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The Effect of Post-Marital Co-Habitation with In-Laws on Level of Acculturation and Marital Satisfaction of Chinese American Women

Louisa F. Lam
Seton Hall University

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THE EFFECT OF POST-MARITAL CO-HABITATION WITH IN-LAWS ON LEVEL OF ACCULTURATION AND MARITAL SATISFACTION OF CHINESE AMERICAN WOMEN

BY

LOUISA F. LAM

Dissertation Committee
Shawn Utsey, Ph.D., Mentor
Arpana G. Inman, Ph.D.
Laura Palmer, Ph.D., Chairperson
John Smith, Ed.D., External Reader

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Seton Hall University
2003
DEDICATION

To my parents, my husband Otto

With all my love and gratitude
ABSTRACT

Marriage is one of the most intense human relationships. The quality of this relationship is continually redefined by spouses and their immediate families and is crucial to the overall experience of family life. Determinants of marital satisfaction can vary across cultures and the specific ways in which marital satisfaction is expressed. Most research on marital satisfaction focuses on Western families and appeared to be less understanding of marital experiences by other cultures.

Confucianism has historically provided the foundation for moral conduct and principles in Chinese society. According to the Confucian teaching, more emphasis is placed on the parent-child bond than on the marital bond. The relationship between parent and son is valued more than the relationship between husband and wife. The primary purpose of the study is to examine the relationship of the practice of post-marital co-habitation with in-laws on the level of acculturation and marital satisfaction among Chinese American women.

Eight married Chinese American women participated in this study and half of them are currently living with their in-laws. Instruments used in this study included the Suin-Lew Asian Self-Identity Acculturation Scale (SL-ASIA), the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS), and the demographic form. The results of the study have shown that the practice of co-habitation with in-laws was positively correlated with level of marital satisfaction, whereas there was no correlation for the non-cohabitate sample. However, level of acculturation has no apparent affect on participants' decision to practice co-habitation with in-laws. This provides evidence that there are other external factors playing a role into making that decision. It is possible that the practice of traditional beliefs, financial situation, and childcare are some of the reasons why Chinese American women decide to live with their in-laws after getting married.
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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Background of the Problem

Many Chinese American women continue to practice co-habitation with their in-laws after marriage. However, for some highly Westernized Chinese families, post-marital co-habitation with in-laws may be experienced as a burden or a restriction on personal autonomy and determination of marital satisfaction (Sue & Morishima, 1982). Highly acculturated Chinese American women may experience less marital satisfaction if they practice post-marital co-habitation with in-laws. Thus, the primary purpose of the study is to examine the relationship of the practice of post-marital co-habitation with in-laws on the level of acculturation and marital satisfaction among Chinese American women.

Marriage is one of the most intense human relationships. The quality of this relationship is continually redefined by spouses and their immediate families and is crucial to the overall experience of family life. Bernard's (1972) notion of "his and her" marriage suggests that wives and husbands may experience their marriage separately, so that various characteristics of the relationship may impact differently on their evaluation of its satisfaction. Although a substantial literature on marital satisfaction exists, most research focuses on Western families, with less understanding of other societies. Furthermore, there is no existing literature examine the impact of post-marital co-habitation with in-laws on marital satisfaction and level of acculturation.

The quality of marriages is influenced by the rules or norms of giving and receiving benefits in marital relationships (Johnson, White, Edward, & Booth, 1986). For instance,
research showed that providing benefits without the expectation of repayment (i.e., love and caring for the partner without asking anything in return) as in communal relationships, which referred as "agape", produced long-term improvements in marital satisfaction (Basic Behavioral Science Task Force of the National Advisory Mental Health Council, 1996).

However, within a different cultural framework, where marriage is based on continuity of the family or on other factors in addition to love, marital satisfaction might not be related to either communal or exchange relationships in precisely the same manner (Yanagisako, 1985). Determinants of marital satisfaction can vary across cultures and the specific ways in which marital satisfaction is expressed. For example, the Western culture of viewing marital satisfaction is based on the level of love and romance experienced by two people, whereas the Chinese culture of viewing marital satisfaction is based on the level of harmony within the family (Baker, 1979).

**Family in Traditional Chinese Society**

Family has its unique role in traditional Chinese society (Freedman, 1979). It was perhaps the most fundamental social institution in China, for a couple reasons. First, as the cornerstone of Chinese culture, the Confucian ethic greatly values the stability of family structure. Second, there are no other societies that the family institution is totally enmeshed with other social institutions, i.e. religious or political, as it is in China, thus making family and society inseparable (Lee, 1989).

For more than two thousand years, Confucian doctrines have been deeply imbedded in Chinese culture. The Chinese family virtue was established under Confucianism, which was handed down some 25 centuries ago. Although the family has long been and remains the basic unit of Chinese society, the relative importance of different kinds of intrafamilial relations has
greatly changed. Historically, the conjugal bond took a distant second place to
intergenerational ties between parents and children, especially sons (Yao, 2000).

Confucius emphasized filial piety as the most fundamental personal characteristic of all
social virtues (Yang, 1959). His famous doctrine of “inner sagehood-outer kingship”
provides a theoretical linkage between individual moral behavior, family management ability,
and public service credentials. Confucianism has historically provided the foundation for
moral conduct and principles in Chinese society. Confucianism stresses the moral integrity
and discipline of the individual, which emphasizes the importance of the social environment
and orientation toward one another. Such an approach serves to promote order in interpersonal
relationships. A “good” society, according to Confucian principles, is one in which each
individual occupies his or her proper place: If the individual is “right” (e.g., takes right action,
behaves correctly), his or her family will be right; furthermore, if the family is right, the society
will be right (Shively & Shively, 1972).

In Confucian tradition, the five most important human relationships are ruler-minister,
father-son, elder brother-younger brother, husband-wife, and friend-friend. That three of the
five are family relationships indicates the central place of the family in Chinese society.
Furthermore, the relationships reinforce a particular hierarchy within the family, characterized
by the importance of generation, age, and gender. Confucian ethics places strong emphasis on
roles within the family and the proper behavior associated with each role. Under Confucian
norms, the eldest son is expected to live with his parents and to provide for their care even after
marriage.

In traditional Chinese families, the ancestors and elders are viewed with great reverence
and respect. Unquestioning obedience to the parents is encourage at an early age and is
maintain throughout life, even after the individual has begun a family of his or her own (Whiting & Child, 1953).

Obligations, responsibilities, and privileges of each role are clearly delineated according to a vertical, hierarchal role structure with the husband as the undisputed head of the family. His authority is unchallenged, and he is the recipient of total respect and loyalty from the wife and children. In return, he assumes maximum responsibility for the family’s social status and economic well-being (MacMahon, 1977).

Additionally, the traditional structure stresses duty, sacrifice, importance of family name, respect for parents-in-law, and worship (Yao, 2000). More emphasis is placed on the parent-child bond than on the marital bond. The relationship between parent and son is valued more than the relationship between husband and wife. The son needs to obey his parent; similarly, the wife needs to obey her husband. In conclusion, it is important for the Chinese family to uphold the structure of family hierarchy in order to maintain harmony with the family.

Speaking of a “typical Chinese family” would be quite difficult to define today, because the traditional Chinese family system has been strongly influenced by Western cultures since the beginning of the 20th century. The Western style “nuclear family” has gradually taken the place of the old-fashioned “big family” (Lin, Mei, & Peng, 1998). In fact, in Taiwan as well as in Mainland China, Hong Kong, Singapore and the United States, where most of the Chinese people are living, a large traditional Chinese family with three to five generations staying together is difficult to find. When only one generation staying together under one household, the relationship between extended family members are often perceived as less important.
Maintaining a big family is no longer possible, either culturally or economically. It is difficult to keep numerous family members living in harmony under one roof since the younger generations prefer living on their own with less restriction and more personal freedom. Furthermore, it is economically impossible to maintain and support a large family when oftentimes only the men in the family are working. However, despite the decrease in the size of the Chinese family unit, the “spirit” of the traditional Chinese family remains intact. Specifically, practicing filial piety to the parents, the wife’s obedience to the husband and the in-laws, and parental need to provide good education to their children.

Once married, traditional Chinese cultural norms dictate that a Chinese woman must live with, serve and please every member of her husband’s family, especially her mother-in-law. It is important for Chinese women to conform to the social norm and roles of filial daughter-in-law, submissive wife, and nurturing mother. According to Confucius’s teachings, women should be brought up and socialized according to the doctrine of “three obediences and four virtues.” The three obediences are: to obey her father before marriage, her husband and mother-in-law after marriage, and her son after the death of her husband (Shon & Ja, 1983). It means that women need to obey and conform rules set by their fathers before they were married. After they were married, the women then need to live with and conform to her husband and mother-in-laws because they become the head of the household. The four virtues are: good appearance and manners, ability in domestic work, language and self-respect. It means that the women need to have good physical appearances and decent education, ability to carry out various housework, and the skill to speak properly and self-respect.

Most Chinese mothers are delighted when their son marries and a daughter-in-law enters their home. Unless the marriage is a love-match, the mother has chosen the girl herself
and investigated her qualities and faults as carefully as possible. For the first few weeks or months, after the marriage, the relationship between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law usually is good. However, the two women’s good feelings usually quickly sour after a series of disagreements about how much to spend on food and clothing, when to have the evening meal on the table, and how to raise the grandchildren (Lo, 1998). Regardless of the merits of her position, the mother-in-law is likely to be the victor in any conflict for a good many years to come. Oftentimes, the sons are caught in the middle of these fights. Since the sons are not allowed to disrespect their mothers, they usually take their frustration out on their wives. As a result, conflict often arises between the couple which may subsequently affect their marital relationship negatively.

The Function of Marriage in Chinese Society

In every society throughout history, there are prescribed roles for men and women. The Chinese culture is no exception; it is a system where the family is more important than the individual and prescribed family roles are more important than personal thought or feelings. China’s patrilineal kinship system has typically emphasized family ties traced through men, in an unbroken “descent line” linking a man with both his ancestors and descendants. Because the descent line was generally more important than individual family relationships, marriage has typically taken place to extend family lines, rather than benefit individuals involved (Baker, 1979). Hence, the quality of marital relations has not necessarily been a salient concept in Chinese society.

An arranged marriage system and post-marital co-habitation with in-laws both facilitate the achievement of family reproduction and keep conjugal bonds inferior to intergenerational ties. The husband, remaining within his family of origin, had closer ties to his parents than his
wife. In this system, the marital relationship has hardly been the focus of romantic expectations. Marriage was universal and utilitarian, conducted for the purposes of having children and furthering the larger family group. Although "love" is said to be important to marriage, Chinese couples have what Westerners might characterize it as a relatively unromantic vision of love, more like companionship (Baker, 1979). Respect, mutual understanding and support are the three important qualities of Chinese marriage.

Role of the Family and Its Individual Members

Knowing one's place in a family and in society directs moral obligation and the fulfillment of duty (Yang, 1959). The nature and structure of the Chinese family is derived from Confucian philosophy, which dictates a sense of order and a prescription for role relationships within Chinese society (Lin, 1938; MacMahon, 1977).

In China, the family is the basic foundation of the lives of most individuals. The Chinese feel a great sense of obligation toward their family and parents. The continuous affective and social bonds with immediate family members validate individuals' self-esteem and secure their future. Social control is exerted through shame and guilt (True, 1981).

Roles for family members are clearly specified and dictate demands that have to be met to ensure that the family network functions effectively. Although a highly structured family life may restrict the freedom to assume other personal roles with the family, it also provides a strong feeling of security, belonging, identity, and duty to have roles that are well defined and understood. Chinese children grow up under the umbrella of an extended family and take part in its social life. Hsu (1970) and Dai (1998) both described the American family as individual centered, whereas members of the Chinese family are more interdependent and more other centered.
Traditional Chinese values governing family life have been influenced by Confucian philosophy and ethics, which strongly emphasizes specific roles and proper relationships among people in those roles (Ho, 1987). Three main relationship roles that are stressed within the family are father-son, husband-wife, and elder-younger siblings (Keyes, 1991). In these relationships, there are feelings of obligation and shame. If a member of a family behaves improperly, the whole family loses face.

The primary emphasis in the Chinese ethical system is on social obligation. The family is the fundamental unit of society and the major emotional support. This society disapproves of individual independence and autonomy. Family needs supersede those of the individual. An expectation that individuals will make decisions independent of their families goes against their disposition (Sue & Morishima, 1982).

Overall, the Chinese culture emphasizes formality in interpersonal relations, in contrast to the much more informal and spontaneous nature of Americans. The Chinese also believe in respect and reverence for the elderly and places strong emphasis on self-discipline, order, social etiquette, and hierarchy (Lee, 1982; Kleinman & Lim, 1981).

Nevertheless, the structures of the tradition Chinese families, the prescribed family roles, and attitude toward marriage have changed somehow since the migrating of Chinese families to the United States. Thus, it becomes relevant to examine the immigration history of the Chinese to the U.S.

**Historical Overview: Chinese American**

There were basically two major waves of immigrants who came to the Untied States from Asia. The first was a pre-1920 wave in which Chinese, Japanese, and Filipinos came as contract laborers to work in gold mines and on railroads. According to Fong (1979), the
Chinese who came to the United States at this time were mainly from the coastal province of Kwangtung. This area of China was facing serious times of flooding and famine during that period; so when the opportunity for a better life was available in the United States, many flocked to America. With the passing of the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1882, a long period of restrictive entry ensued from 1924 to 1965 during which very few Asian immigrants could come to this country (Sung, 1987).

