

The Relationship Among Self-esteem, Acculturation, and Recreation Participation of Recently Arrived Chinese Immigrant Adolescents

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This survey study investigated the relationships among self-esteem, acculturation and recreation participation among recently arrived Chinese immigrant adolescents. A total of 117 Chinese students in New York City, 58 males and 59 females from grades 9 through 12, completed the three questionnaires used in the study. Research findings showed that these students were at a low level of acculturation, but had a moderately high level of self-esteem. They participated most frequently in home/indoor activities and were attracted to various mass media using Chinese language and music. They often recreated with family members, Chinese friends or were alone in their free time. Boys participated significantly more often in sports while girls participated significantly more often in arts and crafts. School clubs and student organizations were the organizations with which these immigrant students most often affiliated. The perceived barriers to participation cited most often were lack of English proficiency, lack of opportunity, lack of partner and money and lack of knowledge about sites or information about activities. Both self-esteem and acculturation had a significant positive correlation with total level of recreation participation and a significant negative correlation with the total number of perceived barriers. Students with higher levels of self-esteem participated more often in recreation activities in the indoor/home-based, spectator, and outdoor activity categories. They also less often associated with non-Chinese people for recreation. Students with higher levels of acculturation participated more often in recreation activities and affiliated more often with organizations. No significant relationship was found between self-esteem and acculturation.

KEYWORDS: *Recreation participation, self-esteem, acculturation, perceived barriers, Chinese immigrant adolescents*

Introduction

This descriptive study was carried out to identify the recreation activity participation levels and patterns of recently arrived Chinese immigrant adolescents and to examine the association of those behaviors with levels of acculturation and self-esteem. The Chinese community in the United States has been radically transformed from the 61% who were American born 30

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years ago to the current 63% who are foreign born. These Chinese newcomers often have little in common with Chinese families who have been here for two or more generations though both groups strive to assimilate while retaining a sense of their roots (Karnow & Yashihara, 1992; Takaki, 1989). Despite the fact that Asians have a reputation as a "model minority" and that, relative to the general population, Chinese youths are noted for their outstanding academic achievements, recently arrived immigrants usually have adjustment problems in school and often experience confusion, bewilderment and culture shock (Kou, 1982; Lee, 1990, March 20).

Theoretical Perspectives

Acculturation or acculturative change (following contact between two distinct cultures) can be viewed from both group and individual perspectives (Berry, J. W., Kim, U., & Boski, P., 1988). Adherents of collective conceptions assume that all members of the cultural group share to some degree in their culture's distinctive character and react similarly (Scott & Scott, 1989). The individual perspective or "Psychological acculturation," as used by Berry and Kim (1988), focuses on the acquisition of a second culture by each individual.

Many researchers use the word "acculturation" in referring to a process or a state. The "process" refers to the interaction between the migrant and the members of the host group; the "state" refers to the outcome, the result from the process of the interaction. In his model of acculturation, Padilla (1980) involves two essential elements—cultural awareness and ethnic loyalty. Cultural awareness refers to an individual's knowledge of specific cultural material, e.g., language, values, history, art and foods of the group of origin and of the host group. Loyalty refers to the individual's preference for one cultural orientation over the other. The lesser acculturated individual will prefer ethnic-related activities and will maintain a network of close friends, including a spouse, of the same ethnicity (group of origin). The process of acculturation is multidimensional in the model. Padilla (1980) posits that there are at least five dimensions important to determining acculturative change: language familiarity and usage, cultural heritage, ethnicity (ethnic pride and identity), inter-ethnic interaction, and inter-ethnic distance.

Cultural Differences in Recreation and Leisure

The value of recreation is less recognized in Chinese than American society (Cheng, 1948). Generally speaking, recreation in traditional Chinese society is different from that of the Western world in at least the following four ways. *First*, to the Chinese, recreation means the absence of strenuous physical exertion, while many of the recreational activities of the Western world involve hard physical exercise. Leisure is more active and action-oriented in Western society; Chinese are more passive than active and more

spectators than participants in recreation. *Second*, it is important for most Westerners to have at least one day off every week which is not always seen as necessary for many Chinese. *Third*, there is less of a variety of outdoor recreation and it is not popular or favored by traditional Chinese families. *Fourth*, fewer Chinese leisure activities involve team work or play by a large group of people. For example, sports are not valued that much in Chinese society in general; many Chinese games are individualistic, not requiring interaction among a large group of people (Cheng, 1948; Emery, 1984; Millard, 1987; Ming-de Foundation, 1987).

Patterns of leisure and recreation involvement are shaped by the more inclusive culture (Neulinger, 1981; Kelly, 1983; Godbey, 1985; Goodale & Witt, 1985). Values of a culture may be conveyed through participation in play and recreation. In the United States, recreation and play activities have a long history of being employed as effective tools to aid immigrant children during the assimilation and acculturation process (Kelly, 1983; Kraus, 1987). When Chinese migrate to the United States, research has found that along with increasing acculturation, the nature of Chinese recreation participation changes, becoming more similar to that of Westerners (Cheng, 1948; Emery, 1984; Kwong, 1987; Millard, 1987).

