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The Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare

Volume 33
Issue 2 June

Article 8

2006

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Recommended Citation

Thomas, Madhavappallil and Choi, Jong Baek (2006) "Acculturative Stress and Social Support among Korean and Indian Immigrant Adolescents in the United States," *The Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare*: Vol. 33: Iss. 2, Article 8.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.15453/0191-5096.3164>

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Acculturative Stress and Social Support among Korean and Indian Immigrant Adolescents in the United States

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This study examined acculturative stress and its relationship with social support among Korean and Indian immigrant adolescents. The data were collected from 165 Korean and Indian adolescents using the Acculturation Scale for Asian American Adolescents and Social Support Scale. Findings show that respondents experience low to moderate level of acculturative stress. Social support activities reduce the level of acculturative stress. Social support from parents is the most important predictive factor in determining the level of acculturative stress. These findings not only contribute to social work education and practice but also increase cultural sensitivity and awareness in working with these populations.

Keywords: Acculturative stress, Social support, Korean adolescents, Indian adolescents

Introduction

Asian Indians and Koreans represent two of the fastest growing immigrant groups in the United States. According to current census data, approximately, 11.7 million Asians live in the U.S. of which 2.2 million are Asian Indians and 1.2 million

are Koreans. As these groups become part of the U.S. society, there is a great need to understand how Korean and Indian immigrant families and their children adapt to the U.S. and the problems they encounter in this process. Although most immigrants from both Korea and India adapted to their new environment, several studies show that they also retained their traditional cultural traits, beliefs, values and mores (Dasgupta, 1998; Saran, 1985; Segal, 1991; Sodowsky & Carey, 1987; Hurh & Kim, 1990; Kim, 1997).

The process of acculturation or adapting to the new culture was once perceived as the immersion of immigrants into the new culture. However, current acculturation models focus on the selective and multidimensional nature of the immigrant experience and process. Some researchers argue that immigrants do not simply shed their old or native values for new ones, but rather select, shift and modify to adapt to the new environment (Buriel, 1993; Mendoza, 1989). Despite differing views, there is general consensus among researchers that acculturation is a learning process whereby at least some of the cultural patterns of the host country are adopted (Khairullah & Kairullah, 1999; Choi, 1997; Kang, 1996). Integration and assimilation are closely related constructs identified by researchers in the continuum of acculturation process. According to Berry (2003), integration is valuing one's own culture while at the same time interacting with the host culture. Assimilation, on the other hand, is giving up one's original culture in favor of the host culture.

In the process of learning to adapt to the new culture, individuals, families and groups experience substantial stress which researchers label as acculturative stress. The acculturative stress framework has been conceptualized for immigrants (Thomas, 1995) and refugee populations (Williams and Berry, 1991). It has also been empirically tested among immigrant populations such as Latinos (Chavez et al., 1997; Gil and Vega, 1996; Hovey and King, 1996), Haitians (Chrispin, 1998), and Asians (Choi, 1997; Kang, 1996; Noh and Avison, 1996; Das, 2002; Farver, Bhadha, and Narrang, 2002; Fuligni, 2001; Ghuman, 1997; Khairullah and Kairulla, 1999) in the United States and in Europe (Sam and Berry, 1995). Results of studies of acculturative stress have varied widely in the level of dif-

difficulties found in immigrant groups. Early views were that culture contact and change inevitably led to stress (Berry & Annis, 1974). However, the current view is that the level of stress depends on a number of factors such as acculturation attitudes, phase of acculturation, and cultural pluralism in the host society (Krishnan & Berry, 1992). Immigrants who feel marginalized and maintain a separation from both their ethnic culture and the host culture tend to be highly stressed. Two major sources of psychological stress experienced by children from immigrant families are pressure from peers to reject their own cultural identity and values in order to assimilate into the mainstream culture and pressure from parents and other adults to conform to ethnic/cultural norms and traditions (Chrispin, 1998).

