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Korean American Adolescents and Their Mothers: Intergenerational Differences and Their Consequences

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KOREAN AMERICAN ADOLESCENTS AND THEIR MOTHERS:
INTERGENERATIONAL DIFFERENCES AND THEIR CONSEQUENCES

DISSERTATION

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the
College of Arts and Sciences at the University of Kentucky

By
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Lexington, Kentucky

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ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

KOREAN AMERICAN ADOLESCENTS AND THEIR MOTHERS:
INTERGENERATIONAL DIFFERENCES AND THEIR CONSEQUENCES

The current study examined the links and mechanisms associated with intergenerational cultural conflict, psychological distress, and the intergenerational differences in acculturation and model minority stereotype (MMS) endorsement for South Korean immigrants. Specifically, Korean American adolescents' (ages 12-19, $M =$ 15.3, $SD = 1.71$) and their mothers' ($N = 209$ dyads) acculturation difference and MMS endorsement difference were measured and analyzed as predictors of intergenerational cultural conflict and psychological distress for adolescents. Furthermore, the study analyzed intergenerational cultural conflict as a mediator in the acculturation gap-distress and the MMS endorsement-distress paths. Results indicated that when mothers and their adolescents differed in their acculturation, they also differed in their endorsement of the MMS. Next, as expected, the adolescents who had mothers who were not as acculturated to the American culture, experienced more cultural conflict with their parents and, in turn, felt more psychological distress. Furthermore, the adolescents who had mothers who endorsed the MMS to a greater degree, experienced more cultural conflict with their parents and, in turn, felt more psychological distress.

KEYWORDS: Model Minority Stereotype, Acculturation, Psychological Distress, Intergenerational Gap, Cultural Conflict

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KOREAN AMERICAN ADOLESCENTS AND THEIR MOTHERS:
INTERGENERATIONAL DIFFERENCES AND THEIR CONSEQUENCES

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Chapter One

Introduction

The United States today has approximately 39.9 million immigrants (12.9% of the population), the largest number in its history (Passel & Cohn, 2012; U.S. Census Bureau, 2011). Immigrant-origin children have become the fastest growing segment of the child population with one in three children under 18 projected to be the child of an immigrant by 2020 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010; Hernandez, 2004). Specifically, as of 2011, 23.7% of school-age children in the United States were the children of immigrants (Migration Policy Institute [MPI], 2011), with the majority (77%) second-generation-citizen children and the rest (23%) foreign-born (Mather, 2009). Approximately 10.7% of all U.S. public school students are classified as English language learners (MPI, 2011).

As 75% of today's immigrants are from Asian and Latin American countries, their children constitute the majority of non-European, non-English speaking school-aged students in the U.S. (Suarez-Orozco, 2001). Although much attention has focused on Latino immigrants, Asian Americans are proportionately the fastest growing ethnic minority group in the United States, accounting for 27.8% of the foreign-born population. These large numbers are due in large part to recent immigration from Southeast Asian countries (Kim, Yang, Atkinson, Wolfe, & Hong, 2001). It is anticipated that the Asian American population will exceed 40 million by 2050, which is estimated to be 10% of the American population (Lee & Zane, 1998). Because Asian American youth are becoming an important part of the American population, it is important to focus on specific issues that affect their development, such as their acculturation, the stereotypes they face, and their relationships with their parents. That is the goal of the current study.

Acculturation Differences and Intergenerational Cultural Conflict

Within immigrant families, there are often differences in acculturation. Acculturation is a multidimensional process that involves changes in many aspects of immigrants' lives, including language competence and use, cultural identity, attitudes and values, food and music preferences, media use, ethnic pride, ethnic social relations, cultural familiarity, and social customs (Yoon, Langrehr, & Ong, 2011). Traditionally, acculturation theories have been developed and tested for adult immigrants (Coll & Magnuson, 1997). Yet, it is important to move beyond these models because today's immigrants typically migrate with families that include children. Children of immigrant parents generally acculturate to the majority culture at a faster rate than their parents (Sluzki, 1979; Portes, 1997). This rapid acculturation by children is seen in their acquisition of English as a primary language, adoption of Western values and lifestyles, and socialization into mainstream society. Immigrant parents, on the other hand, are more likely to retain their native language, cultural values, and traditional lifestyles despite the demands and pressures to socialize into mainstream society (Lau et al., 2005; Lee, Choe, Kim & Ngo, 2000; Portes & Rumbaut, 2001; Szapocznik & Kurtines, 1993).

Because parents and children acculturate at different rates, immigrant parents and their children increasingly live in different cultural worlds. Immigrant parents often understand little of their children's lives outside the home. For immigrant children and adolescents, it can be difficult to live with the expectations and demands of one culture in the home and another at school (Buki, Ma, & Strom, 2003; Farver, Bhadha, & Narang, 2002; Ho & Birman, 2010; Lee, Choe, Kim, & Ngo 2000). These acculturation

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differences between parents and their children, especially as those children become adolescents, are often associated with conflict.

Because of these acculturation gaps, or differences in acculturation between parents and their children, intergenerational cultural conflicts within immigrant families are common, (Lee, et al., 2000). Some manifestations of these conflicts are verbal arguments between parents and their children regarding friendships, dating, marriage, career choices, and gender role expectations (Mahalingam, 2006). Specifically, because of the acculturation gap, many adolescents oppose the traditional values and lifestyles of their immigrant parents and seek to assume more Western or mainstream values and lifestyles, whereas their parents expect their adolescents to maintain the traditional values and lifestyles of their native culture (Uba, 1994). For example, Chao (1994) and Gorman (1998) found that conflict resulted when immigrant Chinese children thought their parents were too traditional and their parents strongly emphasized conformity with parental expectations. Qin, Way, and Mukherjee (2008) found that Asian adolescents tended to blame their parents' traditional Asian cultural beliefs for bringing about family conflicts and feeling alienated from their parents. In a study with immigrant Cuban families, Kurtines and Miranda (1980) found that highly acculturated children negatively perceived traditional parental roles and expectations. The failure within families to resolve these acculturation differences, particularly cultural value differences, results in greater misunderstandings, miscommunications, and eventual conflicts among family members.

