the CSULB IRB

APPENDIX B

QUESTIONNAIRE

<u>Section I: Demographic Information</u>

Please fill in the blanks or check the boxes that apply. All personal information will be kept confidential.

1. What is your gender?
   ☐ Male   ☐ Female

2. What is your current age?
   _____

3. What is your marital status?
   ☐ Single   ☐ Married   ☐ Divorced/ Separated

4. How long have you been living in the United States?
   _____ year(s).

5. What is your country of origin before moving to the United States?
   ☐ China   ☐ Hong Kong   ☐ Taiwan   ☐ Macau
   ☐ Others: _____

6. Who do you live with currently?
   ☐ Family member(s)   ☐ Boyfriend/girlfriend   ☐ Friend(s)
   ☐ Roommate(s)   ☐ Living by oneself

7. What is the highest education level you have obtained or are working in progress?
   ☐ High school   ☐ Community college/ Associate Degree
   ☐ University/ Undergraduate degree   ☐ Graduate school or higher

8. How often do you go to church or attend church activities?
   ☐ Daily   ☐ Several times a week
   ☐ Once a week   ☐ Several times a month
   ☐ Once a month   ☐ Several times a year
   ☐ Once a year   ☐ Never or almost never

Section II: Acculturative Stress

This section will ask you questions about your experiences after migrating to the United States. Please read each of the statements carefully and circle the number that most closely reflects your feelings of agreement or disagreement about that statement.

1 (SA) = Strongly Agree
2 (A) = Agree
3 (N)   = Neutral
4 (D)   = Disagree
5 (SD) = Strongly Disagree

	SA	A	N	D	SD
1. Homesickness bothers me.	1	2	3	4	5
2. I feel uncomfortable to adjust to new foods.	1	2	3	4	5
3. I am treated differently in social situations.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Others are sarcastic toward my cultural values.	1	2	3	4	5
5. I feel nervous to communicate in English.	1	2	3	4	5
6. I feel sad living in unfamiliar surroundings.	1	2	3	4	5
7. I fear for my personal safety because of my different cultural background.	1	2	3	4	5
8. I feel intimidated to participate in social activities.	1	2	3	4	5
9. Others are biased toward me.	1	2	3	4	5
10. I feel guilty to leave my family and friends behind.	1	2	3	4	5
11. Many opportunities are denied to me.	1	2	3	4	5
12. I feel angry that my people are considered inferior here.	1	2	3	4	5
13. Multiple pressures are placed upon me after migration.	1	2	3	4	5
14. I feel that I receive unequal treatment.	1	2	3	4	5
15. People show hatred toward me nonverbally.	1	2	3	4	5

16. It hurts when people do not understand   1   2   3   4   5 my
    cultural values.

17. I am denied what I deserve.   1   2   3   4   5

18. I frequently relocate for fear of others.   1   2   3   4   5

19. I feel low because of my cultural background.   1   2   3   4   5

20. Others do not appreciate my cultural values.   1   2   3   4   5

21. I miss the people and country of my origin.   1   2   3   4   5

22. I feel uncomfortable to adjust to new cultural values. 1   2   3   4   5

23. I feel that my people are discriminated against. 1   2   3   4   5

24. People show hatred toward me through actions.   1   2   3   4   5

25. I feel that my status in this society is low   1   2   3   4   5
     due to my cultural background.

26. I am treated differently because of my race.   1   2   3   4   5

27. I feel insecure here.   1   2   3   4   5

28. I do not feel a sense of belonging here.   1   2   3   4   5

29. I am treated differently because of my color.   1   2   3   4   5

30. I feel sad to consider my people's problems.   1   2   3   4   5

31. I generally keep a low profile due to fear.   1   2   3   4   5

32. I feel some people do not associate with me   1   2   3   4   5
     because of my ethnicity.

33. People show hatred toward me verbally.   1   2   3   4   5

34. I feel guilty that I am living a different lifestyle here. 1   2   3   4   5

35. I feel sad leaving my relatives behind.   1   2   3   4   5

36. I worry about my future for not being able to   1   2   3   4   5
     decide whether to stay here or to go back.

This section will ask you questions about your spiritual well-being. Please read each of the statements and circle the number that most closely reflects your feelings of agreement or disagreement about that statement.

