

udes toward relationships between Asian American women and Caucasian men to provide insight on this sensitive topic.

In "Ethnic Identities Reflected in Value Orientation of Two Generations of Korean American Women," Ailee Moon and Young I. Song investigate the value orientation similarities and differences between immigrant mothers and their adolescent daughters. Value orientation is analyzed in the context of ethnic identity. The study, which is based on the responses of 115 Korean immigrant mothers and their 89 daughters, sheds light on the points of agreement and disagreement in relation to traditional Confucian beliefs and moral standards.

Searching for and Defining a Korean American Identity in a Multicultural Society

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INTRODUCTION

The United States of America is historically a nation of immigrants and a multicultural society. Because early European settlers and immigrants constituted a majority of the population, the cultural and ideological orientation in the United States has been Eurocentric. The nation has advocated the melting pot theory as a model of assimilation. A melting pot, like homogenized stew, is possible among European Caucasian immigrants even through their mixed marriages because of similar physical appearance and skin color.

However, the melting pot model does not work for people of color unless wholesale interracial marriages occur in the United States so as to mix up all the blood and cause a drastic change toward racial homogeneity, as once suggested by Arnold Toynbee, a British historian. As long as there are differences in skin color and outward physical appearance, people tend to be categorized, classified, and put in a pecking order according to skin color and physical characteristics (Kitano, 1974).

An alternative model of a multiethnic and multicultural society is that of a salad bowl (or *jap-chae*, a Korean dish) wherein each ingredient in the tossed salad retains its own color, texture, taste, and identity. The sum total of all the ingredients becomes a mosaic of national identities without the individual parts losing their identity. Salad dressing of oil and vinegar would induce a smooth and tasty blending and unity of the salad.

We need to strive toward a pluralistic society where we can accept and appreciate differences and similarities among diverse ethnic groups. We should promote mutual understanding and cooperation, rather than competition and pitting one against others among ethnic groups. When united, we will make a culturally enriched, colorful, and strong nation.

DEFINITION OF IDENTITY

Baumeister (1988) defined the criteria for identity as continuity as a person across time and differentiation from others.

What is ethnic identity? We use two interconnected or hyphenated words to describe our dual identity, such as Korean American, Chinese American, or African American. Douglas Kim (1993) prefers a more descriptive term "American of Korean descent."

My identity is the total sum of my being and the entirety of what I am. It is the totality of my physical, mental, emotional, social, legal, cultural, and conscious and unconscious thought processes and feelings. As we develop, we will expand and synthesize all we are, although not necessarily smoothly or without problems.

Some aspects of me are given and beyond my control. However, other characteristics are acquired or can be cultivated with effort. Identity does not form naturally by itself, but identity formation is an active process in to which we can make considerable input and define who we are. We will be able to influence the shaping of our identities.

MULTI-FACETED DIMENSIONS OF IDENTITY

Many dimensions and components of ourselves contribute to the totality of our identities. To comprehend the concept of identity more clearly, we may break down the identity into its various dimensions and components, and consider the characteristics of each dimension and ingredient and how they contribute toward the totality of identity formation.

Physical Identity

Our physical identity is made up of such factors as birth; birth order; gender; color of skin, hair, and eyes; physical appearance; and genetic factors, such as hereditary dispositions and diseases.

Our external physical appearance, especially facial features and the color of skin and hair, are readily visible, and therefore can be easily distinguished and categorized. The physical differences are the most common source of separation, bias, and discrimination.

In order to change our identity, we may attempt to modify our weight, and to a lesser degree, our height, or even dye our hair or change our faces by plastic surgery. However, genetic factors are given and we are born with them. We have no choice in choosing our biological parents, ethnicity, and family lineage. How do we feel about our ethnicity, gender, and physical appearance? Do we accept, deny, or try to cope with it, or make up for it?

Legal Identity

Another dimension of our identities is defined by the law and our legal status in the country. Examples are date of birth; country or place of birth (American born, foreign born); legal name (original Korean name, Anglicized name, woman's name after marriage, name of adopted child, and adopted popular name, that is, pen name, movie star's name); U.S. citizenship; naturalization; dual citizenship; permanent resident status; entry as an illegal alien; foreign exchange student status; age of entry to the United States; ethnicity of spouse,

biological parents, step-parents, adopted parents; social security number; inheritance rights, and so forth.