More recent studies on the children and adolescents of immigrants have tended to view their acculturation process as individualistic, rather than as a process that is linked

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to the lives of other family members (Nguyen, Messe, & Stollak, 1999). However, it is important to consider the role of parents' acculturation in their children's adjustment, as children and adolescents are embedded within an important proximal developmental context – the family (Bronfenbrenner, 2005). Within this developmental context, parents represent a strong socializing agent for their children and adolescents (Collins, Maccoby, Steinberg, Hetherington, & Bornstein, 2000; Darling & Steinberg, 1993).

A limitation of research on acculturation differences is that they often rely only on adolescent reports to determine the acculturation gap. Rather than relying simply on students' reports, it is important to obtain acculturation information from both parents and adolescents to get an accurate reflection of the acculturation differences (Birman, 2006). The current study investigates how both Korean immigrant adolescents' *and* their mothers' acculturation levels are related to adolescents' psychological outcomes.

Intergenerational Cultural Conflict and Psychological Distress

One result of this intergenerational cultural conflict may be greater risk of psychological distress for Asian immigrant youth. For example, Asian American adolescents report the highest likelihood of intergenerational cultural conflict compared to Hispanics and European American adolescents (Lee & Liu, 2001); they also report higher levels of depressive symptoms and psychological distress than both White and other minority adolescents (Bankston & Zhou, 2002; Rumbaut, 1994; Greenberger & Chen, 1996). This psychological distress among Asian immigrant youth may be due, in part, to conflict with their parents – particularly conflict resulting from the acculturation gap.

Other studies more directly link intergenerational cultural conflict with psychological distress, lower self-esteem, and greater depression (Rumbaut, 1994). For example, among Asian American adolescents, general intergenerational cultural conflict increases the likelihood of depression symptoms and other forms of psychological distress (Aldwin & Greenberger, 1987; E. Kim & Cain, 2008; Lee & Liu, 2001; Lee et al., 2000). More specifically, depression and anxiety symptoms among Asian American adolescents have been linked to intergenerational conflict concerning cultural values and expectations, academic expectations, expressions of love (i.e., parents not showing physical and verbal affection), the importance of saving face (i.e., bringing shame to the family), the child's expression of opinion (i.e., perceived as talking back), and respect for elders (i.e., showing respect regardless of whether they deserve it; Aldwin & Greenberger, 1987; Bahrassa, Syed, Su & Lee, 2011; Kim & Cain, 2008).

In immigrant families, because they are living in two cultures, incongruent cultural values and conflicts between parents and their children may increase over time and may place families at risk for poorer mental health (Hwang, 2006). Many children and adolescents who begin to assert their autonomy and independence also experience more family conflict and less cohesion with their parents, often with direct negative effects on their psychological well-being (Collins & Russell, 1991; Fuligni, 1998, Greenberger & Chen, 1996). Specifically, in Korean American families, if the parents grew up in Korea and highly value parental authority yet their children grow up in the U.S. and highly value individual autonomy, there may be substantial intergenerational conflict (Kim, 2008). It is likely that these different socialization contexts create cultural gaps and conflict between parents and their children, which in turn are related to

adolescent's mental health. The current study will examine whether intergenerational cultural conflict is a mediator between acculturation differences and psychological distress. Specifically, this study will examine whether acculturation differences are associated with more intergenerational cultural conflict, and whether this in turn is related to higher depression and anxiety symptoms among adolescents.

Asian American Model Minority Stereotype and Intergenerational Cultural Conflict

Another area in which parents and adolescents may differ culturally is in their endorsement of the *model minority stereotype* (MMS). The MMS portrays Asians as hardworking, intelligent, behaving well, and successful (Kitano, 1969; Oyserman & Sakamoto, 1997). Overall, there is some truth to the MMS. For example, a meta-analysis (Tran & Birman, 2010) with publications from 1990-2008, found that generally Asian Americans (aggregated) outperformed (n = 21) or performed no different from Whites (n = 17), particularly with respect to overall GPA, math scores, and math grades. However, since then, many published papers have debunked the image of Asian Americans as model minorities by considering the academic performance of specific Asian American ethnic groups (Suzuki, 2002).

Despite the prevalent image of high achieving Asian Americans, research suggests that Asian American adolescents often do not fulfill the MMS. According to the New York City Board of Education (2000), in the class of 2000, 67.4% of Asian American high school students graduated, 11.1% dropped out, and 21.5% had to repeat a school year. In addition, not only did the dropout rate for Asian American students increase from 8% to 11% from 1997 to 2000 academic school years (New York City Board of Education, 2000), the number of Asian American youths arrested for major

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felonies in New York City increased 38% between 1993 and 1996 (Coalition for Asian American Children and Families, 1999). Furthermore, Choi and Lahey (2006) found that, contrary to the MMS, Asian American adolescents reported as many delinquent behaviors as White youth. In fact, Asian American youth reported slightly higher numbers of aggressive offenses than White adolescents, and female Asian American adolescents reported greater numbers of nonaggressive offenses than White female adolescents.

Considerable evidence suggests that Asian American parents endorse the MMS. Specifically, Asian American parents may apply pressure for success and have high demands for achievement for their children. Previous research has noted that there is a great deal of educational emphasis in the Asian and Asian American culture (Stevenson & Stigler, 1992). Asian American parents, compared to other groups, including European Americans, have higher parental expectations for educational attainment, higher standards for the school grades they consider acceptable, and higher expectations for the amount of effort or work they believe their children should exhibit (Chao, 1996; Chao & Tseng, 2002; Fuligni, 1998; Kao, 1995, Schneider & Lee, 1990; Okagaki & Frensch, 1998; Peng & Wright,1994; Shrake, 1996).

A qualitative study by Lee and colleagues (2009) suggests that Asian parents' stringent expectation of high academic achievement is associated with their endorsement of the MMS. A focus group with 1.5 and 2nd generation Asian American young adults found that they felt strong pressure from their parents, who expect them to succeed academically, strive for certain career paths, and to fulfill expectations (Lee et al., 2009). Under the influence of the Confucian cultural tradition, Koreans have historically had

great faith in education as the main avenue for social mobility (Min, 2011). Korean immigrants have brought the socialization of the emphasis on children's education such as parental pressure to succeed to the U.S. (Min, 1998). The current study will examine if parents of Korean American adolescents and their mothers endorse the MMS.