If you do not believe in God, please substitute the word *God* in the following statements with the word *Higher Power*.

1 (SA) = Strongly Agree
2 (MA) = Moderately Agree
3 (A) = Agree
4 (D) = Disagree
5 (MD) = Moderately Disagree
6 (SD) = Strongly Disagree

		SA	MA	A	D	MD	SD
1.	I do not find much satisfaction in private prayer with God.	1	2	3	4	5	6
2.	I do not know who I am, where I came from, or where I am going.	1	2	3	4	5	6
3.	I believe that God loves me and cares about me.	1	2	3	4	5	6
4.	I feel that life is a positive experience.	1	2	3	4	5	6
5.	I believe that God is impersonal and not interested in my daily situations.	1	2	3	4	5	6
6.	I feel unsettled about my future.	1	2	3	4	5	6
7.	I have a personally meaningful relationship with God.	1	2	3	4	5	6
8.	I feel very fulfilled and satisfied with life.	1	2	3	4	5	6
9.	I do not get much personal strength and support from my God.	1	2	3	4	5	6
10.	I feel a sense of well-being about the direction my life is headed in.	1	2	3	4	5	6
11.	I believe that God is concerned about my problems.	1	2	3	4	5	6

12. I do not enjoy much about life.		1	2	3	4	5	6
13. I do not have a personally satisfying relationship with God.		1	2	3	4	5	6
14. I feel good about my future.		1	2	3	4	5	6
15. My relationship with God helps me not to feel lonely.		1	2	3	4	5	6
16. I feel that life is full of conflict and unhappiness.		1	2	3	4	5	6
17. I feel most fulfilled when I am in close communion with God.		1	2	3	4	5	6
18. Life does not have much meaning.		1	2	3	4	5	6
19. My relation with God contributes to my sense of well-being.		1	2	3	4	5	6
20. I believe there is some real purpose for my life.		1	2	3	4	5	6

REFERENCES

REFERENCES

Abe, J., Talbot, D. M., & Geelhoed, R. J. (1998). Effects of peer program on international student adjustment. *Journal of College Student Development*, *39*, 539-547.

Aldwin, C., & Greenberger, E. (1987). Cultural differences in the predictors of depression. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, *15*, 789-813.

Atkinson, D. R. (2004). *Counseling American minorities* (6th ed.). Boston: McGraw-Hill.

Barcus, S. M. (1999). *The relationship between religious commitment, spiritual well-being and psychological well-being*. Doctoral dissertation, Ball State University, Muncie, IN.

Barnouw, V. (1973). *Culture and Personality*. Homewood, IL: Dorsey Press.

Berry, J. W. (1998). Acculturation and health: theory and research. In S. Kazarian, & D. R. Evans (Eds.), *Cultural clinical psychology* (pp.39-57). New York: Oxford University Press.

Berry, J. W., & Sam, D. L. (1997). Acculturation and adaptation. In J. W. Berry, Y. H. Poortinga, & J. Pandey (Eds.), *Handbook of cross-cultural psychology* (pp. 291–326). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Boey, K. W. (1999). Help-seeking preference of college students in urban china after the implementation of the "open-door" policy. *International Journal of Social Psychiatry*, *45*, 104-116.

Bond, M. (1996). *The Handbook of Chinese psychology*. Hong Kong: Oxford University Press.

Butterfield, F. (1986, August 3). Why Asians are going to the head of the class. *New York Sunday Times*, *12*, 18-23.

Casado, B. L., & Leung, P. (2001). Migratory grief and depression among elderly Chinese American immigrants. *Journal of Gerontological Social Work*, *36*, 22-27.

Casas, J. M., & Mann, D. (1996). MCT theory and implications for research. In D. W. Sue, A. E. Ivey, & P. B. Pedersen (Eds.), *A theory of multicultural counseling and therapy* (pp. 139-154). Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole.

Chae, M. H., Kelly, D. B., Brown, C. F., & Bolden, M. A. (2004). Relationship of ethnic identity and spiritual development: an exploratory study. *Counseling and Values*, *49*, 15-26.

