HHS Public Access

Author manuscript

J Youth Adolesc. Author manuscript; available in PMC 2017 July 01.

Published in final edited form as:

J Youth Adolesc. 2016 July ; 45(7): 1380–1395. doi:10.1007/s10964-016-0496-0.

Advancing Understanding of Acculturation for Adolescents of Asian Immigrants: Person-Oriented Analysis of Acculturation Strategy among Korean American Youth

Yoonsun Choi[1], **Kevin Poh Hiong Tan**[1], **Miwa Yasui**[1], and **Hyeouk Chris Hahm**[2]

[1]School of Social Service Administration, University of Chicago, Chicago, IL

[2]School of Social Work, Boston University, Boston, MA

Abstract

Acculturation strategy, a significant predictor of immigrant adaptation, has been understudied with Asian Americans, in particular, Asian American youth. Using person-oriented latent profile analysis, this study identified acculturation strategies among Korean American early adolescents living in the Midwest. Two-hundred ninety one families were interviewed in 2007 that included 220 youth (mean age = 13, 47.7% female), along with 272 mothers and 164 fathers (*N*=656). They were re-interviewed in 2008 (*N*=588). The study found three distinct acculturation strategies: *separation* (11.8%, *n*=26), *integrated bicultural* (66.9%, *n*=150), and *modest bicultural* (21.3%, *n*=44). *Integrated bicultural* youth reported the strongest sense of ethnic identity and the most favorable characteristics, providing empirical support for the benefit of biculturalism. The findings further suggest that *separation* may not be as detrimental as previously thought, and *modest bicultural*—biculturalism that is not fully developed—may in fact be less desirable among Korean American youth.

Keywords

Acculturation; Korean American youth; Acculturation Strategies; Immigrant Family

Correspondence regarding this paper should be directed to Yoonsun Choi, The School of Social Service Administration, The University of Chicago, 969 East 60th Street, Chicago, IL 60637; Tel: 773-702-4335; Fax: 773-834-3267; yoonsun@uchicago.edu.

Authors' Contribution

Yoonsun Choi conceived, designed and directed the study, including acquisition of data, analysis and interpretation of data, and drafted the manuscript. Kevin Tan performed statistical analyses and assisted with writing the method section. Miwa Yasui contributed to conceptualization and design of the study and helped to draft the manuscript. Hyeouk Chris Hahm participated in interpretation of results and their significance to the literature. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors report no conflict of interests.

Compliance with Ethical Standards

This study was conducted in compliance with ethical standards. All procedures of the study including data collection and analyses were approved by the Institutional Review Board of the University of Chicago to ensure the proper protection of human subjects, including confidentiality of the data and the informed consent process.

Author Manuscript

Author Manuscript

Author Manuscript

Author Manuscript

Author Manuscript

Introduction

Acculturation strategies have been shown to predict different adaptation outcomes among immigrant and ethnic minority youth, ranging from adjustment stress and coping to successful integration into the mainstream society (Yoon, Hacker, Hewitt, Abrams, & Cleary, 2012). Scholars such as John Berry (1997) have identified different acculturation strategies, including *assimilation, integration, separation*, and *marginalization* (e.g., Birman, 1994; LaFromboise, Coleman, & Gerton, 1993). With only a few exceptions (e.g., Miller et al., 2013), however, scholarship excludes Asian Americans. Yet since the Hart-Celler Act of 1965, Asian Americans have been the fastest growing segment of the U.S. population, surpassing Hispanics in the total number of immigrants in 2014 (Pew Research Center, 2015). Nonetheless, there is a dearth of empirical studies investigating how young Asian Americans acculturate and, more important, how their strategies influence youth development. Unlike Asian immigrant parents, the majority of whom migrated with limited English and cultural understanding, Asian adolescents in the United States are predominantly U.S.–born or immigrated at a young age, and thus face a different set of challenges than their parents. Therefore, it is unclear whether existing knowledge, such as Berry's model, accurately represents the experience of this second generation (Cohen, 2010) and can adequately guide intervention and policy efforts.

Moreover, despite the widespread practice of using pan-racial or ethnic categories, such as Asians or Hispanics, there is significant variability among immigrants and children of immigrants in their history, background, and resettlement contexts, including existing co-ethnic communities, and, subsequently, their acculturation strategies. For example, Korean Americans, one of the largest Asian American subgroups, are culturally and ethnically the most separated from the rest of the society (Pew Research Center, 2015). Specifically, Korean immigrant adults, even after years of settlement, remain largely monolingual, predominantly attend Korean ethnic churches or temples, socialize primarily with co-ethnics, and demonstrate high ethnic solidarity and pride (Min, 2006). Contrary to the expectation, this separation strategy has helped Korean immigrants adjust because their strong ethnic enclaves have facilitated economic success and provided significant social support (Min, 2006). However, such a strategy is also blamed for psychological distress and social alienation from others, and even from their own children, who are predominantly English speaking and more Americanized. Interestingly, a limited number of studies and anecdotes suggests a similar acculturation strategy among Korean American youth, that is, they are ethnically cohesive, spend time with mostly co-ethnic peers, and report a high rate of ethnic pride (Choi & Kim, 2010; Lee, 1994). Yet, questions remain whether a separation strategy, if indeed prevalent among Korean American youth, is related to favorable adjustment, or, as suggested by the literature, whether integration as a strategy is in fact most adaptive among the younger generation of Korean Americans.

Acculturation Strategies

At least two cultural orientations determine acculturation strategies: the degree of *acculturation* (learning and adopting the mainstream culture) and *enculturation* (maintaining one's heritage culture). Depending on these two factors, Berry (1997) suggests four possible

Author Manuscript Author Manuscript Author Manuscript Author Manuscript

strategies: (1) *assimilation* (high acculturation and low enculturation) (2) *integration* (high on both), (3) *separation* (low acculturation and high enculturation), and (4) *marginalization* (low on both). In the last two decades, Berry's model has been widely used, tested (e.g., Montreuil & Bourhis, 2004; Pham & Harris, 2001), and expanded. Cohen (2010), for example, added a third component, affiliation with co-ethnic migrants, and generated eight possible strategies.

Among Berry's acculturation strategies, integration (or bicultural competence) is hailed as the most adaptive strategy (Berry, 1997; Sam & Berry, 2006). Assimilation is considered less adaptive, particularly for racial-ethnic immigrants and minorities, because minority children who primarily acculturate to the host culture may suffer from negative experiences of racial-ethnic discrimination and structural inequality because they are likely less prepared to defend themselves and may feel betrayed by the group they felt they belonged to (Chae, Lee, Lincoln, & Ihara, 2012; Park, Schwartz, Lee, Kim, & Rodriguez, 2013). That said, assimilation strategy is beneficial in some aspects, such as help-seeking behaviors (Miller et al., 2013). Separation, on the other hand, may impede successful integration into the host society and perpetuate social and cultural isolation, thus increasing adaptive stress (Berry, Kim, Minde, & Mok, 1987). However, as observed among Korean immigrants, separation can enable successful economic adaptation and provide social support. In fact, in the face of social exclusion and segregation, separation may be the only option (Berry, 1997) and can serve as a protection, which nevertheless has not been put forward as ideal. Lastly, marginalization is thought to be problematic as it may indicate unsuccessful integration to any segment of the society, and it may not be common among nonclinical community samples (Matsunaga, Hecht, Elek, & Ndiaye, 2013).

Children of Immigrants and their Acculturation Strategies

Recently, research has expanded to preadolescents and college students, although focused mainly on Hispanic youth. The results provide general support for Berry's model but often with added complexity. For example, using latent class analysis, Schwartz and Zamboanga (2008) found six groups with two variants of integration among Hispanic college students, whereas Nieri and her colleagues (2011) identified five groups among Mexican-heritage preadolescents, including two variants of bicultural (integration) strategies. Coatsworth and his team (2005) applied a person-oriented approach with Hispanic youth in Miami and cross-tabulated "Americanism" and "Hispanicism" domains. This led to three primary groups: two (high and moderate) bicultural groups and a very small separation group. In another study using latent profile analyses with Mexican American preadolescents, researchers identified three bicultural groups in varying degrees and one small assimilation group (Matsunaga et al., 2013). In all of these studies, assimilation and variations of integration were prominent, with little if any separation or marginalization strategies among Hispanic youth.

A handful of empirical studies with Asian American youth have indicated both support and a slight deviation from Berry's model. For example, Miller and his team (2013) used three independent samples of aggregated Asian college students and identified all four types of Berry's strategies. But because they used the mean of the indicators, the four-group model

Author Manuscript Author Manuscript Author Manuscript Author Manuscript

was somewhat imposed on the data. In a sample of Chinese Canadian university students, Chia and Costigan (2006) used *k*-means clustering to identify five acculturation groups—integrated, separated, and assimilated per Berry's model, and two new groups named as "integrated group with Chinese practices" and "marginalized group with Chinese practices." Both studies illuminated the variety of acculturation strategies endorsed by young Asian college students, as well as distinctions in strategies for these youth.

