

Theories and Research on Acculturation and Enculturation Experiences among Asian American Families

Bryan S. K. Kim, Annie J. Ahn, and N. Alexandra Lam

Abstract In this chapter, we define and discuss the concepts of acculturation and enculturation, as well as theories and research on the consequences of acculturation and enculturation for Asian American families. We also explore the roles acculturation and enculturation play on parent–child values gap and family conflict, the role of cognitive flexibility in this relationship, and clinical implications of the findings.

Keywords Acculturation · Enculturation · Cultural values · Asian American families · Family conflict

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Asian American families comprise units with diverse immigration histories. For example, many of these families are five and six generations removed from

B.S.K. Kim (✉)

Department of Psychology, University of Hawaii at Hilo, Hilo, HI 96720-4091, USA
e-mail: bryankim@hawaii.edu

migration, whose ancestors entered the United States in the mid-1800s and early 1900s during the sugar and pineapple plantation period in Hawaii and the Gold Rush and Transcontinental Railroad eras in California. Other families are third- and fourth-generation Americans whose Asian ancestors entered the United States during World War II and the Korean War. There are also Asian American families who entered the United States after the passing of the Immigration Act of 1965 or after the United States' pullout from Southeast Asia in 1975. Moreover, Asian American families comprise members who entered the United States as recently as yesterday. This suggests that Asian Americans represent a wide range of diversity to the extent to which they have adopted the norms of the dominant US culture and retained the norms of the traditional Asian culture.

To understand this type of diversity among Asian American families, the constructs of acculturation and enculturation can be very useful. Therefore, in this chapter, we will describe the definitions of these two concepts and explore related psychological theories and research with Asian American families. These sections will be followed by a description of a recently completed research study that examined the role of *values enculturation* in the conflicts experienced between parents and children. Specifically, the study examined the cultural values gap between Asian American parents and their children and its relations to respondents' cognitive flexibility and conflicts within the family.

Construct Definitions of Acculturation and Enculturation for Asian American Families

Acculturation was first defined by Redfield et al. (1936) [1] as follows: "Acculturation comprehends those phenomena which result when groups of individuals sharing different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact, with subsequent changes in the original culture patterns of either or both groups" (p. 149).

Several decades later, Graves (1967) [2] used the term *psychological acculturation* to describe the effects of acculturation at the individual level. This process involves changes that an individual experiences in terms of their attitudes, values, and identity as a result of being in contact with other cultures. John Berry and his colleagues [3, 4] developed a bilinear model of acculturation in which one linearity represented "*contact and participation* (to what extent should they become involved in other cultural groups, or remain primarily among themselves)" and the other linearity represented "*cultural maintenance* (to what extent are cultural identity and characteristics considered to be important, and their maintenance striven for)" (p. 304, 305).

Closely related to the construct of acculturation is the concept of *enculturation*. First defined by Herskovits (1948) [5], enculturation refers to the process of socialization into and maintenance of the norms of one's indigenous culture, including its salient ideas, concepts, and values. Recently, BSK Kim (2007) [6] pointed out that the "cultural maintenance" process that is described above might be better represented with the broader terminology of enculturation.

Although the above characterization of cultural maintenance may accurately describe the experiences of Asian American migrants who already had been socialized into their traditional Asian cultural norms before entering the United States, it may not be accurate for Asian Americans who are one or more generations removed from migration. For these individuals who were born in the United States, they may never have been fully enculturated into their Asian ethnic group's cultural norms and may not be engaged in the process of cultural maintenance. Hence, for these individuals, the use of the term cultural maintenance may be inappropriate. Rather, the concept of enculturation provides a more comprehensive description of socialization into and maintenance of one's indigenous cultural norms. Furthermore, BSK Kim (2007) [6] pointed out that an additional benefit of using the term enculturation is that it places an equal level of focus on the process of learning and retaining one's Asian cultural norms as acculturation, which has largely focused on the process of adapting to the norms of the US culture.

Consistent with this explanation, BSK Kim and Abreu (2001) [7] proposed that enculturation be used to describe the process of (re)learning and maintaining the norms of the indigenous culture, and acculturation be used to describe the process of adapting to the norms of the dominant culture. For Asian American families, therefore, acculturation refers to the process of adapting to the norms of the US culture, and enculturation refers to the process of becoming socialized into and maintaining the norms of the Asian culture. Current understanding of acculturation and enculturation suggests that Asian American families who are further removed from immigration will be more acculturated and therefore adhere to the mainstream US norms more strongly than Asian American families who are recent migrants [8]. On the other hand, Asian Americans who are closer to migration will be more enculturated and therefore adhere to Asian norms more strongly than their counterparts who are one or more generations removed from immigration.