Chang, E. C. (1998). Cultural differences, perfectionism, and suicidal risk in a college population: Does social problem solving still matter? *Cognitive Therapy and Research*, *22*, 237-254.

Chang, H. & Holt, R. (1994). A Chinese perspective on face as intern-relational concern. In S. Toomey (Ed.), *The challenge of face work* (pp. 95-132). Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Choi, C. (1997). Acculturative stress, social support, and depression in Korean American families. *Journal of Family Social Work*, *2*, 81–97.

Cole, D. A. (1991). Preliminary support for a competency-based model of depression in children. *Journal of Abnormal Psychology*, *100*, 181-190.

Connell, J. P., & Wellborn, J. G. (1991). *Competence, autonomy and relatedness: A motivational analysis of self-system processes*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Constantine, M. G., Okazaki, S., & Utsey, S. O. (2004). Self-concealment, social self-efficacy, acculturative stress, and depression in African, Asian, and Latin American international college students. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 74*, 230-241.

David, H. P. (1969). Involuntary international migration: Adaptations of refugees. In E. B. Brody (Ed.), *Behavior in New Environments: Adaptation of Migrant Populations* (pp. 73-98). Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications.

Dion, K. L., & Toner, B. B. (1988). Ethnic differences in test anxiety. *Journal of Social Psychology*, *128*, 165-172.

Dubow, E., Pargament, K., Boxer, P., & Tarakeshwar, N. (2000). Initial investigation of Jewish early adolescents' ethnic identity, stress, and coping. *Journal of Early Adolescence*, *20*, 418-441.

Elkins, D. (1990). On being spiritual without necessarily being religious. *Association for Humanistic Psychology Perspective*, *40*, 4-5.

Ellison, C. W. (1983). Spiritual well-being: Conceptualization and measurement. *Journal of Psychology and Theology*, *11*, 330-340.

Fiorito, B., & Ryan, L. (1998). Spirituality development measure: Means and ends. Paper presented at the annual convention of the American Psychological Association, San Francisco.

Fu, D. L. (1991). A process classroom through the eyes of an outsider. *Language Arts*, *68*, 121-123.

Fukuyama, M. A. & Sevig, T. (1999). *Integrating spirituality into multicultural counseling*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Greene, G. J., Jensen, C., & Jones, D. H. (1996). A constructivist perspective on clinical social work practice with ethnically diverse clients. *Social Work*, *412*, 172-180.

Hammer, M. R. (2002). Research, mission statements, and international students advising offices. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, *16*, 217-236.

Hayes, L. H., & Lin, H. R. (1994). Coming to American: Develop social support systems for international students. *Journal of Multicultural Counseling and Development*, *22*, 7-16.

Hovey, J. D., & Magana, C. G. (2002). Exploring the mental health of Mexican migrant farm workers in the Midwest: Psychological predictors of psychological distress and suggestions for prevention and treatment. *The Journal of Psychology*, *136*, 493-513.

Huang, J. (2005). Challenges of academic listening in English: Reports by Chinese students. *College Student journal*, *39*, 553-569.

Hurh, W. M., & Kim, K. C. (1990a). Correlates of Korean immigrants' mental health. *Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease*, *178*, 703–711.

Hurh, W. M., & Kim, K. C. (1990b). Religious participation of Korean immigrants in the United States. *Journal of the Scientific Study of Religion*, *29*, 19-34.

Joiner, T. E., & Walker, R. L. (2002). Construct Validity of a Measure of Acculturative Stress in African Americans. *Psychological Assessment*, *14*, 462-466.

Kennedy, P. (2002). Learning cultures and learning styles: Myth-understandings about adult (Hong Kong) Chinese learners. *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, *21*, 430-445.

Kim, B. S. K., Atkinson, D. R., & Umemto, D. (2001). Asian cultural values and counseling process: Current knowledge and directions for future research. *The Counseling Psychologist*, *29*, 570-603.

Kim, B. S. K., Atkinson, D. R., & Yang, P. H. (1999). The Asian values scale: Development, factor analysis, validation, and reliability. *Journal of Counseling Psychologist*, *49*, 342-353.

Kim, B. S. K., & Omizo, M. M. (2003). Asian cultural values, attitudes toward seeking professional psychological help and willingness to see a counselor. *The Counseling Psychologist*, *31*, 343-361.