Although not directly examined, previous research suggests that the intergenerational difference in the MMS endorsement may be due to differences in acculturation. First-generation immigrant populations demonstrate the best performance on some educational outcomes, followed by a decline in subsequent generations (Fuligni & Witkow, 2004; Garcia Coll & Marks, 2009; Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2001, Perreira, Harris, & Lee, 2006). Previous research has found that Asian American students place less importance on education than their counterparts in Asia (Chen & Stevenson, 1995). In addition, a study by Fuligni (1997) noted that the academic values of Chinese children within the United States declined with each successive generation. Specifically, American born students have lower educational aspirations, place less value on doing well in school, and study less often than their immigrant peers. Immigrant Chinese students often emphasize education more than their native-born American peers because they see it as their primary route to success as newcomers to American society (Sue & Okazaki, 1990; Sung, 1985). As adolescents become acculturated more and faster than their parents, they may have lower academic attitudes and achievement than what their parents expect of them, which contributes to family conflict.

The intergenerational differences in the endorsement of MMS, reflective of the differences in overall acculturation, may lead to intergenerational cultural conflict. Studies examining Asian American college students have shown that parental orientation

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to traditional Asian culture and Asian values similar to the MMS (i.e., getting good grades, getting accepted to prestigious universities, and attaining professional careers) created a generational gap that was associated with increased intergenerational conflict (Ahn, Kim, & Park, 2008; Lee, Choe, Kim, & Ngo, 2000; Park, Vo, & Tsong, 2009). Previous research has found that Asian American adolescents perceive parental pressure to academically succeed (Chen & Stevenson, 1995; Fuligni, 1997; Hao & Bonsted-Bruns, 1998; Sue & Okazaki, 1990; Eaton & Dembo, 1997). For example, Asian American pre-adolescents perceived more pressure from their parents for higher levels of math achievement than their White counterparts (Campell & Mandel 1990). While there is little research suggesting that conflict due to academic and career exists between Asian American adolescents and their parents (Ahn et al., 2008, R.M. Lee, et al., 2000), there is no research examining the difference in the endorsement of the MMS leading to intergenerational cultural conflict. The current study will measure the extent to which parents and adolescents endorse the MMS and if the difference is associated with more intergenerational cultural conflict, which in turn is associated with higher psychological distress.

Diversity among Asian American Adolescents

Research on the experiences of Asian American adolescents has often neglected the diversity of Asian American populations. For example, although there has been an increase in research with Asian Americans in the literature, there has been a decrease in the publication of specific Asian American ethnic groups over the past decade (Kim, Yang, Atkinson, Wolfe, & Hong, 2001). This contributes to a "homogenized" view of Asian Americans, despite the fact that there are over 40 ethnic subgroups of Asian

ancestry who reside in the United States (Uba, 1994; Zhou & Xiong, 2005). The tendency among researchers to view this group as homogeneous may perpetuate the stereotype that Asian Americans are all alike (Alvarez, 2002; Liu, Iwamoto, & Chae, 2010). Researching Asian Americans as a homogenous group is problematic because some researchers have asserted that the difference within the many different Asian subgroups may be as great as the differences between Asians and other ethnic minority groups (Alvarez, 2002; Tsai, Chentsova-Dutton, & Wong 2002).

The "Asian" category is a highly heterogeneous group, including people who trace their ancestry to East Asia, Southeast Asia, and the Indian sub-continent. Asians are diverse in terms of ethnicity, culture, social class, religious affiliation, language, educational attainment, and generation in the United States (Lee & Kumashiro, 2005; Hune & Chan, 2000; Lee, 1996; Pang & Cheng, 1998). For example, socioeconomic levels vary widely among Asian ethnic groups. According to the U.S. Census Bureau (1990), the per capita income for Asian Americans ranged from $9,923 for Hmong Americans to $28,257 for Japanese Americans. Similarly, Asian ethnic subgroups vary greatly in terms of educational attainment. According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2004), approximately 85% of Asian Americans age 25 or older were high school graduates, and nearly 50% had a bachelor's degree or higher. However, disaggregated data revealed that among the Southeast Asians, over 50% of age 25 or older had less than a high school education.

Research on Asian Americans needs to focus on specific populations of Asian Americans, rather than generalize across all groups. To address this lack of differentiation, the current study examined the links and mechanisms associated with

family conflict, psychological distress, and intergenerational differences in acculturation and MMS endorsement in only Korean immigrant families.

Most of the research on Korean Americans combines them with other Asian American subgroups into one macro-level sample, and most previous research in this area has focused primarily on Chinese American and Japanese American populations. Despite the fact that a growing number of Korean immigrants are living in Western countries (i.e., one-fifth of the Asian American population; US Census Bureau, 2000), and are experiencing adjustment problems (Shim & Schwartz, 2008), studies specifically addressing Korean immigrants are lacking (Kim, Yang, Atkinson, Wolfe, & Hong, 2001). Due to their unique cultural heritage, Koreans differ from other Asian immigrants in terms of normative behaviors and social roles (Robinson, Bender, & Whyte, 2004), business and other economic practices (US Census Bureau, 2006), family structure, and a cultural history of oppression by other nationalities (Sohng & Song, 2004). In addition, from 1981 – 1990, Korea was one of the top five countries from which immigrants arrived (Min, 2011), indicating a relatively new adaptation to the US, unassisted by earlier generations. Furthermore, the culture of Korean immigrant families and that of the U.S. do not share much in the way of history, social culture, language, economic structure, and religion; nor do they share an ethical-moral system (Moon, 2008). For example, the Korean culture is strongly based on Confucianism, which emphasizes filial piety, family ties, and the patriarchal family order (Min, 1998). American culture, on the other hand, is based more on individualism (Kim et al, 1982; Jo, 1999). These factors may impact Korean American immigrants' experiences with acculturation and family conflict in unique ways.