In studying acculturation and enculturation, it is also important to consider the construct dimensions on which the two types of adherence can be observed and assessed. Szapocznik et al. (1978) [9] first elaborated on the ways of assessing acculturation (and enculturation) by proposing that it involves changes in behaviors and values. According to these authors, the behavioral dimension of acculturation includes language use and participation in various cultural activities (e.g., food consumption), whereas the values dimension reflects relational style, person-nature relationships, beliefs about human nature, and time orientation (e.g., present-focused, future-focused, or past-focused).

More recently, BSK Kim and Abreu (2001) [7] reviewed the items in 33 instruments designed to measure acculturation and enculturation and, based on their finding, proposed that acculturation and enculturation constructs encompass four dimensions. These authors proposed the following dimensions: *behavior*, *values*, *knowledge*, and *identity*. Behavior refers to friendship choice, preferences for television program and reading, participation in cultural activities, contact with indigenous culture (e.g., time spent in the country of origin), language use, food choice, and music preference. The value dimension refers to

attitudes and beliefs about social relations, cultural customs, and cultural traditions, in addition gender roles and attitudes and ideas about health and illness. The knowledge dimension refers to culturally specific information such as names of historical leaders in the culture of origin and the dominant culture, and significance of culturally specific activities. The cultural identity dimension refers to attitudes toward one's cultural identification (e.g., preferred name is in Korean), attitudes toward indigenous and dominant groups (e.g., feelings of pride toward the indigenous group), and the level of comfort toward the people of indigenous and dominant groups. In classifying identity as one of these four dimensions, BSK Kim and Abreu (2001) [7] pointed out that this concept largely overlaps with the construct of ethnic and racial identity; indeed, "acculturation" and "ethnic and racial identity" are constructs that are not well differentiated in the literature [10]. Also, BSK Kim and Abreu (2001) [7] pointed out that the four dimensions of acculturation and enculturation are not unrelated to each other. For example, the behavioral and knowledge dimensions may be correlated, as behavior is likely to be preceded by knowledge, a principle that also applies to other pairs of dimensions.

Theories and Research on the Consequences of Acculturation and Enculturation for Asian American Families

To understand the acculturation and enculturation experiences of Asian American families in the context of mental health, an important area to explore is the potential consequences of differential rates of progress between parents and children along both acculturation and enculturation continua. Therefore, in this section, the current theories and research on the potential consequences of differential rates of acculturation and enculturation will be described.

To further expound on the concept of "conflict," Hwang (2007) [11] proposed the term Acculturative Family Distancing (AFD) to describe the family functioning among Asian Americans with respect to varying levels of acculturation and enculturation between parents and children. Specifically, AFD is defined as "the problematic distancing that occurs between immigrant parents and children that is a consequence of differences in acculturative [and enculturative] processes and cultural changes that become more salient over time" (p. 398, 11). AFD consists of two dimensions: "a breakdown in communication and incongruent cultural values that develop as a consequence of different rates of acculturation and the formation of an acculturation gap" (p. 398, 11). Hwang (2007) [11] posited that AFD increases the development of problems through distancing in the realms of emotion, cognition, and behavior, which eventually lead to family conflict. In our research study described below, the dimension of incongruent cultural values was explored in terms of its relation to family conflicts, as well as the possible moderating role of cognitive flexibility in this relation. In this chapter, cognitive flexibility refers to an individual's awareness

that, in any situation, there are options and alternatives available, willingness to be flexible and adapt to the situation, and self-efficacy in being flexible.

Similar to AFD, Rosenthal et al. (1989) [12] described how parent-child conflicts occur through a “culture conflict model.” This model proposed that although parents tend to cling to the values from their culture of origin to gain a sense of control over adjusting to an unfamiliar culture, children might increasingly adopt the norms of the dominant society. Because children arrive to the United States at an earlier age, they have more experiences with its cultural norms such as through school, media, and interactions with peers than their parents [13, 14]. During the process of being exposed to two cultures, problems can surface between parents and children when the norms of the culture of origin are vastly different from those of the dominant culture [15, 16]. This dynamic also has been labeled as “dissonant acculturation” [17].

Ryu and Vann (1992) [18] provided a conceptual description of how conflicts can occur between Asian American parents and children. Already feeling a loss of power over their personal life from immigration-related stressors, Asian American parents, when their authority is also threatened, may demand unconditional obedience from their children. For example, parents may overemphasize the importance of excellent grades and view academic achievement as the only way to be successful in the United States. In turn, children may become overwhelmed by these pressures, as they are also attempting to fit in with their peers from the dominant culture, form their own ethnic identity, and try to show genuine respect for their parents’ wishes [19]. Consequently, children may experience a type of double bind where they feel rejected from both their Asian culture and the host culture [20]. Parents may feel betrayed by their children who appear to be resistant to their influencing efforts [21, 20].