Since a substantial number of immigrant children and families experience acculturative stress, it is important that those in the helping professions understand the acculturative process and the stress associated with it. There is clearly a great need for helping professionals to develop culture-specific knowledge and competency in providing services when working with clients from other cultural contexts. It is, therefore, important to enhance knowledge about the acculturation experiences of the fastest growing immigrant populations such as Korean and Indian immigrants and their children.

Within the conceptual framework of acculturative stress, this study investigates acculturative stress and its correlations with social and family support available to these immigrant adolescents. Research questions related to this problem include: What is the level of acculturative stress and social support among Korean and Indian immigrant adolescents? What is the relationship between acculturative stress and social support? Is there any significant difference between Korean and Indian adolescents on the level of acculturative stress and social support? What is the most significant predictor variable of acculturative stress?

Literature Review

High levels of acculturative stress were found to be strongly correlated with lack of social support. Social support not only alleviated acculturative stress but also moderated

stress levels which resulted in less depressive symptomatology (Choi, 1997). Similar findings were echoed in a study by Park (2000) who investigated acculturative stress, parental attachment, self-esteem, social support and psychological adjustment. One of the central findings of the study was the combination of parental care and self-esteem which played a very significant role in psychological adjustment among Korean adolescents in America. Moreover, social support from friends was found to have a significant role in mediating between acculturative stress and depression.

Several researchers examined social support systems and protective processes during adolescence (Furukawa, 1995; Garnefski and Diekstra, 1996; Garmezy, 1993; Gore and Eckenrode, 1996; Hoffman, Levy-Shiff, and Ushpiz, 1988). In the domain of perceived support, studies have consistently emphasized the role of family support in promoting the psychological well-being of adolescents, reducing problem behavior, and buffering the emotional effects of stress (Gore and Aseltine, 1995; Kang, 1996; Liang and Bogat, 1994). However, the support from social network as a buffer of stress was not supported by Salgado de Snyder's study (1987) on Mexican immigrant women. Most respondents who obtained high scores in social support also demonstrated high acculturative stress and depressive symptomatology.

Focusing on acculturation and mental health, Mehta (1998) reported that perception of acceptance and cultural orientation played crucial roles in the mental health of Asian Indians. Furthermore, feeling accepted and being involved with American culture was correlated with better mental health. Clearly, cultural integration seems to have an impact on mental health and studies have shown that Asian Indians prefer integration as the most preferred acculturation style. For example, Krishnan and Berry (1992) found that acculturation stress was positively correlated with separation and marginalization but negatively correlated with integration. Along similar lines, Farver, Narang and Bhadha (2002) reported higher levels of conflicts in families where parents had a separated or marginalized style of acculturation than those parents who had an integrated or assimilated acculturation style. These findings clearly support the promotion of an integrated style

of acculturation for Asian immigrants.

Acculturation preferences or styles also seem to be related to the academic performance of children. For example, Farver, Bhadha, and Narang (2002) found that adolescents with integrated acculturation style had higher GPAs and higher scores on the self-perception profile than adolescents with separated or marginalized acculturation styles. The influence of acculturation and involvement of fathers among Indian immigrant families has been studied by Jain and Belsky (1997). They found that less acculturated men were less likely to be involved in fathering children while most acculturated fathers were more extensively engaged in fathering. Lending support to the notion that the acculturation process may be selective and multidimensional in nature, this study further revealed that traditional social norms and cultural resources are neither given up nor maintained exclusively. Instead, they are reshaped and redefined for better harmonious functioning of the family.

Although various aspects of acculturative stress and social support have been studied, the relationship between social support and acculturative stress among Korean and Indian adolescents has not been adequately explored. Furthermore, graduate programs in social work and other human services may benefit from the outcome of this study in offering courses and exposing students to theoretical and practice models on acculturative stress. This underscores the need for alternative and culture specific practice methodologies. In view of this, the current study examined the acculturative stress experienced by Korean and Indian adolescents and the social support available for them to cope with this stress.