The Chinese Exclusion laws were finally repealed in 1943 and the immigration laws were amended in 1965 allowing a quota of 20,000 immigrants from each country per year (Takiki, 1989). This gave way to a second wave of immigration from Asia beginning in 1965 until today (Sung, 1987). Chinese individuals coming in these waves were from many areas of Mainland China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Southeast Asia. More Asians were allowed to come after the Korean and Vietnam Wars, making the Asian population in this country very prominent.

Asian Americans have become the fastest growing ethnic group in the United States. Current data show that the Asian population doubled since 1995 and may grow approximately 15 million in year 2005 (United States Census Bureau, 2000). Presently, Asians alone constitute over half of all annual admissions (United States Census Bureau, 2000). According to the Census, the largest Asian American immigration groups were Chinese (47%), followed by Asian Indians (18%), Koreans (14%), Filipinos (8%), Japanese (3%), Vietnamese (2%), and other Asians (8%) (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000).

*Chinese American family*

Since migrating to the United States the Chinese family has exhibited much diversity. Family structure and orientation vary according to socioeconomic class, homeland, generation
status, length of stay in the United States, degree of acculturation, and availability and accessibility of other Chinese American families and institutions in the community (Lee, 1983; Ho, 1987). However, despite these variations, Chinese American parents continue to play an influential role in determining marital happiness. They continue to powerfully affect their children’s marriages. Not only is their approval of the marriage strongly linked to its quality, but it is also tied to the establishment of a sizable proportion of marriages. Choice of mate continues to be a joint effort for many Chinese American families.

The traditional family roles of wives being the filial daughter-in-law, submissive wife were predominant in imperial, feudal China. However, as China became modernized, roles changed. In acculturated Chinese American families, only a few of these strictly defined roles remain. For example, females are no longer entirely assigned to subservient roles. Although husbands are often the head of families especially when dealing with the public, wives may in fact be the decision maker behind the scenes.

Gender and birth position are associated with certain duties and privileges. Sons are more highly valued than daughters; they receive preferential treatment as well as more familial responsibilities. Also, the eldest son inherits the financial wealth of the family. While the wife blends into her husband’s family, very often she does not acquire a position of authority or respect until she assumed the role of mother-in-law.

As the Western concept of equal spousal power is getting popular among Chinese American women in the U.S., the level of acculturation appears play an important element into whether the individual continues to carry their prescribed family and gender roles.
Acculturation

According to Takiki (1989), acculturation is the multidimensional, psychological, adaptive process that occurs when an individual interacts with another culture. Acculturation has become the way in which an individual incorporates values and behaviors of the new culture into currently held values and behaviors (Berry, 1980).

Berry identified four forms of acculturation: rejection, assimilation, integration and deculturation. According to Berry’s acculturation framework, the rejection state describes individuals who value their cultural identity and not that of the dominant groups. Assimilation describes those individuals who do not value their cultural heritage and instead value relationships with the dominant culture. Integration is when people value cultural identity and seek relations with the dominant culture. Finally, deculturation describes people’s rejection of both their cultural identity and the dominant culture (Berry, 1980).

Acculturation in part refers to the process by which immigrants adapt to their new environment. The acculturation process has no time frame. Interestingly, the time spent in the new country and the level of acculturation are not necessary correlated (Berry, 1980). It shows that possible selective acculturation may exist for some individuals, such as holding on to traditional Chinese marital values while dressing in western clothes (Berry, 1980).

Acculturating individuals are seen as being in a process of relinquishing the attitudes, values, and behaviors of their culture of origin while simultaneously adopting those of the new society (Ryder, Alden, & Paulhus, 2000). For instance, Chinese American women may feel trapped between conflicting roles. They may attempt to fit into both Chinese and American ideal ways of being. Embedded norms within Chinese culture revere such qualities of submissiveness,
connectedness and quietness. These qualities contrast greatly with established Western values of independence, assertiveness and expressiveness (Hong & Cheng Ham, 1992).

Depending on the degree of acculturation, many Chinese Americans now have attitudes different from the traditional Chinese societal view of the obligation to live and care for the parents after marriage. Although living and caring for the parents is still considered a family responsibility, many Chinese American women preferred not to live with their in-laws after marriage. Thus, they prefer an emotional or physical distance from the in-laws and the husband’s extended family. In summary, as many Chinese American women gradually adapt to the dominant culture and value individualism, they begin to understand that the importance of marital privacy and residing with the parents-in-law may have some impact on their marital satisfaction. Moreover, as more Chinese American women continue to work after marriage, the social status of women has been enhanced and their status in the family has also changed.

**Socioeconomic Status**

Most married Chinese American women gain their family status by employment, and in particular by contributing their salaries to the families. However, some husbands hold unfavorable attitudes toward their wives’ employment because they think they might lose some of the social and psychological support provided by their wives. Furthermore, Gowler and Legge (1992) argued that Chinese women’s working and hence financial contributions, would automatically give her more “say” over family decisions. But it is not invariable, depending on the couples’ level of education and acculturation. Therefore, there are always difficulties arising unless there is some communication about who is the head of the family and who is in control of the family finance. Oftentimes, married Chinese American couples may choose to live with the in-laws based on the couple’s lack of financial resources. Thus, socioeconomic
status appeared to be an important aspect in understanding the practice of post-marital co-habitation with in-laws.

Statement of the Problem

In traditional Chinese society, marriage is usually arranged and the woman is expected to leave her original family and become part of the husband’s family. The wife is responsible for the emotional nurturance and well-being of the family, and her primary role was to serve the parents-in-law, the husband and raise the children. As a daughter-in-law, the woman must display obedience and affection, and spend most of her time in the service of her in-laws. The extended family, rather than the nuclear family, is the primary unit in China. Although the process of migration disrupts this relationship, many Chinese in America attempt to reconstruct this kinship network. For some, the extended family is clearly identified as an important source of social and sometimes financial support. Many Chinese Americans still hold onto their traditional beliefs even after they have lived in the United States for many years. It is important to recognize those cultural beliefs and their coping mechanisms in dealing with marital distress. The primary purpose of the study is to examine the relationship between the practice of post-marital co-habitation with in-laws on level of acculturation and marital satisfaction. It is important for clinicians to acquire a better understanding regarding the concept and background of the practice of post-marital co-habitation with in-laws in Chinese communities and the possible impact it has on marital satisfaction.

Significance of the Research

Chinese culture is family oriented, emphasizing the interdependence of family members. The concept of filial piety prescribes that children should repay their parents’ love and care by providing for them in their old age. It is common for parents to live with a married
child and his family, preferably a married son. In general, the less assimilated Chinese immigrant family will tend to live together for a longer period of time than a mainstream American family.

As the number of Chinese immigrants increase every year, it is important to understand that Chinese American women often are subjected not only to their husband's authority but also to their parents-in-law. The Western idea of nuclear family is quite different from the traditional Chinese family. As Chinese American women became more acculturated; the concept of practicing post-marital co-habitation with in-laws signifies less freedom and personal autonomy. However, it is important for mental health providers to recognize that the level of marital satisfaction among Chinese American women may determine whether they practice post-marital co-habitation with in-laws, their interpersonal relationship with the in-laws and their level of acculturation.

The focus of this research is to enhance the understanding of the relationship between the practice of post-marital co-habitation with in-laws on level of acculturation and marital satisfaction in Chinese American women.

Research Questions

1. Are there group differences on four levels of acculturation between Chinese American women who practice post-marital co-habitation with in-laws and Chinese American women who do not practice post-marital co-habitation with in-laws?

2. Are there group differences on four levels of marital satisfaction between Chinese American women who practice post-marital co-habitation with in-laws and Chinese American women who do not practice post-marital co-habitation with in-laws?
Research Hypotheses


2. Chinese American women who practice post-marital co-habitation with in-laws will report a lower level of marital satisfaction compared to Chinese American women who do not practice post-marital co-habitation with in-laws.

Definition of Terms

For the purpose of clarity, the major terms used in this study are defined below:

Acculturation: Acculturation is a process which involves changes that take place as a result of continuous and direct contact between individuals having different cultural origins. (Berry, 1980).

Chinese American: An individual who is of Chinese descent and is currently living in the U.S. (Lee, 1947).

Confucianism: Confucianism is a Western term that has no counterpart in Chinese. It is a worldview, a social ethic, a political ideology, a scholarly tradition, and a way of life. Confucianism is sometimes viewed as a philosophy and sometimes as a religion (Yao, 2000).

Filial Piety: Filial Piety is a concept which prescribes that children should repay their parents’ love and care by living and providing for them in their old age (Yao, 2000).

Generational Status: Generation status is determined by an individual’s place of birth. An individual who is born in China is considered as first-generation Chinese American. An individual who is born in the U.S. is considered as second-generation Chinese American.
Marital Satisfaction: Marital satisfaction is defined as a subjective evaluation of a married couple's relationship, with the range of evaluations constituting a continuum reflecting numerous characteristics of marital interaction and marital functioning (Spainer, 1979).

Post-Marital Co-Habitation: A living arrangement where married Chinese women live with their husband's parents/family.

Yin and Yang: In Chinese culture, the universe was said to be composed of two interacting elements, Yin (female) and Yang (male). Yin represented what was dark, weak and passive, which is the women. While Yang represented what was bright, strong and active, which is the men. Chinese believed that women are weak and the men are strong (Croll, 1978).
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Although a substantial literature on marriage satisfaction exists, most research on marital satisfaction focuses on Western families, and there is less understanding of the experiences in other cultures.

Relevant Research of Marital Satisfaction

Researchers have examined how the distribution of power relates to the occurrence of marital dissatisfaction among marital couples. According to the normative integration theory of the family (Parsons & Bales, 1995), couples’ consensus over how marital power is distributed is an important factor for marital harmony regardless of whether the marriages are egalitarian.

Studies have found that the level of marital conflicts among husband-dominant relationships sharply reduces if the couples agree on the appropriateness of the arrangement (Brown, 1980; Coleman & Straus, 1986; Scanzoni, 1975). The conflict theory (Coser, 1956; Dahrendorf, 1959), however, argues that marital conflicts are inevitable results of the inherent gender inequality in marriages, and marital dissatisfaction occurs if mechanisms for adapting or resolving these conflicts are absent or inadequate. Feminist theories (e.g. Bogard, 1988; Dobash & Dobash, 1979; Yllo & Straus, 1992) tend to view marital dissatisfaction occurrence as those who have more power in the marriages, mostly men, attempt to control their less powerful spouses so that their own superior positions can be maintained.

Glenn (1990) describes two schools of thought in marriage quality research: one that views marital quality as being “simply a matter of how married persons feel about their marriages” and the other that sees its as “a characteristic of the relationship between
spouses.” In fact, marriage quality appears to be truly multidimensional, thus the quality of marriage has separate determinants, particularly over time (Gilford & Bengtson, 1979).

Johnson et al. (1986) discovered that five separate factors were considered important parts of marriage quality: stability, satisfaction, interaction, amount and severity of disagreements, and perception of problems. These five factors changed over the life course in different ways, with the stability and satisfaction first found to be important. While the other four factors later become more important in determine marital quality.

Marriage in China

Marriage in China has long been virtually universal and was historically organized within an arranged marriage system. Marriages were not something to be left to the individuals involved and were certainly not to be left to “love” (Baker, 1979). An arranged marriage system maintained the importance of the family unit as a whole by keeping the conjugal bond weak and facilitated control over the young couple by older kin. The male descent line, Chinese kinship and marriage patterns, and the gender hierarchy thus all reinforced the importance of the parent-child bond over the conjugal bond. The arranged marriage system ended in China after the communist part took over in year of 1949 (Freedman, 1979). Similar to the Western cultures, Chinese men and women were allowed to choose their own mates.

The importance in Chinese families of the parent-child bond over all others meshed with the ideal family structure of “an extended joint household, in which all married sons, their wives, and their progeny lived with the unmarried siblings under the guidance of a patriarch...” (Stacey, 1983, p. 31). Chinese kinship emphasized the importance of males and of relationships traced through males. Sons not only carried on the family line, but
also functioned as the main economic providers and were expected to support and care for
their parents in their old age. A woman entered the family of her husband upon marriage,
and thus was at a disadvantage in competing with his parents for his attention and loyalty
(Wolf, 1972). Thus, Chinese women need to obey the in-laws and the husbands in order to
gain respect and obtain her secure role in the family. The level of marital satisfaction
experience by Chinese women oftentimes determine by their relationship with the in-laws
and the closeness between the in-laws and their husbands (Lin, Mei, & Peng, 1998).

The Concept of Marital Satisfaction in Chinese Culture

A study conducted by the University of Michigan, in collaboration with the Beijing
University examined perception of marital quality on 2,170 married Chinese women and
1,985 of their husbands in the metropolitan Beijing area of China (Guilford & Bengtson,
1979; Whyte, 1990). Of the 2,170 women interviewed, 2,152 were currently living with
the husbands’ parents. The multivariate results shown that husbands and wives in urban
China clearly see their marriages in a different light (Guilford & Bengtson, 1979; Whyte,
1990). Husbands in general report significantly higher marital closeness and fewer
disharmonies than do wives. It would appear that major factors in spousal difference in
marriage quality are the differential importance of parents-in-law and interactions within
the family for men and women. While men may feel that living with their parents lowers
marital disharmony, this may be related to the increased help they receive from their
parents around the house. Women however, do have greater disharmony when living with
the in-laws in the home. They feel that the husbands’ parents take their husband attention
away from them, thus lowering their marital closeness.
While past studies of marriage quality have focused almost exclusively on Western families, this research shown that the concept may also be used for the study of marriages in urban China. Items commonly included in marriage quality scales in Western research were correlated in similar ways for couples in Beijing (Guilford & Bengtson, 1979; Whyte, 1990). The one major differences was the lack of importance in China of couples spending free time together; while it may be of importance to Western couples, couples in China indicated it was irrelevant in making a “good” or “bad” marriage.