Overview of Current Study and Summary of Hypotheses

The current study examined the links and mechanisms associated with intergenerational cultural conflict, psychological distress, and the intergenerational differences in acculturation and MMS endorsement for Korean immigrants. See Figure 1. First, it was hypothesized that the intergenerational acculturation gap would be positively associated with the intergenerational difference in MMS endorsement. Specifically, the less acculturated the parent and the more acculturated the adolescent, the more the parent would endorse the MMS and the less the adolescent would endorse the MMS (i.e., greater difference in MMS endorsement). Second, it was hypothesized that there would be a link between the intergenerational acculturation gap and adolescent psychological distress, which would be partially mediated by the link to adolescents' perceptions of intergenerational cultural conflict. Specifically, it was hypothesized that the intergenerational acculturation gap would be associated with more intergenerational cultural conflict, which in turn would be associated with higher adolescent depression and anxiety. Third, it was hypothesized that there would be a link between intergenerational difference in MMS endorsement and adolescent psychological distress, which would be partially mediated by the link to adolescents' perceptions of intergenerational cultural conflict. Specifically, less acculturated parents may highly endorse the MMS and their more acculturated children may endorse the MMS less, leading to more intergenerational cultural conflict, and subsequently, greater psychological distress.

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Figure 1. *Hypothesized Model: Intergenerational Cultural Conflict as a Mediator*

*p < .05, **p < .01*
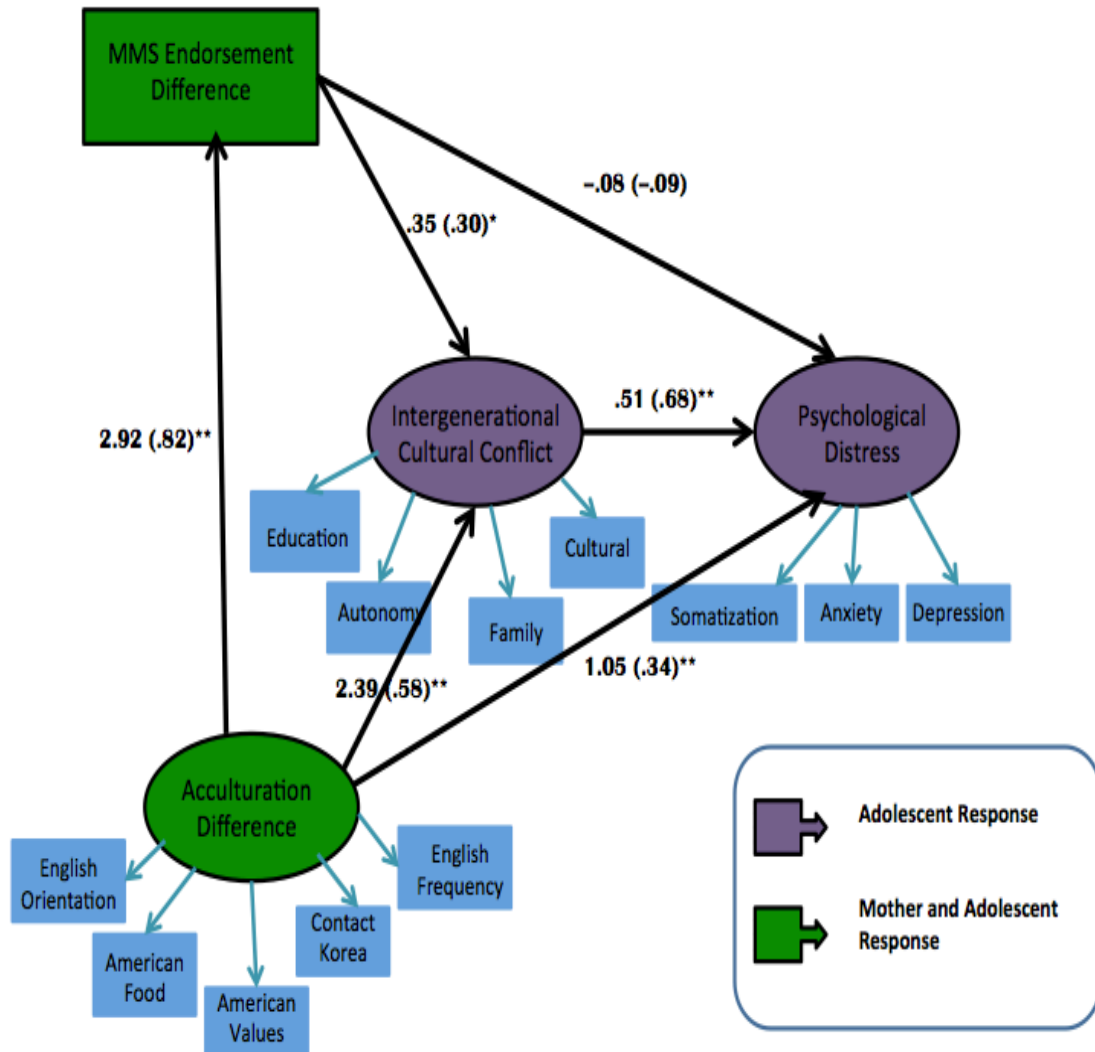
Chapter Two

Method

Participants

Participants were 209 dyads of adolescent and mother. There were 209 adolescents (100 girls, 109 boys), ranging from 9th – 12th grades (ages 12-19, $M = 15.3$, $SD = 1.71$). The adolescents were 41% 1st – (South Korea born) and 59% 2nd generation (U.S. born). For 1st generation adolescents, the age of immigration was $M = 4.5$, $SD = 2.7$. The mothers (ages 39-50, $M = 15.3$, $SD = 1.71$) were all 1st generation from South Korea with the age of immigration $M = 30.6$, $SD = 4.07$.

The sample was drawn from five churches in Southern California. The county has an Asian population of approximately 14% (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010) of which 2.2% is Korean. The community that the sample was drawn from was 34.5% Asian.

Procedures

Consent forms were passed out to all adolescents after church services. All consent forms were in English and Korean. Only those adolescents who return signed consent forms from their mothers were approached about the study. Consent forms included parental consent for the adolescents' participation and assent for the mothers' participation. Adolescents were told about the nature of the study in an assent form. Only those adolescents who had a signed consent from their mother and gave assent themselves and assent from their mother to participate, participated in the study.

The adolescents completed the questionnaires at church during various times allotted by the church (e.g., Bible study times, before service, etc.). The study took approximately 30 minutes per person. Students received a $10.00 gift certificate at the end of the study.

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The mothers of the adolescents completed the questionnaire in Korean either in their own time or at church and returned it to the principal investigator.