However, acculturation is never an easy process for Chinese immigrants. Upon migration to the United States, youth immigrants face changes in family routines, changes in their community life, and changes in their social environment. Some of their adjustment problems identified by researchers include: lack of English proficiency; difficulties in adjusting to the educational system and school environment, separation from the family; lack of familiarity with the customs and the people; financial need; lack of employment opportunities or, conversely, a heavy work load; cultural conflicts and identity crisis; a disparity between their expectations and illusions about the United States and the reality they face; and the experience of discrimination due to racism (Sung, 1978; Kou, 1982; Kwong, 1987). Parents, the major agents of socialization of the child, are themselves in the transition from one culture to another and are thus unable to help their children to understand their new environment. It is often the children who must help the parents adjust.

The problems cited above are common during the acculturation process (Berry et al., 1988; Kim & Gudykunst, 1988). Even though the problems may seem less difficult for those Chinese adolescents from more westernized areas (e.g., Taiwan and Hong Kong), failure to deal with these problems may make these adolescents feel incompetent and unworthy resulting in a weakening of their self-esteem (Wan, 1978; Kou, 1982) which may then affect their ability to adjust to the new environment (Kou, 1982; Prigoff, 1984; Hattar, 1987; Thompson, 1987). Increasing school drop-outs, street crime, suicide rate, and various other psychological and social problems are indicators of their maladjustment (Sung, 1967; Kwong, 1987; Karnow & Yoshihara, 1992).

The degree to which Chinese individuals adopt new practices into their personal behavioral repertoires may vary substantially depending, at least in

part, on the length of residence and place of origin. Millard (1987) stated that changes in leisure attitude and leisure participation on both sides of the Pacific are due to the influence of Western culture, higher income and better education. Kwong (1987), comparing Chinese immigrants from different areas of origin, argued that individuals from Taiwan and Hong Kong have experienced American culture through movies, TV, and advertising, thus easing their transition in the new environment. With regard to recreation participation, such knowledge and experiences should result in newly arrived Chinese youth immigrants from these two countries exhibiting some of the recreation participation and participation patterns of American youth. Such behavior would probably not be expected from newly arrived Chinese immigrant youth from mainland China. From the perspective of individuals, however, individual Chinese adolescents at different levels of acculturation may reflect different kinds and degrees of recreational participation and participation patterns.

Self-esteem and Recreation Participation

Epstein (1973) referred to the maintenance of self-esteem as a central function of the self's activities. Becker (1971) also stated that self-esteem takes root in internalized social rules for behavior. Culture, which is a structure of rules, customs, and ideas, provides the individual with a "highly involuted and meaningful scheme of action, which makes fine shades of self-esteem possible" (p. 83). The individual learns about self from the experience of socialization and interaction with others. Different value systems will definitely affect self-definition.

Many researchers (Rosenberg, 1979; Higgins, Klein, & Strauman, 1985) indicated that low self-esteem results from a disparity between different parts of the self, e.g., private self and public self. The developmental considerations of adolescence are particularly crucial for establishing self-esteem because it is the stage when individuals must deal with great physical and sexual changes along with rapid mental, psycho-social, and moral development. These changes urge adolescents to re-evaluate or re-define themselves. Family and school are two very important institutions which foster or inhibit the development of a positive self-concept. "Parents and peers are considered to be the central players on the stages of enhancing or denigrating adolescents's sense of self" (Bednar, Wells & Peterson, 1989). Newly arrived Chinese adolescents quite often find value conflicts between home and school as a consequence of cultural differences.

Recreation contributes to the physical, mental, and moral well-being of the participant. It is widely believed, moreover, that play is a functional need to human beings (as of all mammals) and is related to biopsychosocial development and survival (Csikszentmihalyi, 1981; Frost & Sunderlin, 1985; Reilly, 1974; Sutton-Smith, 1980). Iso-Ahola (1980) argued that the feeling of competence is the major intrinsic reward linked with play behavior. It seems that the act of playing or recreating involves self-evaluation and that

the self-concept may be enhanced as a result of achieving/learning recreational skills. Recreational skills comprise both mastering activities and handling interpersonal relationships.

Participation in recreation provides youth a context for trying out abilities and evaluating themselves in every aspect to establish and balance their self-esteem (Rosenberg, 1965; Yarworth & Gauthier, 1978). Loesch (1984) states that leisure activities provide opportunities for achieving developmental tasks which are limited in educational (school) and familial contexts. They offer youth opportunities for "role-playing" in situations where the interpersonal dynamics are safer. Recreation experiences may be particularly important for newly arrived Chinese immigrant youth because of the "experiments" they can make in recreation activities. However, many Chinese parents are more concerned that their children study than become involved in activities.

Research results in the United States have demonstrated a positive relationship between levels of recreation participation and self-esteem among youths (Rosenberg, 1965; Coopersmith, 1968; Yarworth and Gauthier, 1978). Iso-Ahola (1980) found that those individuals with a wide variety and large number of leisure skills have a higher self-concept than those with only a few leisure skills. He further argued that self-esteem is enhanced only when one learns new skills or develops new abilities. Also, the more important leisure is to an individual, the more likely one is to define one's self-esteem in terms of leisure skills and performance.

Some authors emphasize the importance of outdoor recreation, sports, and other physical activities for youngsters because the learning and mastering of sports and other relevant skills (e.g., social integration) improve self-concept (Alwon, 1979; Wright, 1982; Berman & Berman, 1989). The evidence is, however, equivocal. Some studies discovered no significant relationship between outdoor and sports programs and self-esteem in youth (Duhaime, 1982; Ruzicha, 1984; Langsner & Anderson, 1987). Other factors, such as the impact of coaches and parents, the intention of the participants, and peer interaction seemed to be significant determinants (Langsner & Anderson, 1987; Hines & Groves, 1989). Wankel and Berger (1990) presented an overview of research on the contribution of sport and physical activity to personal enjoyment, personal growth, social integration, and social change. They claimed that a potential exists for negative as well as positive outcomes. Thus, one must identify the prerequisite activity, leadership, organizational, and environmental conditions for facilitating positive outcomes.