JM Kim (2003) [23] described how conflicts can develop from the contrasting emphases of traditional Asian values and values from the dominant culture and differential rates of children’s and parent’s acculturation in Asian American families. Asian cultural values emphasize interdependence and filial piety, which are in direct opposition to American values that emphasize independence. When children adapt more to American values and parents choose to adhere more to Asian values, parents often feel bewildered and overwhelmed as they interpret their children’s rejection of traditional values personally. Fearing the loss of control over their children, parents may get anxious and commonly view children’s behaviors as selfish or indifferent to their family ties. On the other hand, children may feel frustrated, angry, and rebellious toward their parents’ lack of acceptance of their growing self-assertions and self-reliance.

LaFromboise et al. (1993) [24] also pointed out that immigrant families in particular are vulnerable to psychological distress because of their adjustment with the opposing demands of two cultures. Referred to as *acculturative stress*, problems can occur when Asian American families have trouble adjusting to the US norms while trying to retain the norms of their indigenous culture. These problems can lead to symptoms such as worsened mental health status, anxiety, depression, feelings of marginality and alienation, identity confusion,

and psychosomatic symptoms [25]. But on the more positive side, these authors also pointed out that once individuals have achieved biculturalism, where individuals are able to function well within the norms of both cultures, positive benefits can be experienced. In support of this idea, a study with Vietnamese youths living in a primarily European American community explored possible links between their acculturation process and adjustment [26]. The results showed that the youths who were strongly involved with both American and Vietnamese cultures tended to have more positive family relationships and higher self-esteem. But youths who were involved only in Vietnamese culture and not with the predominant European American culture experienced more psychological distress. Collectively, these results suggest that there are strong benefits to achieving biculturalism with both the dominant and indigenous cultures.

Within the framework of bicultural competence is cognitive flexibility, a construct that could serve as a helpful buffer against psychological distress arising from acculturation and enculturation processes. As mentioned earlier, cognitive flexibility refers to the awareness that in any situation there are options and alternatives available, the willingness to be flexible and adapt to the situation, and the competence to be flexible [27]. It represents the ability of bicultural individuals to cope with and reconcile potential conflicts as they try to function in two different cultural norms. Harrison et al. (1990) [28] observed that increased cognitive flexibility is one of the benefits experienced by children who grow up in ethnic minority families in the United States in which the children learn to negotiate the demands of the two cultures. Related to this observation, a study by Ahn et al. (2005) [29] found that increased cognitive flexibility was related to decreased likelihood and seriousness of child–parent conflicts among Korean Americans, particularly in the area of children’s education and career. In the study described in the second half of this chapter, cognitive flexibility is examined as a possible moderator on the relation between parent–child cultural values gap and family conflict.

In addition to these internal family dynamics between immigrant parents and children, Asian American families in general also experience environmental and sociopolitical stressors that can exacerbate the parent–child conflicts that occur at home. Particularly, the experience of racism due to their minority status can cause stress for each family member and negatively impact the family dynamics [30, 31]. More specifically, Chan and Hune (1995) [32] explained that the needs of the Asian American group tend to be ignored by policy makers and institutional leaders. Instead, Asian Americans are often scapegoated during times of economic recession and social crisis. Asian Americans are subject to stereotypes and are excluded from school curricula, media representation, and popular culture. Furthermore, Asian Americans are at risk of the glass ceiling effect, receiving lower wages than European Americans who have equal or lower training and education. Moreover, there exist anti-immigrant sentiment, anti-Asian violence, and occupational segregations that increase the risk of psychological stress among Asian American families. These risk factors in

turn can make it even more difficult for parents and children to cope with conflicts that may exist between them.

There have been a growing number of research studies focusing on the acculturation and enculturation experiences of Asian American families. In one of the first studies on this topic, Wakil et al. (1981) [33] found that Asian American parents might be open to adopting pragmatic aspects of the dominant culture. For example, the participants tended to relinquish some of the traditional Asian gender norms and encourage their daughters to obtain professional degrees. The parents tended to allow their children to have more choices in their education and occupational decisions. To explain these findings, the author(s) pointed out that the parents viewed these changes as “functional compromises,” which allowed them to remain strongly embedded in traditional core values such as the importance of family influence on selecting a marriage partner.

In a related study, Nguyen and William (1989) [34] found that Asian American parents might send mixed messages with regard to which traditional values to endorse. The study involved Vietnamese and European American adolescents from 12 to 19 years old in the Oklahoma City public schools and their parents. The participants completed a questionnaire assessing family values, which included Vietnamese values and issues of adolescent independence. The study revealed that Vietnamese parents strongly endorsed family values and absolute obedience to authority but that the adolescents rejected these traditional values. Interestingly, the results also showed that parents were ambivalent about giving children rights and privileges in their dating, marriage, and career choices.

A few studies have pointed to gender as an important factor leading to an increase in the levels of parent–child conflict. Particularly, females reported more conflict compared with males in areas of gender role expectations and dating and marriage issues [34–36]. In support of these earlier results, Chung (2001) [19] found that male students reported a lower number of conflicts with their parents regarding dating and marriage issues in comparison with their female counterparts.