Chinese women are happier in their marriage when the husband and wife relations are viewed as relatively more important than parental relations, especially when the couples have problems. Chinese women in the research study believed that their husbands should place their spousal relationship above his parental relationship because the wives will be with them all their life, not their parents. However, the women believed that the parents-in-law should always be there because of their blood tie to the husbands. They understood that maintaining a good marital relationship required constant attention and work, though it becomes more difficult when the husband-wife tie occupied nearly the lowest rank in the relationship hierarchy in the Chinese society (Lin, Mei, & Peng, 1998).

There is a paucity of studies on marital dissatisfaction in Chinese families. The Confucian concept of model womanhood commands the submission of Chinese wives to their husbands, and their families. The value of Chinese women is judged by the women’s capacity to fulfill their culturally prescribed domestic roles of supportive wives, daughters-in-law and mothers. Despite rapid urbanization, industrialization, and Westernization in recent decades in China, researchers have found that modified Confucian ideals and principles still persist as the protocol for proper family life in contemporary Chinese societies such as
China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Singapore (Chan & Lee, 1995; Liu, Hutchison, & Hong, 1979; Wong, 1972).

For example, recent local studies have found that Hong Kong Chinese couples still apply the Confucian principles to their marital life with prescribed roles for the husbands and wives. It is noted that the husbands or the parents-in-law often dominate over major decision making in various family matters, while wives behave within cultural rules as the submissive individuals. Tang (1994) argues that these traditional patriarchal Chinese values are fundamental to the occurrence of marital dissatisfaction in Hong Kong.

Research conducted in Hong Kong showed that 56.8 percent of Hong Kong Chinese women had a high level of marital satisfaction if they shared marital decision power with their marriage partners (Chan & Lee, 1995; Liu, Hutchison, & Hong, 1979; Wong, 1972). 28.2 percent reported a low level of marital satisfaction due to dominated decision power by their husbands or parents-in-law (Chan & Lee, 1995; Liu, Hutchison & Hong, 1979; Wong, 1972). 15.0 percent reported a moderate level of marital satisfaction when they were occasionally allowed to contribute to household decision process (Chan & Lee, 1995; Liu, Hutchison & Hong, 1979; Wong, 1972).

The study also indicated that women’s demographic factors, such as the level of education and socioeconomic status, were related to the distribution of decision power between Chinese couples and eventually affect the perception of marital satisfaction (Chan & Lee, 1995; Liu, Hutchison & Hong, 1979; Wong, 1972).

Similar results were also found in previous studies in Western (e.g., Lee & Petersen, 1983; Rodman, 1967; Warner, & Lee, 1986) and Asian countries such as India (Conklin, 1998) and Korea (Kim & Kim, 1977), and can be explained by the resource theory (Blood
& Wolfe, 1960; Warner, & Lee, 1986; Rodman, 1967) as well as the social exchange theory (Heer, 1963). These theories suggest that women with high educational attainment and high socioeconomic status not only bring in additional material resources into the marriages but they also possess more accessible alternatives to their present marriages. Thus, they are more able to impose their will on their partners or partners' families in various family decisions.

Loo (1998) examined marital satisfaction in Chinese American couples who resided in San Francisco Chinatown, and found that there was statistically significant differences in marital satisfaction between men and women when the data were analyzed, husbands were more satisfied with their marriages than wives (Loo, 1998). However, when asked if their spouse was meeting their expectations and whether there were marital conflicts, members of both genders complained. The husbands complained about differences with their wives in handling family finances and making major decisions for the family, while the wives complained about the distribution of household tasks and ways of dealing with in-laws. Most of the husbands participated in the study stated that since they are the head of the family, the wives should listen and respect their ideas (Loo, 1998).

Despite these complaints, the majority of married persons still reported satisfaction with their marriage. The findings did not reveal whether the women's reported marital satisfaction was due to lower expectations or actual satisfaction. Loo has several perspectives on the result of her study. First, Confucian traditions of acceptance, lower levels of education for women, or less patriarchal gender relations today could explain why Chinatown's women did not in general express great marital dissatisfaction. Confucian traditions admonished women to accept their fate (Loo, 1998). As the proverb reads,
"When you marry a chicken, stick with a chicken; when you marry a dog, stick with a dog" (Chiu, in Croll, 1978 p. 35). Only in the next life could one’s fate be changed (Smith, 1990).

Second, lower expectation for marital satisfaction on women’s part could also be due to their lower level of education compared to men. Campbell, Converse, and Rodgers (1976) found that Americans with lower levels of education were more satisfied with their jobs and marriage than were persons with higher levels of education. Thus, education has the effect of raising expectations.

Third, wives may not express dissatisfaction in their marriages because spousal relations are less patriarchally oppressive today than they were in traditional Chinese society, and poverty, which forces the wife into the labor market, makes the sequestering of women impossible (Loo, 1998). Thus, even though majority of Chinese American women experience marital dissatisfaction, they are less likely to express their dissatisfaction to the husbands due to cultural and economical reason.

**Divorce in China**

As society becomes more developed, women’s status tends to increase; and as women’s roles become more diffused, intra-family relations become more egalitarian. Modern Chinese women can no longer tolerate being in the traditional submissive roles. They are more financially independent and assertive. Inevitably, the divorce rate is likely to increase (Cherlin, 1996). Women in China have a low divorce rate. For thirty years after the end of the World War II, the divorce rate in China was only about 2 per 1,000 married women (Lin, Mei & Peng, 1998). However, since 1975, the divorce rate has
steadily increased from 2 per 1,000 married women to 6 per 1,000 married women per year in China (Lin, Mei & Peng, 1998).

The old saying "till death do us apart" is not longer valid. In the United States, one quarter of the newly wedded couples are likely to be divorced within 6 years after the nuptial ceremony, and half of them will eventually be divorced in 13 years (Furstenberg, 1997). In comparison, the divorce probability is much lower in China. The average Chinese couple do not find themselves in divorce court. Their marriage lasts much longer than their counterparts in the United States. It takes 35 years for one quarter of the newly wedded Chinese couples to dissolve their marital relations (Parish & Whyte, 1998).

Regardless of the stage of life cycle, both young and old Chinese women have experienced an escalation of family instability. Obviously, the younger women when they are divorced, the more likely they are to remarry. The social predicaments are the highest for the middle-aged who may have to take care of fatherless children. Divorce is still a social taboo in China. Some young Chinese divorced women may eventually remarry, but the duration of the waiting period is much longer than that in the United States (Parish & Whyte, 1998). However, divorced Chinese women cannot count on the assistance of their extended families because divorce is viewed as "shame for the family." Oftentimes, it means that the women need to take care of themselves and their children without any emotional or financial support from her extended families. Chinese women who experience marital dissatisfaction may continue stay in the marriage due to cultural and financial reasons (Dalsimer & Nisonoff, 1997).
Divorce in America

By age 30, three-quarters of women in the U.S. have been married and about half lived with their domestic partners, according to a comprehensive new report on cohabitation, marriage, divorce, and remarriage released by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 2002). The report, by CDC focuses not only on individual factors but also community conditions associated with long-term marriages as well as divorce and separation. Based on the interview with nearly 11,000 women between 15-44 years of age, the study examined conditions associated with cohabitation, including the impact that pre-marital cohabitation has on marriage and marital stability. Overall, 43 percent of marriages break up within 15 years (Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 2002). The study suggested that both cohabitations and marriages tend to last longer under certain conditions, such as: a woman’s age at the time cohabitation or marriage began; whether she was raised throughout childhood in an intact 2-parent family; whether religion plays an important role in her life; and whether she had a higher family income or lived in a community with high median family income, low male unemployment, and low poverty. Moreover, the study shown that marriages in American that end do not always end in divorce; many end in separation or never go through the divorce process.

The study examined beyond the influence of individual characteristics and looking more at the characteristics of the community at large to get a comprehensive picture of what factors impact marriage and divorce rates in America. In addition, it reinforced the society to consider how the issue of cohabitation impacts the life of a relationship.
Gender Role Expectation in Chinese Culture

Gender role expectations of women can vary widely based on class of origin, current class, and ethnic group of origin, and generation in the United States. Furthermore, many Chinese American women report performing different gender roles at home, in private, at work, and in public (Root, 1998). Conflicts for women subsequently may arise from differences in roles and expectations at work and at home.

Homma-True (1987) suggested that these differences might cause conflict if a Chinese American woman is partnered with a Chinese American man who expects her to fulfill a gender role modeled by his mother. Although few in number, empirical marital studies support the hypothesis that conflicts in gender role expectations and transformations in roles can be a major source of marital conflict and dissatisfaction (Homma-True, 1987).

For immigrant groups, class status changes, struggles with language barriers, and trying to make ends meet become everyday sources of stress that might interact with shifts in gender role performance (Loo, 1991). Ying (1991) found that 42% of the variance in marital satisfaction for women, compared to 30% for men, was accounted for by subjective ratings of gender role expectation, life aims, communication and living arrangement. The best predictor for marital satisfaction was sharing goals with partners (Ying, 1991).

Chinese American women from immigrant, working-class backgrounds tend to be less educated and are reported to be more tradition-bound in terms of their sex role orientation (True, 1981). Disruptions in the family hierarchy, such as higher employment status of the wife, might be perceived by the husband as a threat to his patriarchal authority (Ho, 1987).
Chow (1985) found that Chinese American women with higher education and middle-class backgrounds might be exposed to feminist ideas, egalitarian marital role attitudes and expectations for greater occupational mobility. Chinese American males were found to be high on male-dominant, patriarchal attitudes pertaining to marital roles (Root 1998), whereas Chinese American females scored higher on egalitarian conceptions of marriage and not significantly different from Caucasian American females (Root, 1998).

There often is a gap between expression of egalitarian attitudes or values and actual behavior. Even among Caucasian American families who express egalitarian attitudes, women still have a disproportionate share of the child and household responsibilities relative to time spent by the husbands engaged in those tasks (see review in Schellenberger & Hoffman, 1995).

In summary, various studies have documented that the Confucian concept of model family, living arrangement after marriage, level of individual acculturation, the level of education, and socioeconomic status have a significant impact on perception of marital satisfaction for Chinese American women.

Relevant Research of Chinese American Acculturation

Historically, immigration was associated with young Chinese adults coming to the United States seeking a better way of life. The aged, if they lived to be old, stayed in China. This pattern describes the situation of Chinese immigration before 1949. Chinese students came to study in graduate schools and then returned to China when they had completed their programs. However, in the last three decades, many Chinese students remained in the United States and are now middle aged. Since Chinese tradition required
that adult children take care of their aged parents, an increasing number of older Chinese have come from their homeland to join their children.

Although many scholarly publications have discussed a variety of issues concerning China, there are few quantitative studies of Chinese Americans and the acculturation process, and the impact of acculturation level on marital satisfaction. The following are some studies which are directed toward this group of people.

Sociologists pioneered many early studies of Chinese American families and marriages. In 1947, Rose Hun Lee in her dissertation entitled “The Growth and Decline of Chinese Communities in the Rocky Mountain Region” found that thirteen Chinese families resided in Butte, Montana by 1870 and the average size of these families tended to be large, usually seven people (Lee, 1947). Lee observed that Chinese women were subjected not only to their husband’s authority but also to parents-in-law and other family associations (Lee, 1947). Despite the patriarchal control, Lee also noted, Chinese women in Butte occasionally challenged male predominance by running away from unhappy marriages (Lee, 1947).

Two decades later, another sociologist, Standford Lyman, examined the social life of Chinese immigrants in the United States and spearheaded the discussion on polygamous practice among early Chinese immigrants. Not simply proclaiming the practice as evidence of the inferiority of Chinese, Lyman rather interpreted polyandry as a form of marriage among Chinese immigrants due to the shortage of women (Standford, 1974).

Yu (1984) conducted a pilot study in a Midwestern campus town, and found that Chinese immigrants had to modify their traditional values and adopt new roles in order to make a more satisfactory transition from living in China to living in the Untied States. The
adjustment included their adaptation to social and cultural changes, their perceptions of changes in social status, their attitudes toward filial responsibility, and intergenerational relations.

Yu (1984) also conducted another study that examined the relationship between acculturation and stress in Chinese American families. The study focused on the value of filial piety, which has been the foundation of the parent-child relationship in traditional China and how this relationship has been affected by acculturation process. Acculturation was operationalized by grouping respondents into the number of years they have been in the United States. Stress was measured by four stress indicators: number of psychological stress symptoms, number of negative life events in the last 12 months, life dissatisfaction and discomfort level. Three major components of filial piety were chosen for exploration: concern for parental health, financial support of parents, and housing needs of parents. Yu predicted that the higher the acculturation, the smaller the number of psychological stress symptoms. Since the U.S. born Chinese are totally acculturated, they should have the smallest percentage of high stress.

These results also showed that level of acculturation is not a good predictor of whether an individual practice filial piety and level of stress associated with this Chinese tradition. In the study, many individuals who were fully acculturated still felt obligated to take care of their aged parents and the importance of adopting the traditional Chinese cultural values into their life. This phenomenon of selective acculturation could be explained by Chinese parents who immigrated from China continually teaching their American born children the philosophy of Confucianism and tradition.
Several theorists have conceived of acculturation as a process in which both heritage and mainstream cultural identities are free to vary independently (e.g., Berry 1980; Celano & Tyler, 1990; LaFramboise, Coleman, & Gerton, 1993; Laroche, Kim, Hui, & Joy, 1996; Szyech & Lasry, 1993; Sanchez & Fernandez, 1993; Zak, 1973). A research study conducted by Ryder, Alden, and Paulhus (2000) examined acculturation and prediction of self-identity and adjustment in Chinese Americans using unidimensional and bidimensional acculturation approach. In the unidimensional approach to acculturation, individuals are placed on a continuum of identities ranging from exclusively heritage culture to exclusively mainstream culture. This perspective was first detailed by Gordon (1964), who developed an assimilation model in which penetration into the mainstream culture is necessarily accompanied by "the disappearance of the ethnic groups as a separate entity and the evaporation of its distinctive values" (Gordon, 1964, p. 81).