Adolescent Measures

Psychological distress. Psychological distress was measured with the Brief Symptom Inventory designed for individuals 13 years and older (BSI; Derogatis & Fitzpatrick, 2004). The BSI measured psychological distress by evaluating three primary symptom clusters: somatization, depression, and anxiety. Anxiety (i.e., the tendency to be nervous, fearful, or worried about real or imagined problems) was measured with items such as "Scared for no reason," and "Nervousness." Depression (i.e., excessive feelings of unhappiness, sadness, or stress) was assessed with items such as "Feeling hopelessness about the future," and "Feelings of worthlessness." Psychosomatization (i.e., bodily symptoms caused by mental or emotional disturbance) was measured with items such as "Nausea or upset stomach" and "Pains in the heart or chest". The adolescents responded to 21-items on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from (1) never to (5) all the time, regarding how often each symptom was experienced. There were seven items about anxiety ($M = 2.01$, $SD = .84$; $\alpha = .94$), seven items about depression ($M = 2.26$, $SD = .87$; $\alpha = .92$), and seven items about psychosomatization ($M = 2.09$, $SD = .81$; $\alpha = .90$). Higher numbers indicated higher levels psychological distress (i.e., more anxiety, more depression, and more psychosomatic symptoms).

<u>*Intergenerational cultural conflict.*</u>

Intergenerational Conflict. Intergenerational conflict was measured using the Intergenerational Conflict Inventory (ICI) developed by Chung (2001). The ICI used 24 items to measure how often the adolescents and their parents disagreed on specific topics.

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Adolescents were given statements such as "How much time to help around the house", "Pressure to learn Korean", and "How much time to spend on studying" and asked to "Indicate how often you and your parent(s) disagree about these things" using a 5-point Likert scale (1) never to (5) all the time, with higher numbers indicating greater conflict ($M = 2.49$, $SD = .97$; $\alpha = .90$).

Cultural Conflict. Adolescents' perceptions of cultural conflict was measured by the Asian American Family Conflicts Scale developed by Lee, Choe, Kim and Ngo (2000). Adolescents read family conflict situations that were likely to occur in an Asian American family due to cultural differences such as "You want to state your opinion, but your parents consider is to be disrespectful to talk back" and "Your parents want you to sacrifice personal interests for the sake of the family, but you feel this is unfair". Adolescents answered ten items on a Likert scale on the likelihood of this conflict occurring (1) never to (5) all the time, and the overall seriousness of the conflict when it occurs (1) not at all to (5) extremely. Higher scores indicated greater likelihood ($M = 2.47$, $SD = .85$; $\alpha = .89$) and seriousness ($M = 2.61$, $SD = .98$; $\alpha = .89$) of family conflicts ($M = 2.64$, $SD = .92$; $\alpha = .94$).

Acculturation

Cultural orientation. Cultural orientation was measured by the adapted Bi-dimensional Acculturation Scale (BAS) by Marín & Gamba, (1996). Adolescents rated how much they prefer activities and media in English and Korean. For example, they rated how much they enjoy speaking, watching TV and movies, listening to music, reading books, and writing in Korean and English. Adolescents responded to 16 items using a 4-point Likert scale (1) not at all to (4) very much, with higher numbers indicated

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greater cultural orientation to either English ($M = 3.91$, $SD = .18$; $\alpha = .94$) or Korean ($M = 2.25$, $SD = .71$; $\alpha = .93$).

Acculturation. Acculturation was measured by using the Suinn-Lew Asian Self-Identity Acculturation Scale (SL-ASIA), based on Suinn et al., (1992), and adapted for the Korean American population. The SL-ASIA scale consists of 26 items, measuring three aspects: a person's behaviors, a person's set of cultural values, and/or a person's inner definition of who he/she "is" (self-identity). The scale included items such as "What is your food preference at home?", "What language do you prefer to use?", "How much contact have you had with Korea?", and "Rate yourself on how much you believe in Korean values, for example, about marriage, families, education, work". Adolescents responded using a 5-point Likert scale with higher numbers indicating more acculturation towards the dominant or western culture ($M = 3.49$, $SD = .56$; $\alpha = .69$).

A person retaining a high Korean identity ("Asian-identified") is one whose values, behaviors, preferences, and attitudes reflect those of a person with a Korean background. For example, such a person might be expected to value the family, to demonstrate respectful behavior toward elders, to have a strong work ethic, to participate in Korean cultural events, to prefer Korean over English, and to emphasize collective or group attitudes. A person showing a high Western identity ("Western-identified") is one whose values, behaviors, preferences, and attitudes reflect those of a Western background. For example, such a person might be more self-directed and independent of parental guidance, disinterested in Korean cultural events or beliefs, committed to English as the preferred language, and more comfortable socializing with European-American friends and acquaintances.

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MMS Endorsement. Adolescents' endorsement of the MMS was measured by an adapted version of Thompson and Kiang's (2010) scale. Adolescents were given statements such as "Because I am Korean American, it is important that I should be..." "Intelligent", "Quiet/reserved", "Ambitious", "Family oriented", "Hardworking", "Talented in classical music", "Good at math/science", and "Likely to go to a prestigious college" and asked "How much do you agree with these statements?". Adolescents answered on a Likert scale ranging from (1) strongly disagree to (5) strongly agree. Higher scores indicated a higher endorsement of model minority stereotypes (M = 1.9, SD = .78; α = .94).

Mother Measures

Acculturation Difference. The mothers completed the same measures as the adolescent. The mothers responded to the cultural orientation measure (i.e., BAS) with higher numbers indicated greater cultural orientation to either English (M = 1.43, SD = .48; α = .90) or Korean (M = 3.90, SD = .47; α = .84) Because the current study was only concerned about the difference between the adolescent and mother in acculturation to America, only the cultural orientation to English was used in the analysis. with higher numbers indicating more acculturation towards the dominant or western culture SL-ASIA and (M = 1.44, SD = .49; α = .86). The acculturation difference score was calculated by subtracting the mother's score from their adolescent's score. The higher the absolute value of the difference, the greater the acculturation gap was (M = 2.06, SD = .72).