In addition to the variations of acculturation strategies found in studies, the findings are mixed on cultural orientation's association with youth developmental outcomes, with studies showing no effect, positive effects, or negative effects (Bynum, Burton, & Best, 2007; Caughy, O'Campo, & Randolph, 2002; Marshall, 1995; Smith, Atkins, & Connell, 2003; Tran & Lee, 2010). These inconsistencies in cultural orientations and developmental outcomes are in part owing to the sample specific and/or actual differences but also likely from a combination of varied conceptualizations of cultural orientations, inconsistent operationalization (i.e., different domains of measures used), and diverse statistical approaches (from cluster analysis, mean-split to person-centered methods). In particular, it is common that different studies use different aspects of cultural orientation to assess the entire constructs or assess them only partially. For example, English language proficiency, one of the most frequently used proxies of acculturation, may facilitate adaptation in several aspects, but behavioral acculturation, such as mainstream media consumption, can be harmful in developing a positive sense of self-image because it may reveal a more racialized and stereotyped portrayal of one's heritage group (Choi, Tan, Yasui, & Pekelnicky, 2014).

It may also be that acculturation strategies, that is, a certain combination of enculturation and acculturation, can better explain youth development and its correlates. For example, Sullivan et al. (2007) found that, among Hispanic adolescents, integrated youth reported most favorable levels of parental involvement, positive parenting and support. Only assimilated youth had significantly higher behavioral problems compared with integrated, separated, or moderately bicultural groups. A study with high school students in California (Giang & Wittig, 2006) showed that integrated youth consistently reported higher personal and collective self-esteem than marginalized youth.

However, with few exceptions, ethnic and mainstream cultural orientations are often examined as a separate constructs (e.g., Choi et al., 2014), which does not clarify which combinations of cultural orientation predict youth outcomes. For example, heritage language and English proficiency each predicted fewer mental health problems among Korean American youth (Choi et al., 2014). However, by not considering them simultaneously as a strategy type, it remains unclear whether proficiency in any language or a certain combination (e.g., bilingualism) is protective. In a similar vein, ethnic identity, one of the prominent dimensions of enculturation, is regarded as protective because it may mitigate the adverse effect of racial discrimination (Rivas-Drake, Hughes, & Way, 2008). It is unclear, however, whether ethnic identity is beneficial by itself or in the presence of a strong identity as an American (i.e., bicultural identity). If ethnic identity alone can be beneficial without American identity, enculturation in the form of separation should be beneficial as well as integration. This study can clarify this question.

Author Manuscript Author Manuscript Author Manuscript Author Manuscript

The Present Study

This study uses latent profile analysis (LPA), a person-oriented analytic approach (Magnusson, 1998), to identify the most parsimonious number of latent subgroups that best represent the acculturation strategies among Korean American youth. In addition, this study examines differences and similarities of the groups across an array of correlates to investigate which strategy may yield the most favorable developmental pattern.

Generating Latent Groups of Acculturation Strategies

To identify acculturation strategies among Korean American youth, this study uses three main dimensions of cultural orientations—language, identity, and behaviors—(Choi et al., 2014). Although often used interchangeably or in combination, these dimensions are distinct and independent aspects of cultural orientation (Ward, 2001). Using these dimensions simultaneously but as a distinct construct more accurately reflects recent theoretical advancements in acculturation and acculturation strategies. For example, in a typical scenario involving the acculturation gap, immigrant parents would adhere to their traditional cultural beliefs while their children would endorse dominant Western values, resulting in a clash (Choi, He, & Harachi, 2008). However, in an extensive literature review, Telzer (2010) finds substantial variability among family members in acculturation levels and asserts that it is erroneous to assume that children of immigrants are always more acculturated than their parents. Even more nuance emerges when considering various dimensions of cultural orientation. In other words, in some situations, children are more acculturated than their parents simply by the function of their nativity (e.g., U.S.–born children of immigrants or children who immigrated at a young age likely speak better English). However, in other dimensions, such as identity and cultural practices, children may be less acculturated. A handful of studies has found a significant proportion of children endorsing a stronger racial-ethnic identity and practicing certain aspects of their heritage culture more frequently than their parents, despite their high level of linguistic acculturation (Atzaba-Poria & Pike, 2007; Costigan & Dokis, 2006; Telzer, 2010). Growing up a racial-ethnic minority in the United States brings with it a different set of experiences and challenges. Children may deliberately practice their heritage culture and possess a stronger awareness and identity as a racial-ethnic minority than their parents. Such a pattern has been found among the children of African or Caribbean immigrants (Waters, Ueba, & Marrow, 2007).

Furthermore, each dimension of cultural orientations is distinct. As implied above, one's inability to speak a heritage language does not necessarily mean a low level of racial-ethnic identity. The rate of heritage language retention among U.S.–born Asian youth is quite low (1%–10%) yet this loss is not necessarily correlated with a weaker sense of racial-ethnic identity (Tsai, Chentsova-Dutton, & Wong, 2002). At the same time, given the difficulty of learning and maintaining their heritage language, competence in it would be an important indicator to consider in generating acculturation strategies. Heritage language also is important to parent-child communication and relationship-building because a large proportion of Asian immigrant parents have limited English language skills (Choi & Kim, 2010). Racial-ethnic identity may also indicate a much more conscious and deliberate endorsement of race-ethnicity for Asian American youth than other dimensions, such

Author Manuscript Author Manuscript Author Manuscript Author Manuscript

cultural behaviors, consumption of ethnic media, or the racial-ethnic composition of peers (Tsai et al., 2002). Lastly, we include cultural behaviors but not cultural values variables as indicators because cultural behaviors and values are not necessarily in accord, especially when values are changing at a much slower rate, sometimes lasting even generations later (Miller et al., 2013).

We expect that the majority of youth will fall into the integration group among various strategies. First, the majority of youth samples were either born in the United States or immigrated at a young age. Thus, they should be proficient in English and mainstream behavioral practices (i.e., high language and behavioral acculturation). Their parents, however, are known to be culturally separated from others, and the family socialization processes remain largely Korean (Choi, Kim, Pekelnicky, & Kim, 2013). Thus, we also expect a considerable rate of behavioral enculturation and a strong sense of racial-ethnic identity among children. This combination of high acculturation and high enculturation characterizes integration. Hispanics are highly diverse including a good size of White Hispanics and multiracial individuals who may find it relatively easier to assimilate than non-Hispanic Whites. Conversely, Korean Americans may be more distinctive racially and culturally. Thus, the assimilation group is expected to be very small, if any. Similarly, unlike Hispanic youth, we expect a sizable separation group in this sample, as elaborated earlier. We do not expect to find marginalization strategy since the participating families are non-clinical community samples.

Comparisons of Group Characteristics

To compare characteristics of each group, we selected an array of correlates that may vary across acculturation strategy groups. The correlates include demographics, peer and family process variables (including those that may be particularly pertinent to Korean American youth), parental cultural orientations, and youth developmental outcomes. We use both youth and parent reports for these variables, whenever available, because youth and parent reports of the same construct are often significantly different from each other and youth cultural orientations can be a determining factor in youth reports, especially for family process (Choi, Kim, Pekelnicky, Kim, & Kim, in press).

First, demographic variables include youth gender, years of living in the United States (parent and youth respectively), youth nativity and parental legal immigration status. We use years of residence and nativity as correlates, not indicators, of acculturation because researchers have argued that although some aspects of culture and its orientations change with years of residence and nativity, other aspects may persist or in fact strengthen over time (Choi & Kim, 2010; Feldman & Rosenthal, 1994).

Second, peer and family are the two major contexts for youth development. Accordingly, we compare several correlates from each domain. Peer characteristics include racial-ethnic composition of friends, antisocial behaviors, beliefs of close friends, and peer rejection. Comparison of these peer variables would show whether acculturation strategies influence racial-ethnic composition of peers as well as the quality of those friends. A vast body of parenting literature demonstrates that family process variables are major determinants of youth development, and it is thus essential to examine whether and how acculturation

Author Manuscript
Author Manuscript
Author Manuscript
Author Manuscript

strategies may influence them. The family process variables we examine include youth reports of bonding to both parents, parental discipline, family support, parent-child conflict, and parental supervision. We also include parent reports of parent-child communication, supervision, warmth, and cohesion.

In addition, we examine how the latent groups differ (or not) across family processes that may be more salient to Korean families. We do this by assessing youth reports of maternal and paternal expectations, parental sacrifices, feeling ashamed of parents, and parent reports of ethnic socialization, *guan* ideology, and traditional Korean parental values. The "immigrant ethos," common among immigrant families, is strong among Asian immigrant families and they are strongly motivated toward and driven by achievement (Kibria, 2002). Thus, families stress educational and occupational achievement and parents are willing to make sacrifices to assist their children. In addition, Korean American families actively invest in ethnic socialization of their children and largely maintain traditional parenting values (Choi, Kim, Pekelnicky, et al., 2013; Min, 2010). Youth, however, frequently report feeling ashamed of parents, and they may perceive their parents as culturally and socially awkward (Choi & Kim, 2010). Most important, youth cultural orientations influence how youth perceive these family processes most salient to them (Choi et al., in press). Thus, this study examines how acculturation strategies influence both youth perceptions and parents' reports of these processes. It also examines and compares parental cultural orientations (parents' language competence, racial-ethnic identity, and cultural participation). Parental cultural orientations play an important role in shaping youth acculturation strategies via racial-ethnic socialization in the family (Juang, Shen, Kim, & Wang, 2016) and this study examines whether parental cultural orientations align with their child's acculturation strategies. Finally, we examine youth outcomes across two times points and by two informants. The outcomes are youth-reported delinquent behaviors, depressive symptoms, and academic performance, and parent reports of youth delinquent behaviors.