In terms of the specific content areas of disagreement between Asian American parents and children, a study by Kwak and Berry (2001) [37] revealed that in comparison with European Americans, Asian Americans experienced more parent–child disagreements in the areas of independence, roles in decision-making, and intercultural contact. Asian American parents tended to view parental authority and children’s rights from the perspective of their culture of origin, whereas adolescents tended to adopt more to the independent values of dominant US culture. In addition, Lowinger and Kwok (2001) [38] found that Asian American parents tend to engage in parental overprotection. Parental overprotection refers to the stifling of a child’s emotional autonomy and independence, as well as nonresponsiveness to the child’s needs for acceptance and approval. Studies have found that parental overprotection can lead to deleterious effects for Asian American children growing up in Western societies [21, 39]. For example, research suggests that parent overprotection in the form

of parental strictness can be interpreted as a sign of hostility, aggression, distrust, and rejection, which can lead to a decrease in children's self-confidence and assertiveness, children doubting their parents' love, and decreased ability for children to be extroverted. Moreover, children who experience academic pressure from their parents without support and praise for their accomplishments may become anxious, obsessive-compulsive, and depressed [38].

In a recent study, Ahn et al. (2005) [29] directly investigated the role of enculturation on the occurrence of parent-child conflicts among Korean Americans. These authors examined Korean American college students' perceived Asian cultural values gap between themselves and their parents, their cognitive flexibility, and their coping strategies. The relationships between these factors were studied, which included the intensities and types of child-parent conflicts. The results indicated that the students generally adhered less strongly to Asian values than their parents. When faced with conflicts, the respondents reported using a problem-solving coping strategy to the greatest extent, followed by a social support coping strategy, and then an avoidance coping strategy. There was a positive relationship between the student-perceived student-parent values gap and the intensity of conflicts, particularly in the area of dating and marriage. In contrast, there were inverse relationships between cognitive flexibility and the intensity of conflicts, specifically in the area of dating and marriage. Furthermore, a positive relationship was observed between the intensity level of conflicts and the use of social support coping strategy. Surprisingly, there was an interaction effect where student-perceived student-parent values gap and cognitive flexibility were related to increased frequency of conflicts around the topic of whom the child should date or marry. However, an important limitation of this study was that parents' cultural values orientation was based on the perceptions of the student and not directly from the parents themselves.

To summarize, current theory and research findings suggest that many Asian American parents and children have differences in world views, and these differences can lead to parent-child conflicts and other negative psychological outcomes. One area in which these differences manifest themselves is that Asian American parents tend to hold onto the traditional Asian values more tightly than their children. Asian American children, given their increased exposure to dominant US cultural norms, tend to more readily relinquish traditional Asian values and adhere to the values of the dominant US culture. In essence, there are differential rates of enculturation and acculturation between Asian American parents and their children.

Relationships among Parent-Child Cultural Values Gap, Cognitive Flexibility, and Family Conflict

This study represented an extension of the study of Ahn et al. (2005) [29], in that the relationship between child-parent cultural values gap and intergenerational conflict was explored using actual reports from both parents and children,

rather than the perceived values gap by the children as was done in Ahn et al. (2005) [29]. Specifically, we examined the actual child–parent Asian values gap and its possible relation to child-perceived conflicts. In addition, the child’s cognitive flexibility was examined as a possible moderator on this relation.

Method

Participants

The participants were 146 Korean American parent–child dyads. The children were college students who attended one of the four large West Coast Universities or two West Coast Korean churches. The child sample consisted of 80 females and 66 males and their ages ranged from 17 to 33 years ($M = 20.62$, $SD = 2.18$). There were 46 seniors (31.5%), 34 sophomores (23.3%), 33 juniors (22.6%), 22 freshmen (15.1%); 6 graduate students (4.1%), and 5 did not report grade level. There were 41 (28.1%) first-generation and 101 (69.2%) second-generation students, and 4 did not report their generation status. Among the first-generation students, the mean number of years in the United States was 12.48 years ($SD = 4.84$) with a range of 2 months to 22 years. At the time of data collection, 55 (37.7%) students reported living with their parents, whereas 90 (61.6%) reported living away from their parents; 1 did not report his or her living status.