Methodology

Participants

Eighty two Korean immigrant adolescents and eight three Indian immigrant adolescents residing in the U.S. participated in this study. Participants' ages ranged from 10 to 20 years. The selection of this age group was based on the ability to read and understand the questionnaire and the nature of this study. Since the study involved collecting data from ad-

olescents, the entire research protocol was submitted to, and approved by the Human Subjects Review Board at California State University, Bakersfield prior to data collection.

Data Collection

Participants were selected through convenience sampling of Korean and Indian immigrant adolescents mostly residing in California, Florida, Illinois, and Massachusetts. These were some of the places where Korean and Indian immigrants had established their communities, and researchers had contacts and access to these communities. Questionnaires were distributed and collected in churches and community centers from June to September 2004. The researchers explained the procedures of the survey and how to complete the questionnaires. Each participant and his or her parents were asked to read an informed consent form attached to the cover page of the questionnaire and to fill out the questionnaire if they agreed to participate. After completing the questionnaire, participants were asked to place them in an envelope and return it to the researchers.

Measures

This study used the Acculturation Scale for Asian American Adolescents (Kang, 1996) for measuring the level of acculturative stress. Items in the scale consisted of examples of stressful situations, which adolescents may experience in daily life. Each respondent was asked to rate each item on a 0 - 3 scale. The numbers from zero to three represented various degrees of stress, with a 0 representing "never stressful", and a 3 representing "very stressful."

Forty items were developed by Kang (1996) for his dissertation and tested on Korean American adolescents. In this study, only the 30 most relevant items with some modifications were selected by researchers as these items were judged to be more applicable to this topic. The modifications were primarily limited to replacing "Korean" and "Indian" in the appropriate places. Kang (1996) reported a reliability coefficient of .91. The overall reliability coefficient in this study was .92. While the reliability coefficient for Koreans was .93, the coefficient for Indians was .90.

Based on the literature review, the researchers developed an instrument for measuring social support. The researchers identified five sub-areas from which adolescents generally receive social support, namely, support from friends, support from parents, support from religious organizations, support from social organizations, and support from cultural associations. There were a total of 15 items in the five sub-areas with three items in each sub-area. The first question in all five sub-areas asked if they had access to the areas of social support. For example, in the area of support from friends, the first question asked "do you have close friends?" Their responses were scored "yes" or "no." The second question in all five sub-areas asked how often they interacted with parents and friends or participate in social organization activities (YMCA, Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, school activities, etc.), religious activities (attending church, temple, mosque, etc.) and cultural activities (ethnic cultural associations, cultural festive, etc.). For example, in the area of support from friends, the second question asked "how often do you interact with your friends?" Their responses were scored on a 5 point scale with 1 representing "never" and 5 representing "very frequently." The third question in all five sub areas asked how they described parents, friends, religious organizations, social organizations, and cultural associations as sources of social support. For example, in the area of support from friends, the third question asked "how do you describe your friendship as a source of social support?" Their responses were scored on a 5 point scale with 1 representing "very little" and 5 representing "very much." The same pattern was repeated in all five sub areas. The reliability coefficient of the social support scale in this study was .74.

Data Analyses

The data were analyzed using SPSS (Statistical Packages for the Social Sciences) version 11.0. First, the researchers analyzed the demographic characteristics of the sample. Second, analyses of the scales were carried out to answer the research questions. To examine the group differences between Indian and Korean adolescents, *t*-tests were used. Third, Pearson's Correlation was used to examine the relationship between acculturation stress, social support, and continuous demographic

variables such as age and number of siblings. Finally, multiple regressions were conducted to identify the most significant predictor variable of acculturation stress. These statistical analyses were performed to answer the research questions posed in the study.

Findings

Demographic Characteristics

Out of 165 respondents, 49.7% (n=82) were Korean adolescents and 50.3% (n=83) were Indian adolescents. In terms of gender, 51.8% (n=85) were males and 48.2% (n=79) were females. Participants' ages ranged from 10 to 20 years, with a mean age of 14.36 years (SD=2.45). The respondents' siblings ranged from 1 to 7, with a mean number of 1.4 siblings. Number of years residing in the U.S. ranged from 4 months to 20 years, with a mean of 12 years. The vast majority of respondents (88.1%) reported that they spoke English most of the time, with more than 86% rating themselves either "very good" (18.8%) or "excellent" (68.2%) in speaking English fluently.