Building on existing research, we expect integration strategies to be associated with the most positive characteristics of the correlates and assimilation the least favorable. High mainstream orientation (i.e., assimilation) has shown to complicate and strain parent-child relations by widening cultural gaps and increasing communication difficulties (Tseng & Fuligni, 2000). Conversely, high ethnic orientation may enhance family process because it can help youth better appreciate heritage culture, and thus parental values, intensions, and behaviors, particularly those that may be culturally specific. However, in the absence of a strong sense of affiliation to the mainstream, youth adopting a separation strategy may experience negativity, such as feeling ashamed of their parents' cultural ineptness (Choi & Kim, 2010). Parents' cultural orientations, which are intertwined with their ethnic socialization efforts and cultural values, also are likely to influence youth's acculturation strategies. Peer-related variables are exploratory, except that racial-ethnic composition of friends is expected to be higher Korean friends among separation, higher White friends among assimilation and equal in integration.

Author Manuscript
Author Manuscript
Author Manuscript
Author Manuscript

Method

Overview of the Project

The data are from the Korean American Families (KAF) project, a survey of Korean American youth and their parents in Chicago and surrounding areas. The data were collected over a two-year period. In 2007 (Time 1), 656 individuals from 291 families were interviewed (220 youth, 272 mothers, and 164 fathers). A follow-up interview was completed a year later with 198 youth, 244 mothers, and 146 fathers ($N = 588$). To recruit participants, three sources were used: phonebooks, school rosters, and Korean church/temple rosters. Korean American and immigrant families with adolescents aged 11–14 were eligible to participate in the survey. About equal proportions of samples were obtained from each source. Families did not differ in age and gender or socio-economic status across three sources. Additional details are available in other places (Choi, Kim, Kim, & Park, 2013; Choi, Kim, Pekelnicky, et al., 2013).

Sample Characteristics

The average age at Time 1 was 13 years ($SD = 1.00$) for youth, 43 for mothers ($SD = 4.57$), and 46 for fathers ($SD = 4.69$). Nearly 64% of mothers and 70% of fathers reported having attended some college either in Korea or the United States. All parents were born in Korea and had lived in the United States for an average of 15.4 years ($SD = 8.36$). More than one-half (61%) of the youth were born in the United States, and those who emigrated had lived in the United States for an average of 10.4 years ($SD = 4.14$). About one-half (47%) of the families reported an annual household income between $50,000 and $99,999, followed by those between $25,000 and $49,999 (23.6%) and more than $100,000 (22%). The remaining 7.4% made less than $25,000. Fifteen percent of mothers reported having received public assistance, including food stamps or free/reduced-price school lunch. Approximately 40% of mothers reported being currently employed. Overall, the survey sample was predominantly urban, middle class, Protestant (76.7%), and small business owners (40%), which is fairly comparable to the Korean immigrant profile in the United States (Min, 2010) and representative data sets such as the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health (Add Health) (Harris, 2009).

Measures[1]

Indicators of subtypes (youth-report)

Language competency: Korean and English: Adopted from the Language, Identity, and Behavior (LIB) survey (Birman & Trickett, 2002), two sets of four parallel items (eight total) measured youth's language competency in Korean and English. The questions included "How would you rate your overall ability to speak Korean (or English)?" and "How well do you understand Korean (or English)?" ($\alpha = 0.86$ for Koreans; 0.91 for English).

Behavioral cultural participation: Korean and American: Adopted from the LIB (Birman & Trickett, 2002), 18 items measured youth's participation in either Korean or

[1]Unless notes, scales were constructed such that higher score means higher rates of the construct. Also, the majority of response options were Likert scale, for example, 1 (not at all) to 5 (very likely). Exceptions are described in the text.

Author Manuscript
Author Manuscript
Author Manuscript
Author Manuscript

American cultural activities. Topics included peer composition, participation in social clubs or parties, media use, and food. For example, "How often do you usually listen to Korean (or American) songs?" (α = 0.76 for Korean cultural participation; 0.77 for American cultural participation).

Ethnic identity: Korean and American: Similar to the language scales, 14 questions from LIB (Birman & Trickett, 2002) asked the extent to which youth identified themselves as Korean or American. For example, "I think of myself as being Korean (or American), and "I have a strong sense of being Korean (or American)" (α = 0.88 for Korean identity; 0.91 for American identity).

Demographics—The study included several demographic variables, including youth-reported gender, years of living in the United States, place of birth, and parent-reported years of living in the United States and legal status of immigration.

Youth-report correlates

Peer characteristics: Four peer characteristics were assessed. (1) *ethnic composition of friends* (the percentage of close friends by race-ethnicity); (2) *peer antisocial behaviors* were assessed from seven questions from the Raising Healthy Children (RHC) project (Catalano et al., 2003) about the number among one's 10 closest friends who engage in antisocial behaviors such as drinking alcohol, getting into fights, and skipping school (α = 0.80); (3) *peer antisocial beliefs* were measured with seven items from the Minority Youth Health Project (Cheadle et al., 1998) and the Seattle Social Development Project (Hawkins et al., 1992). The scale asked: "Most people my age think it is OK to…" for example, smoke, have sex, get drunk, and carry a gun/knife (α = 0.86); (4) *peer rejection* was based on three items from Asher and Wheeler (1985) asking respondents how true it is that they "have friends in school," "feel lonely in school," and "feel it is hard to get kids to like them." The items were reverse-coded (α = 0.57).

Family processes: Five aspects of family processes were examined: (1) *Bonding to mom/dad* was adopted from Add Health (Harris, 2009) and RHC (Catalano et al., 2003). Questions were asked separately about their mother and father (α = 0.84 for mothers, 0.92 for fathers); (2) *Parental discipline* was measured from seven questions from the Linking the Interests of Families and Teachers (LIFT) project (Eddy, Reid, & Fetrow, 2000). Examples included: "When you misbehave, how often do your parents raise their voice?" and "How often do your parents spank you?" (α = 0.60); (3) *Family support* was based on six questions from Fuligni and Zhang (2004), such as "How important is it to you to help your parents financially in the future?" and "How important is it to you to have your parents live with you when they get old?" (α = 0.73); (4) *Family conflict* was based on four questions from Prinz, Foster, Kent, and O'Leary (1979), including, "we get angry at each other a lot," and "[my mom] nags me a lot" (α = 0.80); (5) *parental supervision* was based on eight questions adapted from the LIFT (Eddy et al., 2000) and Steinberg, Lamborn, Dornbusch, and Darling (1992), such as, "When you are away from home, how often do your parents know where you are and who you are with?" and "How well do your parents know who your friends are?" (α = 0.77).

Author Manuscript Author Manuscript Author Manuscript Author Manuscript

Family processes salient to Korean families: Three other family processes that are particularly salient to Korean families were measured: (1) *youth perception of mother/father expectations* was based on four questions from Add Health (Harris, 2009). Items included: "How disappointed would your mother (or father) be if you did not graduate from high school?" and "My mother (or father) thinks that getting a professional job (e.g., doctor or lawyer) is important" (α = 0.55 for mothers; 0.70 for fathers); (2) *parental sacrifice* was determined with six questions from Ruth Chao (2001). Items included: "My parents have made many sacrifices to give me a better life" and "My parents work hard to assure I have the best opportunities" (α = 0.80); (3) *Feeling ashamed of parents* was based on five questions (Choi, 2007). Items included: "There are times when I feel embarrassed about my parents' poor English / being too Korean / being awkward with other Americans" (α = 0.78).

Parent-report correlates—The data were constructed around youth participants (*n*=220), which we matched to their parents' data. If both parents for a child participated, we used the mean of parents' responses for parent constructs. If not, we used the participating parent's (either mother or father) responses.

Parent cultural orientations: A parallel set of scales (Birman & Trickett, 2002) were used to assess parental ethnic and mainstream orientations: (1) *language competency: Korean and English* (α = 0.99 for Koreans; 0.92 for English), (2) *cultural participation: Korean and American* (α = 0.83 for ethnic culture; 0.88 for mainstream culture), and (3) *identity: Korean and American* (α = 0.88 for Korean identity; 0.91 for American identity).