MMS Endorsement Difference. The adolescents' mothers completed the adapted version of the MMS endorsement scale. Mothers were given statements such as "Because we are Korean American, it is important for my child to be..." "Intelligent",

"Quiet/reserved", "Ambitious", "Family oriented", "Hardworking", "Talented in classical music", "Good at math/science", and "Likely to go to a prestigious college" and asked "How much do you agree with these statements?". The mothers answered 13 items ($M =$ 3.63, $SD = .48$; $\alpha = .89$) on a Likert scale ranging from (1) strongly disagree to (5) strongly agree. Higher scores indicated a higher endorsement of the model minority stereotypes. The MMS endorsement difference score was calculated by subtracting the mother's score from their adolescent's score ($M = 1.73$, $SD = .91$)

Chapter 3

Results

Means, standard deviations, and correlations for variables are presented in Table 1. Data analysis was conducted with the software package AMOS (Arbuckle & Wothke, 2001) to test the hypothesized model using the structural equation modeling (SEM) approach to path analysis with observed and latent variables. The hypothesized model was analyzed to examine whether (a) acculturation difference predicted MMS endorsement difference, (b) acculturation difference predicted psychological distress and if intergenerational cultural conflict mediated acculturation difference and psychological distress, and (c) MMS endorsement difference predicted psychological distress and if intergenerational cultural conflict mediated MMS endorsement difference and psychological distress.

The model included one exogenous variable, acculturation difference (latent) which consisted of five observed variables from a factor analysis that measured how acculturated the participants were to the American culture: English orientation, American food, American values, contact with Korea, and frequency of English usage. The model also included three endogenous variables, MMS endorsement difference (observed), intergenerational cultural conflict (latent), and psychological distress (latent). For intergenerational cultural conflict, a factor analysis yielded conflict based on four factors: family, cultural, autonomy, and education. Psychological distress consisted of three observed variables, anxiety, depression and somatization. The standardized factor loadings of each construct were large (>.45), indicating that all factors were well determined with valid indicators.

First the measurement model was fit to make sure the model was identified and had good fit. The model was identified with no errors. The model fit the data very well with χ^2 (209) = 333.6, p = .000, χ^2/df = 3.34, Comparative Fit Index (CFI) = .95, Goodness of Fit Index (GFI) = .93, Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) = .044 and Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) = .106 with a 90% Confidence Interval (CI) of .089-.124. These indicated good fit because most fit within the fit criteria of χ^2/df < 3, CFI >0.9, GFI >0.9, SRMR <0.08 and RMSEA <0.08. The covariates (i.e., age, gender, and socioeconomic status) were not significant and decreased model fit so were dropped from further analysis. Next, significance tests for indirect effects were constructed by obtaining parameter standard errors using bootstrap resampling in Amos.

As hypothesized the path from acculturation difference to MMS endorsement difference was significant (.82, p < .01). Specifically, the greater the difference between mother and adolescent in acculturation, the greater the difference was between mother and adolescent for MMS endorsement difference. In other words, when mothers and their adolescents differed in their acculturation, they also differed in their endorsement of the MMS. Consistent with the hypothesis, the paths from acculturation difference to psychological distress (.34, p < .01) and acculturation difference to intergenerational cultural conflict (.58, p < .01) were significant. Specifically, adolescents with mothers who differed from them in their acculturation experienced more psychological distress and perceived more conflict than adolescents with mothers more similar to them. Further, as expected, intergenerational cultural conflict was significantly associated with psychological distress (.68, p < .01).

To examine whether intergenerational cultural conflict mediated acculturation difference and psychological distress, mediation analysis was conducted using the bootstrapping method. Bootstrapping resulted in a 95% confidence interval of 1.18 – 2.74 reflecting significance at $p < .05$. Indirect effects are significant if the 95% confidence intervals do not include zero (Shrout & Bolger, 2002). Results suggest a partial mediation. Specifically, adolescents with a greater difference in acculturation with their mothers tended to perceive more intergenerational cultural conflict and, in turn, experienced more depression, anxiety, and somatic symptoms.

As hypothesized, the mediation analysis suggested a full mediation and the path from MMS endorsement difference to psychological distress (.09) was not significant after the mediation was taken into consideration. The path from MMS endorsement difference to intergenerational cultural conflict (.30, $p < .05$) was significant, as was the path from intergenerational cultural conflict to psychological distress (.68, $p < .01$). Mediation analysis examined whether intergenerational cultural conflict mediated MMS endorsement difference and psychological distress. Bootstrapping resulted in a 95% confidence interval of .13 – .44 reflecting significance at $p < .01$. Specifically, adolescents with a greater difference in MMS endorsement with their mothers tended to perceive more intergenerational cultural conflict and, in turn, experienced more depression, anxiety, and somatic symptoms.

Table 1

Means, Standard Deviations and Correlations Among Variables

Measure	M	SD	1	2	3
1. Acculturation difference	2.06	.72			
2. MMS endorsement difference	1.73	.91	.720**		
3. Intergenerational cultural conflict	2.55	.93	.709**	.760**	
4. Psychological distress	2.12	.84	.714*	.704**	.841**

Note: * *p* < .05, ***p* < .01

Chapter Four

Discussion

The current study examined the acculturation differences between adolescents and their mothers, and how those acculturation differences are related to differences in their endorsement of the model minority stereotype. Furthermore, the study analyzed how these differences between adolescents and their mothers predict greater psychological distress, and whether intergenerational cultural conflict mediated the acculturation gap-distress and the MMS endorsement-distress paths.

First, as predicted, results suggest that when mothers and their adolescents differed in their acculturation, they also differed in their endorsement of the MMS. Second, adolescents who differed more from their mothers in terms of how acculturated they were to American culture also experienced more cultural conflict with their parents and, in turn, felt more psychological distress. Furthermore, adolescents who differed more from their mothers in terms of how much they endorsed the MMS also experienced more cultural conflict with their parents and, in turn, felt more psychological distress.

This study adds to the current acculturation literature by recognizing and addressing the complexity of measuring and evaluating acculturation. Specifically, in line with the current literature, acculturation was assessed orthogonally with orientation towards the mainstream culture and the heritage culture assessed independently as continuous variables (Ryder, Alden, & Paulhus, 2000). In addition, acculturation was assessed in multiple domains including behavioral practices (e.g., language use, social contacts, media preferences) and cultural values (e.g., importance of family obligations,

interdependence, or autonomy) (Costigan & Su, 2004; Tsai, Chentsova-Dutton, &Wong, 2002).