Kim, B. S. K., & Omizo, M. M. (2005). Asian and European American cultural values, collective self-esteem, acculturative stress, cognitive flexibility, and general self-efficacy among Asian American college students. *Journal of counseling psychology*, *52*, 412-419.

Kim, I. (1997). Korean immigrant women's challenge to gender inequality at home. *Gender and Society*, *11*, 31–51.

Kung, W. (2003). Chinese Americans' help-seeking for emotional distress. *Social Service Review*, *77*, 110-134.

Kung, W. (2004). Cultural and practical barriers to seeking mental health treatment for Chinese Americans. *Journal of Community Psychology*, *32*, 27-43.

Kuo, B. C. H. & Roysircar, G. (2004). Predictors of acculturation for Chinese adolescents in Canada: Age of arrival, length of stay, social class, and English reading ability. *Journal of Multicultural Counseling and Development*, *32*, 143-154.

LaFromboise, T., Coleman, H. L. K., & Gerton, J. (1993). Psychological impact of biculturalism: Evidence and theory. *Psychological Bulletin*, *114*, 395-412.

Lee, E. (1996). Chinese American families. In M. McGoldrick, J. K. Pearce, & J. Giordano (Eds.), *Ethnicity and family therapy* (2nd ed., pp. 249-267). New York: Guilford Press.

Lee, K. K. (2002). *The correlation between levels of acculturation and self-esteem in Korean Americans*. Master's thesis, California State University, Long Beach.

Leong, F. T. L. & Lau, A. S. L. (2001). Barriers to providing effective mental health services to Asian Americans. *Mental Health Services Research*, *3*, 201-214.

Lin, J. C. G. & Yi, J. K. (1997). Asian international students' adjustment: Issues and program suggestions. *College student journal*, *31*, 473-479.

Lum, D. (2000). *Social work practice and people of color: A process-stage approach*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

Ma, Y., & Huang, J. (1992). *A practical guide to English teaching methodology*. China: Hunan Normal University Press.

Maciekewski, P. K., Prigerson, H. G., & Mazure, C. M. (2000). Self-efficacy as a mediator between stressful life events and depressive symptoms: Differences based on history of prior depression. *British Journal of Psychiatry*, *176*, 373-378.

Maltby, J., Lewis, C. A., & Day, L. (1999). Religious orientation and psychological well-being: The role of the frequency of personal prayer. *British Journal of Health Psychology*, *4*, 363-378.

Marin, G. (1992). Issues in the measurement of acculturation among Hispanics. In K. F. Geisinger (Ed.), *Psychological testing of Hispanics* (pp. 235-251). Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association.

Markstrom, C. (1999). Religious involvement and adolescent psychological development. *Journal of Adolescence*, *22*, 205-221.

Mays, V. M., Caldwell, C. H., & Jackson, J. S. (1996). Mental health symptoms and service utilization patterns of help-seeking among African American women. In H. W. Neighbors, & J. S. Jackson (Eds.), *Mental health in Black America* (pp.161- 176). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

McCready, W. C., & Greeley, A. M. (1976). *The ultimate values of the American population*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

McGee, M. A. (1999). *Spiritual health and its relation to levels of perceived stress among a sample of university students*. Doctoral dissertation, University of New Mexico.

McGrath, E. (1983, March 28). Confucian work ethic. *Time*, *64*.

Min, P. G. (1992). The structure and social functions of Korean immigrant churches in the United States. *International Migration Review*, *26*, 1370-1394.

Mol, J. (1976). Identity and the Sacred. *A Sketch for a New Social-Scientific Theory of Religion*. New York: Free Press.

Moore, K. A., & Glei, D. (1995). Taking the plunge: An examination of positive youth development. *Journal of Adolescent Research*, *10*, 15-40.

Mori, S. (2000). Addressing the mental health concerns of international students. *Journal of Counseling & Development*, *78*, 137-144.

Narikiyo, T., & Kameoka, V. (1992). Attributions of mental illness and judgments about help seeking among Japanese-American and Whit American students. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, *39*, 363-369.