Family processes: Four aspects of family processes were examined with parents: (1) *parent-child communication* was based on 12 questions from LIFT (Eddy et al., 2000). Examples included: "Are you very satisfied with how you and your child talk together?" and "Do you find it easy to discuss problems with your child?" (α = 0.83); (2) *parental supervision* was measured from nine questions adopted from LIFT (Eddy et al., 2000), and Steinberg, Lamborn, Darling, Mounts, and Dornbusch (1994). Items included: "How well do you know who your child's friends are?" "How often do you allow sleepovers for your child?" and "How well do you know how your child spends money?" (α = 0.81); (3) *parental warmth* used seven questions from the Parenting Practices Questionnaire (Robinson, Mandlesco, Olsen, & Hart, 1995). Examples included: "I tell my children that I love him/her" and "I tell my child that I appreciate what he/she tries or accomplishes" (α = 0.87); (4) *family cohesion* from Olson, Gorall, and Tiesel (2006) was a five-item scale asking, for example: "My family members ask each other for help," and "My family members feel very close to each other" (α = 0.77).

Family processes salient to Korean families: Similar to youth-reported measures, three family process constructs that may be especially salient to Korean families were included for parents: (1) *ethnic socialization* was four-item scale (Choi, 2007) asking how important it is for parents that their children maintain ethnic pride, traditional values, language, and Korean manners toward parents and the elderly (α = 0.84); (2) *guan ideology* (Chao, 1994) was a six-item scale assessing the Chinese concept of parenting as "training and governing" but was fairly endorsed among Korean Americans (Choi, Kim, Pekelnicky, et al., 2013).

Author Manuscript Author Manuscript Author Manuscript Author Manuscript

Examples included: "Parents should train children to work very hard and be disciplined," and "For children to learn, parents should continuously monitor and correct their behavior" (α = 0.84); (3) *traditional Korean parent virtues* was a new scale developed for Korean American families (Choi, Kim, Pekelnicky, et al., 2013) emphasizing values of filial piety and the practice of ideal behaviors as a way to teach children the specific virtue. Items included: "Parents should try to demonstrate proper attitude and behavior in front of their children," and "Parents should try to be the model of honesty and righteousness for my child" (α = 0.76).

Youth outcomes

Self-report youth outcomes: Three self-reported youth outcomes were used in the study: (1) *delinquent behaviors* were assessed based on 34 items from the Self-Report Delinquency Measure (Huizinga & Elliott, 1986), including physical fights, cruelty, theft, and violence (α = 0.84); (2) *depressive symptoms* were based on 14 items from the Children's Depressive Inventory (Angold, Costello, Messer, & Pickles, 1995) and the Seattle Personality Questionnaire for Children (Kusche, Greenberg, & Beilke, 1988), and included an array of depressive symptoms two weeks prior to the survey (α = 0.91); (3) *academic performance* was computed based on grades in English, mathematics, social studies, and science.

Parent report youth behaviors: Parental reports of youth's negative behaviors used 10 items from Werthamer-Larson, Kellam, and Wheeler (1990). Questions included talking back, lying, and arguing (α = 0.74).

Analysis

Using *Mplus* v.7.3 (L. K. Muthén & Muthén, 2013), we conducted latent profile analysis (LPA) to generate the most parsimonious number of subtypes describing youth cultural adaptation patterns. LPA is a person-oriented approach that categorizes individuals who share common characteristics that are derived from continuous observed variables (B. O. Muthén & Muthén, 2000). In the LPA framework, individuals are assigned probabilities according to their likelihood of membership in each group and then allocated into the group with the highest probability. Six variables were used to derive the subtypes: Korean and English language competency, Korean and American cultural participation, Korean and American identity.

To identify the ideal number of subtypes in the samples, several fit statistics were examined, for example, the Akaike information criterion (AIC), Bayesian information criteria (BIC), sample-size adjusted BIC, entropy, Vuong-Lo-Mendell-Rubin (LMR-LRT), and the bootstrapped likelihood ratio test (L. K. Muthén & Muthén, 2013). Specifically, AIC, BIC, and the sample-size adjusted BIC serve as a measure of the goodness of fit. Smaller values indicate a better fit. The entropy concerns the accuracy of assignment of respondents to the subtypes, with a value closer to 1 suggesting a more accurate classification. The LMR-LRT and the bootstrapped likelihood ratio test are direct tests of significance between models (e.g., 1 vs. 2 subtypes; 2 vs. 3 subtypes). Once a model reaches nonsignificance ($p > 0.05$), the model prior to the nonsignificant model is preferred (L. K. Muthén & Muthén, 2013). In addition to the statistical fit indices, substantive theory guided the identification of the most

Author Manuscript Author Manuscript Author Manuscript Author Manuscript

appropriate number and pattern of subtypes. At each step of the analysis, the total number and pattern of subtypes were evaluated against the models mainly from Berry (1997) and others whenever necessary.

When the subtypes were finalized, we used *Auxiliary (e)* command in *Mplus* to describe the subgroups by the correlates. The *Auxiliary (e)* command uses posterior probability-based multiple imputations to determine differences in a given variable across latent classes without using that outcome to define latent classes (L. K. Muthén & Muthén, 2013). Owing to its probabilistic nature of class classification and determination in latent profile analysis, the observed class assignment is likely to introduce error into the analysis. Thus, to maintain the inherent probabilistic uncertainties associated with latent profile analysis, significant pairwise *t*-tests on the equality of means across classes ($df=1$), using posterior probability-based multiple imputations, were used to compare differences across the subgroups. Lastly, missing data were handled using maximum likelihood in *Mplus*.

Results

Identifying Subtypes

The fit indices are summarized in Table 1, which provides fit statistics for 1 to 5 subtype solutions. Based on the indices, we explored three-, four-, and five-subtype solutions. The three-subtype solution showed the highest entropy (.83), suggesting high classification accuracy. AIC, BIC, and the sample-size adjusted BIC suggested a solution of more than five subtypes. The bootstrapped likelihood ratio test also suggested more than five subtypes ($p = 0.001$). However, LMR-LRT suggested that the four-subtype solution ($p = 0.019$) is significantly better than five-subtype model ($p = 0.276$).

In addition to these fit indices, the nature of each group (i.e., of three vs. four vs. five subtypes) was evaluated in regard to six indicators that were used to generate the subtypes and against the theoretical models. We also considered the number of samples in each group to see whether each subgroup had reasonable sample sizes for post-hoc comparisons on various correlates. For example, in the four-subtype solution, two groups were quite similar and the mean difference was mostly fairly small (i.e., approximately .5 on a scale of 1 to 5). In addition, one of the groups was quite small ($n = 18$). Thus, based on various considerations, we ultimately chose the three-subtype solution, as it seemed to best fit with substantive theory as well as the empirical fit indices. The three subtypes of youth cultural adaptation are summarized in Table 2.

Characteristics of the Subtypes by Indicators

Based on their characteristics, we identified three groups: (1) *separation*, (2) *integrated bicultural,* and (3) *modest bicultural*. The *separation* group (11.8%; $n = 26$) was characterized by the lowest mainstream cultural orientation but the highest ethnic cultural orientation. Specifically, youth in this group reported the lowest means of English language competency, American cultural participation, and American identity. The rate of American identity was notably low. They also reported much better Korean language proficiency than

Author Manuscript Author Manuscript Author Manuscript Author Manuscript

English (which was the lowest among the three groups), highest Korean cultural participation, and second highest Korean identity.

The *integrated bicultural* was the largest group (66.9%; *n* = 150), reporting the highest English competence but also the strongest Korean and American identity among the three groups. Notably, their Korean identity was significantly stronger than their American identity. Participation was about equal across Korean and American cultural activities.

Lastly, the *modest bicultural* subtype (21.3%; *n* = 44) was somewhat similar to the *integrated bicultural* in terms of language competence (i.e., better English) but differed in their cultural participation (i.e., lower Korean cultural activities). They were about equal in their Korean and American identity. In fact, all aspects of their ethnic cultural orientation (i.e., language, cultural participation, and identity) were the lowest among the three groups. Despite the low ethnic cultural orientation, we did not name this group *assimilation* only because their Korean identity and American identity were at a comparable level (i.e., their American identity was not strong either), with Korean identity given a slight edge, which does not fit the traditional assimilation model.

Characteristics of the Subtypes by Correlates

Demographics—Summarized in Table 4, the *modest bicultural* group consisted of more boys (68.4%), and the *separation* group was predominantly foreign-born (87.6%). Parents of the *modest bicultural* group had lived in the United States the shortest time (nearly half as long as the other groups) and the majority were not American citizens.

Youth-reported correlates

Peer characteristics: The three groups were not statistically different in the percentage of close Korean and White friends[2] and peer antisocial behaviors. There were, however, statistically significant differences in peer antisocial beliefs and peer rejection. Specifically, the *modest bicultural* youth reported higher rates of peer antisocial beliefs than the *separation* youth and higher peer rejection than the *integrated bicultural* youth.

Family processes: A few significant differences emerged in youth reports of family process. For example, the *separation* and the *integrated bicultural* types reported a stronger bonding with their mothers and fathers and stronger family support than the *modest bicultural* youth, while the means of these constructs were slightly higher among the *integrated bicultural* youth than the *separation* youth or comparable to one another. Parental discipline, parent-child conflict, and supervision were not significantly different across the subtypes.

Salient to Korean families: The family process variables that may be more salient to Korean families presented a different picture. The *integrated bicultural* youth reported the highest level of maternal and paternal expectations and parental sacrifice, followed by the *separation* subtype. The levels were lowest among the *modest bicultural* group, who also reported the highest level of feeling ashamed of parents.