Certain types of activities seem to be more significant or potent than others in facilitating feelings of competence. Kleiber, Larson, and Csikszentmihalyi (1986) stated that in free time activities adolescents experienced greater freedom, intrinsic motivation and positive affect than in productive (e.g., working, studying) and maintenance activities (e.g., eating, sleeping). Sports and games, arts and hobbies were reported as having the highest scores on concentration and challenge among all the activities. Contrasted with the more relaxed leisure of such activities as socializing and television-

watching, these more structured activities (sports and games, art works and hobbies) are seen by the authors as "transitional" in being similar in their demand characteristics to the serious activities of adult roles.

As indicated earlier, the purpose of the investigators of this survey study was to identify the recreation activity patterns and levels and perceived recreation barriers of recently arrived Chinese immigrant adolescents, examine the association of those behaviors with acculturation and self-esteem, and examine the relationship between selected demographic factors to recreation participation and perceived recreation barriers. The following research questions were examined.

1. What are the levels of self-esteem and acculturation, recreation participation patterns, and perceived recreation barriers exhibited by Chinese immigrant adolescents?
2. What are the relationships of selected demographic factors to recreation participation and perceived recreation barriers?
3. What are the differences in recreation participation and perceived recreation barriers between genders?
4. What is the relationship of self-esteem to recreation participation and perceived recreation barriers?
5. What is the relationship of acculturation to recreation participation and perceived recreation barriers?
6. What is the effect of acculturation on the relationship of self-esteem to recreation participation and perceived recreation barriers?

Method

The study participants for this survey research were recruited from grades nine to 12 in one high school, located on the lower east side of Manhattan, which has the largest population of Chinese immigrant youth in New York City. Over 1,000 American and foreign born students attend this high school. According to the enrollment information for 1993, this school served mostly immigrant and minority students: 47% were Hispanic, 36% Asian, 15% Black and 2% white.

Permission to conduct the study was obtained from the appropriate division of the New York City Board of Education and the high school principal. Approval from the New York University Human Subjects Committee was also obtained prior to beginning the study.

Instruments

Three questionnaires, the Chinese Self-esteem Inventory, Revised Version of the Suinn-Lew Asian Self-identity Acculturation Scale, and the Recreation Participation Questionnaires were used to measure levels of self-esteem, acculturation and recreation participation of the participants. Demographic information was also solicited.

The Chinese Self-esteem Inventory was developed by Wu and Chuang (1980). The questions in the inventory were originally derived from three questionnaires: Self-esteem (Bachman, 1977 as cited in Wu & Chuang); Personal Competence (Campbell, 1976 as cited in Wu and Chuang); and General Self-evaluation Questionnaire (Diggory, 1966). The authors revised the original questions to make the inventory more culturally appropriate for Chinese people. In this Inventory, self-esteem is treated as a global dimension rather than the total of several separate domains. There are 10 statements, for each of which respondents are asked to indicate, on a six-point Likert scale, which response best describes them. There are eight positive statements, e.g., "I feel that I have many good qualities," and "Like most people, I can do most things well." Responses to the statements are assigned scores from six to one to represent "very much like me," "somewhat like me," "a little like me," "a little unlike me," "somewhat unlike me," "very much unlike me." For the two negative statements, "I feel that I cannot do anything right," and "I feel that I am rather useless," reverse scoring is used. There is a total score for the ten statements. The higher the total score, the higher the level of self-esteem.

Chuang (1980), using 92 Chinese junior high school students in Taiwan, obtained correlation coefficients between each item and the total score ranging from .51 to .67. Hsui (1988), using 854 Chinese Junior high school students from grades seven to nine, obtained internal consistency Cronbach alphas ranging from .78 to .87. Gu (1989), using 302 Chinese company employees, obtained an internal consistency Cronbach alpha of .86. Wu (1989), who assessed 15 women working in business and education fields, obtained a test-retest reliability coefficient of .92 using a two-week interval between test administrations. The questionnaire is recognized as appropriate for Chinese populations, is widely used with high school and college students in Taiwan (Chuang, 1980; Wu, 1982; Hsu, 1988; Chung, 1990) and, because of its relevancy to Chinese students, was the only self-esteem instrument that the Board of Education would approve for use in this study. In a pilot study, involving 20 Chinese immigrant high school students in New York City, the investigators obtained an internal consistency Cronbach Alpha of .81 and the correlation between the Chinese Self-esteem Inventory and the Coopersmith's Self-esteem Inventory (1976) was .76. For the main study involving 117 Chinese immigrant high school students in New York City, a Cronbach alpha of .83 was obtained.

To assess levels of acculturation, the Revised Suinn-Lew ASIA Scale was developed by the senior author modeled after the Suinn-Lew Asian Self-identity Acculturation Scale (Suinn, Rickard-Figueroa, Lew & Vigil, 1987). The Suinn-Lew scale, in turn, is based on the Acculturation Rating Scale for Mexican Americans (ARSMA, Cuellar, Harris, & Jasso, 1980). Nineteen of the 21 questions in the Suinn-Lew ASIA Scale were adopted for this study. Two questions asking information on generation history and where their children were raised were deleted and one question, "In what language do

you think?," which was on Cuellar's (1980) Scale was added. Wording in some questions was slightly revised for added clarity for this research sample. For the multiple choice statements, the 5-point Likert scale continuum from *Chinese* to *American/English/Western* is used instead of a continuum from *Asian* to *American/English/Western*.