Acculturative Stress

Mean scores were calculated to ascertain the level of acculturative stress experienced by the adolescent respondents. The overall rating for each item of acculturation situations ranged from 0 to 2.67, with a mean rating of 0.71 (SD=0.49). Korean adolescents showed a mean rating of 0.78 (SD=0.54) while Indian adolescents had a mean rating of 0.64 (SD=0.41).

Among the acculturation situations, the item rated as the most stressful was, "my parents compare me to other teenagers of my age in terms of obedience, discipline, and manners" (Mean= 1.60, SD=1.17). The item rated the 2nd highest was, "people expect me to do well in school because of Asian background" (Mean= 1.36, SD=1.17). The 3rd highest item was, "my parents expect me to do what they want without questioning" (Mean= 1.32, SD=1.11).

On the other hand, the item rated as the least stressful situation was, "I do not know how to act among Korean/Indian people who are "more Korean/Indian" than I (Mean= 0.25,

SD=0.62). The item rated the 2nd lowest was "I do not speak English as well as some of my non-Asian and Asian peers" (Mean= 0.26, SD=0.62). The 3rd lowest was "I sometimes feel as if the U.S. is really not my home" (Mean= 0.26, SD=0.59).

This study found no significant difference between Korean adolescents and Indian adolescents in the overall level of acculturative stress. There was also no significant difference between male and female adolescents in terms of acculturative stress. Furthermore, acculturation stress did not significantly vary with language they use most of the time.

However, item analyses on the Acculturative Stress Scale revealed statistically significant differences in acculturative stress between Korean adolescents and Indian adolescents (see Table 1). Korean adolescents experienced more stress than Indian adolescents in the following situations: "I sometimes feel that I don't really belong anywhere"; "At school and other places outside my home, I am sometimes overlooked because of appearance"; "I often feel that I am different"; "Peers have made fun of me for my Korean/Indian characteristics (e.g., appearance, language), which in turn makes it hard for me to fit in with others."

Social Support

Mean scores were calculated to explore how the respondents described each item of social support. The overall rating for each item of social support ranged from 0.73 to 3.20, with a mean rating of 2.11 (SD=0.44). Korean adolescents showed a mean rating of 2.08 (SD=0.40) while Indian adolescents presented a mean rating of 2.13 (SD=0.60).

The vast majority of respondents reported that they had friends (97.5%), parents (87.3%), or religion (82.2%) for social support to cope with acculturative stress. A smaller proportion of respondents reported that they participated in social organizations (42.0%) or cultural activities (54.8%). Of the 5 sub-areas of social support, the respondents rated friendship as the most important source of social support (Mean=2.67, SD=0.56). Parents were rated as the 2nd most important area of support (Mean=2.52, SD=0.67) followed by their participation in religious activities (Mean=2.24, SD=0.77).

The data indicated a statistically significant difference

Table 1. Differences between Korean adolescents and Indian adolescents in the level of acculturative stress

Items		N	Mean Rank	Mann-Whitney U	Sig.
I sometimes feel that I don't really belong anywhere.	Korean	82	88.05	2332	.003**
	Indian	83	69.10		
At school and other places outside my home, I am sometimes overlooked because of appearance.	Korean	82	86.57	2454	.011*
	Indian	83	70.72		
I often feel that I am "different."	Korean	82	86.70	2443	.012*
	Indian	83	70.58		
Peers have made fun of me for my Korean/Indian characteristics (e.g. appearance, language), which in turn make hard for me to fit in with others.	Korean	82	85.34	2555	.040*
	Indian	83	72.07		

* Difference is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

** Difference is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

between male and female respondents in terms of social support ($t = -3.015$, $df = 154$, $p < .01$). Female respondents (Mean=2.22, SD=0.47) had more social support than male respondents (Mean=2.01, SD=0.39). In particular, female respondents had significantly more social support than male respondents in the areas of support from friends ($t = -2.360$, $df = 154$, $p < .05$) and support from participation in social organization activities ($t = -2.037$, $df = 154$, $p < .05$). Furthermore, it was found that adolescents who had more siblings were less likely to receive social support than those with fewer siblings ($r = -.222$, $p < .01$). Similarly, older adolescents were less likely to receive social support than younger ones ($r = -.235$, $p < .01$) (see Table 2).