[2]We considered only the percentage of White friends because the participating youth reported predominantly either Korean or White friends in peer compositions.

Author Manuscript Author Manuscript Author Manuscript Author Manuscript

Parent-reported correlates

Parent cultural orientations: Parents of *separation* youth aligned largely with their children's cultural orientations. For example, they scored lowest on mainstream culture (i.e., poorer English, low American cultural participation, and very low American identity) and the highest on Korean identity and Korean cultural participation. Parents of *modest bicultural* youth were largely similar to parents of *integrated bicultural* youth, with only marginal differences in means. In addition, parents of *modest bicultural* and *integrated bicultural* youth reported better English, higher American cultural participation, and higher American identity than parents of *separation* youth.

Family processes: Only a few significant differences emerged in parent-reported family process. Parents of *integrated bicultural* youth reported higher parental warmth than parents of *modest bicultural* youth. Parents of the *separation* group reported the highest level of ethnic socialization. No significant differences were found in other variables, such as parent-child communication, parental supervision, and family cohesion. Korean-specific family process variables did not differ across the groups.

Youth outcomes—The three subtypes did not differ significantly in terms of youth self-reported outcomes, (i.e., antisocial behaviors, depressive symptoms, and academic performance). However, parent-reported delinquent behaviors were highest among the *separation* youth.

Alternative Models

Although we chose the three-subtype solution for this paper, the four-subtype solution could be considered as an alternative model. The first group (20.4%, *n*=45) in the four-subtype solution was similar to *modest bicultural* (high English language and American cultural participation with almost equal and modest Korean and American identity). The second group (8.2%, *n*=18) was similar to *separation* (high enculturation and low acculturation). The remaining two groups could be regarded as two forms of *integration*. Specifically, one of the *integration* groups (22.6%, *n*=50) had slightly higher Korean cultural participation and weaker American identity than the other *integration* group (48.9%, *n*=108), although both groups uniformly reported the strongest Korean identity. This group of 50 youth, bicultural but with a notably stronger Korean identity, reported significantly better youth developmental outcomes that the first group (*modest bicultural*), indicated by less depressive symptoms and better grades.

Discussion

Acculturation persists as one of the major issues facing Asian American youth, including those who were born in the United States or who emigrated at a young age. Unlike early immigrants who were predominantly White, Asian Americans, as a racial-ethnic minority, must continually straddle the mainstream and heritage cultures and navigate a racialized society. Amid the developmental difficulties typical to adolescence, acculturation strategies can potentially create more challenges or, in contrast, mitigate some of the growing pains.

Author Manuscript Author Manuscript Author Manuscript Author Manuscript

Identifying an ideal acculturation strategy can help youth strengthen resilience and maximize their developmental potential.

Most of the existing research on acculturation, however, excludes Asian Americans. Further, previous studies have largely employed variable-oriented analyses that may impose existing theories on study samples rather than allowing the samples to reveal the sortings that can advance theories that better fit the new, growing population. This study is one of a handful that attempts to fill the gap in the literature by using a person-oriented approach that reveals how the varying strategies are associated with family process, peer variables, and developmental outcomes among Korean American youth.

Moving Beyond Berry's Model

In contrast to Berry's four strategies, we find three distinct acculturation strategies among Korean American youth. None fits squarely into the existing four-strategy model. Our main findings are that Korean American youth, socialized mainly in the United States, are growing up American and show a more *integrated bicultural strategy* with a strong sense of ethnic identity (Birman, 1994). This constrasts with their parents, who are known to be largely separated from the mainstream culture (Min, 2006). In line with the study's expectations, we find no youth who fit the *marginalization* type. It is plausible that this group did not participate in the study, given that the voluntary nature of the survey can exclude those who struggle.

More intriguing is that we find no clear *assimilation* group, which may be an indication that Korean American youth maintain an ethnic distinction and solidarity, or the finding may be specific to this immigrant generation. The current samples of Korean American youth are mostly first or second generation. Thus, we may see an *assimilation* group emerge among third and fourth generations, especially if there is a rapid and high rate of interracial marriages and births among Korean Americans. Also, we find youth in the *separation group* are predominantly foreign-born. Thus, this group may disappear in a later generation. *Integration*, however, is more complex, and multiple groups may exist within the category, as found among Hispanic youth in other studies that were described earlier. We find at least two versions of bicultural groups among Korean American youth, and, as suggested by the four-subtype solution, we might have found more bicultural groups with substantial numbers, if we had a larger sample, given that the statistical fit indices suggested additional groups in the data.

More specifically, the study demonstrates that the majority of Korean American youth (about 67% of the sample) are *integrated bicultural* who speak better English than Korean (which was expected), participate in both cultures' activities, and most notably have the strongest sense of ethnic identity and pride while identifying also as American. This seems to be an example of the balanced "hyphenated" identity (e.g., Korean-American) with a stronger identification with one's own ethnic group (Birman, 1994). A consensus among scholars is that for youth of color, complete identity assimilation to an unhyphenated American is neither ideal nor possible. Rather, a well-established racial-ethnic identity is much more desired as it can protect youth from adverse structural and social discrimination. Together with *separation* youth, *integrated bicultural* youth constitute near 80% of our

Author Manuscript Author Manuscript Author Manuscript Author Manuscript

sample. Both groups show a very strong ethnic identity, which supports the anecdotes about Korean American youth being ethnically cohesive and proud. However, this study also shows that these youth, including *separation* youth, are well acculturated, as indicated by their moderate to high levels of linguistic and behavioral acculturation.

Contrary to our expectations, the proportion of youth who fits the *separation* type is much smaller (near 12%). *Separation* youth are characterized by the lowest rate of American identity (2 on a 5-point scale) and modest English competence. Interestingly, although they did not differ in time in the United States, 88% were foreign-born. It may be that despite their time in the country, which is often used as a proxy of acculturation, the place of birth has a stronger influence on how youth identify. This underscores the significance of nativity in acculturation, particularly identity development. On the other hand, *modest bicultural* youth are mostly U.S.– born but, while bicultural, do not endorse any aspect as strongly as *integrated bicultural* or *separation* youth. Also, they are mostly boys (68.4%). This disproportionate gender composition may point to a gender-based socialization and racial-ethnic identity process. Moreover, a smaller proportion of parents of *modest bicultural* youth has U.S. citizenship or permanent resident status (about 40% compared with 80–90% in other groups), which might play a role in why their children feel only moderately affiliated with either group.

In addition to parental immigrant status, parental cultural orientations seem to play a role in how youth formulate acculturation strategies. First, similar to how they are portrayed in the literature, Korean immigrant parents in this study are largely monolingual, identify mainly as Korean, and practice Korean culture more than the mainstream culture. Nonetheless, there is some meaningful variability among parents even within this separation strategy, which may influence their children's acculturation. In particular, parents of *separation* youth mostly resemble their children (i.e., relative to the other groups, they have the least English competence, highest participation in Korean culture, and lowest in American culture). They also have the strongest Korean identity and weakest American identity. We find a similar pattern among *modest bicultural* youth and their parents. Thus, it may be conceivable that youth and parents share acculturation patterns or parents influence youth in formulating their strategy. In a similar pattern, parents of *separation* youth report the highest rate of ethnic socialization, while parents of *modest bicultural* youth report the lowest ethnic socalization and the lowest rate of endorsement of *guan* ideology. It should be noted, however, that these observations are about how parents of each subtype compare in relation to parents in other groups and are not necessarily indicative of a smaller intergenerational acculturation gap, given that we did not examine the parent-child acculturation gap per se. These findings, instead, highlight the meaningful variability within parents' separation strategies, the importance of parental cultural orientation and racial-ethnic socialization in the family, and how parents can help shape youth's acculturation strategies. Thus, if we are to increase and strenghten bicultural competence among chlidren (which is associated with positive outcomes), we should also work with parents to improve their bicultural competence.