Some demographic questions were included in the revised scale Part I and the acculturation questions were included in Part II. The total score of the 20 acculturation questions in part II were divided by 20 to obtain a mean score which ranged from 1.00, indicating low acculturation (or high Chinese identity) to 5.00, indicating high acculturation (or high Western identity).

With regard to construct validity, the investigator's acculturation scale, like the SL-ASIA Scale and ARSMA, recognized the multidimensionality of acculturation and took into account the issue of bicultural development. Acculturation was viewed as:

A multifaceted phenomenon composed of numerous dimensions, factors, constructs, or subcomponents. Values, ideologies, beliefs, and attitudes appear to be important components of acculturation as are cognitive and behavioral characteristics such as language, cultural customs, and practices (Cuellar, Harris, & Jasso, 1980, p. 209).

Each of the five dimensions incorporated by Padilla (1980) in his multidimensional model of acculturation were assessed: language familiarity, and usage, cultural heritage, ethnic pride, ethnicity, and inter-ethnic distance.

Concurrent validity is reported for both ARSMA (Cuellar, et al., 1980) and the SL-ASIA Scale (Suinn et al., 1987). Cuellar reported .80 and Suinn et al. reported .88 test-retest reliability coefficients in their studies. An internal consistency Cronbach alpha of .64 was obtained for the 20 Chinese immigrant high school students participating in the pilot study and a Cronbach Alpha of .72 was obtained for the 117 students participating in the main study.

The Recreation Participation Questionnaire, developed for this study, was designed to elicit information regarding participation level (How often did participants engage in activities?); recreation association (With whom did they recreate/play?); organized group affiliation (To what kinds of organizations do they now are have they previously belonged?); and perceived recreation barriers (What factors prevent or discourage participation in recreation activities?). For purposes of analysis, the 110 activities listed in the questionnaire are classified into six categories: home/indoor activities, arts and crafts, hobbies and games, sports, outdoor and other physical activities, and spectator activities. Respondents are asked to report how often they participated in each activity during the past 12 months on a 3-point Likert scale (0 = never, 1 = once in a while, 2 = regularly). There is a subtotal score for each activity category reflecting frequency of participation level in each category. The total level of recreation participation is determined by a total score for all activities. High scores indicate higher levels of participation.

With regard to recreation association, respondents are asked to report on whom they play with most of the time for each activity (1 = alone, 2 = family, 3 = Chinese friends, 4 = both Chinese and non-Chinese friends, 5 = non-Chinese friends). For each activity category, there are five subtotal scores for the five types of recreation association. For all the activities, there are five total scores for the five types of recreation association. Respondents are also asked to identify their organization affiliations and perceived recreation barriers by placing a check mark beside appropriate organization names and barrier statements. Total scores for each variable are obtained by adding all the check marks. For the pilot study, Cronbach alphas ranged from .62 for participated with families to .94 for total recreation activity participation. For the main study Cronbach alphas ranged from .64 for organization affiliations to .95 for total recreation activity participation.

The questionnaires were printed in both English and Chinese (traditional and simplified characters). Participants were asked to select their preferred language in which to respond.

Procedures

The senior author (principle investigator) visited the high school several times to meet with the principal, some of the teachers and the tutors who work with the Chinese students to assist them in their various class assignments and home work and often provide personal counseling and advice as well. The tutors are all doctoral students from New York University's School of Education provided to the high school by the School's Metropolitan Center. Two of the tutors, with the approval of the Center and the Principal, agreed to assist in the study.

The principal provided a list of all bilingual classes, by grade, to which the approximately 1,000 Chinese students were assigned. Each class was assigned a number and about half of the classes at each grade level (nine through 12) were randomly drawn to be involved in the study. The principle investigator and the two pre-trained tutors went to each of the classes selected to recruit students for the study. A description of the study and what the students would be required to do was read to the students and their participation was requested. Each student who was interested in participating in the study was given a large envelope containing student and parent/guardian consent forms and a self-addressed envelope. Students placed the signed consent forms in the envelope, sealed it and returned it to a specified box in the the tutors' office. There were 450 consent forms distributed and 243 signed consent forms were returned two weeks later.

After receiving the consent forms, a package containing three questionnaires, an instruction sheet (in English or Chinese) and a self-addressed envelope was given to each student by a tutor or the investigator. No names appeared on the questionnaires, but the class number was coded on each envelope. Students were requested to place their completed questionnaires in the envelope, seal it, and place in a specified box in the bilingual edu-

cation office for the investigator. The investigator went back and forth to those classes who had few returned envelopes to ask for more responses. By the end of two weeks, there were 145 returned envelopes and after invalid questionnaires were removed, there were 117 questionnaires available for data analysis.

According to Cohen (1977, P. 55 & p. 102), the sample size of 117 would have: 1) the power of .90 for correlation analysis with non-directional statistical significance level of .05 and ES of $d = .30$; and 2) the power of .75 for t -test analysis with non-directional statistical significance level of .05 and median ES of $d = .50$.

Descriptive analysis, Product-Moment correlations, partial correlations, and t -tests were the major statistical methods used to analyze data. Statistical significance of findings was tested at the .05 level of significance.