The parent sample consisted of 96 mothers and 50 fathers, whose ages ranged from 42 to 64 years ($M = 50.42$, $SD = 4.14$). Of these, 127 parents (87%) completed the Korean version of the survey and 19 (13%) completed the English version of the questionnaire. Overall 87% of parents were foreign born with an average length of stay of 22.65 years in the United States ($SD = 8.69$) with a range of 5–61 years. In terms of marital status, 112 (76.7%) parents were married, 23 (15.8%) were divorced, 3 (2.1%) were separated, 5 (3.4%) were widowed, and 2 (1.4%) were single; 1 did not respond. In terms of the educational background of mothers, there were 7 (4.8%) with less than a high school degree, 51 (34.9%) high school degree, 62 (42.5%) bachelor of arts degree, 13 (8.9%) masters degree, 1 (0.7%) MBA, 2 (1.4%) Ph.D., and 10 (6.8%) reported other. The fathers’ educational background consisted of 4 (2.8%) with less than a high school degree, 32 (22.4%) high school degree, 60 (42.0%) bachelor of arts degree, 18 (12.6%) masters degree, 6 (4.2%) MBA, 9 (6.3%) Ph.D., 11 (7.7%) listed other, and 6 did not report.

Instruments

To assess the variables examined in this study, we utilized the following instrument that seemed to best capture the constructs of interest.

Adherence to Asian Cultural Values

Asian Values Scale – Revised (AVS-R) [40] contains 25 items and was developed based on the Asian Values Scale (AVS) [41], a reliable and valid measure of adherence to Asian cultural values. Sample items from the AVS-R are “One should not deviate from familial and social norms,” and “One should be discouraged from talking about one’s accomplishments.” The instrument contains 12 negatively worded Asian values statements that are reverse-scored for data analysis. Although it contains fewer items, the AVS-R represents a psychometric improvement over the AVS. To develop the AVS-R, BSK Kim and Hong (2004) [40] used the Rasch model (1960) [42] to first examine the 7-point anchor of the AVS to determine whether it represented the full range of responses well. Three of these categories were found to be an inadequate representation of the responses. For example, the anchor point 4 (*neither agree nor disagree*) may not be conceived as a halfway point between the anchor point 1 and anchor point 7, and may represent item irrelevancy. Consequently, the 7-point anchor was changed to a 4-point scale (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = agree, and 4 = strongly agree). Second, the infit and outfit statistics were used to identify and delete 11 items, 7 of which were found to contribute to a decrease in the measure’s construct homogeneity and 4 items that were redundant with other items. Despite the removal of nearly one-third of the items, the AVS-R retained the same level of internal consistency as the AVS, with a person separation reliability (a Rasch model analog of Cronbach’s α) of 0.80. An examination of the final 25 items that were retained from the AVS indicated that they functioned well to represent the full range of “person trait level” (i.e., the degrees to which the respondents adhered to Asian cultural values) and “item difficulty level” (i.e., likelihood of endorsement for each item). As for the present data, Cronbach’s α of 0.72 for children’s scores and 0.81 for actual parents’ score were observed. For the full AVS scale, please see the appendix.

Cognitive flexibility. The Cognitive Flexibility Scale (CFS) [27] is a 12-item self-report measure of cognitive flexibility. Sample items include “I can communicate an idea in many different ways” and “I can find workable solutions to seemingly unsolvable problems.” The CFS is anchored on a 6-point Likert-type scale (1=*strongly disagree* to 6 = *strongly agree*). Four of the scale items are worded negatively and are reverse-scored. Regarding validity, Martin and Rubin (1995) [27] reported significant positive correlation between CFS scores and the scores on a measure of communication flexibility and a significant negative correlation between CFS scores and the scores on a measure of attitude rigidity. Furthermore, using data from another sample, Martin and Rubin reported additional evidence of CFS scores’ construct validity in the scale’s correlations with scores on measures of interpersonal attentiveness, perceptiveness, and responsiveness, of self-monitoring, and of unwillingness to communicate. Martin and Rubin (1995) [27] reported coefficient α of 0.76 and 0.77 across two samples, suggesting internal consistency of the scale’s score. In addition, Martin and Rubin reported a coefficient of stability of 0.83 across a

1-week period, suggesting test–retest reliability of the scale’s scores. The present data yielded a coefficient α of 0.76 for children’s scores.

Parent–child conflicts. The Intergenerational Conflict Inventory (ICI) [19] is a 24-item measure of intergenerational conflicts in Asian American families. The scale is intended for Asian American young adults to indicate the degree to which they experience a conflict with their parents regarding various types of issues. Across the 24 items, a factor analysis yielded a three-factor solution, leading to the establishment of subscales: expectations about the relationship with family (ICI-Family Expectations; 11 items); education and career (ICI-Education and Career; 10 items); and dating and marriage (ICI-Dating and Marriage; 3 items). Sample items within the area of ICI-Family Expectations are “lack of communication with your parent,” “following cultural traditions,” and “pressure to learn one’s own Asian language.” Sample items for ICI-Education and Career are “how much time to spend on studying,” “importance of academic achievement,” “which career to pursue,” and “being compared to others.” Sample items for ICI-Dating and Marriage are “Whom to date” and “when to marry.” For each item, participants respond on a 6-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*no conflict over this issue*) to 6 (*a lot of conflict over this issue*). Chung (2001) [19] reported adequate internal consistency for the ICI subscale scores: ICI-Family Expectations (coefficient $\alpha=0.86$), ICI-Education and Career (coefficient $\alpha=0.88$), and ICI-Dating and Marriage (coefficient $\alpha=0.84$). In addition, a adequate test–retest reliability across 7 weeks was observed for the subscales with the coefficients of stability ranging from 0.81 to 0.87. Chung (2001) [19] also reported ICI score’ evidence of face validity through an examination by high school students and counselor trainees ($N = 10$) who identified the measure as referring to possible sources of tensions between respondents and their parents. Based on the data from the children, the observed Cronbach’s α were 0.93 for ICI-Total, 0.84 for ICI-Family Expectations, 0.92 for ICI-Education and Career, and 0.92 for ICI-Dating and Marriage.