In examining a series of correlates, the *integrated bicultural* surfaces as potentially the most ideal strategy, which provides empirical support for the beneficial effect of biculturalism. This finding is in line with previous studies that reported more favorable outcomes among

Author Manuscript Author Manuscript Author Manuscript Author Manuscript

integration than other strategy groups in family process (Sullivan et al., 2007) and self-esteem (Giang & Wittig, 2006). This study significantly expands the scope of correlates examined by including peer variables and an extended list of family processes that also include aspects that are particularly relevant to Korean American youth. First, in peer characteristics, although the groups do not differ in the percentage of close friends who are Korean or White, the *moderate bicultural* group is most vulnerable to peer risk factors, given that they report more peer antisocial beliefs and a higher rate of peer rejection than the other two groups. For youth-reported family processes, *integrated bicultural* youth show a significantly positive pattern, that is, they have the strongest bond to their parents and strong parental support, more so than *modest bicultural* youth. Bonding with parents is one of the strongest protective factors in youth development. *Separation* youth also fare well in this regard: they report greater bonding with parents than the *moderate bicultural* group. Although not as notable as in youth reports, parents of *integrated bicultural* youth report higher parental warmth than those of *modest bicultural* youth. *Integrated bicultural* youth also had the highest rates of maternal and paternal expectations, and parental sacrifices, which are family processes that may be more salient to Korean Americans. In the literature, ethnic cultural orientation facilitates youth's appreciation of parental culture. It is curious that the means of these culturally more salient variables are in fact higher among *integrated bicultural* or *modest bicultural* youth than *separation* youth, who, one would think, may be keen to parental culture the most. This somewhat contradictory finding may suggest that youth who have a modest to high mainstream cultural orientation may be more aware of the cultural differences, and their appreciation of ethnic culture may be more primed than among *separation* youth, who may perceive cultural behaviors and values of their parents as indistinctive. Higher parental academic and career expectations and parental sacrifices tend to produce better youth behaviors. Thus, this higher perception of parental expectations and sacrifices may be a benefit of biculturalism. *Modest bicultural* youth nonetheless report the highest rate of feeling ashamed of their parents, which is often reported as a common struggle among Korean American youth (Choi & Kim, 2010). This may cause tensions and conflicts in the family and thus enhancing ethnic cultural orientation, including ethnic pride, may mitigate this issue. Taken together, the findings suggest that biculturalism, even if modestly developed, may offer more protection to youth in certain domains than enculturation alone. More studies are warranted to better understand this domain-specific benefit of biculturalism, not just enculturation, on youth perception of parental culture and behaviors.

Although the groups did not significantly differ in delinquent behaviors, depressive symptoms, and academic performance, we cannot dismiss the potential role of acculturation strategies in these outcomes. First, the four-subtype solution indeed showed a significant difference in depressive symptoms and academic performance among certain subtypes. In addition, the variance of the outcome variables is somewhat limited owing to the sample characteristics of this study. As noted, children with behavioral problems may be less likely to participate in the survey, especially because the study approached parents for their consent first. Also, we examined correlates as a single variable and with no adjusting for confounds. Thus, additional multivariate analyses may reveal different findings. Furthermore, the results do indicate that *integrated bicultural* youth report stronger bonding with parents, which is a

Author Manuscript Author Manuscript Author Manuscript Author Manuscript

powerful protection against youth problems. It is plausible that the impact of acculturation strategies on youth development may be indirect, that is, mediated by family processes and peer factors. Thus, the role of *integrated bicultural* strategy should be examined in more depth with a larger sample size and ideally longitudinally.

A notable finding is how the *modest bicultural* group emerges as a potentially struggling group relative to the other two groups. It is also possible that this group's limited attachment to either group may indicate the emergence of a hybrid identity, that is, they may not see themselves as either Korean or American but as Korean-American. Nonetheless, it is interesting that they often show a less ideal pattern than the *separation* group. Existing studies have portrayed *separation* as problematic or less desired and *bicultural* as the most adaptive. This study shows that *bicultural* youth, if they do not have strong cultural orientation to both cultures, may in fact be more vulnerable than the *separation* group. The gap in English competence between parent and youth is the greatest among *modest bicultural* youth, which may mean they experience the highest level of difficulty in parent-child communication. Although parents of *modest bicultural* youth do not report significantly higher parent-child communication problems, given that the youth are in middle school, communication may become an issue when they are older and as personal issues become more complex. This group also seems to struggle with peers, which will also become more influential in high school.

Alternatively, *modest bicultural* may in fact fit Berry's marginalization type. The means of identity are not low but are in mid-range, from "somewhat" to "fair" (i.e., 3.55 for Korean identity and 3.41 for American identity) and Korean language and cultural practices are low. Nonetheless, *modest biculturals* have high linguistic acculturation and a fair level of American cultural practices. Thus, they do not entirely fit marginalization. In addition, in some areas they show a favorable pattern, although it is limited to parental expectations and sacrifices. Regardless how we name them, the findings of this study imply that the group of youth with the characteristics of the *modest bicultural* subtype should be targets for intervention.

Limitations

A few limitations should be noted. First, the sample size of some latent groups was too small and had to be merged. Relatedly, the sample sizes of some latent groups were too small to conduct multivariate analyses in examining group profiles. However, the study is longitudinal and also includes both youth and their parents, providing multiple sources of information, which may outweigh the limitations.

Conclusion

Most important, the current findings provide significant clinical implications to inform culturally responsive clinical practice with Asian American families. The varying patterns of correlates among the three acculturation strategies highlight the need for tailored approaches in identifying risk and resilience among Asian American youth, particularly pertaining to youth's bicultural orientations and family functioning. The subtle yet meaningful differences in youth's cultural orientations suggest the increasing importance of identifying critical

within-group differences that direct the course of effective practice, and calls for greater specificity in culturally responsive practice. Another subtle yet meaningful variability is in parental cultural orientation, which signals the important role of racial-ethnic socialization in the family in shaping youth acculturation strategies. Further, our results support the increasing emphasis on the integration of culture in interventions with ethnic minority youth and families (Ying & Han, 2007).

This study advances the theory of acculturation by showcasing the complex nuances of biculturalism, i.e., hyphenated or hybrid identity, among younger generations of Korean Americans. It also signifies the importance of regularly modifying theory to fit the growing youth population.

To recap, Korean American youth have been thought to be culturally separated, like their parents (Choi & Kim, 2010; Lee, 1994), but this study demonstrates that, in fact, they are growing up mostly bicultural and integrated, and the separation strategy is not as prevalent as speculated. An integrated biculturalism with a strong sense of ethnic identity prevails among these youth, facilitating positive family process and favorable peer relations, and possibly producing better developmental outcomes. Moreover, *separation* may not be as detrimental as previously thought, and *modest bicultural*—biculturalism that is not fully developed—may in fact be less desirable among Korean American youth. Although enculturation even in the absence of a strong sense of affiliation to the mainstream society may prove to be beneficial to an extent, to promote better child development, this study guides us to strive to assist Korean American youth (and likely other Asian Americans) to develop a fully-fledged biculturalism, with a focus on solidifying their ethnic identity.

Acknowledgments

Funding

This study was supported by a Research Scientist Development Award from the National Institute of Mental Health (Grant No. K01 MH069910), a Seed Grant from the Center for Health Administration Studies, a Junior Faculty Research Fund from the School of Social Service Administration and the Office of Vice President of Research and Argonne Laboratory at the University of Chicago, to the first author.

Biographies

Yoonsun Choi is an Associate Professor at the University of Chicago, School of Social Service Administration. She received her doctorate in Social Welfare from the University of Washington, Seattle in 2001. Her major areas of interests include minority youth development; prevention of youth developmental problems; race, ethnicity and culture in youth development; culture and family process.

Kevin Tan is currently a doctoral student at the University of Chicago, School of Social Service Administration and is scheduled to receive his doctorate in June, 2016. He will begin his Assistant Professor position at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, School of Social Work in July, 2016. He main research interests include developmental trajectories of youth development, in particular how school context influences youth problem behaviors in urban schools.

Author Manuscript Author Manuscript Author Manuscript Author Manuscript

Author Manuscript Author Manuscript Author Manuscript Author Manuscript

Miwa Yasui is an Assistant Professor at the University of Chicago, School of Social Service Administration. She received her doctorate in Clinical Psychology at the University of Oregon in 2008. Her main research areas include culturally competent practice including therapeutic relationships and engagement processes, and a range of factors associated with race, ethnicity, and culture that influence child development.

Hyeouk Chris Hahm is an Associate Professor at Boston University, School of Social Work. She received her doctorate in Social Work at Columbia University in 2002. Her areas of expertise include adolescent health, Asian American women, prevention of self-harming behaviors, culturally competent practices.

References

Angold AC, Costello EJ, Messer SC, Pickles A. Development of a short questionnaire for use in epidemiological studies of depression in children and adolescents. International Journal of Methods in Psychiatric Research. 1995; 5(4):237–249.

Asher SR, Wheeler VA. Children's loneliness: A comparison of rejected and neglected peer status. Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology. 1985; 53(4):500–505. [PubMed: 4031205]

Atzaba-Poria N, Pike A. Are ethnic minority adolescents at risk for problem behavior? Acculturation and intergenerational acculturation discrepancies in early adolescence. British Journal of Developmental Psychology. 2007; 25:527–541.

Berry JW. Immigration, acculturation, and adaptation. Applied Psychology: International Review. 1997; 46(1):5–34.

Berry JW, Kim U, Minde T, Mok D. Comparative studies of acculturative stress. International Migration Review. 1987; 21(3):491–511.

Birman, D. Acculturation and human diversity in a multicultural society. In: Trickett, E.; Watts, R.; Birman, D., editors. Human Diversity: perspectives on people in context. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass inc.; 1994. p. 261-284.

Birman, D.; Trickett, EJ. Psychology. Chicago. Chicago: University of Illinois; 2002. The "language, identity, and behavior" (LIB) acculturation measure.

Bynum MS, Burton ET, Best C. Racism experiences and psychological functioning in African American college freshmen: Is racial socialization a buffer? Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology. 2007; 13(1):64–71. [PubMed: 17227178]

Catalano RF, Mazza JJ, Harachi TW, Abbott RD, Haggerty KP, Fleming CB. Raising healthy children through enhancing social development in elementary school: Results after 1.5 years. Journal of School Psychology. 2003; 41(2):143–164.