The major limitations to this study relate to the sample. First, the sample size was not large enough to permit use of multivariate statistical analysis which would have been preferable. Second, the Chinese immigrant population at the high school came largely from mainland China so the results of the study probably cannot be generalized beyond the population of that high school; many immigrant youth from Taiwan and Hong Kong apparently attend other high schools in New York City. It should be noted that according to both the principal of the school and the tutors who work closely with these students, the sample was representative of the immigrant Chinese students in that high school.

Findings

Of the 117 students involved in this study, 58 were male and 59 were female. They ranged in age from 13 to 21, but most (93%) were between 15 and 19 years of age with a mean age of 17.1 years. Most of these students came from mainland China (94%). They lived with their parents (93%) and had come to the United States and been in school here for less than five years (98%); about two-thirds (64%) of them for two years or less. Half of the students worked after school and 20% of them worked over 20 hours per week. Nearly all (95%) of the students reported that both parents/guardians work and that 97% of these families rent the apartments or houses in which they live. Seventy percent of the students' parents/guardians had lived in the United States for less than six years. More than two-thirds (71%) of the students reported that their parents/guardians cannot read English at all.

Self-esteem and Acculturation

Self-esteem of the students was evaluated by the Chinese Self-esteem Inventory. There were ten questions on a 6-point Likert scale. Total scores ranged from 18 to 57 with a possible range from 10 to 60. The mean score was 41.86 with a standard deviation of 7.88. Students showed moderately high

scores (4.01 to 4.80) on most of the questions. The exceptions were questions eight and nine which asked about their experiences in obtaining important goals in their lives and the feelings of control of their future for which the mean scores were 3.43 (SD = 1.33) and 3.47 (SD = 1.41) respectively.

Acculturation was evaluated by the revised Suinn-Lew Asian Self-Identity Acculturation Scale which has 20 questions on a 5-point Likert scale. Total scores of the group ranged from 24 to 55 with a possible range from 20 to 100. A low score indicates low acculturation. The mean score was 39.65 with a standard deviation of 6.45. Most of the students selected one of the first two possible responses for all 20 items which indicated high ethnic loyalty and low acculturation. Analysis of their responses showed that 91% identified themselves as Chinese or overseas Chinese and 68% thought of themselves as "very Chinese" or "mostly Chinese." Most of these students spoke, read, wrote, and preferred the Chinese language. They listened to and watched Chinese programs, ate mostly Chinese food, and associated after school exclusively or mostly with Chinese persons. There were some responses indicating some influence of American culture. For example, almost half (47%) of the students liked both Chinese and English/American music, TV or video programs (47.9%) and movies (39.3%). They mostly had Chinese food at home, but when they dined out, 28.2% favored both Chinese and American food. Thirty percent of the students thought of themselves as "bicultural" and 26.5% indicated that they were not necessarily proud of being Chinese, but neither did they feel negative about it.

Recreation Participation and Perceived Recreation Barriers

Analysis of findings showed that these Chinese immigrant youth participated most frequently in home/indoor activities and least frequently in sports and other outdoor activities (see Table 1). Boys participated significantly more often in sports ($t = 1.95$, $p \leq .05$) while girls participated sig-

TABLE 1
Means, Standard Deviations, and *t* values in Each Activity Category

Activity Category	Total <i>n</i> = 117 Mean (SD)	Male <i>n</i> = 58 Mean (SD)	Female <i>n</i> = 59 Mean (SD)	<i>t</i> value
Home / Indoor activities	16.78 (4.76)	16.00 (5.19)	17.54 (4.20)	-1.77
Hobbies and games	7.57 (4.03)	7.93 (4.24)	7.22 (3.82)	.95
Arts and crafts	7.85 (6.06)	6.36 (5.84)	9.32 (5.95)	-2.71**
Spectator activities	7.86 (4.50)	7.62 (4.67)	8.10 (4.35)	-.58
Sports	7.49 (6.51)	8.01 (1.05)	4.38 (.57)	1.96*
Outdoor & other activities	6.86 (6.07)	7.64 (7.04)	6.10 (4.89)	1.37
Total	54.42 (24.79)	54.21 (28.71)	54.63 (20.48)	-0.09

* $p \leq .05$ ** $p \leq .01$

nificantly more often in arts and crafts activities ($t = .72, p \leq .01$). There were no significant differences found between genders for the remaining activity categories though some differences were found for specific activities. Table 2 shows the three most popular activities and the type(s) of association most often cited for each activity category. The five most popular Home/Indoor Activities were: watching Chinese programs on TV or video, listening to Chinese music/songs, talking on the telephone, reading Chinese newspapers, magazines, and reading Chinese books, comics, etc. Girls significantly more often participated in all reading activities and boys significantly more often ate out in restaurants. In the hobbies and games category, girls significantly more often participated in singing, writing letters, paper cutting and folding, ballet and modern dance and all needlework and sewing activities while boys participated significantly more often only in woodworking. In the

TABLE 2
Three Most Popular Activities and Type of Association by Activity Category

($N = 117$)

Rank Order / Popularity of Activity Category	Three Most Popular Activities in Each Category	Recreation Association in Each Activity Category
1 Home / Indoor activities	1. Watching Chinese programs on TV / video 2. Listening to Chinese music / songs 3. Talking on telephone	Participated more often alone, with families or with Chinese friends
2 Spectator activities	1. Shopping or window shopping 2. Going to Chinese movies 3. Attending Chinese festivals and holiday celebrations	Participated more often with Chinese friends
3 Arts and crafts	1. Writing letters 2. Singing popular songs 3. Paper cutting / folding	Participated more often alone or with Chinese friends
4 Hobbies and games	1. Playing cards 2. Playing computer / video games 3. Collecting objects such as stamps, coins, pictures, etc.	Participated more often with Chinese friends, alone or with families.
5 Sports	1. Basketball 2. Volleyball 3. Badminton	Participated more often with Chinese friends or with families.
6 Outdoor and other activities	1. Bicycling 2. Walking for pleasure 3. Picnicking	Participated more often with Chinese friends

sports category, boys significantly more often played baseball, basketball, soccer, billiards and pool, went swimming, and participated in weight lifting and Karate while girls did not participate significantly more often than boys in any sports activities. The participants often recreated with family members and Chinese friends or were alone in their free time. Student organizations and clubs were the most popular organizations with which these immigrant students were affiliated.