Some of the legal status characteristics are given, and others are something we can choose, change, and plan.

Professional/Occupational and Achievement-Related Identity

Usually Asians come from a historically hierarchical society and tend to be status-conscious and achievement-oriented. Often people view their self-esteem and self-identity in terms of their academic and professional achievements, degrees, and titles. Also in this capitalist society, business and financial success—millionaire or celebrity status—enhance self-esteem and self-perception as well as perceptions by others. These kinds of accomplishments contribute to a more positive self-identity.

Psychological Identity

Psychological, emotional, and life experiences are crucial in shaping and influencing identity formation. Important contributing factors are the nature and quality of relationships with parents, siblings, and extended family during the developmental age; and positive and negative identification with parents, especially with regard to their ethnicity. These psychological experiences play an important role in the development of ethnic identity. The influences of other life experiences include friends, school peers, teachers, neighbors, co-workers, girlfriends or boyfriends, husband or wife, including their ethnicities.

Also other influencing psychological experiences are experiences of prejudice and discrimination, feelings of alienation and marginality, feelings of insecurity and non-acceptance, and feelings of victimization.

Other pertinent psychological dimensions that contribute to one's identity are self-concept, self-esteem, self-affirmation, perception by others, self-denial, self-hatred, ambivalence, conscious and unconscious defensive psychological postures, especially with regard to ethnic issues, and the degree of psychological resolutions and insight into one's identity.

We are well aware that psychological factors are strongly influenced by the sociocultural environment in which we live. A child's life experiences will be very different if he/she grows up in a small town in North Dakota or in the middle of Koreatown in Los Angeles. It would make a difference if the child attends an all-white school in Minnesota or a big-city school in San Francisco where Korean and other Asian ethnic students are predominant.

In the psychological dimensions of identity, there are aspects we can choose and control, and there are areas we may or may not be able to influence as a child, such as family dynamics and parental child-rearing practices.

Cultural Identity

The transmission of cultural traditions, values, customs, rituals, and family stories through parents and extended families are very important for children in developing interest in their family history and ethnic heritage. It helps shape their cultural identity. They can further increase their understanding and knowl-

edge of Korean culture and history by attending a local Korean weekend language school, learning the Korean language and reading books on Korean culture and literature. Many young people find it a very moving experience to visit Korea, meet relatives in Korea, and find "roots" there. There are Korean American summer camps, Korean American college leadership conferences, and other Korean American community and church programs that can help enhance the development of Korean American identity. Each year the Korean government and universities in Korea offer Korean summer culture schools for overseas students. Many high school students find Korean summer school experiences worthwhile and helpful in their search for cultural identity.

Ideological/Political/Religious Identity

Another dimension of identity is defined by where we stand ideologically and what we do in terms of social, political, and spiritual/religious actions and behaviors. The following list will tell us something about the person and his/her ideological orientation, belief system, and political/religious affiliations: Christian (Catholic, Protestant, born-again, fundamentalist, liberal, etc.), Jehovah's Witness, Mormon, Buddhist, agnostic, atheist, communist, socialist, anti-communist, Ku Klux Klan, skinhead, Aryan Brother, Crips, Bloods, Black Panther, Gray Panther, feminist, environmentalist, peace movement activist, civil rights activist, nonviolence protester, Republican, Democrat, Libertarian, conservative, anarchist, and so on.

TOTALITY OF SELF-IDENTITY

In sum, the totality of self-identity is multifaceted and dynamic. Many factors and dimensions interact together and contribute synergistically or sometimes discordantly to the development of identity. There are aspects we have no choice over because they are given. But there are many components and dimensions of identity which we can intentionally choose and influence. Positive identification with one's own ethnic identity, and the integration and synthesis of various experiences and dimensions will contribute toward a more solid sense of who we are, and the enhancement of our psychological well-being, including strong ethnic identity.