In contrast to the unidimensional perspective, the bidimensional approach supposed that individuals differed in the extent to which self-identity included culturally based values, attitudes, and behaviors. Culture may play a large role in the identities of some individuals, whereas others may base their identity more on factors such as occupation or religion. In addition, individuals are capable of having multiple cultural identities, each of which may independently vary in strength. The most widely researched bidimensional approach to acculturation has been John Berry's acculturation framework. Berry (1980, 1984) observed that acculturating individuals are faced with two fundamental questions: "Is it of value to maintain my cultural heritage?" and "Is it of value to maintain relations with other groups?" According to Berry, the responses to these questions guided the individual's adoption of a particular acculturation strategy.
Ryder, Alend, and Paulhus (2000) proposed that acculturation involves changes in self-identity resulting from the need to accommodate an old and a new culture, changes that can lead to fundamental alterations in the individual’s sense of self. The results of the study demonstrated empirically that people exposed to two cultures, either through birth or through heritage, can incorporate, to varying degrees, two coexisting cultural self-identities.

Furthermore, it does not seem to be the case that the old Chinese cultural identity necessarily diminishes while the new American one grows; rather, the two identities can vary independently (Ryder, Alend, & Paulhus, 2000). Overall, the study showed that acculturation appeared to be bidimensional, far richer and a more functional process. Individuals who retain their own cultural identity and adapt to their new environment tend to experience family life satisfaction. Acculturated individuals are constantly learning from their new environment and incorporate their new lifestyle with their own tradition and eventually created a very unique self-identity that help them to survive and grow.

The acculturation process is continuous and not restricted by a time frame according to the bidimensional approach. The bidimensional approach of acculturation constitutes a broader and more valid framework for understanding acculturation. As mentioned before, many Chinese American parents continue to teach their American born children the importance of practice filial piety and Chinese family tradition, which may subsequently lead to selective acculturation. Many American born Chinese may be fully acculturated in languages and appearances but the practice of Confucianism may still create tremendous stress in their lifestyle.
Socioeconomic Status

Money is a tool with which people can buy what they want or need. No matter what amount of money a person owns, it could become a way to show one’s affection, a substitute for love, a controlling device against other people, and a weapon in interpersonal battles as well (Lin, 1986, pp. 153-156). By virtue of the individual’s innate disposition, acquired temperament, and personal experience, it is impossible to assume that each individual will have the same attitude towards money. Holding a different concept of money can easily damage the interpersonal relationship, especially in marital relationships, and the resulting differences and damages are difficult to remedy (Lo, 1980).

The husband-wife relationship is the most intimate one among all human relationship (Yen, 1991), and a successful marriage depends on the consistency of the couple’s life style and the degree of adjustment to the spouse’s personality, needs and habits. Socioeconomic status thus doubtlessly can be a problem in marital life. According to Lin (1986), money is one of the main sources of conflict commonly seen in China. The conflicts are disputes about who will make money, and who will spend money, how, and on what to spend it, and who will be responsible for money, bills, loans, and investments, and other transactions.

A nationwide survey in the United States among Asian Americans (Lin, 1986) revealed the following disagreements in money matters among couples: general disputes regarding money (59%), a necessity to budget and save money in the family (47%), wasting money (42%), unpaid bills (38%), savings for a rainy day (25%) and loans (17%), among others. It is easy to identify which spouse has the power in the process of discussion on how to handle money matters in the family. Social scientists, Robert Blood
and Donald Wolfe, in their studies conducted in 1990 showed that the relative power between the couple comes from each individual’s relative “resource,” and the valuable resource is the ability to provide the family with money (Lee & Tsai, 1997).

Landies and Landies in their 1993 survey found that among 581 happily married Asian American couples, 164 divorced couples, and 155 unhappy couples who were participating in marriage counseling, the first or second most difficult factor of marital adjustment was “financial problems” (Dai, 1998).

Besides, many other studies in marital success reveal that marital discord has much to do with economic factors (Bell, 1993; Kenkel, 1996). Based on the fact that there are significant correlations between marital satisfaction and socioeconomic factors, it is interesting to investigate what exactly these factors are, the couple’s attitudes toward the family financial situation, and the correlation between money issues and marital satisfaction.

The popular old Chinese saying “poor married couples of lower socioeconomic classes are sad and miserable in all aspects,” was mostly true in the past, due to the fact that there was usually only one bread winner, the husband, in the family, and the wife was always financially disadvantaged (Lin, Mei, & Peng 1998). Because the husband’s income was not sufficient to raise a family, the low living standard would easily bring out disagreements and conflicts in marriage, and the practical problems, such as unpaid bills, waste of money, conservation, savings, and others could turn intimacy into complaints and hatred.

In the past two decades, more and more Chinese American women have received higher education and have gone to work. Most women continue to work after they get
married because they believe two salaries make a more comfortable home and a better life. Since there has been a change in social trends, and Chinese American women have proved that they can work just as well as their male counterparts, the social status of women has been much enhanced. This to some extent has also changed their status in the family, as well as in the husband-wife relationship, because some women may earn the same amount of salary as, or more than, their husbands. However, the interactions between the couple and the in-laws have also changed. Since the couples are both working outside, the in-laws who live with them are responsible for the caring of the grandchildren. It has been the finding in many studies that in-law problems are an important factor in marriage breakdown or dissolution (Lin, 1986). Giving money to in-laws for child caring can cause a serious conflict in both single and dual-earner families because money which could be spent between the couples is taken away. Oftentimes, marital conflict arise by how much to spend on the in-laws and ultimately lead to marital satisfaction (Lin, 1986). Therefore, the actual marital problem for Chinese American women is not the struggles for decision making power at home or to compete with their husband for financial contribution to the family, but to manage family finance properly by establishing effective communication between husband and wife, and the in-laws.

Thus, numerous studies have showed that the Confucian family model, level of acculturation, practice of post-marital co-habitation with in-laws, and socioeconomic status all contribute to the level of marital satisfaction experience by Chinese American women.
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the participants, methods, and procedures that will be used for this study. The validity and reliability data for the instruments are reviewed. In addition, research design and statistical analyses are presented in relationship to the stated hypotheses.

Study Design and Statistical Procedures

Design

The design of this study was a quasi-experimental, two-group, ex-post facto design. This study involved two groups: (1) Chinese American women who practice post-marital co-habitation with in-laws and (2) Chinese American women who do not practiced post-marital co-habitation with in-laws. The dependent variables are marital satisfaction and level of acculturation. The independent variable was post-marital co-habitation behavior.

The ex-post facto design was used because the cohabitation behavior was not under the researcher’s control and has already occurred. However, the researcher was interested in the influence of this uncontrolled factor. Participants in this study could not be randomly assigned to practice post-marital co-habitation with in-laws. In the current study, the researcher was looking at the results of phenomena that have already occurred. The research is considered as quasi-experimental design because the basic design of the study is to look at the differences between groups when the intervention (living with in-laws) happened in the past, not just to find a relationship between two variables. The study simply could not meet the conditions for a true experiment (Ray & Ravizza, 1985). Eighty married Chinese American women were recruited and their data collected. Among the
eighty women, forty of them practice post-marital co-habitation with in-laws and forty of them do not practice post-marital co-habitation with in-laws. According to Tabachnick & Fidell (1996), thirty participants or more in a group and equal number of participants in two groups help make the statistical comparisons more appropriate. A sample size greater than or equal to eighty safeguarded the study in terms of the data meeting assumptions of normality because the large sample size for each group makes ANOVA robust to the violation of homogeneity of variance (Sprintall, 1997). Thus, the methods were robust to the violation of the assumptions of normality.

**Statistical Procedures**

Demographic data were analyzed for this study. Scale reliability and descriptive statistics were computed to provide additional information about the data set and the dependent variable. An exploratory analysis was conducted to test the assumptions of normality by using a histogram and examining skewness. As a result, of the findings assumptions were met using the Levene's test for homogeneity of variance. A post-hoc power analysis was conducted. The eta square (effect size) and observed power were calculated. The eta square demonstrated how strong the effect was in the population, and the observed power demonstrated the likely chances of finding the same statistical effect if the study is replicated with the same sample size and statistical analysis in the future.

Cronbach alpha's were calculated to determine scale reliability. Furthermore, two separate One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) were conducted to test for main effects comparing scores for women who practice post-marital co-habitation and women who do not practice to determine whether there were significant differences between the groups.

Socioeconomic status (SES) was not used as a covariate in this study because it did not
correlate significantly with the dependent variables: acculturation level and marital satisfaction. Thus, Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) was not necessary to remove the effect of the covariate from the dependent variables because they are not related in the first place. Since there is no relationship between the covariate and the dependent variables, ANOVA was chosen as the statistical procedure for this study. Finally, Pearson correlation was obtained to determine the strength of the relationship between variables (Stevens, 1996).

**Hypotheses**

The following details the hypotheses and the statistical tests that were used:

**Hypothesis 1.** Chinese American women who practice post-marital co-habitation with in-laws will report significantly lower levels of acculturation than Chinese American women who do not practice post-marital co-habitation with in-laws. The method of analysis for this hypothesis was a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA). The independent variable is the co-habitation behavior, operationalized as two level (practicing/non-practicing); the dependent variable is level of acculturation.

**Hypothesis 2.** Chinese American women who practice post-marital co-habitation with in-laws will report significantly lower levels of marital satisfaction than Chinese American women who do not practice post-marital co-habitation with in-laws. The method of analysis for this hypothesis was a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA). The independent variable is co-habitation behavior, operationalized as two level (practicing/non-practicing); the dependent variable is level of marital satisfaction.
Procedure

The researcher wrote a letter to various Chinese American community centers and organizations in the city of New York and in the state of New Jersey informing them about the nature of the study, and the need for participants (see Appendix B). Approval was secured from the directors of the various community centers, and research packets were handed out in the centers. The packets contained the Informed Consent letter (see Appendix C) and three instruments including the Suinn-Lew Asian Self-Identity Acculturation Scale (SL-ASIA) (see Appendix D), the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS) (see Appendix E), and the Demographic Form (see Appendix F).

Each participant gave her consent to participate in the study by completing the Demographic Form, the SL-ASIA, and the DAS. The measures were administered in groups. All participants finished the instruments within 15 to 20 minutes. They were instructed to put the completed packets into a collection box located at the back of the meeting room. All participants were instructed not to put their names or any identifiable information on the measures in order to protect their identity. The researcher emptied the collection box after each meeting.

Each participant upon completing all the measures received five U. S. dollars as research compensation. All participants' identities were anonymous to the researcher. No coding or master list was used. All participants were informed that the information gathered was for research purposes only, and that all responses were kept confidential. As indicated on the Informed Consent (see Appendix B), participants were informed that they could withdraw from the research at anytime.
Participants

Participants in this study consisted of 80 married Chinese American women living in the U.S. whose in-laws are also living in the U.S. The rationale for requiring the women’s in-law living in the U.S. was to ensure that participants who do not practice post-marital co-habitation with in-laws choose not to practice it, not because the in-laws are living in another country.

The participants were recruited from various Chinese American community centers and organizations in the city of New York and state of New Jersey (see Appendix A). The demographics of the participants reflected the general composition of the geographical area in which Chinese American women resided in the United States. Table I represents the demographic data analyzed for this study.

Of the eighty Chinese American married women, forty women (50%) were currently living with their in-laws and another forty women (50%) were not living with their in-laws. The mean age was 39 years of age ($SD = 9.7$). At the time of data collection, all respondents (100%) were married Chinese American women. Eight (10%) respondents were second generation Chinese American, and 72 (90%) respondents were first generation Chinese American. Eleven (13.8%) respondents were housewives, 69 (86.2%) respondents were employed outside the home. The country of origin was China for 49 (61.3%) respondents, 11 (13.8%) respondents were from Hong Kong, 7 (8.8%) respondents were from New York City, and fourteen were others from different Asian countries (16.3%).

Of all the participants, 40 were living with their in-laws. Within these 40 participants, 22 (55%) reported “traditional beliefs” were their reason for living with in-
laws, 9 (22.5%) reported “child care”, 7 (17.5%) reported “financial reason”, and 2 (5%) reported “husband’s wishes”.