Table 3 shows the rank order of perceived recreation barriers. These youth perceived most often that lack of English proficiency, lack of opportunity, lack of partner and money, and lack of knowledge about sites or information about activities prevented them from being more active in recreation.

Product-moment correlations were used to determine the relationship among the study variables. Most of the correlation coefficients which reached the .05 level of significance ranged from .20 to .30. Although they are not strong, they do provide information of direction and relationship among variables. Both self-esteem and acculturation were found to be significantly positively related to the total level of recreation participation ($r = .21$, $r = .20$, $p \leq .05$) and self-esteem was negatively related to the total number of perceived recreation barriers ($r = -.20$, $p \leq .05$). Students with higher levels

TABLE 3
Rank Order of Perceived Recreation Barriers

(N = 117)			
Rank	Perceived Barriers	Frequency	%
1	Lack of English Proficiency	80	68.4
2	Lack of opportunity	51	43.6
3	Lack of partner	44	37.6
4	Lack of money	43	36.8
5	Site or information unknown	36	30.8
6	Shyness, lack of confidence, or timidity	32	27.4
7	Family obligations	31	26
8	Too busy at work / job	31	26.5
9	Lack of skill or knowledge	28	23.9
10	Too much school work	26	22.2
11	Lack of facilities or equipment	24	20.5
12	Lack of artistic ability	21	17.9
13	Not encouraged or favored by family	18	15.4
14	Lack of physical ability	16	13.7
15	Overcrowding	12	10.3
16	Feel being discriminated against	9	7.7
17	Physically disabled	7	6.0
18	Not encouraged or favored by frnds	2	1.7

of self-esteem participated significantly more often in recreation activities, especially in indoor/home-based ($r = .23, p \leq .05$), spectator ($r = .22, p \leq .05$), and outdoor activity ($r = .21, p \leq .05$) categories, compared to students with lower levels of self-esteem. They also significantly less often associated with non-Chinese people for recreation ($r = -.23, p \leq .05$).

Students with higher levels of acculturation participated significantly more often in recreation activities, especially in sports ($r = .20, p \leq .05$) and they affiliated significantly more often with organizations for recreation ($r = .20, p \leq .05$), especially with school clubs and student organizations ($r = .23, p \leq .05$). Although these immigrant students were still at lower levels of acculturation as a group and the whole group showed a moderately high level of self-esteem, no significant linear correlation was found between self-esteem and acculturation within the group. The level of acculturation was not an important factor in considering the relationship between self-esteem and recreation participation among these new immigrant students. Table 4 presents the partial correlations (controlling for acculturation) between self-esteem and recreation participation. Self-esteem was still found to be positively related to total recreation participation, negatively related to being with non-Chinese people, and negatively related to the number of perceived recreation barriers. These findings support the view that there is a relationship between self-esteem and recreation participation in Chinese immigrant youth regardless of their levels of acculturation.

Many researchers have reported that demographic factors such as gender, age, youth employment, and socio-economic backgrounds will affect the

TABLE 4
*Partial Correlation Coefficients Between Self-Esteem and Recreation Participation
(Controlling for Acculturation)*

(N = 117)

1. Indoor/home activities	.22**
2. Hobbies and games	.06
3. Arts and crafts	.14
4. Spectator activities	.21*
5. Sports	.10
6. Outdoor and other activities	.20*
7. Total Level of Recreation Participation	.20*
8. Participated alone	.15
9. Participated with families	.08
10. Participated with Chinese	.07
11. Participated with both Chinese and non-Chinese friends	.13
12. Participated with non-Chinese	-.23**
13. Total Level of Organization Affiliation	.09
14. Total Level of Perceived Recreation Barrier	-.21**

* $p \leq .05$ ** $p \leq .01$

recreation participation of youth (e.g., Mauldin & Meeks, 1990; Stamps & Stamps, 1985). In addition to gender differences already reported, Product-Moment correlation analysis was used to determine the relationships of other demographic factors to recreation participation and perceived barriers among these youth. Students of older ages tended to participate less in hobbies/games ($r = -.20, p \leq .05$) and arts and crafts ($r = -.24, p \leq .05$) and they participated less with their families in their recreation pursuits ($r = -.38, p \leq .01$). Also, those students who had stayed or attended school longer in the United States had: a) higher levels of acculturation ($r = .20, p \leq .05; r = .22, p \leq .05$) and lower levels of self-esteem ($r = -.20, p \leq .05; r = -.23, p \leq .05$); b) perceived more recreation barriers ($r = .27, p \leq .01; r = .27, p \leq .01$); c) felt more often that lack of money ($r = .24, p \leq .01; r = .25, p \leq .01$) and lack of opportunity ($r = .22, p \leq .05; r = .24, p \leq .05$) prevented them from participating in recreation; and d) played less with their families in recreation activities ($r = -.32, p \leq .01; r = -.30, p \leq .01$). The longer they attended school in the United States, the more often they played with non-Chinese friends ($r = .19, p \leq .05$). Analysis also revealed that students with longer work hours had higher levels of acculturation ($r = .31, p \leq .05$) and tended to feel they were too busy at work to participate more often in recreation pursuits ($r = .55, p \leq .01$).