It is likely that parent-child differences in acculturation influence the lens through which other processes take place. For example, in the current study, acculturation difference was positively associated with the MMS endorsement difference. This finding is important for two reasons. First, based on the mean values, the current study shows that mothers are endorsing the MMS to a higher degree than their adolescents. Although this is the first study to show this, this finding is consistent with previous research that shows that Asian American parents, compared to other groups, place more emphasis on educational attainment, set higher standards, and tend to have higher school grades they consider acceptable (Fuligni, 1997; Kao, 1995, Chao, 1996; Chen & Stevenson, 1995). This finding is also important because it suggests that the adolescents who have mothers who are not as acculturated tend to have mothers that endorse the MMS to a higher degree. It is likely that internalizing the MMS is damaging (e.g., leading to distress), but the current study suggests that it is also important to examine the degree to which there is a difference in endorsement between the adolescent and mother.

The current study also found that differences in acculturation are related to adolescent distress. This study adds to the literature by demonstrating that parent– child discrepancy in American orientation may have a persistent negative effect on the mental health of children from early to middle adolescence. This supports previous research on the effect of parent-child acculturation discrepancy on child adjustment including internalizing problems (Costigan & Dokis, 2006; Farver et al., 2002; Kim et al, 2009; Kim, Chen, Wang, Shen, & Orozco-Lapray, 2013) and externalizing problems (Le &

Stockdale, 2008). The current study examines acculturation within a dyadic relationship but recognizes that future research needs to further examine this complicated relationship within individuals and how this influences the process between dyads. Specifically, future research should examine how parents' experiences of acculturation distress and children's acculturation distress interact and impact the parent-child relationship and outcomes.

Consistent with previous research, family conflict has been indicated as a common mechanism proposed to explain why parent-child differences in acculturation might affect youth development but it has not been formally assessed as the role of a mediator before (Costigan, 2010). The current study found that intergenerational cultural conflict (i.e., family conflict due to the cultural dissonance that emerges between generations) was an important mediator and predicted psychological distress for the adolescents. Specifically, adolescents' psychological distress was predicted by adolescent perceptions of conflict between their own behaviors and values and differing parental expectations of their behavior and values. This supports previous research, which has demonstrated that intergenerational cultural conflicts leads to psychological distress (Chung, 2001; Lee, Su, & Yoshida, 2005; Wu & Chao, 2005). The current study found that for both the acculturation gap-distress and the MMS endorsement-distress paths, intergenerational cultural conflict is what explained adolescents' distress. Furthermore, these results provide evidence suggesting that intergenerational cultural conflict is predicted by acculturation differences and MMS endorsement differences. Future research should explore other predictors of conflict for immigrant families.

A limitation of the current study is that the sample was collected from an ethnically diverse area with a large Korean enclave. However, at the national level, there are more areas across the countries that are predominantly European American so the current study does not generalize to Korean American families in those areas. Most acculturation research has focused on areas with the heaviest immigrant population disregarding areas that are currently seeing rapid shifts in their demographics due to immigration. Future research should examine parent-child acculturation gaps and cultural conflict in different contexts since it may be easier for families to navigate in some of these contexts than others.

The literature on acculturation gaps has been exclusively focused on differences between parents and children (mothers and children, in particular). Future research should include fathers in studies of acculturation gaps, because mother-child and father-child differences do not necessarily operate in the same way (e.g., Costigan & Dokis, 2006; Schofield, Parke, Kim, & Coltrane, 2008). In addition, the current literature is dominated by studies that explore the implications of acculturation gaps for children's adjustment only; there is a pressing

need for studies that examine the implications of acculturation gaps for parents' adjustment as well. For example, acculturation gaps with children may undermine parents' feelings of efficacy in the parenting role, and parenting efficacy has been shown to be strongly related to parents' psychological adjustment and the quality of their parenting (Costigan & Koryzma, 2011; Jones & Prinz, 2005). Immigrant parents' adjustment is an important factor because parents' well-being has implications for the adjustment of the children. Furthermore, future research needs to acknowledge the interdependence of

relationships within a family; relationships between parents and children, between spouses, and among siblings are not independent of one another and adopt a family systems perspective.

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Hui Chu
Curriculum Vitae

EDUCATION

Ph.D., University of Kentucky   **April 2014**
Dual Major: Developmental Psychology, Social Psychology
Advisor: Christia Spears Brown, Ph.D.
Dissertation: Korean American Adolescents and Their Mothers: Intergenerational
Differences
and Their Consequences

Certification in College Teaching   **2012**

M.S., University of Kentucky   **2011**
Thesis: Ethnic Identity and Perceived Discrimination as Predictors of Academic Attitudes:
The Mediating and Moderating Roles of Psychological Distress and Self-Regulation

B.A., University of California, Los Angeles   **2006**
Major: Psychology
Minor: Applied Developmental Psychology

FELLOWSHIPS AND AWARDS

National and International:
National Science Foundation (NSF) Graduate Research Fellowship   2010-present
Shanghai University International Graduate Student Conference, Second Place   2013

University (Competitive):
Outstanding Developmental Graduate Student Award   2011
Annual Graduate School Travel Awards   2009-2012
Annual Department of Psychology Travel Awards   2008-2012
Competitive Research Fellowship
2011

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

National Conference of Undergraduate Research   2014
Abstract Submissions Reviewer

University of Kentucky   2013
Mentor and Supervisor for 15 Lab Section Teaching Assistants

SRCD SECC (Student Early Career Council)	2013
Reviewer for Dissertation Grants	
American Psychological Association (APA)	2010-2012
APA of Graduate Students Campus Representative	
Kentucky Psychological Association (KPA)	2012
KPA Spring Academic Conference Panelist for Graduate School Applicants	
Society for Research on Child Development Conference	2011
Junior Mentor	
University of Kentucky	2009-2011
Experimental Psychology Department Prospective Applicants Coordinator	
University of Kentucky	2011-2012
Developmental Area Brown Bag Meetings Coordinator	

PUBLICATIONS

Brown, C.S & Chu, H. (2013). Gendered Conceptions of Ethnicity: Latino Children in Middle Childhood. In S. Chuang & C. Tamis-LeMonda (Eds.), *Gender Roles in Immigrant Families.* New York: Springer Science+Business Media.

Brown, C.S. & Chu, H. (2012). Discrimination, ethnic identity, and academic outcomes of Mexican immigrant children: predict academic**:** The importance of school context. *Child Development, 83*(5), 1477-1485.