Of all the participants, forty-one (51.3%) have been living in the U.S. between one to ten years, 20 (25%) have been living between eleven to twenty years, 13 (16.2%) have been living between twenty-one to thirty years, and 6 (7.5%) have been living between thirty-one to thirty-six years. The participants’ annual household income ranged from $10,000 to $120,000. Twelve respondents’ (15%) household income were between $10,000 to $29,000, 43 (45.8%) respondents were between $40,000 to $69,000, 21 (26.2%) respondents were between $70,000 to $99,000 and 4 (5%) respondents were between $100,000 to $120,000. When asked about their highest education degree obtained, one (1.3%) reported had a junior high school diploma, 25 (31.2%) had a high school diploma, 44 (55%) had a bachelor degree, 9 (11.2%) had a master degree, and only one (1.3%) had a doctoral degree. Respondents were asked about their primary language at home. Sixty-six respondents (82.5%) spoke Chinese at home and 14 (17.5%) spoke English at home. Moreover, respondents were asked about the number of person living in the household. Forty-four (55%) were living with 2 - 4 persons, 35 (43.7%) were living with 5 - 7 persons, and only one was living with 8-10 persons (1.3%) (see Table 1).
Table 1

*Frequency Distribution of Demographic Variances*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Frequencies</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participants</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living with in-laws</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living without in-laws</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reasons of Living with In-laws (only 40 participants)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child care</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>22.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial reason</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>17.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Husband's wishes</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tradition beliefs</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>55.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Length Stay in the U.S.</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-10 years</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>51.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-20 years</td>
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<td>25.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>21-30 years</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>16.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>31-36 years</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7.5</td>
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</table>
### Place of Birth

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>61.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hong Kong</td>
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<td>13.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macau</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phillippines</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singapore</td>
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<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taiwan</td>
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### Household Income ($)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$10,000 – 39,000</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>15.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$40,000 – 69,000</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>53.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$70,000 – 99,000</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>26.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$100,000 – 120,000</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Highest Education Degree Obtained

<table>
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<th>Percentage</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Junior High School</td>
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<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School Diploma</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor Degree</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>55.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master Degree</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctoral Degree</td>
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<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
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</table>
## Primary Language at Home

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>82.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>17.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Number of Person in Household

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Persons Range</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2 – 4 persons</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>55.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 – 7 persons</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>43.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 – 10 persons</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Measures

Suinn-Lew Asian Self-Identity Acculturation Scale (SL-ASIA)

The Suinn-Lew Asian Self-Identity Acculturation scale (SL-ASIA) (Suinn, Rickard-Figueroa, Lew, & Vigil, 1987) is a self-administered paper-and-pencil test that measures participants' level of acculturation. The SL-ASIA contains 21 multiple-choice questions about language (4 items), identity (4 items), friendship choice (4 items), behaviors (5 items), generation and geography (3 items), and attitudes (1 item). Examples of sample items include "What language do you prefer?" and "Do you participate in Asian occasions, holidays, traditions, and so on?" For example, question 1 asked "What language can you speak?" The responses available were: 1. Asian only (for example, Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Vietnamese, etc.); 2. Mostly Asian, some English; 3. Asian and English about equally well (bilingual); 4. Mostly English, some Asian; 5. Only English. The first response was given a score of 1. The second response was given a score of 2. The final score, which is calculated by summing the 21 responses and dividing by 21, results in a range of 1 to 5. Acculturation scores ranges from 1.00, representing high Asian identification (rejection of dominant culture) to 5.00, representing high Western identification (assimilation into the dominant culture). A mean response of 3.00 would be representative of a bicultural orientation (integration).

Reliability.

The SL-ASIA is posited to be the only extant scale that specifically attempts to measure the acculturation of all Asian American ethnic groups (Suinn, Ahuna, & Khoo, 1992; Suinn, Rickard-Figueroa, Lew, & Vigil, 1987). The scale attempts to capture the two questions put forth by Berry (1980) using a single score based on an orthogonal and
multidimensional model (Suinn et al., 1995). The scores could be interpreted as either a continuous variable or a categorical variable. An internal consistency reliability of .79 for Asians and .88 to .91 for Asian Americans of the 21 items have been reported (Park & Harrison, 1995; Solberg, Choi, Ritsma, & Jolly, 1994; Suinn et al., 1987, 1995). Reliability scores for this study were represented with a Cronbach Alpha of .96, slightly higher than the scores reported in the literature.

Validity.

Validity was established by examining the acculturation scores of Asian Americans from different generations (Suinn et al., 1987). The results, which are consistent with the theory of acculturation, revealed that first-generation Asian Americans are less acculturated than second-generation Asian Americans, and so on. The SL-ASIS acculturation scores for the four generations were: first, 2.96; second, 3.57; third, 3.78; and fourth, 3.85 (Suinn et al., 1987). Comparison of the acculturation scores with Asian Americans’ length of stay in the United States are also quite consistent with the theory and lent further support to the validity of the SL-ASIA scale (Suinn et al., 1987).

Concurrent validity.

Validity studies conducted by Suinn, Ahuna, & Khoo (1992) indicated that the SL-ASIA has concurrent validity with demographic variables, indicative of acculturation factors such as age of arrival in the U.S., years lived in non-Asian neighborhood, and self-rating of acculturation, all yielded significant correlations of $p<.001$.

The concurrent validity of the SL-ASIA has also been shown to be related to generation level, length of residency, and English as a second language (Park & Harrison,
1995; Suinn et al., 1987). Data also exists on the concurrent validity of using the measure with Asian internationals (Suinn et al., 1995).

Abe-Kim, Okazaki, and Nakawatase (1995) studied acculturation, measured by the SL-ASIA, and cultural values, measured by the Individualism-Collectivism and the Independence-Interdependence scales. They found that the SL-ASIA was sensitive in measuring generational and ethnic differences in immigration history of Asian American populations (Suinn, Khoo, & Ahuna, 1995).

The SL-ASIA has been validated recently in some Asian sub-groups. One of the studies conducted involved the investigation of the measure's validity to a non-college population (Atkinson, Lowes, & Matthews, 1995). Results from the study established a reliability of .89, comparable to reliability coefficients obtained in Suinn et al (1987) reliability coefficients of .88 and .89, respectively. The adequacy of this reliability coefficient is attributed to Suinn et al (1987) who recommended that a reliability level of .80 or higher is considered acceptable for research studies of such nature. A Principal Component Factor Analysis on this non-student sample also yielded results indicative of the SL-ASIA being an adequate measure of acculturation.

_Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS)_

The DAS (Spanier, 1976) provided a general measure of satisfaction in an intimate relationship. It is a 32-item rating, self-administered paper-and-pencil instrument completed by either or both partners in a relationship. Each DAS item is rated with one of several responses. The DAS included four subscales: Dyadic Consensus, Dyadic Satisfaction, Affectional Expression, and Dyadic Cohesion. Of the 32 items, 13 measure dyadic consensus, 10 measure dyadic satisfaction, 5 measure dyadic cohesion, and 4
measure affectional expression. Examples of sample items from Dyadic Consensus subscale are “Making major decisions” and “Ways of dealing with parents or in-laws.” The responses for Dyadic Consensus subscale ranged from “Always agree” to “Always disagree.” The rating scale ranging from “Always agree (5)” to “Always disagree (0).” Sample items from the Dyadic Satisfaction subscale include “How often do you and your partner quarrel?” and “Do you confide in your mate?” The responses for Dyadic Satisfaction subscale ranged from “All the time” to “Never.” The rating scale ranging from “All the time (0)” to “Never (5)” Sample items from the Affectional Expression subscale include “Being too tired for sex” and “Not showing love.” The responses for the Affectional Expression subscale ranged from “Yes” to “No.” The rating scale ranging from “Yes (0)” to “No (1).” Sample items from the Dyadic Cohesion subscale include “Calmly discuss something” and “Have a stimulating exchange of ideas.” The responses for the Dyadic Cohesion subscale ranged from “Never” to “More often.” The rating scale ranging from “Never (0)” to “More often (5).” A total adjustment score was calculated by summing the scores for the four subscales. In the present study, the total score of the DAS was used in the statistical analysis.

Test scores ranged from 0 to 151. The higher the score, the better is the person’s adjustment and satisfaction in the marriage. The items were written at an 8th grade reading level (Jensen, Witcher, & Upton, 1987) and most respondents could complete the instrument in 5-10 minutes. Normative data were reported on a sample of 218 married couple and 94 divorced couples. Norms were presented separately for married and divorced couples (Jensen, Witcher, & Upton, 1987).
The DAS is used to characterize the quality of a dyadic relationship, and measure major areas of marital satisfaction or dissatisfaction (Spanier, 1976). Since initial scale development, the DAS has become one of the most widely used measures of relationship satisfaction (Cohen 1985; Follette & Jacobson, 1985; Johnson & Greenberg, 1985). Psychometrically, the DAS has been acknowledged as one of the best pencil-and-paper indicators of dyadic satisfaction (Cohen, 1985). In clinical settings, the DAS is used primarily as an assessment device with individuals or couples who are considering or beginning marital therapy (Spanier, 1976). The multidimensional nature of the instrument is important in providing a comprehensive description of the marital relationship.

As a research instrument, the DAS has been used in hundreds of studies of marital satisfaction (Spanier, 2001). This research base provides an important linkage of the individual results observed for an individual or a couple to demonstrated relationships found for many thousands of couples (Spanier, 2001). The DAS has been used to evaluate various treatment strategies and social programs (Spanier, 2001). The scale has also been used to answer basic questions related to marital problems (Spanier, 1976).

Reliability.

Spanier (1976) reported a total score internal consistency reliability of .96. Other investigators have reported comparable values for both males and female respondents. Subscale internal consistency reliabilities range from .73 to .92 for Dyadic Consensus (Spanier, 1976). The values of coefficient alpha range from .77 to .94 for Dyadic Satisfaction (Spanier, 1976). The internal consistency coefficients for Affectional Expression are somewhat lower, ranging from .58 to .73 (Spanier, 1976). Internal consistency reliabilities for Dyadic Cohesion range from .72 to .86 (Spanier, 1976). The
data indicate that the total scale and its components have sufficiently high internal consistency reliability to justify their use. The total reliability scores for this study was represented with a Cronbach Alpha of .84, with subscale reliabilities of .77, .80, .62, and .75 respectively for the subscales of Dyadic Consensus, Dyadic Satisfaction, Affectional expression, and Dyadic Cohesion, slightly lower than the subscales scores reported in the literature.

*Test-retest reliability.*

The temporal stability of the DAS has been shown in a number of studies. Stein, Girodo, and Dotzenroth (1982) reported 11-week test-retest correlations for the total DAS of .96. Subscale correlations over this period were .98 for Dyadic Consensus, .92 for Dyadic Satisfaction, .78 for Affectional Expression, and .88 for Dyadic Cohesion. Belaky, Spanier, and Rovine (1983) reported 12-month stability coefficients ranging from .43 for Affectional expression among husbands to .82 for the total DAS among wives. Overall, the results suggested that DAS scores were reasonably stable over relatively long intervals of time.

*Content validity.*

The content validity of DAS was achieved by having three judges maintain items for inclusion only if they considered the items relevant measures of dyadic adjustment for contemporary relationships, consistent with definitions for adjustment, satisfaction, cohesion and consensus, and were well worded with appropriate fixed choice responses (Bagarozzi, 1985).
Criterion-related validity.

Criterion-related validity was considered satisfactory as each of the 32 items in the scale correlated significantly with the external criterion of marital status (Spanier, 1976). Specifically, for each item, t-tests revealed significant differences between the responses of the divorced sample and those of the married sample, all p’s < .001 (Spanier, 1976). In addition, the mean total scale scores for the married and divorced samples were 114.8 and 70.7 respectively (Spanier, 1976). These total scores are significantly different at the .001 level.

Additional support for the criterion-related validity of the DAS comes from a study of marital distress. Jacobson, Follette, and McDonald (1982) compared the reactions of distressed and happily married couples to daily events. Distressed and nondistressed couples were identified by scores on the DAS. Low total adjustment scores were associated with lower rates of positive behavior and higher rates of negative behavior. In general, distressed couples (those with low DAS scores) were more reactive to recent events than no distressed couples (those with high DAS scores).

Construct validity.

Construct validity was obtained by correlating the DAS with the Locke Marital Adjustment Test (LMAT) (Locke & Wallace, 1951). Correlational analysis revealed that the DAS significantly correlated .86 among married respondents and .88 among divorced respondents (Spanier, 1976). Factor analysis of the final scale produced four interrelated components, three of which were hypothesized as components of adjustment. The DAS appears to measure the theoretical construct of marital adjustment and marital satisfaction.
Demographic Data Form

The Demographic Data Form was used to collect data such as participant’s co-habitation behavior, length stay in the U.S., place of birth, annual household income, education level, occupation, age, primary language at home and number of persons in the household. Generation status was determined by participant’s place of birth; participants who are not born in the U.S. are considered at first generation Chinese American while participants who are born in the U.S. are considered as second generation Chinese American. No third generation Chinese American was included in the study.

Summary

This chapter reviewed methodological issues relevant to this study. Also described were methods of participant recruitment as well as demographic characteristics. Measures utilized in this study were the Demographic Form, the Suinn-Lew Asian Self Identity Acculturation Scale (SL-ASIA), and the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS). Procedures for administration of the measures were described in detail. A quasi-experimental design was described and a description of statistical analysis was offered.
CHAPTER IV
RESULTS

This chapter reports the results of the statistical analyses derived from the data obtained from participants in the study. It will comprise two sections which include the following: 1) a presentation of the descriptive statistics, 2) preliminary data analysis using correlation, 3) and hypotheses testing using ANOVA analysis and the results of the data analysis.

Descriptive Statistics

Means and standard deviations for the Suina-Lew Asian Self-Identity Acculturation Scale (SL-ASIA), and the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS) are shown in Table 2. The mean is a measure of central tendency, a value that represents a typical member of the sample or population (Sprinthall, 1997). The standard deviation is a measure of variability that indicates by how much all of the scores in a distribution typically deviate or vary from the mean. Together, a measure of central tendency and a measure of variability provide a great deal of information about the data set (Sprinthall, 1997). The descriptive statistics can provide explanations of findings that may be unexpected.