Discussion

Acculturation is a dynamic process occurring over time. Most of the students in this study had come to the United States from mainland China and been in school here for less than five years. Although their level of acculturation increased the longer they stayed in the United States and continued in school, their responses on the acculturation questionnaire indicated that most of them were still at a low level of acculturation.

Acculturation for these immigrant adolescents from a singular Chinese culture to a pluralistic American culture certainly cannot be achieved easily. Several reasons can at least partially explain these adolescents' low level of acculturation. Most of the students came from a much less industrialized country and their distinctive physical features, language, inherited cultural values, and behavior patterns differed markedly from Westerners. Moreover, they were one of several different immigrant or minority groups in a school populated with few native caucasians which gave them few opportunities to acculturate to the dominant white society.

The findings from the acculturation and recreation participation questionnaires revealed that these immigrant adolescents' lifestyle and recreation participation patterns were generally harmonious with those of the Chinese community. Their responses showed that they preferred to maintain the Chinese language and a network of relatives and friends of the same ethnicity which are indicators of high cultural loyalty and low acculturation of immigrants (Padilla, 1980). However, a significant positive relationship between levels of acculturation and recreation participation ($r = .20; p \leq .05$) sug-

gested the possibility of using recreation as a tool to facilitate the acculturation of these immigrant youth to the new society. The higher the acculturation level of these youth, the more often they participated in recreation activities ($r = .20, p \leq .05$), especially in sports ($r = .20, p \leq .05$) and the more often they affiliated with organized groups ($r = .20, p \leq .05$).

Although these Chinese students demonstrated a low level of acculturation and high acculturative stress was expected, it was encouraging to find that they tended to maintain a moderately high sense of self-esteem. In fact the mean scores of the participants on the self-esteem questionnaire were even higher than the mean scores obtained from Chinese students in Taiwan (Wu, 1982). This finding was the opposite of the findings of other investigators who studied the self-concept of immigrant Mexican American youth (Peterson, 1981; Padilla, 1986b; Mean, Padilla, & Maldonado, 1987), immigrant Latin American youth (Thompson, 1987), and Korean immigrant children (Kim, 1980). Ito and Tashima advocated that researchers studying Asian American self-concept focus more on cultural retention than on assimilation into American culture. Some studies of immigrant Chinese and Mexican adolescents indicated that those youngsters achieving bicultural identity have high self-esteem (Yao, 1983; Prigoff, 1984).

Significant others such as parents and peers are very important to the development of self-esteem in adolescents. Most of the parents of these immigrant students could not read English, so they relied on their children to translate English, serve as interpreters and handle many social and business situations for them since moving to the United States. That these youth obtained new skills in language and in dealing with the new and strange environment as well as contributed to their families' well being might have enhanced their evaluation of themselves. On the one hand, immigration posed many problems for these Chinese youth; on the other hand, the experiences of immigration also created opportunities for them to try new things, to develop abilities, and to realize the importance of their existence. It seems that maintaining a connection with Chinese people or with the Chinese community is as important as the contact with American people or American society for the development of self-esteem among immigrant adolescents.

Data analysis also revealed that these Chinese immigrant students, although they were at an age when most youth are full of curiosity and energy and usually have wide interests in recreation activities, participated more in home/indoor-based activities than any other type of recreation activity. The five most frequent activities were watching Chinese programs on television or video, listening to Chinese music, talking on the telephone, reading Chinese newspapers and magazines, and reading Chinese books, comics, etc. That these youth relied heavily on mass media for recreation and were dependent on the Chinese language in recreation is similar to the findings of Millard (1987) in his study of Asian Americans. He reported that TV/Video programs, songs, and newspapers in their ethnic languages were very popular among Asian Immigrants.

In general, the activities these students most frequently engaged in can be characterized as being less organized, less expensive, less physically active, less skill oriented, and more easily accessible than many other types of activities. This finding is consistent with many reports about traditional Chinese recreation attitudes and behavior patterns (Kwong, 1987; Ming-de Foundation, 1987). These recreation participation tendencies and the fact that they relied heavily on the Chinese language in recreation showed the influence of their ethnic culture.

Language and cultural barriers were the most serious problems perceived by these students in their recreational pursuits. Tutors who had worked with these and other Chinese immigrant high school students for many years reported that most of these students came from coast provinces of south China. They were very conservative both in attitudes and in behavior. In addition to the language barrier which handicapped them from communicating fluently with other ethnic groups, little knowledge of Western culture also made it difficult for them to deal with differences between various ethnic cultures in the American mix. Furthermore, according to the tutors, many of the Chinese students felt "odd" about the way students of other ethnic groups behaved or thought which often restrained many shy and conservative Chinese students from interaction with them. Misinterpretations and misunderstanding often occurred when there was an interaction between Chinese students and students outside of their group.

According to the tutors, language and cultural barriers also existed within the Chinese group. Chinese students who came from different areas with different dialects seldom mingled. Some of the students reported that one of the reasons for their staying at home most of the time was to keep away from street "gangsters."