Brown, C., Bigler, R., & Chu, H. (2010). An experimental study of the correlates and consequences of perceiving oneself to be the target of gender discrimination. *Journal of Experimental Child Psychology*, *107*(2), 100-117.

MANUSCRIPTS UNDER REVIEW

Chu, H. & Brown, C.S. Stereotype threat among school-age Latino children.

MANUSCRIPTS IN PREPARATIONS

Chu, H. & Brown, C.S. Korean American adolescents and their Mothers: Intergenerational differences and their consequences.

Chu, H. & Brown, C.S. Ethnic identity and perceived discrimination as predictors of academic attitudes: The mediating and moderating roles of psychological distress and self regulation.

Chu, H. & Blincoe, S. A cross-cultural exploration of respect and disrespect.

PRESENTATIONS

Richman, S., *Chu, H., & DeWall, N. (2014). *The Effects of Self-Concept Clarity on College Students' Academic Success*. Poster accepted for National Institute on the Teaching of Psychology Conference; St. Pete Beach, Florida.

Chu, H. Brown, C.S. (2013). *Korean American Adolescents and Their Mothers: Intergenerational Differences and Its Consequences.* Paper presented at Shanghai University International Graduate Student Conference; Shanghai, China.

Chu, H. & Brown, C.S. (2012). *Korean American Adolescents' Perceptions of the Model Minority Stereotype and its Link to Psychological Distress: The Mediating Role of Family Conflict.* Poster presented at Society for Research on Adolescents; Vancouver, Canada.

Chu, H. & Brown, C.S. (2012). *Stereotype Threat among Latino School-Age Children: An Experimental Study.* Poster presented at the Interdisciplinary Graduate
Student Conference for Research on Children at Risk; Lexington, Kentucky.

Chu, H. & Brown, C.S. (2012). *Gendered Conceptions of Ethnicity: Latino Children in Middle Childhood.* Poster presented at the Gender Development Research Conference; San Francisco, California.

Chu, H. & Brown, C.S. (2012). *Stereotype Threat among Latino School-Age Children: An Experimental Study.* Poster presented at Kentucky Psychological Association Spring Academic Conference; Lexington, Kentucky.

Chu, H. & Brown, C.S. (2012). *Psychological Distress, Family Conflict, and the Model Minority Stereotype among Korean American Adolescents.* Paper presented at the 'On New Shores' Immigrant Children Conference; Toronto, Canada.

Chu, H. & Brown, C.S. (2011). *The Effects of Discrimination on Academic Outcomes in a Predominantly European-American Area: Elementary Latino Students.* Poster presented at Society for Research on Child Development; Montreal, Canada.

Brown, C.S. & Chu, H. (2011). *How Discrimination and Ethnic Identity Predict the Academic Attitudes and Performance of Latino Children in a White Community:*

The Importance of School Context. Paper presented at Society for Research on Child Development; Montreal, Canada.

Chu, H. & Brown, C.S. (2011). *Immigrant Latino Children at Risk in a White Community: Ethnic Identity, Perceived Discrimination, and Academic Outcomes.* Poster Presented at the Interdisciplinary Graduate Student Conference for Research on Children at Risk; Lexington, Kentucky.

Chu, H. & Brown, C.S. (2010). *Ethnic identity and Perceived Discrimination as Predictors of Academic Outcomes:* Poster presented at American Psychological Association; San Diego, CA.

Chu, H. & Brown, C.S. (2010). *Ethnic identity and Perceived Discrimination as Predictors of Academic Attitudes: The Mediating and Moderating Roles of Psychological Distress and Self-regulation.* Poster presented at Conference on Human Development; New York, NY.

Chu, H. & Brown, C.S. (2009). *Important Factors in Academic Outcomes of Immigrant Children.* Poster presented at Society for Research in Child Development; Denver, CO.

Chu, H. & Brown, C.S. (2006). *Acculturation and Ethnic Identities among Korean American Youth.* Paper presented at Psychology Undergraduate Research Conference, The University of California, Los Angeles.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

University of Kentuck   Spring 2014
Visiting Scholar Instructor
PSY 215 Research Methods (1 course)
PSY 216 Statistics in Psychology (2 courses)

University of Kentucky   Fall 2013
Visiting Scholar Instructor
PSY 100 Introduction to Psychology (2 courses)
PSY 223 Developmental Psychology (1 course)

El Camino College   Fall 2012
Adjunct Faculty
PSY 3 Critical Thinking in Psychology
PSY 5 General Psychology

University of Kentucky   Summer 2012
Teaching Assistant
PSY 223 Developmental Psychology

University of Kentucky   Spring 2012
Teaching Assistant
PSY 562 Advanced Topical Seminar Cognitive Psychology: Human Factors

University of Kentucky   Spring 2012
Guest Lecturer
PSY 562 Advanced Topical Seminar Cognitive Psychology: Human Factors

University of Kentucky   Fall 2011
Guest Lecturer
PSY 100 Introduction to Psychology

Centre Liberal Arts College   Spring 2011
Guest Lecturer
PSY 370 Motivation and Emotion

University of Kentucky   Spring 2011
Course Development
On-line: Introduction to Psychology Lab

Inner Mongolia University of Technology in Hohhot, China   Summer 2009
Inner Mongolia Normal University in Hohhot, China   Summer 2007
English Teacher

University of Kentucky   Summer 2009
Teaching Assistant
PSY 100 Introduction to Psychology

El Camino College Torrance, CA   Fall 2007-Summer 2008
Supplemental Instructor
Courses: College Algebra and Child Development

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

University of Kentucky   Aug 2008-Aug 2011
Project and Research Lab Manager
Supervisor: Christia Spears Brown, Ph.D.

University of Kentucky   July-Aug 2009
Project Manager and Data Collection
Inner Mongolia University of Technology (Hohhot, China)
Supervisor: Christia Spears Brown, Ph.D.

University of Kentucky   April-June 2009
Research Assistant: Data Collection
Supervisor: Greg Smith, Ph.D.

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

Society for Research on Child Development
Society for Research on Adolescence
Society for the Teaching of Psychology
American Psychological Association
Society for Personality and Social Psychology
Social Psychology Network
Asian American Psychological Association

REFERENCES

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