Table 2. Correlations between social support and selected demographic variables

Variables	<i>r</i>	Sig.
Age	-.235	.003*
Number of siblings	-.223	.006*
Years in the U.S.	-.128	.115
English fluency	.073	.366

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

Item analyses on the five areas of social support (see Table 3) indicated the following: 1) Korean respondents were significantly different from Indian respondents in the area of social support from friends ($t = 2.816$, $df = 150$, $p < .01$). Korean respondents (Mean=2.79, SD=0.53) had more social support from friends than Indian respondents (Mean=2.54, SD=0.58); 2) Korean respondents were significantly different from Indian respondents in the area of social support from participating in organizational activities ($t = -2.70$, $df = 154$, $p < .01$). Indian adolescents (Mean=1.71, SD=0.84) had more social support from organizational activities than Korean adolescents (Mean=1.34, SD=0.85); 3) Korean respondents were significantly different from Indian respondents in the area of social support from participation in religious activities ($t = 3.479$, $df = 142$, $p < .01$).

Korean respondents (Mean=2.44, SD=0.67) had more social support from religious activities than Indian respondents (Mean=2.02, SD=0.82); 4) Korean respondents were significantly different from Indian respondents in the area of social support from participation in cultural activities ($t = -3.03$, $df = 154$, $p < .01$). Indian respondents (Mean=1.79, SD=0.82) had more social support from cultural activities than Korean respondents (Mean=1.39, SD=0.83).

Table 3. Group Differences in the sub areas of social support between Korean adolescents and Indian adolescents

Items	N	Mean	SD	<i>t</i>	Sig.
Social support from friends					
Korean	82	2.79	0.53	2.816	.006*
Indian	83	2.54	0.58		
Social support from parents					
Korean	82	7.35	1.71	-1.303	.195
Indian	83	7.77	2.29		
Social support from participating in organizational activities					
Korean	82	1.34	0.85	-2.70	.008*
Indian	83	1.70	0.83		
Social support from participating religious activities					
Korean	82	2.44	0.67	3.48	.001*
Indian	83	2.02	0.82		
Social support from participating cultural activities					
Korean	82	1.39	0.83	-3.03	.003*
Indian	83	1.79	0.82		

* Difference is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Acculturative Stress and Social Support

The relationship between acculturative stress and social support is presented in Table 4. Respondents who scored higher on the items related to acculturative stress were less likely to receive social support ($r = -.248, p < .01$). In other words, adolescents who did not have social support were more likely to experience stress in acculturation situations. Furthermore, data analyses on the sub-areas of social support indicated that the level of acculturative stress was negatively correlated with social support from parents ($r = -.342, p < .001$) and social support from organizational activities ($r = -.157, p = .05$). Availability of social support from parents and organizational activities serves as a buffer to reduce acculturative stress among the adolescents.

Table 4. Correlations between Acculturative Stress and Social Support

Variables	<i>r</i>	Sig.
Overall social support	-.248	.002**
Social support from friends	.005	.955
Social support from parents	-.342	.000***
Social support from organizational activities	-.157	.050*
Social support from religious activities	-.117	.145
Social support from cultural activities	-.113	.159

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

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

*** Correlation is significant at the 0.001 level (2-tailed)

A multiple regression analysis was conducted to evaluate how well social support variables and some demographic variables predicted the level of acculturative stress. The predictors were age, years residing in the U.S., number of siblings, English proficiency, and 5 sub-areas of social support (Social Support from Friends; Social Support from Parents; Social Support from Social organizations; Social Support from

Religious organizations; and Social Support from Cultural activities). The criterion variable was the level of acculturation stress. The linear combination of the predictor variables was significantly related to acculturative stress, $R^2 = .136$, adjusted $R^2 = .080$, $F(9,140) = 2.449$, $p = .013$. The simple multiple correlation coefficient was .37, indicating that approximately 14% in the variance of the criterion variable in the sample can be accounted for by the linear combination of the predictor variables. Among the 9 predictor variables only one variable, social support from parents was found to be a significant predictor in determining acculturative stress ($p < .001$).