Procedure

Because the sample included predominantly first-generation Korean American parents who tend to have limited English language proficiency, the instruments for the parent version were translated utilizing a forward–backward translation method [43]. One translator was involved in the process of first translating the original English version of the instruments into Korean and another translator then translated the Korean version back to English. The original English version and the retranslated English version were compared to examine the accuracy of the Korean translations. For discrepancies between the original version and the translated version, the final translator reconciled them by making changes to the Korean version. All translators were bilingual individuals proficient in both English and Korean.

Prior to data collection, approvals from the institutional review board of the host institution and instructors/leaders of solicited locations were secured.

Solicited locations included Korean-related academic courses (i.e., Korean history, Korean language, and Asian American psychology), Korean-related student organizations (i.e., Korean American Campus Missions, Korean Cultural Awareness Group, and Korean Student Association), Educational Opportunity Program, Resource Center for Sexual and Gender Diversity, and Korean churches. In addition, participants were recruited through flyer advertisements and emails that asked Korean American students to come to a research office at a designated time to complete the questionnaire. A monetary incentive of \$5 was offered to these students. No incentive was given to students recruited from some courses and churches. All participants were informed about the anonymous and voluntary nature of participation.

The child participants were given the following instructions before filling out their own questionnaire. They were asked to write their parents' name and addresses on a large stamped envelope that was mailed later to parents. Where the return address was located, the child participants wrote their name for parents to recognize from which child the survey came. There was also a place on the upper left corner for child participants to check whether they thought their parents would prefer an English or Korean version. The researchers also gave the child participants a stamped reminder card. On this card, they were asked to write their names on the back of the reminder card and their parents' names and addresses on the front. After the researchers collected the completed questionnaires from each child participant, the matching parent survey was mailed along with an informed consent and a stamped return envelope. The instructions on the survey asked the parent to complete the survey based on both parents' collective attitudes. A pen with a university logo stamped on it was included in the mailing packet as an incentive for the parents. Two weeks later, a reminder card was mailed to the parents to remind them to turn in their survey.

Results

Preliminary Analysis

The means, standard deviations, and intercorrelations of the study's variables are presented in Table 1.

Remuneration or no remuneration. An examination of the dependent variables for possible relations with whether or not the respondents received a monetary incentive indicated no differences for all variables: ICI-Total [$t(143) = -0.34, P = 0.736$], ICI-Family Expectations [$t(143) = -0.76, P = 0.449$], ICI-Education and Career [$t(143) = -0.17, P = 0.863$], and ICI-Dating and Marriage [$t(143) = 0.36, P = 0.723$]. Hence, data were combined with respect to this variable.

Table 1 Means, standard deviations, and intercorrelations for the predictor and criterion variables

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
A. AVS-R Child	2.49	0.28	–						
B. AVS-R Parent	2.54	0.29	0.06	–					
C. AVS-R Gap	0.04	0.39	–0.68***	0.69***	–				
D. CFS Child	4.44	0.58	–0.13	0.11	0.17*	–			
E. ICI-Total Child	2.77	1.00	0.00	0.10	0.07	–0.16	–		
F. ICI-FE Child	2.53	0.93	–0.20*	0.05	0.18*	–0.04	0.88***	–	
G. ICI-EC Child	3.06	1.34	0.09	0.11	–0.02	–0.25	0.90***	0.63	–
H. ICI-DM Child	2.67	1.64	0.03	0.07	0.03	–0.03	0.60***	0.47***	0.35***

* $P < 0.05$; ** $P < 0.01$; and *** $P < 0.001$.

Residence with or without parents. An examination of the dependent variables for possible relations with whether or not the respondents currently lived with their parents indicated no differences for all variables: ICI-Total [$t(142) = 1.00$, $P = 0.322$], ICI-Family Expectations [$t(142) = 0.97$, $P = 0.333$], ICI-Education and Career [$t(142) = 1.09$, $P = 0.278$], and ICI-Dating and Marriage [$t(142) = -0.04$, $P = 0.972$]. Hence, data were combined with respect to this variable.