THE GRID MODEL OF KOREAN/ASIAN AMERICAN IDENTITY ADJUSTMENT

We propose a grid for four modes of Korean/Asian American identity adjustment as illustrated in Table 10.1. The four modes in the quad are assimilation, traditionalist, marginality, and bicultural integration. The four modes form a conceptual paradigm, but, in reality, people tend to adopt varying gradations and mixtures among the four types of adjustment. This is a modified version of similar paradigms previously proposed by Kitano & Daniels (1988).

As we will see later, self-identity adjustment is not fixed, and changes will occur in the different developmental phases of life, as described in the life cycle proposed by Erik Erikson (1968).

Table 10.1
Four Modes of Korean American Identity

Accept	Reject
Bicultural Integration Maintain active contact with both cultures Biculturally comfortable and competent Can easily move in and out of both cultures Bicultural perspective	Assimilation Mainstreaming Associate mainly with Caucasians and avoid Korean people "Banana" identity Culturally assimilated but physical appearance still a barrier
Traditionalist Emphasize "Koreanness" Reject American values and avoid American people Voluntary segregation from mainstream society	Marginality "Deculturation" Withdrawal from both societies and cultures Loss of cultural identity Isolated and alienated, individualistic experience

Source: Modified; Kitano & Daniels (1988).

Assimilation

The mode of assimilation is represented by a person who is eager to assimilate into the white American mainstream. The person tends to associate with white peers only and to avoid Korean people. The person rejects Korean/Asian culture and values, including Korean food and language. He/she admires and adopts mainstream American culture and values. He/she despises Korean people and may feel ashamed of being a Korean. He/she may hide from being a Korean. This mode of adjustment is especially common during the period of kindergarten, elementary, and junior high school when children are sensitive to being different from peers. They want to be similar to, and be accepted by, their majority Caucasian peers. Some late teenagers and even adults may continue in this mode of assimilation as they probably have had very negative experiences in response to being Korean Americans. Although they are trying hard to assimilate into mainstream white society, their different Asian physical appearance remains an obstacle and a barrier to complete assimilation into white society.

Traditionalist

The traditionalist strongly identifies with Korean people and their culture, while rejecting and resisting American values. He/she is proud of being a Korean and feels that everything Korean is good or "number one." The person usually associates with Korean people, eats Korean food, and maintains family relations and a Korean lifestyle. They emphasize Koreanness and Korean culture to their children. The traditionalist usually attends a Korean ethnic church for

social, emotional, and spiritual support. By avoiding mainstream society, the person may be living a self-imposed "ethnic ghetto" life.

Marginality

In the mode of marginality, the person is withdrawn from both cultures. The person feels marginalized and alienated from both mainstream society and the Korean community. He/she feels a loss of cultural identity, acceptance, and belonging in both communities. They are "decultured" and live an individualistic and isolated existence. Young people during the phase of identity crisis and some interracial married Korean women may prefer this kind of existence.

Bicultural Integration

In the bicultural integration mode of adjustment, the person feels comfortable, competent, and adequate biculturally. He/she may speak the Korean language, or even if the person does not speak Korean, he/she feels proud of and is comfortable and knowledgeable with regard to Korean and American cultures. The person can move in and out of both communities easily with flexibility and appropriate cultural behavior. They view their bicultural orientation as an asset, not a liability. They feel that their lives are enriched by bicultural/multicultural perspectives (Grace Kim, 1993). We realize that this mode of bicultural integration is desirable and ideal in the conceptual scheme. However, it is not easy for American-born second-generation Korean Americans to be biculturally integrated. The 1.5 generation (those who immigrated to the United States when they were young, i.e., at an elementary or junior high school age) will have a better chance to maintain their bicultural and bilingual orientation.

Won Moo Hurh (1993) described this mode as a "cosmopolitan personality," which has had positive resolution of biculturalism, and displays flexibility, motivation, and leadership potential with a strong sense of Korean American identity. With the ascendancy of the Pacific Rim countries' global economic power, such a bicultural/bilingual, cosmopolitan, "international and global" person will have an advantage in employment, business opportunities, and the political arena.

ETHNIC MINORITY IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT

Another theory of the stages of minority identity development was proposed by Derald Sue and David Sue (1990). Their ethnic identity development stages are as follows.