Table 5. Multiple Regression results on predictors of acculturative stress

Variable	B	SE	B	T	Sig.
Social support					
from friends	1.106	.768	.124	1.441	.152
Social support					
from parents	-2.488	.667	-.332	-3.731	.000
Social support					
from organizations	-.208	.498	-.036	-.417	.678
Social support from					
religious activities	-.161	.529	-.025	-.305	.762
Social support from					
cultural activities	-.121	.505	-.020	-.239	.812
Age	-3.778	.588	-.006	-.064	.949
Years in the U.S.	.165	.348	.049	.482	.630
Number of siblings	1.114	1.238	.073	.901	.369
English fluency	-1.821	1.801	-.093	-1.011	.314

$F(9,140) = 2.449$, $p < .05$, Multiple $R = .369$, $R^2 = .136$, adjusted $R^2 = .080$

Discussion

Korean and Indian immigrant families and their chil-

dren experience several problems associated with the acculturation process. This study examined acculturative stress and its relationship with social support among Korean and Indian adolescents in the immigrant families in the United States. This study found that both Korean and Indian adolescents experienced low to moderate levels of acculturative stress. In many families, the challenge of coping with stress has led to family conflicts particularly between adolescents and their parents. When working with Korean and Indian immigrant families, social work practitioners can promote increased involvement in activities that generate social support, which in turn is shown to reduce acculturative stress. Findings revealed that parents' tendency to compare their adolescents to others of the same age in terms of their obedience, discipline and better manners was the most stressful situations reported by both Indian and Korean adolescents. This was followed by the expectation to do well in school because of their Asian background and the parental expectation to do what parents want unquestioningly. Not only do these families want to instill the values of respect, obedience and good manners in their children, but they also want to see their children succeed and realize the American dream, which brought them here. Interestingly enough, the adolescents feel these situations as quite stressful.

Consistent with our expectations, the acculturative stress did not differ significantly between Korean and Indian adolescents. No significant variations were found in terms of stress experienced by these two groups in the acculturative process or the challenges associated with it. Although the overall mean difference is not statistically significant, Korean adolescents seem to have a slightly higher level of acculturative stress than Indian adolescents. Item analyses, however, indicate that acculturative stress experienced by Korean and Indian adolescents is significantly different in certain areas. The mean rank for the item, "I sometimes feel that I don't really belong anywhere" is significantly higher for Korean adolescents than for Indian adolescents. Similar differences were also observed in other items like "I often feel that I am different." These findings clearly indicate that some of the second-generation adolescents have not "felt" fully integrated into the mainstream culture nor have they "felt" connected to the culture of

their parents. It is possible that these respondents experience a certain amount of uncertainty about their cultural identity as they feel they do not belong anywhere.

The vast majority of both Korean and Indian adolescents draw support from friends, parents and religious organizations. In contrast, only a small segment of the respondents participates in social and cultural activities. Interestingly enough, activities conducted by socio-cultural associations do not seem to interest or involve a majority of the second-generation adolescents. Furthermore, female respondents seem to have more social support than male respondents. This may mean that more female respondents are actively engaged in many more social, religious and cultural activities than male respondents. Such increased involvement in social, cultural and religious activities may lead to an increased level of integration. Gender variations in the involvement of socio-cultural and religious activities as a source of social support found in this study do not conform to the findings of Farver, Bhadha, and Narang (2002). These researchers found that females were more likely to be marginalized (indicating a lack of involvement in either culture) than males who were more likely to be integrated (indicating involvement in socio-cultural activities in both cultures).