Age. There were no significant relationships between age and ICI-Total ($r = -0.02$, $P > 0.05$), ICI-Family Expectations ($r = 0.05$, $P > 0.05$), ICI-Education and Career ($r = -0.08$, $P > 0.05$), and ICI-Dating and Marriage ($r = 0.06$, $P > 0.05$). Hence, data were combined with respect to this variable.

Gender and generation. To assess for the effects of gender and generation level of the child on the parent–child conflict variables, a multivariate analysis of variance was conducted. Gender and generation were entered as independent variables with ICI scores as dependent variables. There was no main effect for gender, Wilks' $\lambda = 0.989$, $F(4, 135) = 0.37$, $P = 0.828$. There was also no main effect for generation level, Wilks' $\lambda = 0.962$, $F(14, 135) = 1.33$, $P = 0.263$. Hence, data were combined with respect to these variables.

Calculation of the parent–child values gap score. To calculate the parent–child values gap score, each child's AVS-R score was subtracted from the parent's AVS-R scores.

Main Analyses

For the main purpose of the study, the correlational analysis indicated a significant relation between the parent–child values gap score and ICI-Family Expectations ($r = 0.18$, $P < 0.05$). However, no significant relations were found between the values gap score and the other ICI scores.

As for the secondary purpose of the study in examining the possible moderating role of a child's cognitive flexibility, four hierarchical multiple regression analyses were conducted, one for each of the ICI scores (ICI-Total, ICI-Family Expectations, ICI-Education and Career, and ICI-Dating and Marriage). In step 1, the independent variable of child-parent Asian values gap and the moderating variable of cognitive flexibility were entered. In step 2, the interaction term produced by multiplying the child-parent Asian values gap score and the cognitive flexibility score were entered. In creating this interaction term, the variables were centered to reduce the possibility of multicollinearity.

The results indicated a significant overall equation for ICI-Education and Career (see Table 2); the other dependent variables did not yield significant regression equations. The standardized β -coefficient for the interaction variable indicated a significant moderator effect for cognitive flexibility. Interestingly, further examination of the interaction effect showed that for children with high cognitive flexibility, there was a positive relationship between child-parent values gap and child-reported frequency of conflicts in the area of education and career (see Fig. 1). For children with low cognitive flexibility, there was a negative relationship between child-parent values gap and child-reported frequency of education and career conflicts.

Discussion of the Results

The present study yielded a significant positive relationship between the child-parent Asian values gap and child-reported conflict in the area of expectations about family relationships. This result is consistent with existing literature that suggests that the parent-child gap in cultural values is associated with parent-child conflict [19, 20, 29, 39]. For example, Ahn et al. (2005) [29] found that the Korean American child-perceived Asian values gap between themselves and their parents was significantly related to increased frequency of conflicts in the areas of education and career as well as dating and marriage. Although the present findings were not identical to those of Ahn et al. in terms of the area of conflicts, the findings provide support for the theory that increased cultural values gap between parents and children is associated with increased conflicts in

Table 2 Results of hierarchical multiple regression analyses of Asian values gap and child's cognitive flexibility on ICI-education and career

	b	t	P	R^2	F	P	ΔR^2
Step 1				0.06	4.68	0.011	0.06
Values Gap (A)	0.03	0.32	0.748				
Cognitive Flexibility (B)	-0.25	-3.05	0.003				
Step 2				0.09	4.74	0.004	0.03
AVS-R Gap (A)	0.00	-0.05	0.961				
Child's CFS (B)	-0.27	-3.30	0.001				
A X B	0.18	2.15	0.034				

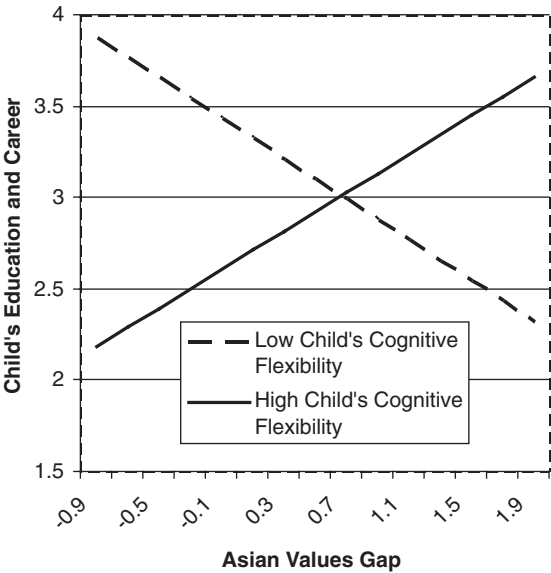


Fig. 1 Interaction effect between Asian values gap and child’s cognitive flexibility on child-reported education and career conflict

the family. Furthermore, in terms of the salience of the area of expectations about family relationships among Korean Americans, Chung (2001) [19] found that Korean American college students experienced more conflicts in the area of family expectations in comparison with Japanese American students.