The Levene’s test for homogeneity of variances shown that there is no violation to normality for level of acculturation ($L_e = 2.70, p>.05$), but there is violation for marital satisfaction ($L_e = 4.34, p<.05$). However, due to the large sample size in each group (40 married women), ANOVA is still consider robust to this violation (Sprinthall, 1997).
Table 2

Means and Standard Deviations for the Suinn-Lew Asian Self-Identity Acculturation Scale (SL-ASIA), Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS), and DAS subscales

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Women living with in-laws (N = 40)</th>
<th>Women living without in-laws (N = 40)</th>
<th>Total (N = 80)</th>
<th>F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SL-ASIA</td>
<td>2.10</td>
<td>.78</td>
<td>2.43</td>
<td>.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DAS</td>
<td>28.40</td>
<td>7.09</td>
<td>47.70</td>
<td>10.03</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dyadic Consensus*</td>
<td>32.80</td>
<td>8.26</td>
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<td>8.77</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dyadic Satisfaction*</td>
<td>31.55</td>
<td>6.97</td>
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<tr>
<td>Affectional Express.*</td>
<td>34.15</td>
<td>7.04</td>
<td>46.08</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dyadic Cohesion*</td>
<td>31.65</td>
<td>6.51</td>
<td>51.15</td>
<td>11.54</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Note. * p < .05, two tailed  ** p < .01, two tailed
* Subscale of the Dyadic Adjustment Scale.
Preliminary Data Analysis

Pearson correlation coefficients were determined to assess the strength of the linear relationship between two given variables (Tabachnick & Fidell, 1996). Moderate to small positive correlations were found between a number of variables in this study. Table 3 summarizes this information; there was a significant positive relationship between the SL-ASIA and respondents' length stay in the U.S. \( (r = .66, p < .01) \), their household income, \( (r = .36, p < .01) \) and years of education \( (r = .41, p < .01) \). As indicated, respondents with high acculturation level tend to live in the U.S. longer, have higher educational levels and higher levels of income.

A high positive correlation was found \( (r = .74, p < .01) \), between the Dyadic Adjustment Scale and respondents' post-marital co-habitation practice. A significant positive relationship was found between marital satisfaction and years of education \( (r = .29, p < .01) \). As expected, respondents who practice post-marital co-habitation with-in laws tended to have lower levels of marital satisfaction and lower levels of education. A positive correlation was found between the length of stay in the U.S. and the DAS \( (r = .25, p < .05) \) and length of stay in the U.S. and the current living situation \( (r = .27, p < .05) \).

Respondents who lived in the U.S. for a long period of time tend to have a higher acculturation level. Further, the longer respondents lived in the U.S., the more they tend not to practice post-marital co-habitation with their in-laws. A significant positive relationship was found \( (r = .36, p < .01) \) between household income and length of stay in the U.S. The less time participants have been in the U.S., the less money they made. Moderate positive correlations were found between household income and years of education \( (r = .53, p < .01) \). Respondents with higher level of education tend to have
higher income. Another moderate positive correlation was also found ($r = .66, p < .01$) between length stay in the U.S. and level of acculturation. Respondents who stay in the U.S. longer tend to have higher level of acculturation. However, a significant negative correlation was found between years of education and length stay in the U.S. ($r = -.29, p < .01$), indicating that the fewer years respondents stay in the U.S., the more education they are likely to have (see Table 3).
Table 3

*Intercorrelations Between Suinn-Lew Asian Self-Identity Acculturation Scale (SL-ASIA),
Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS), and Demographic variables for Total Sample*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td>.19</td>
<td>.18</td>
<td>.66**</td>
<td>.36**</td>
<td>.41**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. DAS</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.74**</td>
<td>.25*</td>
<td>.18</td>
<td>.29**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Living Situation</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.27*</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>.14</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Length Stay in U.S.</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.36**</td>
<td>-.29**</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Household Income</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.53**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Years of Education</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Note. * p < .05, two tailed  ** p < .01, two tailed N = 80*
Main Data Analysis

To examine whether respondents living with in-laws and those living without in-laws differed significantly on their scores on the two measures, mean scores were compared for both groups of women. Mean scores and standard deviations on the Sunnn-Lew Asian Self-Identity Acculturation Scale (SL-ASIA), the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS) and the DAS subscales are reported in Table 2. An ANOVA was used to compare the two groups of women’s scores on the two measures to determine whether there were significant differences between groups.

A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to compare acculturation level and marital satisfaction on Chinese American women who practice co-habitation with in-laws and Chinese American women who do not practice co-habitation with in-laws to determine whether there are significant differences between these two groups. The ANOVA produces an F statistic designed to test for interactions as well as main effects (Tabachnick & Fidell, 1996). ANOVA was chosen as opposed to a series of t-tests to avoid increasing the likelihood of a Type I error (Tabachnick & Fidell, 1996). F scores on all but one measure revealed significant differences between two groups of women at the p < .01 level (see Table 2), suggesting that the sample should be examined separately by co-habiting behavior.

Hypothesis 1

A one-way ANOVA was calculated to test for group differences on the effect of post-marital co-habitation with in-laws on acculturation level. It was hypothesized that those women who lived with in-laws would be significantly less acculturated than those women not living with their in-laws. The results indicated that there are no group
differences on the SL-ASIA scale, $F(1, 78) = 2.87, p > .05$, eta-squared = .04 (power = .388) between Chinese American women who practice post-marital co-habitation with in-laws ($M = 2.10$) and those who do not practice ($M = 2.43$).

Hypothesis 2

A one-way ANOVA was calculated to test for differences between women engaged in post-marital co-habitation with in-laws and women who did not co-habitate on the measure of marital satisfaction. It was predicated that women who co-habitate with in-laws would report significant lower levels of marital satisfaction than those who did not cohabitate with in-laws. The ANOVA results indicated that post-marital co-habitation with in-laws did affect participants’ perception of marital satisfaction, $F(1, 78) = 98.76, p < .001$, eta-squared = .56 (power = 1). Chinese American women who practice post-marital co-habitation with in-laws reported significantly lower levels of marital satisfaction ($M = 28.40$) than those who do not practice post-marital co-habitation ($M = 47.70$).

The ANOVA results for the four subscales all shown significant lower levels of marital satisfaction for women who practice post-marital co-habitation with in-laws. The result as followed; The Dyadic Consensus subscale: $F(1, 78) = 71.26, p < .001$, eta-squared = .48. The Dyadic Satisfaction subscale: $F(1, 78) = 89.11, p < .001$, eta-squared = .53. The Affectional Expression subscale: $F(1, 78) = 47.36, p < .001$, eta-squared = .38. The Dyadic Cohesion subscale: $F(1, 78) = 86.62, p < .001$, eta-squared = .53. Table 2 summarizes the $F$ statistics for both Hypothesis 1 and 2.
Summary

Based on the statistical analyses conducted on the collected data, Hypothesis I was not supported in the current study. Chinese American women who practice post-marital co-habitation did not report significant lower levels of acculturation. However, acculturation level was found to be highly correlated with participants' length stay in the U.S., household income and years of education. Further, Hypothesis II was fully supported in the current study. Chinese American women who practice post-marital co-habitation with in-laws did reported significantly lower levels of marital satisfaction than Chinese American women who did not practice post-marital co-habitation with in-laws.
CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents the results of the data analyses conducted in this study, and presents conclusions and discussion based upon the analyses of both the descriptive and statistical data relevant to this investigation. The first section contains a summary of previous research that frames the background for the present study. The second section presents and discusses the finding of this investigation, determined as a result of the analysis of the data. The third section presents the limitations for the study. The fourth section describes the study's relevant implications for counseling theory, research and practice.

Summary of Previous Research

Many researchers have conducted studies in the area of marital satisfaction and gender role expectation, however, the theme for those studies focus mainly on an individuals’ own perception of marital satisfaction and expectations on the marriages. In reality, determinants of marital satisfaction can vary across cultures and the specific ways in which marital satisfaction is expressed. Most research on marital satisfaction focuses on Western families; the level of love and romance experienced by only two people, whereas there appeared to be less understanding of marital experiences by other cultures.

Research data in China shows that wives in general report significantly lower marital satisfaction than their husbands (Gilford & Bengtson, 1979; Whyte, 1990) due to the practice of post-marital co-habitation with in-laws. Married Chinese women also reported less satisfied in their marriage when their husbands place their spousal relationship below his parental relationship (Lin, Mei, & Peng, 1998). In addition, married women in
Hong Kong reported lower level of marital satisfaction when the dominated decision power in the household was controlled by their husbands or parents-in-law (Chan & Lee, 1995; Liu, Hutchison, & Hong, 1979; Wong, 1972).

There are several studies of Chinese Americans and the acculturation process, and the impact of acculturation level on marital satisfaction. Ryder et al. (2000) stated that acculturation involves changes in self-identity resulting from the need to accommodate an old and a new culture, changes that can lead to fundamental alterations in the individual's sense of self. The acculturation process is continuous and restricted by a time frame (Ryder, Alend, & Paulhus, 2000). Socioeconomic status and level of education also contributed to an individual's level of acculturation (Berry, 1984). This evidence highlights a unique opportunity for research to aid in the understanding of the practice of post-marital co-habitation and its relationship to acculturation level and marital satisfaction of Chinese American women.

This study focused on whether the practice of post-marital co-habitation with in-laws affects the level of acculturation and marital satisfaction. Acculturation level was measured by The Suin-Lew Asian Self-Identity Acculturation scale (SL-ASIA) (Suinn, Rickard-Figueroa, Lew, & Vigil, 1987). The SL-ASIA is the only extant scale that specifically attempts to measure the acculturation of all Asian American ethnic groups. The scale was sensitive in measuring generational and ethnic differences in the immigration history of Asian Americans (Suinn, Khoo, & Ahuna, 1995). Marital Satisfaction is measured by the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS), which provides a general measure of satisfaction in an intimate relationship. There are four subscales in the DAS. A total adjustment score is used in the study by summing the scores for the four subscales. A
demographic information sheet was used to collect additional information such as reasons to practice post-marital co-habitation with in-laws; household income, level of education; occupation, etc.

The first hypothesis was designed to investigate whether Chinese American women who practice post-marital co-habitation with in-laws will report lower acculturation levels than those who do not practice. The second hypothesis examined whether Chinese American women who practice post-marital co-habitation with in-laws will report a lower level of marital satisfaction compared to those who do not practice.

The independent variable examined in this study was the practice of post-marital co-habitation with in-laws. The dependent variables examined in this study were the scores from SL-ASIA and the DAS. A Pearson correlation matrix was developed to explore relationships among the variables. Two one-way ANOVA were used to examine group differences (the practice of post-marital co-habitation with in-laws) on level of acculturation and marital satisfaction.

Summary and Discussion of Findings

The results of the ANOVAs shown that there are no group differences on acculturation level between Chinese American women who practice post-marital co-habitation with in-laws and those who do not practice. In contrast, women who practice post-marital co-habitation with in-laws reported significantly lower levels of marital satisfaction than those who do not practice.

These findings reveal that level of acculturation did not have any influence on the decision of practicing post-marital co-habitation with in-laws. There are many factors which may have play a role into how women who made the decision to practice co-
habitation with in-laws such as tradition beliefs, childcare, financial reason and husband's wishes. Within these reasons, traditional beliefs (55%) are the main reasons why participants decided to live with their in-laws. As mentioned early in the study, when a Chinese woman get marries, she not only marries her husband but also his family. She must live with, serve and please the husband's parents because they have become her parents. The woman must understand and respect her role in the family. Since the traditional Chinese family values are governed by Confucian philosophy and ethics, many women feel obligated to live with and take care of their in-laws. These traditional family values and Confucian teachings did not fully diminish when the Chinese immigrants came to the United States. Many Chinese families believed that by preaching the Confucian teaching to their children, it would help to shelter their children away from the mainstream culture. The study has shown that regardless of whether the participants are first or second generation Chinese American, the majority of them continue to practice the Confucian teaching and believe that living with in-laws were another way to preserve their own traditions.

Moreover, childcare (22.5%) and financial reasons (17.5%) are also why women decide to live with their in-laws. More Chinese American women who have received higher education continue to work after marriage and even after they have children. However, many Chinese American women believe that giving their children to the care of the in-laws is the most economical way compare to the daycare center. Allowing the in-laws to take care of the children will keep the in-laws busy at home and help the children to learn their native language and customs. Furthermore, all these findings support Yu's (1984) study on selective acculturation. Yu (1984) found that level of acculturation is not a
good predictor of whether an individual practices filial piety. He mentioned that many individuals who lived in American were fully acculturated but still felt obligated to take care of their aged parents and continue to adopt the Confucian teaching and traditional Chinese cultural values into their daily life. Many Chinese parents continue teaching their American born children the importance of being Chinese is to practice the Confucian philosophy and tradition.

The fact that acculturation level did not differ between the cohabitated sample and the non-cohabitated sample suggests that SL-ASIA actually may measure different constructs. The measure may need further research into its measurement qualities. The complexity of acculturation seems to imply that there must be other constructs relevant to understanding the process by which an individual incorporates values and behaviors of a new culture. Constructs such as ethnic and racial identity may provide added information to the construct of acculturation. The SL-ASIA tends to focus more on external aspects of acculturation such as language, behaviors and attitudes but is not able to detect selective acculturation process such as retaining one’s heritage, cultural identity or beliefs. Researchers have demonstrated empirically that people exposed to two cultures, either through birth or through heritage, can incorporate varying degrees, two cultural identities through selective acculturation process.