There is a discrepancy in the literature with regard to the relationship between gender and acculturative stress. While some researchers (Chrispin, 1998; Salgado de Snyder, 1987) found a significant relationship between gender and acculturative stress, others (Choi, 1997; Mena et al., 1987) reported no significant relationship. This study also found no significant relationship between gender and acculturative stress.

While Korean adolescents receive significantly more support from friends and religious activities, Indian adolescents draw significantly more support from organizational activities (e.g., YMCA, Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts) and cultural activities (e.g., Indian associations, cultural festivals). This may suggest that as a group, Korean adolescents have more interactions with friends and get involved in more religious activities. Indian adolescents, on the other hand, may get more involved in cultural and organizational activities that are considered to be the sources of social support.

With regard to the relationship between acculturative stress and social support, findings show a negative correlation although the strength of the relationship is relatively weak. This relationship suggests that adolescents from immigrant families who have less social support are likely to experience higher level of acculturation stress than their counterparts. Clearly, social support from a variety of sources weakens the hold of acculturative stress for many adolescents. In our study, social support was conceptualized as involvement in social, cultural, and/or religious activities as well as interactions with parents and friends. These factors clearly indicate greater connection and affiliation to the socio-cultural fabric of the American culture and such affiliations with the dominant society are more likely to reduce acculturative stress according to several studies (Mehta, 1998; Berry & Annis, 1974).

Results from the linear regression analysis identified one significant predictor variable in determining the level of acculturative stress, namely, social support from parents. This finding underscores the importance of stability in immigrant families that may sometime be the sole support for adolescent children in coping with the stress resulting from the acculturation process. However, one of the most stressful items reported by the adolescents is their parents' tendency to compare adolescents' behavior patterns and school performance with others. This seems that family is both a source of social support and acculturative stress and thus parents probably play a contradictory role. This result is also consistent with findings from previous studies which identified the role of family support in promoting the psychological well-being of adolescents, reducing problem behavior and buffering the emotional effects of stress (Gore & Aseltine, 1995; Kang, 1996 and Liang & Bogat, 1994; Choi, 1997). Perhaps family based intervention may be more effective when working with Indian and Korean adolescents.

Although the findings of this study add to the existing literature, there are several limitations that need to be considered. The study employed a convenience sample of Korean and Indian adolescents residing currently in the U.S. Such a sampling method does not assure adequate representativeness of the population, which in turn will limit generalization

beyond the study population. Since samples were selected from churches and community centers, it is possible that their responses may be biased as these places may attract adolescents who tend to be socially integrated and psychologically adaptable. Furthermore, our sample size was relatively small, and was primarily limited to Korean and Indian adolescents born in the U.S. and considered to be "second generation." The study did not include the experience of "first generation" immigrants, who may have experienced greater level of stress associated with acculturation. Acculturative stress and the utilization of social support may vary widely across generations; therefore future research should be conducted with larger samples involving both first and second generations. Another concern is that the data for this study are collected from several places where Korean and Indian communities have populated. Our findings, to some extent, may be a reflection of geographical variations since these locations vary considerably in terms of ethnic compositions, diversity, and population size. Because this study was conducted among Korean and Indian immigrants, it did not capture the opinions of other Asian population groups like the Chinese and Filipino. These factors serve as external threats to the generalizability of the study's findings to other Asian populations. Additionally, social support scale used in this study is not a standardized instrument.

In conclusion, the current study and its findings reiterate the importance of social support in reducing acculturative stress experienced by adolescents from Korean and Indian immigrant families. These adolescent respondents experience a low to moderate level of acculturative stress. Their involvement in activities that promote social support reduces the level of stress associated with the acculturation process. Social support from parents is the most important predictive factor in determining the level of acculturative stress. These findings not only contribute to social work education and practice but also increase cultural sensitivity and awareness in working with these populations. This study will add to the increasing body of social work literature that highlights the importance of culture-specific service needs of the Asian populations.

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