Ng, K. H. (2002). Seeking the Christian Tutelage: Agency and Culture in Chinese immigrants' conversion to Christianity. *Sociology of Religion*, *63*, 195- 214.

Ni, T. (2000). More than a place to worship: Chinese Christian church and center in Philadelphia. *Migration World Magazine*, *28*, 28-30.

Noh, S., & Avison, W. R. (1992). Assessing psychopathology in Korean immigrants: Some preliminary results on the SCL-90. *Canadian Journal of Psychiatry*, *37*, 640–645.

Nwadiora, E., & McAdoo, H. (1996). Acculturative stress among Armenian refugees: Gender and racial differences. *Adolescence*, *31*, 477-486.

Olaniran, B. A. (1993). International students' network patterns and cultural stress: What really counts. *Communication Research Reports*, *10*, 69-83.

Palinkas, L. A. (1982). Ethnicity, identity, and mental health: the use of rhetoric in an immigrant Chinese church. *The Journal of Psychoanalytic Anthropology*, *5*, 235-257.

Peng, S. S., & Wright, D. (1994). Explanation of academic achievement of Asian American students. *Journal of Educational Research*, *87*, 346-352.

Perry, K. E., & Weinstein, R. S. (1998). The social context of early schooling and children's adjustment. *Educational Psychologist*, *33*, 177-194.

Phinney, J. (2003). Ethnic identity and acculturation. In K. Chun, P. Organista, & G. Marin (Eds.), *Acculturation: Advances in therapy, measurement, and applied research* (pp.63-82). Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association.

Phinney, J., DuPont, S., Espinosa, C., Revil, J., & Sanders, K. (1994). Ethnic identity and American identification among ethnic minority youth. In A. M. Bouvy, F. J. R. van de Vijver, P. Boski, & P. Schmitz (Eds.), *Journeys into cross-cultural psychology* (pp. 167-183). Amsterdam, Netherlands: Swets & Zeitlinger.

Poyrazli, S., Kavanaugh, P. R., Baker, A., & Al-Timimi, N. (2004). Social support and demographic correlates of acculturative stress in international students. *Journal of College Counseling*, *7*, 73-82.

Resnicow, K., Braithwaite, R. L., & Kuo, J. A. (1997). Interpersonal interventions for minority adolescents. In D. K. Wilson, & W. C. Taylor (Eds.), *Health-promoting and health compromising behaviors among minority adolescents* (pp. 201-228). Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association.

Ritsner, M., & Ponizovsky, A. (1999). Psychological distress through immigration: The two-phase temporal pattern? *International Journal of Social Psychiatry*, *45*, 125-139.

Rodriguez, N., Myers, H. F., Morris, J. K., & Cardoza, D. (2000). Latino college student adjustment: Does an increased presence offset minority-status and acculturative stresses? *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, *30*, 1523-1550.

Rotheram, M., & Phinney, J. (1987). Introduction: Definitions and perspectives in the study of children's ethnic socialization. In J. Phinney, & M. J. Rotheram (Eds.), *Children's ethnic socialization, Pluralism and development* (pp. 10-28). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Salili, F. (1996). Accepting personal responsibility for learning. In D. Watkinds, & J. Biggs (Eds.), *The Chinese learner: cultural, psychological and contextual influences* (pp. 85-105). Hong Kong: University of Hong Kong Press.

Sandhu D. S., & Asrabadi, B. R. (1994). Development of an acculturative stress scale for international students: preliminary findings. *Psychological Reports*, 75, 435-448.

Serafica, F. C. (1990). Counseling Asian-American parents: A cultural-developmental approach. In F. C. Serafica, A. I. Schwebel, R. K. Russell, P. D. Isaac, & L. B. Myers (Eds.), *Mental health of ethnic minorities* (pp.222-244). New York: Praeger Publishers.

Shafranske, E., & Malony, N. (1990). Clinical psychologists' religious and spiritual orientations and their practice of psychotherapy. *Psychotherapy: Theory, Research, Practice and Training*, *27*, 72-78.

Sherer, M., & Adams, C. H. (1983). Construct validation of the self-efficacy scale. *Psychological Reports*, *53*, 899-902.

Shin, K. R. (1994). Psychosocial predictors of depressive symptoms in Korean-American women in New York City. *Women & Health*, *21*, 73-82.