Caughy MOB, O'Campo PJ, Randolph SMN, Kim. The influence of racial socialization practices on the cognitive and behavioral competence of African American preschoolers. Child Development. 2002; 73(5):1611–1625. [PubMed: 12361322]

Chae DH, Lee S, Lincoln KD, Ihara ES. Discrimination, Family Relationships, and Major Depression Among Asian Americans. Journal of Immigrant and Minority Health. 2012; 14:361–370. Retrieved from http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s10903-011-9548-4. [PubMed: 22083344]

Chao RK. Beyond parental control and authoritarian parenting style: understanding Chinese parenting through the cultural notion of training. Child Development. 1994; 65:1111–1119. [PubMed: 7956468]

Chao, RK. Psychology. Riverside. Riverside: University of California; 2001. Adolescent perceptions of parental sacrifice.

Cheadle A, Wagner E, Anderman C, Walls M, McBride C, Bell MA, Pettigrew E. Measuring Community Mobilization in the Seattle Minority Youth Health Project. Evaluation Review. 1998; 22(6):699–716. [PubMed: 10345195]

Chia A-L, Costigan CL. A person-centered approach to identifying acculturation groups among Chinese Canadians. International Journal of Psychology. 2006; 41(5):397–412.

Author Manuscript Author Manuscript Author Manuscript Author Manuscript

Choi, Y. School of Social Service Administration. University of Chicago; 2007. Korean American Families (KAF) Project Measures.

Choi Y, He M, Harachi TW. Intergenerational cultural dissonance, family conflict, parent-child bonding, and youth antisocial behaviors among Vietnamese and Cambodian immigrant families. Journal of Youth and Adolescence. 2008; 37:85–96. [PubMed: 18645631]

Choi Y, Kim TY, Pekelnicky DD, Kim K, Kim YS. Impact of youth cultural orientations on perception of family process and development among Korean Americans. Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology. (in press).

Choi Y, Kim YS. Acculturation and enculturation: Core vs. peripheral changes in the family socialization among Korean Americans. Korean Journal of Studies of Koreans Abroad. 2010; 21:135–190. [PubMed: 21818175]

Choi Y, Kim YS, Kim SY, Park IJK. Is Asian American parenting controlling and harsh? Empirical testing of relationships between Korean American and Western parenting measures. Asian American Journal of Psychology. 2013 (Special Issue titled "Tiger Moms, Asian American Parenting, and Child/Adolescent Well-being in Diverse Contexts").

Choi Y, Kim YS, Pekelnicky DD, Kim HJ. Preservation and Modification of Culture in Family Socialization: Development of Parenting Measures for Korean Immigrant Families. Asian American Journal of Psychology. 2013; 4(2):143–154. [PubMed: 24765236]

Choi Y, Tan KPH, Yasui M, Pekelnicky DD. Race-ethnicity and culture in the family and youth outcomes: Test of a path model with Korean American youth and parents. Race and Social Problems. 2014

Coatsworth JD, Maldonado-Molina M, Pantin H, Szapocznik J. A person-centered and ecological investigation of acculturation strategies in Hispanic immigrant youth. Journal of Community Psychology. 2005; 33(2):157–174. [PubMed: 16799699]

Cohen EH. Impact of the group of co-migrants on strategies of acculturation: Towards an expansion of the Berry Model. International Migration. 2010; k49(4):1–22.

Costigan CL, Dokis DP. Similarities and differences in acculturation among mothers, fathers, and children in immigrant Chinese families. Journal of Cross Cultural Psychology. 2006; 37:723–741.

Eddy JM, Reid JB, Fetrow RA. An Elementary School-Based Prevention Program Targeting Modifiable Antecedents of Youth Delinquency and Violence: Linking the Interests of Families and Teachers (LIFT). Journal of Emotional and Behavioral Disorders. 2000; 8(3):165–176.

Feldman, SS.; Rosenthal, DA. Culture makes a difference…..or does it? A comparison of adolescents in Hong Kong, Australia, and the United States. In: Silbereisen, R.; Todt, E., editors. Adolescence in context. New York: Springer-Verlag; 1994. p. 99-124.

Fuligni AJ, Zhang W. Attitudes toward family obligation among adolescents in contemporary urban and rural China. Child Development. 2004; 74(1):180–192. [PubMed: 15015683]

Giang MT, Wittig MA. Implications of adolescents' acculturation strategies for personal and collecctive self-esteem. Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology. 2006; 12(4):725–739. [PubMed: 17087532]

Harris KM. The National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent to Adult Health (Add Health). 2009

Hawkins, JD.; Catalano, RF.; Morrison, DM.; O'Donnell, J.; Abbott, RD.; Day, LE. The Seattle Social Development Project: effects of the first four years on protective factors and problem behaviors. In: McCord, J.; Tremblay, R., editors. Preventing antisocial behavior. New York: Guilford Press; 1992.

Huizinga D, Elliott DS. Reassessing the Reliability and Validity of Self-Report Delinquency Measures. Journal of Quantitative Criminology. 1986; 2(4):293–327.

Juang LP, Shen Y, Kim SY, Wang Y. Development of an Asian American parental racial-ethnic socialization scale. Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology, Online Version. 2016

Kibria, N. Becoming Asian American: Second generation Chinese and Korean American identities. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University; 2002.

Kusche, CA.; Greenberg, MT.; Beilke, R. Department of Psychology. Seattle: University of Washington; 1988. Seattle Personality Questionnaire for Young School-Aged Children.

LaFromboise T, Coleman H, Gerton J. Psychological impact of biculturalism: evidence and theory. Psychological Bulletin. 1993; 114(3):395–412. [PubMed: 8272463]

Author Manuscript Author Manuscript Author Manuscript Author Manuscript

Lee SJ. Behind the model-minority stereotype: Voices of high- and low-achieving Asian American students. Anthropology & Education Quarterly. 1994; 25(4):413–429.

Magnusson, D. The logic and implications of a person-oriented approach. In: Cairns, RB.; Bergman, LR.; Kagan, J., editors. Methods and models for studying the individual. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, Inc.; 1998. p. 33-64.

Marshall S. Ethnic socialization of African American children: Implications for parenting, identity development, and academic achievement. Journal of Youth and Adolescence. 1995; 24(4):377–396.

Matsunaga M, Hecht ML, Elek E, Ndiaye K. Ethnic identity development and acculturation: A longitudinal analysis of Mexican-heritage youth in the Southwest United States. Journal of Cross Cultural Psychology. 2013; 41(3):410–427. [PubMed: 20740051]

Miller MJ, Yang M, Lim RH, Hui K, Choi N-Y, Fan X, Blackmon Sk. A test of the domain-specific acculturation strategy hypothesis. Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology. 2013; 19(1): 1–12. [PubMed: 23148899]

Min, PG. Korean Americans. In: Min, PG., editor. Asian Americans: Contemporary trends and issues. Thousand Oaks: Pine Forge Press; 2006. p. 230-259.

Min, PG. Preserving ethnicity through religion in America: Korean protestants and Indian Hindus across generations. New York: New York University; 2010.

Montreuil A, Bourhis RY. Acculturation orientations of competing host communities toward valued and devalued immigrants. International Journal of Intercultural Relations. 2004; 28(6):507–532.

Muthén BO, Muthén LK. Integrating Person-Centered and Variable-Centered Analyses: Growth Mixture Modeling With Latent Trajectory Classes. Alcoholism: Clinical and Experimental Research. 2000; 24(6):882–891.

Muthén, LK.; Muthén, BO. Mplus User's Guide. Los Angeles, CA: Muthen & Muthen; 2013.

Nieri T, Lee C, Kulis S, Marsiglia FF. Acculturation among Mexican-heritage preadolescents: A latent class analysis. Social Science Research. 2011; 40:1236–1248. [PubMed: 21785519]

Olson, DH.; Gorall, DM.; Tiesel, JW. FACES-IV package: Administration. Minneapolis, MN: Life Innovations, Inc; 2006. Retrieved from

Park IJ, Schwartz SJ, Lee RM, Kim M, Rodriguez L. Perceived racial/ethnic discrimination and antisocial behaviors among Asian American college students: Testing the moderating roles of ethnic and American identity. Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology. 2013; 19(2): 166–176. [PubMed: 22686143]

Pew Research Center. Social & Demographic Trends: Korean Americans. 2015 Retrieved from http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/asianamericans-graphics/koreans/.

Pham T, Harris RJ. Acculturation strategies among Vietnamese Americans. International Journal of Intercultural Relations. 2001; 25(3):279–300.

Prinz RJ, Foster SL, Kent RN, O'Leary KD. Multivariate assessment of conflict in distressed and nondistressed mother-adolescent dyads. Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis. 1979; 12(4):691–700. [PubMed: 541311]

Rivas-Drake D, Hughes D, Way N. A Closer Look at Peer Discrimination, Ethnic Identity, and Psychological Well-being Among Urban Chinese American Sixth Graders. Journal of Youth and Adolescence. 2008; 37 (1 DO - 10.1007/s10964-007-9227-x), 12-21 LA - English. Retrieved from http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s10964-007-9227-x.