The Conformity Stage

The person prefers the dominant, white culture and wants to conform to his/her white peers. This person has negative beliefs about his/her own culture and has feelings of self-hatred with regard to his/her own minority ethnicity. Often young children or teenagers may feel this way when they want to be like their white peers.

The Dissonance Stage

The person experiences cultural confusion, conflict, or even an identity crisis. Denial begins to break down, which leads to questioning. The person is in conflict as a result of disparate pieces of information or experiences that challenge his/her current concept.

This stage frequently occurs among late teen and college age students who are rebellious against their parental and ethnic values, and yet are beginning to think about their ethnic identity issues in relation to dating and courting a person of the opposite sex and of a different race.

The Resistance and Immersion Stage

The person begins to reject, or react against, the dominant white society and its values as having no validity for him or her. The three common types of affective feelings the person experiences during this stage are guilt, shame, and anger. Now the person begins to show endorsement of his/her own ethnic minority and its values.

The Introspection Stage

Loyalty and responsibility to one's own ethnic group and family on the one hand, and a desire for personal independence and autonomy on the other hand, come into conflict. The person begins to recognize that there are many elements in the white American society that are functional and desirable, yet there is confusion as to how one should incorporate these elements into the ethnic minority culture and values. An introspective mode sets in for more questioning and searching.

The Integrative and Awareness Stage

One feels a sense of fulfillment with regard to one's own cultural identity. Cultural values of other minorities and dominant Caucasian groups are objectively examined and accepted or rejected on the basis of prior experiences in an earlier stage of identity development. The person in this stage attains a more synergistic and integrated bicultural orientation that is realistic and workable for them. Some call this phase the "stage of internalization" (Hall et al., 1972).

As Derald Sue & David Sue suggested (1990), we should be aware of some cautions and possible limitations in proposing any kind of ethnic identity models. Cultural identity development is a dynamic process, not a static one. Models should serve as conceptual frameworks to help us understand the process and development, but there are mixtures of the various stages and many other factors are involved.

LIFE CYCLE AND IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT

Based on experiences of his own and other second-generation Korean Americans, Douglas Kim (1993) reiterated that the nature and degree of awareness and struggle with one's own ethnic identity do change and modify in different phases of life.

Elementary and junior high school youths, for example, tend to deny and reject their ethnic identity and want to be like the dominant white peers. The children are sensitive to being different and to being ridiculed often for being different. Approval and acceptance by peers are important to them.

When they are in their late teens and college age, the issue of in-group and out-group becomes a sensitive one. Identity issues surface more acutely when they begin to date. Many of them begin to think about their identity seriously for the first time. There may be ambivalence and confusion, leading to introspection and inner struggle. Steady courtship with a member of the opposite sex of a different race and plans for an eventual marriage may precipitate a more serious crisis of some kind of resolution of ethnic issues.

By the time the second-generation Korean Americans reach adulthood, many of them appear to have accepted their ethnicity and bicultural orientation with more positive resolution. It is also noted that by the time their children have grown to be young adults, the immigrant parents tend to change and modify from their firm cultural stand. Parents become more "mellow," conciliatory, and willing to accept their offspring's more Americanized way of life. The earlier cultural conflict between the parents and growing children appears to resolve toward more mutual accommodation (Park & Sohn, 1993).

However, the above statement does not mean that the first generation of immigrants will change in their basic cultural and ethnic orientation. Even if they have lived in the United States for a long period of time, their basic core of "Koreanness" will continue, while their Western acculturation proceeds (Luke Kim, 1992). The progressive Americanization of Korean immigrants and their strong attachments are not mutually exclusive. Americanization is "added on" to their Koreanness, and does not discard or weaken the original identification. Hurh and Kim (1988) described this phenomenon as an "adhesive adaptation pattern."