Sondereggar, R., & Barrett, P. M. (2004). Patterns of cultural adjustment among young migrants to Australia. *Journal of child and family studies*, *13*, 341-356.

Sorenson, A. M., Grindstaff, C. F., & Turner, R. J. (1995). Religious involvement among unmarried adolescent mothers: A source of emotional support? *Sociology of Religion*, *56*, 71-81.

Sue, D. W., & Sue, D. (2003). *Counseling the culturally different: Theory and practice* (4th ed.). New York: Wiley.

Sue, S. (1994a). Mental health. In N. W. S. Zane, D. T. Takeuchi, & K. N. J. Young (Eds.), *Confronting critical health issues of Asian and Pacific Islander Americans* (pp.266-288). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Sue, S. (1994b). *The State of Asian Pacific American*. Los Angeles: LEAP Asian Pacific Public Institute and University of California, Los Angeles, Asian American Studies Center.

Sue, S., & Chin, R. (1983). The mental health of Chinese-American children: Stressors and resources. In G. Powell (Ed.), *The psychosocial development of minority group children* (pp. 385-377). New York: Brunner/ Mazel.

Sue, S., & Okazaki, S. (1990). Asian-American educational achievements: A phenomenon in search of an explanation. *American Psychologist*, *45*, 913-920.

Sue, S., & Sue, D. W. (1973). Chinese American personality and mental health. In S. Sue, & N. Wagner (Eds.), *Asian-Americans: Psychological perspectives* (pp. 111-124). San Francisco: Science and Behavior Books.

Tabora, B., & Flaskerud, J. H. (1994). Depression among Chinese Americans: Review of the literature. *Issues in Mental Health Nursing*, *15*, 569-584.

Takeuchi, D. T., Sue, S., & Yeh, M. (1995). Return rates and outcomes from ethnicity-specific mental health programs in Los Angeles. *American Journal of Public Health*, *85*, 638-643.

Triandis, H. C., McCusker, C., & Hui, C. H. (1990).   Multimethod probes of individualism and collectivism. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *59*, 1006-1020.

Tsai, D. T., & Lopez, R. A. (1997). The use of social supports by elderly Chinese immigrants. *Journal of Gerontological Social Work*, *29*, 77-94.

Tseng, W. S. (2001). *Handbook of cultural psychiatry*. San Diego, CA: Academic Press.

Tweed, R. G., & Lehman, D. R. (2002). Learning considered within a cultural context. *American Psychologist*, *57*, 89-99.

Uba, L. (1994). *Asian Americans: Personality patterns, identity, and mental health*. New York: Guilford Press.

Upton, T. A. (1989). Chinese students, American universities, and cultural confrontation. *MinneTESOL Journal*, *7*, 9-28.

United States Bureau of the Census. (2000). *The Asian Population: 2000*. Retrieved on September 20, 2005, from http://www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/race.html.

Wang, L. L. (1998). Roots and changing identity of the Chinese in the United States. In F. Ng, (Ed.), *Adaptation, acculturation, and transnational ties among Asian Americans* (pp. 27-52). New York: Garland Publishing.

Warner, R. S. (1998). *Immigration and religious communities in the United States*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Williams, D. R., Larson, D. B., Buchler, R. E., Heckman, R. C., & Pyle, C. M. (1991). Religion and psychological distress in a community sample. *Social Science Medicine*, *32*, 1257-62.

Wong, E. (1989). *Correlations between spiritual well-being, self esteem, and social desirability for Chinese Americans in the Northwest*. Doctoral dissertation, Western Conservative Baptist Seminary, Portland, OR.

Zalaquett, C. P., & Wood, R. J. (1997). *Evaluating Stress: A Book of Resources*. Lanham, Maryland: Scarecrow Press.

Zhang, A. Y., Snowden, L. R., & Sue, S. (1998). Differences between Asian and White Americans' help seeking and utilization patterns in the Los Angeles area. *Journal of Community Psychology*, *26*, 317-326.

Zhou, Z., Peverly, S. T., Xin, T., Huang, A. S., & Wang, W. (2003). School adjustment of first-generation Chinese-American adolescents. *Psychology in the Schools*, *40*, 71-84.