Also, half of the students worked after school and 20% of them worked over 20 hours a week. The tutors reported that those students who worked usually had some money at their discretion and these students liked very much to go together to Atlantic City for entertainment shows performed by people from Hong Kong.

In line with Padilla's (1980) theory of acculturation, these young recent immigrant students in both their behavior and attitudes in leisure reflected high ethnic loyalty to their original culture. It indicated that as these youth reached their teenage years, the values systems stemming from the Chinese society, where these immigrant students were from, still formed the framework for their recreation participation behavior. It seems the values learned during the formative years of childhood were not easily replaced.

Although their recreation participation tendencies, and the fact that they relied heavily on the Chinese language in recreation, showed the influence of their ethnic culture, they also reflected the results of constraints from the environment. Two sets of factors, economic marginality and ethnicity factors, are most frequently used to explain the differences in recreation participation patterns among minorities. Some researchers (Stamps & Stamps, 1985; Woodward, 1988), who emphasize socioeconomic factors, posit

that when immigrants' social and economic situations improve, their recreation patterns change to meet the behaviors or attitudes of the majority population. Other researchers (Allison & Geiger, 1993; Barth, 1969), who stress ethnicity or cultural factors, explain the cultural variations in recreation as a function of values, social organizations, and normative elements. Stamps and Stamps (1985) and Woodard, (1988) reported that when minority upper-middle class persons are compared with persons of the same ethnic groups but of low socioeconomic status, their leisure activity patterns are more similar to those of white middle class native-born Americans. A number of researchers supported this tendency in their studies of Chinese people in the United States (Sung, 1967; Wan, 1978; Kwong, 1987). They reported that many Chinese-American adolescents of low income immigrant families were deprived of normal family life and social or cultural activities.

Although these theories were developed from studies of Black and Hispanic groups, it seems also appropriate to use them to partially explain the results of this study. Chinese immigrant adolescents in this study were very close to their ethnic community in their recreation pursuits which reflected the influence of their ethnicity and Chinese culture. Many students reported working long hours and also reported that both of their parents worked and that neither of them could read English. These findings are indicative of their economic disadvantage.

For the students with low-acculturated parents in this study, their low levels of recreation participation and engagement in a narrow range of activities, indicates, to some extent, socio-economic disadvantages of which they might not even be aware due to the lack of opportunities for involvement with middle or upper class Chinese or American teenagers. As families become more affluent, they usually move away from the tenements of Chinatown and the lower East side where most of these students lived.

A positive relationship between self-esteem and recreation participation was found in this study. Like many research findings about American children, this finding supports the importance of recreation participation in the development of self-esteem among Chinese immigrant youth and suggests that recreation might be a useful tool in enhancing their self-esteem. The study's findings not only support the importance of recreation participation, but also the importance of cultural heritage and cultural connection in recreation in the development of young immigrants' self-esteem. Adolescence is a stage in which individuals are driven to define themselves. Changes in acculturation may result in considerable acculturative stress which may reduce self-esteem of immigrant children (Padilla, 1986a). Changes in their interaction with significant others and changes in their reference groups may also be sources of acculturative stress. After a few more years in the United States, they may be less likely to limit themselves only to their community, less likely to use people from their original country as their primary reference group, and more likely to use other immigrants and people of the majority culture for reference. Thus, it is possible that, over the next few

years, these young people may experience some loss in level of self-esteem while they become more acculturated. High self-esteem levels may be regained, however, as these immigrant students achieve bicultural identity and overcome some of the conflicts and crises inherent in the acculturation process.

Implications for Practice and Research

To reduce or eliminate the students' perceived recreation barriers and to enhance or maintain their self-esteem in the acculturation process, recreation practitioners need to be aware of the socio-economic constraints in newly arrived Chinese immigrant youths. Moreover, they also need to be sensitive to the special needs of immigrant youths and to an understanding of the Chinese cultural values and practices related to leisure and recreation participation.

Forty percent of the students who signed consent forms to participate did not return their questionnaires. Some possible reasons for this rather high refusal rate are: a) In Chinese culture, the teacher is a respected authority figure and the classroom teachers were present when the investigator made her first request for participants, but were not always there when she returned to ask those who had not completed their questionnaires to please do so as soon as possible. The presence of the teacher probably influenced the students to agree to participate initially; the absence of the teacher on the second and third visits made it easier for the students to ignore the requests. b) Some students with low self-esteem may not have wanted to complete the questionnaires because they might reveal negative information about themselves—even though their names did not appear on the questionnaires. More time may need to be spent in developing mutual trust between potential Chinese participants and the research investigator before a study is initiated.

A number of recommendations for further research come to mind. First, it would be very useful if this study could be conducted involving immigrant adolescents from Hong Kong and Taiwan who attend high schools in Manhattan and other boroughs along with an age cohort sample of first generation American born Chinese youth and compare their levels of self-esteem, acculturation and recreation participation patterns with the findings of this study's population. Second, a longitudinal study over a period of five or so years could be conducted to identify the changes that take place in the levels of self-esteem, acculturation and recreation participation patterns of young immigrant Chinese (or other immigrant groups). Third, a study of this kind could be conducted with several different immigrant groups to determine how different cultural groups differ with respect to self-esteem, acculturation and recreation participation patterns. Fourth, future research using more open ended questions and repeated interviews would provide the kind of rich information missing from numerical and statistical data. For example,

asking students to recount how their recreation choices have changed since their arrival in the United States, the reasons for such change, and how they see themselves from the time of their arrival to the present.

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