The most significant finding in this study was that participants who live with the in-laws did have a lower level of marital satisfaction compared to others. The result shows that Chinese American women do experience greater disharmony when living with the in-laws at home. The results of the DAS and the subscales show that women who live with in-laws do encounter different level of marital distress, including: having difficulty
communicating with their husbands regarding money, recreation activities, friends and household tasks; the dilemma of whether to get a divorce; level of satisfaction with the expression of affection and sex in their relationship; and the common interest and activities shared with their husbands. These findings support Whyte's (1990) study on Chinese women's perception of marital quality. Whyte (1990) found that individuals who lived with the in-laws report significantly lower marital closeness and higher disharmonies than do their husbands. The women in the study believed that even though the in-laws are taking care of the children and helping with household works, they have definitely taken away their husbands' attention from them.

The study has shown that traditional beliefs are the major reason why Chinese American women decide to live with their in-laws. Many women make that decision prior to their marriage. They believed that living with the in-laws is just the same as living with their own parent. They did not take other variables such as the distribution of household tasks; financial decision and management; and the distribution of decision-making power into consideration before committing to the living arrangement. Many women believe that practicing post-marital co-habitation with in-laws will have not effect on their marital relationship with their husbands, especially those who have a full-time employment. However, the result of the DAS has shown that women who do not live with their in-laws have higher level of marital satisfaction. Both groups of women have similar socioeconomic status and level of education. Over half of the women (55%) have bachelor degree and a household between $40,000 to $69,000. It indicated that the participants' demographic factors, such as the level of education and socioeconomic status have minimum affect on their perception of marital satisfaction. Since Chan & Lee's (1995)
study have shown that women’s demographic factors may affect Chinese women’s perception of marital satisfaction due to their lack of decision power within the family. Chan & Lee, et al. suggested that women with high educational attainment and high socioeconomic status might have higher expectation for their marriages, thus, easier to get dissatisfied compared to other women.

Results of the Pearson correlation matrix revealed a statistically significant positive correlation was found for the following variables: current living situation, years of education, length stay in the U.S., household income and marital satisfaction, which confirm Hypothesis 2. These findings reveal that participants’ decision to co-habit with in-laws, their years of education, length of stay in the U.S. and household income are all important factors that positively correlate to their perception of marital satisfaction.

Individuals who practice post-marital co-habitation with in-laws tend to have lower level of marital satisfaction, educational level and household income. These findings support Lee & Petersen’s (1983) study on married women’s demographic factors and perception of marital satisfaction. Lee & Peterson (1983) based their study on the resource theory (Blood & Wolfe, 1960) and social exchange theory (Heer, 1963), suggesting that women with high educational attainment and income bring in additional material resources into their marriages, thus, they expected more in return such as high marital satisfaction. Furthermore, these findings support Campbell et al.’s (1976) study that lower level of education could contribute to married women’s lower expectation for marital satisfaction.

The most significant finding in this study was that the practice of co-habitation with in-laws was inversely correlated with level of marital satisfaction, whereas there was no correlation for the non-cohabitate sample. In other words, besides educational level,
household income and length of stay in the U.S., individuals’ perception of marital satisfaction are directly affected by whether they live with their in-laws. This supports findings by Gilford & Bengston (1979) that Chinese women who practice co-habitation with in-laws reported lower level of marital satisfaction compared to their husbands.

In contrast, years of education were negatively correlated with length stay in the U.S. In other words, Chinese American women with more years of education tend to spend fewer years in the country. This finding shown that many participants may receive their education outside the U.S.

Overall, the hypotheses were partially supported, since co-habitation with in-laws did affect participants’ perception of marital satisfaction. However, level of acculturation has no apparent affect on participants’ decision to practice co-habitation with in-laws. This provides evidence that there are other external factors playing a role into making that decision. It is possible that the practice of traditional beliefs, financial situation, and childcare are some of the reasons why Chinese American women decide to live with their in-laws after getting married. The sample of the study consists of some well-educated workingwomen. Due to the socioeconomic status of these women involved in the study, it may be conceivable that these women have the confidence that they are able to handle all the stresses evoked by living with the in-laws since they only spend about four to five hours daily with the in-laws. Thus, their level of acculturation may not play an important role into the decision of co-habitation with the in-laws.

Furthermore, the important thing to consider in this study is that Chinese American women who decide to practice co-habitation with in-laws are not forced into it and no arranged marriages were involved. More specifically, these women entered their marriages
by their own will, and they believed that they would share household decision power with their husbands even though the in-laws were also in the picture. The women believed that the communication involved only two individuals, the wife and the husband. They did not take the important family role of the in-laws into consideration before committing to the living arrangement. Many Chinese American women have underestimated or neglected their husbands' feelings toward his parent, thus, they become shocked and upset when the husbands and the in-laws become the decision maker in the family.

This study provides important data for the Chinese American community that the practice of post-marital co-habitation with in-laws does affect Chinese American women's perception of marital satisfaction, even with women who are working and educated.

Limitation of the Study

The research design for this study was fundamentally sound and balanced using valid and reliable instruments to collect the data. Since reliabilities of all the measures used ranged from an alpha .84 to an alpha of .96, it is safe to believe that the results found were reliable for use with Chinese American women.

A number of possible limitations exist. The norms for the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS) are based on a group of White married individuals from suburban area in Pennsylvania, unlike the potential participants in this study which are Chinese American women from urban areas. In addition, during the scale development phase, items in the scale were evaluated by three judges from the U.S. for content validity. Items were judged as whether they were relevant measures of dyadic satisfaction for Western relationships. It is an empirical question whether items in the scale are culturally relevant to Chinese American relationships.
Another primary limitation is that no causal claims can be made regarding the relationships between the independent variable (post-marital co-habitation with in-laws) and the dependent variables (acculturation level and marital satisfaction) due to the quasi-experimental nature of the design. However, results only can indicate if the variables are related in a non-causal way.

Another limitation of this study includes those common to self-reported measurements. Social desirability may play a role in how participants respond to the instruments. Participants may not understand items or may have interpreted items differently than the authors of the measurements intended. In addition, there is always some concern with response bias.

Large percentages of references and citations used in this study is updated, however, certain references regarding Confucian theory and study of Chinese families was quit old. This can be explained by the lack of updated research on the relationship between Confucian theory and the impact it has on Chinese families in the 21st century. In addition, most of the researches focused on Chinese American families were conducted in the early 70's when large numbers of Chinese immigrants have just arrived in the U.S.

Participants in this study are Chinese American women who can read and understand English. This may affect the generalization of the study to all Chinese American women since not all Chinese American women can read or understand English. By not translating the measures from English into Chinese, women who do not read and understand English may not have their voice in the study. The lack of participants from various socioeconomic backgrounds has also limited the applications of the study. The majority of current sample is from an inner city “Chinatown” in New York City, and
although the results may generalize to other Chinese American women in other Chinatowns, the relevance of the findings to Chinese American women living in other settings has yet to be established.

Another limitation for this study included the fact that incentives may present somewhat of a bias in the sample. Participants who volunteer to participate in the study and non-volunteers who declined to participate in the study may influence the findings of the research.

There are several strengths and weaknesses associated with recruiting participants from Chinese American community center and professional organizations. First of all, most people who go to community centers and join professional organizations are educated and at least in the middle-class income range. Limiting a study to such a select group of economically and educationally advantaged, homogeneous groups of persons could affect findings. There may be important differences in the lower socioeconomic status that cannot be obtained using community centers and professional organizations. In addition, due the lack of comparative studies on Chinese American women’s perception of marital satisfaction, findings in the present study were not able to relate to other studies.

One strength associated with utilizing participants from Chinese American community centers and professional organizations is that it is advantageous to limit one’s sample to a select population to examine more closely the effects of the variable. Unfortunately, it is not realistic to believe that all extraneous variables were accounted for in this study.

Another strength of this study is the homogeneity of the group. For instance, most participants were first generation married Chinese American women. This homogeneous
group does not allow for enough diversity in order to be able to generalize findings, yet the significant differences found can be attributed to between groups as opposed to within group differences (Tabachnick & Fidell, 1996).

Relevant Implications for Theory, Research, and Practice

Theory

In this study, the researcher has provided an overview of the cultural characteristics that guide the practice of post-marital co-habitation with in-laws for Chinese American women. The framework used in this study includes the philosophy of Confucianism, process of acculturation and gender role expectation, together, describe and conceptualize the predictable marital satisfaction and level of acculturation among Chinese American women. Beliefs about appropriate gender roles are particularly important in the context of relationships such as marriage. Consistency between role beliefs and behaviors within marriage is probably important for the quality of the relationship. The gender roles expectation and authority between Chinese spouses, educational level and individual’s own expectation of marriage are important determinants of women’s marriage satisfaction, but less so for men.

Many Chinese Americans still hold onto their traditional beliefs even after they have lived in the United States for many years, thus, the egalitarian gender role attitudes believed to be associated with level of marital satisfaction. It is important to identify cultural beliefs and coping mechanisms in dealing with marital problems (Lin & Lin, 1981). The balance of spousal power continued to play an important role on marriage quality for Chinese American women.
The frame of reference concept is quit important in understanding marital satisfaction in the context of culture. The greatest challenge in working with Chinese American women is the process of understanding their frame of reference regarding marital satisfaction. Culture clearly plays a critical role in the way one attaches meaning to perceptions and experiences. People do not form their values outside their cultural heritage. Their culture is a large part of their value system. From the prism of one’s culture, therefore, every individual views the world and forms concepts of family life, life satisfaction, and the meaning of society. The clinicians must understand the context in which marital satisfaction occurs to understand the meaning of the concept and interactions, and to gain the insight to work cross-culturally. The role or function of culture in understanding marital satisfaction is to provide a useful framework for comprehending more clearly the systems and structure of intimate relationship in various cultural context.

Research

Continued research on the implications of acculturation for how Chinese American women experience marital satisfaction, is vital for theoretical and practical reasons. It is urged that research on acculturation should fully incorporate the philosophy of Confucianism and traditional gender role expectations domains of psychological functioning in order to understand how Chinese American women manage significant marital and cultural transitions.

Researchers have shown that unequal distribution of marital decision power and the management of family finance were associated with marital dissatisfaction for Chinese American women. However, marital dissatisfaction does not necessarily lead to marital instability, nor does marital satisfaction always produce a stable relationship. Therefore, it
is important to examine how much decision-making power, individual’s own expectation, cultural beliefs, or family financial situation have contributed to the level of marital satisfaction.

Recommendations for future research included examining the relationship between lengths of time that post-marital co-habitation existed and level of marital satisfaction, recruited samples outside of inner-city and ethnically dominated suburban areas. It is also important to examine how much of the differences in acculturation level and marital satisfaction may be found in other Asian-American groups who practice post-marital co-habitation with in-laws.

**Practice**

In assessing Chinese American women, special attention must be given to the degree of social and psychological stress on the role/status changes. It is thus suggested that greater flexibility about marital roles and couple autonomy can be promoted among Chinese American couples in various family life education programs to reduce conflict and marital dissatisfaction. In addition, equal opportunities policies should be implemented to ensure equal access of Chinese women to higher education and employment to reduce disparity in couples’ resource bases so that marital power can be distributed more equally between husbands and wives.

When working with Chinese American women who practice post-marital co-habitation with in-laws, therapists must take acculturation into account. For instance, first-generation Chinese American families may need assistance from therapists in learning how to relate properly to their in-laws and other extended families. They may likewise face problems involving social isolation, new family roles, and new living arrangements. The
role of the therapist in such cases is primarily to provide education and to serve as an advocate for the women and direct efforts toward outreach, rather than diagnosis and conduct psychotherapy (Cheng, 1996). When working with second generation Chinese American women, the therapists need to comprehend the reasons why these women choose to practice post-marital co-habitation with in-laws, and what are their marital expectation before entering the marriages. Besides having difficulty living with the in-laws, when working with this clientele, the therapist also needs to take other intertwining factors into consideration such as level of education, individual’s communication skills, or possible financial difficulties.

The greatest challenge for most clinicians is the process of understanding the client’s frame of reference. To do this, the clinicians need to “enter the client’s world.” More specifically, the clinicians need to be able to view the world as the client views it. Both Erickson (Erickson, Rossi & Ross, 1976) and feminist theories have proposed that every client has a model of the world that defines reality for her. The clinicians need to meet the client in her model of the world. Furthermore, the theories suggested that people operate out of their internal maps and not out of sensory experience. The task of the clinicians is to develop a sufficient understanding of these internal maps. In addition, frame of reference may be understood as the meanings that the clients attach to their perceptions that are related to their particular problems.

The sudden role changing from single working women to married women can be challenging to Chinese American women that has different expectations or preconceived notions of what is appropriate or desired within the marital relationship. When working with Chinese American clients, it is important to openly explore their feelings and thoughts
pertaining to the changes they perceive happening within the marital relationship before and after the practice of post-marital co-habitation with in-laws. From the feminist perspective, clients need to be encouraged to discuss their perceptions of their present roles in their marriage and how they would like their roles to be different. Sometimes, clients are unaware of old messages they receive from their parents about how they “should” act and have not made a conscious decision about whether those expectations fit their own image of marriages. Every woman is different. To best facilitate this type of awareness, it is essential that clinicians be aware of their own perceptions and stereotypes of appropriate marital expectation and post-marital living arrangements for Chinese American women and how this may bias the counseling process.

When assessing the changes that occur after practicing post-marital co-habitation with in-laws, it is important for clinicians to remember that although many Chinese American women experience the same marital distresses (e.g., lack of decision-marking power in the family), it is not realistic to assume that all women want to give up their post-marital living arrangement and that they are extremely unhappy in their marriages. Since Chinese society is based on the philosophy of collectivism and group harmony is often placed higher than individual harmony. Many Chinese American women continues place their family’s need above their own, and they tend to experience personal happiness through the relationship with their families. Collective harmony is extremely crucial in Chinese family and need to be maintained constantly within one's own family.