The present study also examined a child’s cognitive flexibility as a possible moderator on the relationships between parent–child Asian values gap and parent–child conflicts in the areas of expectations about family relationships, education and career, and dating and marriage. The results showed that cognitive flexibility served as a moderator in the positive relationship between Asian values gap and child-reported education and career conflict. However, contrary to previous literature, the direction of the interaction was reversed: children with high cognitive flexibility tended to have increased conflict as the values gap increased, whereas children with low cognitive flexibility tended to have decreased conflict. Although it is difficult to explain this unexpected finding, one possible explanation lies in the correlational nature of the present study. Perhaps this result indicates that due to increased Asian value differences and the frequency of conflict over education and career choices, children respond with high cognitive flexibility. In other words, children may be using higher levels of cognitive flexibility in an attempt to deal with the intense level of value differences with their parents, which in turn influences the frequency of conflict. When Asian values gap is not considered at various levels, cognitive flexibility was associated with a decreased level of education and career conflicts.

Another possible explanation is that there may be ways in which cognitive flexibility backfires and creates more conflict when there are large Asian value differences. This interpretation can be elaborated with the findings in the study of Martin et al (1998) [44]. These authors found that the use of cognitive flexibility was related to the characteristics of communication competence, which included assertiveness, argumentation, and responsiveness among college students. Initially, this study's result appeared to set a good rationale for cognitive flexibility decreasing the levels of conflict due to the elements of communication competence. However, it could be that those aspects of communication may be effective, but only selectively with Asian American children and parents who are more acculturated (45). To further elaborate, Gudykunst (2001) [46] described the existence of cross-cultural differences in communication styles between Western and Eastern cultures. For Western cultures, the author used the term low-context communication style to describe the specific, precise, and direct modes of communication that are expressed when transmitting messages. These aspects have similar elements of communication competence that was described above. However, this communication style may not be cross-culturally effective in the dynamic between Korean American children and their traditional Korean parents. In fact, it may cause cultural clashes because traditional Asian parents may expect their children to adhere to high-context communication style, which is described as indirect, implicit, and polite approaches to sending messages. The author characterized high-context communication style in relation to traditional Asian collectivistic values and its maintenance of social hierarchy. Therefore, when children use high cognitive flexibility in the face of high Asian values gap and conflict, they could be perceived as expressing their views in a manner that threatens this hierarchy, thereby exacerbating the frequency of conflicts.

Limitations and Implications

The findings in the current study have limitations that are typical of survey research with university students. Although a significant proportion of Korean Americans with whom counselors are likely to work with will be college students, the use of these individuals in the present study limits the generalizability of findings to Korean Americans not in college settings. Similarly, the results may apply only to college students in the West Coast and not the other geographical areas, and not apply to other Asian American ethnic groups. The study was also selective in gathering data from parents who turned in their survey, making it difficult for random sampling. In addition, given that we asked the respondent to represent the views of their spouse, the results might be different if we asked mothers and fathers separately.

Despite these limitations, there are several research implications. As the present study focused only on children's perceptions of parent-child conflict and their cognitive flexibility, future studies should also focus on the perceptions of

parents in terms of their conflicts with their children and their cognitive flexibility. In addition, given that the present study examined only the values gap relative to the Asian culture, future studies should also examine values gap regarding adherence to mainstream US culture (i.e., acculturation). An instrument that may be helpful in this regard is the *European American Values Scale for Asian Americans – Revised* [47], a measure of values acculturation. In addition, it is recommended to assess the differences in acculturation and enculturation in other dimensions, such as behaviors, knowledge, and racial ethnic identity. In future studies, it may also be useful to include a measure of social desirability, because family shame may play a role in how much parents and children disclose about the conflicts between them. For the full scale, please see the appendix.

In terms of clinical implications, given some of the significant relations among parent–child Asian values gap, cognitive flexibility, and intergenerational conflicts, clinicians may profit from exploring these variables with their parent–child clients. Doing so could help to illuminate the intrapersonal and interpersonal dynamics that may exist between the clients. As these dynamics are known, clinicians could help clients develop new strategies to successfully cope with their problems and avoid future ones.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we described the construct definitions of acculturation and enculturation and explored the psychological theories and research on these two constructs as related to Asian American families. Then, we described the findings from a recently completed study focusing on values enculturation among Korean Americans, a significant subpopulation among Asian Americans.

Through this chapter, we hope to have created a greater appreciation for the within-group variability among Asian American families in terms of acculturation and enculturation. In addition, we hope that the readers have increased their understanding about the potential pitfalls that exist for Asian American families as they engage in adapting to the norms of the dominant US culture while trying to retain the norms of their Asian ethnic culture. In particular, it is important to be aware of the serious pitfalls in the form of parent–child conflict as a result of the differential adherences to traditional Asian values between parents and children and the moderating role of a child’s cognitive flexibility. Through this type of understanding, we hope that the clinicians can increase their effectiveness when working with Asian American families.

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