Robinson C, Mandlesco B, Olsen S, Hart C. Authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive parenting practices: Development of a new measure. Psychological Reports. 1995; 77:819–830.

Sam, DL.; Berry, JW., editors. The Cambridge Handbook of Acculturation and Psychology. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; 2006.

Schwartz SJ, Zamboanga BL. Testing Berry's Model of Acculturation: A Confirmatory Latent Class Approach. Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology. 2008; 14(4):275–285. [PubMed: 18954163]

Smith EP, Atkins J, Connell CM. Family, school, and community factors and relationships to racial-ethnic attitudes and academic achievement. American Journal of Community Psychology. 2003; 32(1–2):159–173. [PubMed: 14570444]

Author Manuscript

Author Manuscript

Author Manuscript

Author Manuscript

Steinberg LD, Lamborn SD, Darling N, Mounts NS, Dornbusch SM. Overtime changes in adjustment and competence among adolescents from authoritative, authoritarian, indulgent and neglectful families. Child Development. 1994; 65:754–770. [PubMed: 8045165]

Steinberg LD, Lamborn SD, Dornbusch SM, Darling N. Impact of Parenting Practices on Adolescent Achievement: Authoritative Parenting, School Involvement, and Encouragement to Succeed. Child Development. 1992; 63(5):1266–1281. [PubMed: 1446552]

Sullivan S, Schwartz SJ, Prado G, Huang S, Pantin H, Szapocznik J. A bidimensional model of acculturation for examining differences in family functioning and behavior problems in Hispanic immigrant adolescents. Journal of Early Adolescence. 2007; 27(4):405–430.

Telzer EH. Expanding the acculturation gap-distress model: An integrative review of research. Human Development. 2010; 53(6):313–340.

Tran AGTT, Lee RM. Perceived ethnic-racial socialization, ethnic identity, and social competence among Asian American late adolescents. Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology. 2010; 16(2):169–178. [PubMed: 20438155]

Tsai, JL.; Chentsova-Dutton, Y.; Wong, Y. Why and how researchers should study ethnic identity, acculturation, and cultural orientation. In: Nagayama Hall, GC.; Okazaki, S., editors. Asian American psychology: The science of lives in context. Washington DC: American Psychological Association; 2002. p. 41-65.

Tseng V, Fuligni AJ. Parent-Adolescent Language Use and Relationships Among Immigrant Families With East Asian, Filipino, and Latin American Backgrounds. Journal of Marriage and Family. 2000; 62(2):465–476. Retrieved from http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-3737.2000.00465.x DO - 10.1111/j.1741-3737.2000.00465.x.

Ward, C. The A, B, Cs of Acculturation. In: Matsumoto, D., editor. The Handbook of Culture and Psychology. New York: Oxford University Press; 2001. p. 411-445.

Waters, MC.; Ueba, R.; Marrow, H., editors. The new Americans: A guide to immigration since 1965. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press; 2007.

Werthamer-Larson, L.; Kellam, SG.; Wheeler, L. Teacher Observation of Classroom Adaptation (TOCA-R). Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University; 1990. Retrieved from

Ying Y-W, Han M. The Longitudinal Effect of Intergenerational Gap in Acculturation on Conflict and Mental Health in Southeast Asian American Adolescents. American Journal of Orthopsychiatry. 2007; 77(1):61–66. Retrieved from http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0002-9432.77.1.61 DO - 10.1037/0002-9432.77.1.61. [PubMed: 17352586]

Yoon E, Hacker J, Hewitt A, Abrams M, Cleary SE. Social connectedness, discrimination, and social status as mediators of acculturation/enculturation and well-being. Journal of Counseling Psychology. 2012; 59(1):86–96. [PubMed: 21895356]

Table 1

Latent Profile Analysis Fit Indices

	AIC	BIC	Sample-Size Adjusted BIC	Entropy	Vuong-Lo-Mendell-Rubin Test	Bootstrapped Likelihood Ratio Test	Sample Size of Smallest Subtype
1 Subtype	2939.91	2890.63	2942.60	NA	NA	NA	NA
2 Subtypes	2715.20	2779.68	2719.47	0.93	0.004	0.001	25
3 Subtypes	**2656.37**	**2744.60**	**2662.21**	**0.83**	**0.009**	**0.001**	**26**
4 Subtypes	2609.61	2721.60	2617.03	0.78	0.019	0.001	18
5 Subtypes	2585.26	2718.00	2591.24	0.82	0.276	0.001	10

Author Manuscript Author Manuscript Author Manuscript Author Manuscript

Author Manuscript Author Manuscript Author Manuscript Author Manuscript

Table 2

Latent Groups of Youth Acculturation Strategy

	Korean Language	English Language	Korean Cultural Participation	American Cultural Participation	Korean Identity	American Identity
Separation (n=26; 11.8%)	4.42	3.21	3.99	2.80	4.45	1.88
Integrated Bicultural (n=150; 66.9%)	3.08	4.70	3.60	3.97	4.62	3.60
Modest Bicultural (n=44; 21.3%)	2.54	4.48	2.93	3.88	3.55	3.41

Note: The response options were (1) Not at all, (2) Not so well, (3) Neutral, (4) Quite Well, and (5) Very well (like native) for language questions and (1) Not at all, (2) Not much, (3) Somewhat, (4) Fair, and (5) Very much for cultural participation and identity questions.

Author Manuscript

Author Manuscript

Author Manuscript

Author Manuscript

Table 3

Comparisons of Correlates by Latent Groups

	Separation n=26 11.8%	Integrated Bicultural n=150 66.9%	Modest Bicultural n=44 21.3%	Significant Differences (p< 0.05)
Demographics				
Youth Demographics				
Proportion of Boys	57.0%	46.3%	68.4%	2<3
Years of living in U.S.	10.88	10.50	11.14	
Born in US	12.4%	65.7%	72.5%	1<2, 1<3
Parent Demographics				
Years of living in U.S.	16.87	16.27	7.79	1>3, 2>3
American Citizen	59.1%	49.8%	14.5%	1>3, 2>3
Permanent Resident	30.0%	28.5%	25.3%	
Youth Report Correlates				
Peer Characteristics				
# of Close Korean Friends	40.99	37.39	35.70	
# of Close White Friends	30.12	38.33	39.46	
Peer Antisocial Behaviors	1.36	1.37	1.46	
Peer Antisocial Beliefs	1.22	1.39	1.57	1<3
Peer Rejection	1.59	1.33	1.60	2<3
Family Processes				
Bonding to Mother	4.30	4.32	3.81	1>3, 2>3
Bonding to Father	3.90	4.06	3.49	1<2, 1>3
Discipline	2.60	2.76	2.76	
Support	3.78	3.81	3.26	1>3, 2>3
Conflict	2.11	2.29	2.38	
Supervision	3.85	3.97	3.78	
Salient to Korean Families				
Mother's School/Career Expectations	3.76	4.46	4.28	1 < 2, 1<3
Father's School/Career Expectations	3.62	4.37	4.25	1<2, 1<3
Parental Sacrifice	4.29	4.69	4.40	1<2, 2<3
Feeling Ashamed of Parents	1.55	2.03	2.22	1<2, 1<3
Parent Report Correlates				
Parent Cultural Orientations				
Korean Language	4.99	4.92	4.93	1>2, 1>3
English Language	2.59	3.04	3.09	2>1, 3>1
Korean Cultural Participation	3.70	3.62	3.39	1>3, 2>3
American Cultural Participation	2.31	2.77	2.79	2>1, 3>1
Korean Identity	4.29	4.04	3.91	1>2, 1>3
American Identity	1.78	2.42	2.31	2>1, 3>1
Family Processes				

Author Manuscript Author Manuscript Author Manuscript Author Manuscript

	Separation *n*=26 11.8%	**Integrated Bicultural** *n*=150 66.9%	**Modest Bicultural** *n*=44 21.3%	**Significant Differences** ($p < 0.05$)
Parental-Child Communication	3.91	3.83	3.72	
Parental Supervision	4.04	4.12	4.13	
Parental Warm	3.93	4.11	3.81	2>3
Family Cohesion	4.00	3.99	3.83	
Salient to Korean Families				
Ethnic Socialization	4.43	4.17	4.00	1>2, 1>3
Guan Ideology	4.36	4.36	4.15	2>3
Traditional Korean Parent Values	4.39	4.24	4.13	
Youth Outcomes				
Youth Self-Report				
Delinquent Behaviors (Time 1)	0.81	0.76	0.84	
Delinquent Behaviors (Time 2)	0.67	0.67	0.78	
Depressive Symptoms (Time 1)	1.45	1.52	1.73	
Depressive Symptoms (Time 2)	1.64	1.76	1.65	
Academic Performance (Time 1)	3.54	3.59	3.46	
Academic Performance (Time 2)	3.53	3.43	3.34	
Parent Report				
Delinquent Behaviors	1.50	1.31	1.32	1>2

Note: 1 indicates *separation*, 2 *integrated bicultural* and 3 *modest bicultural*