OUTMARRIAGE

Outmarriage data (marriage out of one's own ethnic group) may provide another interesting angle and insight into ethnic identity issues. According to Kitano's study in Los Angeles (Kitano & Rogers, 1988), the highest rates of outmarriage of Asian Americans occurred in 1977. The outmarriage rates were Japanese (68%), Chinese (49.7%), and Koreans (31.1%). Females consistently outmarried at a higher rate than males. Since 1977 there has been a decrease in outmarriages by all groups, probably due to the fact that the population of new immigrants from Asia grew drastically. By 1984, the rates of outmarriage were Japanese (51.2%), Chinese (30%), and Koreans (8.7%). Japanese Americans have had much fewer numbers of recent immigrants and also have been in the United States longer than other Asians. This appears to be reflected in their higher rates of outmarriage than the rates of other Asian Americans. The data seem to suggest that as their generation increases (i.e., second, third, and fourth generations), they tend to outmarry more and show less attachment to their own ethnic identity.

Table 10.2
Asian/Korean Values versus American Values

Asian/Korean Traditional Values	American Mainstream Values
Family-oriented	Individual-oriented
Interdependence	Independence and autonomy
Respect for parents and elders	Horizontal, democratic structure
Family loyalty and filial piety	Depends on the family and individual
Duty, obedience, acceptance	Freedom of choice, independence
Family discipline via shame/punishments	School/other agency discipline
	Family Relations
Family/kinship bonds, collectivism	Individualism
Success through self-discipline and will	Pragmatism, fulfilling one's potential
Sense of stoicism and fatalism	Sense of optimism and opportunism
Reciprocity and obligation	Avoidance of obligation ("going Dutch")
Status consciousness and face-saving	Self-realization; do your own thing
Living in harmony with nature	Control and conquer nature
	Life Philosophy
Subtle, non-verbal body language	Emphasis on verbal language
Control of feelings	Free expression of feelings
Flowery, indirect expression	Direct, explicit expression
No eye-to-eye contact	Eye contact important
Honorific language	Equality in language
Self-effacing	Self-promoting
No hugging or kissing in public	Hugging and kissing in public
	Communication Style

DIFFERENCES IN CULTURAL VALUES BETWEEN ASIAN TRADITION AND MAINSTREAM EUROAMERICANS

We find that the most common conflict between Asian/Korean immigrant parents and their second-generation youths is due to the cultural value differences in the concept of self and family. Asian cultural values derive from the 3000-year tradition of Confucius's teachings. Confucian teachings stress work ethics (will rather than natural talent); life long self-cultivation (emphasis on higher learning and scholarship and respect for teachers); respect for elders and ancestors (importance of family lineage); priority of the interest of the family, group, and collective welfare over the interest of the individual member; and respect for and conformity to the hierarchical structure and order of the society and family.

In contrast, American democratic ideology emphasizes freedom, individuality, autonomy, independence, and equality. This different concept of the self and the family is reflected in family relations, interpersonal relationships, gender roles, communication styles, and other associated behaviors that emerge.

This difference between the primacy of the individual over the family in American culture, on the one hand, and the primacy of family over the individual in Asian culture on the other hand, are the source of recurring conflicts and

disagreements between Asian immigrant parents and their American-born youths. The conflicts are manifested in constant tensions between parents and youths, with pulling and pushing, and maneuvering from both sides. Some youths may conform to parents' wishes, but many may resist or rebel.

It is a big challenge for both parents and teenagers to come to some kind of mutual understanding and "win-win" solution. What would be a win-win situation? Would Korean/Asian American values be a hybrid of two cultures or a bicultural perspective? A bicultural perspective requires flexibility, give-and-take, and the ability to move in and out of both cultures without too much conflict. Table 10.2 illustrates the differences between the two "traditional" or "model" cultures. There is a risk of describing the differences in a stereotypical manner. This is for contrast only. Also, it should be noted that there have been significant cultural changes toward Westernization among Asian countries. The global "democratic" ideology is becoming a set of common values that people aspire to across different nations and races. Thus the differences between Western and Eastern values are narrowing.

SUMMARY

In searching, defining and, developing the Korean/Asian identity, we have described the multi-faceted factors and dimensions that contribute to the totality of one's self-identity. In spite of the many givens we are born with, we have considerable choice and input that we can exercise in the shaping and directing of our ethnic identity formation processes. We have described the different modes and phases of identity development we go through as we search, define, and find our identities. Developing and maintaining a biculturally integrated "dual identity" is not an easy task, but it is a desirable and attainable goal. As a bicultural, cosmopolitan, and "globally oriented" person, one will find a more self-affirming and culturally enriching way of life.

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