Another imperative element in working effectively with Chinese American women is the ability of a therapist to gain a clear understanding of the marital relationship dynamics and the goals of the clients. When working with Chinese American women,
clinicians need to provide an atmosphere that allows clients the freedom and comfort level to express themselves. Because numerous aspects influence how women perceives the dynamics within the marital relationship and how they cope with the post-marital living arrangement, it is important to remain cognizant of the influence of family history, acculturation level, and individual communication styles within the relationship. It is also important to realize that loving relationship is a process and one that takes continual work. Clinicians can also help clients to identify potential at risk areas for experiencing marital dissatisfaction within the marriage. Specifically defining problem areas allows the clients to begin thinking and creating problem-solving solutions. It is significant to share with clients the normality of experiencing certain level of marital dissatisfaction in the course of marriage, exploring the positive and negative aspects of practicing post-marital cohabitation with in-laws, and finally help clients to make an appropriate judgment on the satisfaction level of their marriage and their perception of the current living arrangement.

In order to provide culturally competent services to this population, clinicians need to understand the cultural meanings of the Confucian concept of family, function of marriage, ways to deal with marital problems and the individual’s acculturation process. The most challenging task in working with Chinese American women is to integrate the very rich cultural strengths of the East with the modern Western approaches the field of psychology can offer. Such integrated models will not only benefit the treatment of Chinese American women but can also benefit clients from many different cultures.

Chinese American families are in transition. From the pioneer family to the newly arrived immigrant family, Chinese American families have undergone numerous changes and are continuously evolving. With the present political and economic trends in the
United States and Asia, Chinese American families may undergo even more rapid changes. Clinicians need to stay in tune with these changes and be flexible in designing culturally competent clinical and psycho-educational programs for this underserved population.

Conclusions

This research found empirical evidence that highlights the dire need to research how the practice of post-marital cohabitation with in-laws contributes toward marital satisfaction. Empirically validated factors that contribute to some component of marital satisfaction were investigated. Quantitative measures were used to show relationships between these variables.

The findings of this study support the premise of investigating the philosophy of Confucianism and tradition gender role expectation on Chinese American women’s level of marital satisfaction as well as their practice of post-marital co-habitation with in-laws. Therefore, suggesting the importance of careful attention to these variables in developing and managing client interactions, psycho-educational programs or empirical contributions.

It is important that premarital counselors and therapists better understand the major concepts of Confucian theory and gender role expectation as research continues to demonstrate that the practice and honor of filial piety continues to play as an important factor before and after marriage. This includes acquiring a better understanding regarding the concept and background of the practice of post-marital co-habitation with in-laws, learning how to better recognize and treat negative attitudes toward marriage, and value individual’s acculturation process. Through such culturally sensitive interventions, attitudes and feelings about marriage may become more positive. Then, the basis for maintaining a healthy marriage will be more solid.
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APPENDICES
APPENDIX A

List of Chinese American Community Centers and Organizations in City of New York and State of New Jersey
List of Chinese American Community Center
and Organizations

New York City:

Asian American Federation of New York
95 Madison Avenue, #1309
New York, NY 10016
(212) 725-3840

Brooklyn Chinese-American Association
5002 Eight Avenue
Brooklyn, NY 11220
(718) 438-9312

Chinatown Cultural Service Center
10 Confucius Plazas
New York, NY 10002
(212) 925-2245

Chinatown Health Clinic
125 Walker Street, 2nd Floor
New York, NY 10013
(212) 226-8866

Chinatown Multi-Social Services Center
480 Broadway, 2nd Floor
New York, NY 10013
(212) 431-7800

Chinese American Parents’ Association
36-09 Main Street, #7B
Flushing, NY 11354
(718) 359-6810

Chinese American Planning Association
65-69 Lispenard Street, 4/F
New York, NY 10013
(212) 941-0920

Chinese Information and Culture Center
1230 Avenue of the Americas
New York, NY 10020-1513
(212) 373-1800
Chinese Progressive Association
83 Canal Street, #304-305
New York, NY 10002
(212) 274-1891

State of New Jersey:

Northern New Jersey Chinese Association
P.O. Box 814
Pine Brook, NJ 07058
(973) 227-7129

Chinese American Academic and Professional Society
P.O. Box 623
Holmdel, NJ 07733
(908) 949-2243

Chinese American Professional Association
281 Edgewood Avenue
Teaneck, NJ 07666
(201) 833-1506
APPENDIX B

Letter to Directors of Chinese American Community Center

And Organizations
Letter to Directors of Chinese American Community Center and Organizations

To Whom It May Concern:

First, let me introduce myself. My name is Louisa Lam and I am a Chinese American doctoral candidate in the Counseling Psychology Program at Seton Hall University. I am in the process of data collection for my dissertation titled “The Effect of Post-Marital Co-Habitation with In-Laws on Level of Acculturation and Marital Satisfaction of Chinese American Women.” The purpose of the research is to enhance the understanding of the relationship between the practice of post-marital co-habitation with in-laws on level of acculturation and marital satisfaction in Chinese American women.

I am recruiting 80 married Chinese American women participants with whom the in-laws are living in the U.S. 40 of them are living with their in-laws and 40 of them are not living with the in-laws. All the participants will fill out the same Demographic Form and two measurements in this study. Each potential participant upon completing all the measures will receive five U.S. dollars as research compensation.

The Demographic Form collects information regarding length of stay in the U.S., place of birth, household income, education level, occupation, etc. The two measurements are Suinn-Lew Asian Self-Identity Acculturation Scale (SL-ASIA) and Dyadic Adjustment scale (DAS). The SL-ASIA contains 21 items that address issues regarding acculturation. The DAS contains 32 items measures marital satisfaction. It takes about 15 minutes to complete both the Demographic Form and the two measurements.

Participants will be instructed not to put their names or any identifiable information in the measurements in order to protect their identity. Participants will put their completed measurements into a collection box located at the end of the room. The researcher will collect the box at the end of the day. All the data will be stored in a locked file cabinet and only the researcher has access to the data. All the information gathered in this study is for research purposes only, and all data will be kept confidential.

I have enclosed the informed consent letter, the Demographic Form, the SL-ASIA and the DAS for your review. I would like to set up a time to come to your community center to recruit participants for this study. Should you have any questions regarding the study, please feel free to contact me, Principle Investigator (973-299-8474) (email: lamlouis@shu.edu) or my doctoral supervisor/mentor, Shawn O. Utsey, Ph.D. (973-761-9451) (email: utseysme@shu.edu).

Sincerely,

Louisa Lam, M.A. Shawn O. Utsey, Ph.D.
Doctoral Candidate Doctoral Supervisor/Mentor
Department of Professional Psychology and Family Therapy
Seton Hall University
APPENDIX C

Informed Consent Letter
Participant Informed Consent

Dear Potential Research Participant:

Your time and willingness to consider participating in this research is greatly appreciated. First, let me introduce myself. My name is Louisa Lam and I am a Chinese American doctoral candidate in the Counseling Psychology Program at Seton Hall University. The purpose of this research is to enhance the understanding of the relationship between the practice of post-marital co-habitation with in-laws on level of acculturation and marital satisfaction in Chinese American women.

You will fill out one Demographic Form and two measurements in this study. The Demographic Form collects information such as length of stay in the U.S., place of birth, household income, education level, occupation, etc. The two measurements are Suinn-Lew Asian Self-Identity Acculturation Scale (SL-ASIA) and Dyadic Adjustment scale (DAS). The SL-ASIA contains 21 items that address issues regarding acculturation. The DAS contains 32 items that measure marital satisfaction. It takes about 15 minutes to complete the Demographic Form and the two measurements.

You should not put your name or any identifiable information in the measurements in order to protect your identity. When you finish all the measurements, please put them into a collection box located at the end of the room. The researcher will collect the box at the end of the day. All the data will be stored in a locked file cabinet and only the researcher will have access to the data.

The SL-ASIA is used to determine the level of acculturation and the DAS is used to examine level of marital satisfaction. Both of these measurements shouldn’t cause you any discomfort. However, the participation in the study may cause emotional discomfort regarding your recent marriage or relationships with your in-laws or other marital problems you are experiencing. If your participations cause any discomfort, please talk with a friend or someone your trust, or you may contact me at (973) 299-8474 (email: lamlouis@shu.edu) or Dr. Utsey at (973) 761-9451 (email: utseyshu@shu.edu), or seek professional counseling.

Upon completing all the measures you will receive five U.S. dollars as research compensation. Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You may stop participating at any time, or you may decide not to be involved at all. Your participation, or your decision not to participate, will not have any negative consequences for you.

All the information gathered in this study is for research purposes only, and that all responses will be kept confidential.

By completing the Demographic Form and two measurements, you give your consent to participate in this research. Thereby, you indicate your understanding of and agreement with the terms of your participation in this study including your research compensation and your right to withdraw at any time.

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Seton Hall University Institutional Review Board for Human Subjects Research. The IRB believes that the research procedures adequately safeguard the subject’s privacy, welfare, civil liberties, and rights. The Chairperson on the IRB may be reached through the Office of Grants and Research Services. The telephone number of the Office is (973) 275-2974.

I appreciate your time and attention to this study, thank you.

Sincerely,

Louisa Lam, M.A.  Shawn Utsey, Ph.D.
Doctoral Candidate  Doctoral Supervisor/ Mentor
Department of Professional Psychology and Family Therapy  Seton Hall University
APPENDIX D

Suinn-Lew Asian Self-Identity Acculturation Scale (SL-ASIA)
SUINN-LEW ASIAN SELF-IDENTITY ACCULTURATION SCALE (SL-ASIA)

INSTRUCTIONS: The questions which follow are for the purpose of collecting information about your historical background as well as more recent behaviors which may be related to your cultural identity. Choose the one answer which best describes you.

1. What language can you speak?
   1. Asian only (for example, Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Vietnamese, etc.)
   2. Mostly Asian, some English
   3. Asian and English about equally well (bilingual)
   4. Mostly English, some Asian
   5. Only English

2. What language do you prefer?
   1. Asian only (for example, Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Vietnamese, etc.)
   2. Mostly Asian, some English
   3. Asian and English about equally well (bilingual)
   4. Mostly English, some Asian
   5. Only English

3. How do you identify yourself?
   1. Oriental
   2. Asian
   3. Asian-American
   5. American

4. Which identification does (did) your mother use?
   1. Oriental
   2. Asian
   3. Asian-American
   5. American

5. Which identification does (did) your father use?
   1. Oriental
   2. Asian
   3. Asian-American
   5. American
6. What was the ethnic origin of the friends and peers you had, as a child up to age 6?
   1. Almost exclusively Asians, Asian-Americans, Orientals
   2. Mostly Asians, Asian-Americans, Orientals
   3. About equally Asian groups and Anglo groups
   4. Mostly Anglos, Blacks, Hispanics, or other non-Asian ethnic groups
   5. Almost exclusively Anglos, Blacks, Hispanics, or other non-Asian ethnic groups

7. What was the ethnic origin of the friends and peers you had, as a child from 6 to 18?
   1. Almost exclusively Asians, Asian-Americans, Orientals
   2. Mostly Asians, Asian-Americans, Orientals
   3. About equally Asian groups and Anglo groups
   4. Mostly Anglos, Blacks, Hispanics, or other non-Asian ethnic groups
   5. Almost exclusively Anglos, Blacks, Hispanics, or other non-Asian ethnic groups

8. Whom do you now associate with in the community?
   1. Almost exclusively Asians, Asian-Americans, Orientals
   2. Mostly Asians, Asian-Americans, Orientals
   3. About equally Asian groups and Anglo groups
   4. Mostly Anglos, Blacks, Hispanics, or other non-Asian ethnic groups
   5. Almost exclusively Anglos, Blacks, Hispanics, or other non-Asian ethnic groups

9. If you could pick, whom would you prefer to associate with in the community?
   1. Almost exclusively Asians, Asian-Americans, Orientals
   2. Mostly Asians, Asian-Americans, Orientals
   3. About equally Asian groups and Anglo groups
   4. Mostly Anglos, Blacks, Hispanics, or other non-Asian ethnic groups
   5. Almost exclusively Anglos, Blacks, Hispanics, or other non-Asian ethnic groups

10. What is your music preference?
    1. Only Asian music (for example, Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Vietnamese, etc.)
    2. Mostly Asian
    3. Equally Asian and English
    4. Mostly English
    5. English only

11. What is your movie preference?
    1. Asian-language movies only
    2. Asian-language movies mostly
    3. Equally Asian/English English-language movies
    4. Mostly English-language movies only
    5. English-language movies only
12. Where were you born?

_____ U.S. _____ Asia _____ Other-Where

Where was your father born?

_____ U.S. _____ Asia _____ Other-Where

Don't Know

Where was your mother born?

_____ U.S. _____ Asia _____ Other-Where

Don't Know

Where was your father's father born?

_____ U.S. _____ Asia _____ Other-Where

Don't Know

Where was your father's mother born?

_____ U.S. _____ Asia _____ Other-Where

Don't Know

Where was your mother's father born?

_____ U.S. _____ Asia _____ Other-Where

Don't Know

Where was your mother's mother born?

_____ U.S. _____ Asia _____ Other-Where

Don't Know

On the basis of the above answers, circle the generation that best applies to you:

1. 1st Generation = I was born in Asian or other
2. 2nd Generation = I was born in U.S., either parent was born in Asia or other
3. 3rd Generation = I was born in U.S., both parents were born in U.S., and all grandparents born in Asian or other
4. 4th Generation = I was born in U.S., both parents were born in U.S., and at least one grandparents born in Asian or other and one grandparent born in U.S.
5. 5th Generation = I was born in U.S., both parents were born in U.S., and all grandparents also born in U.S.
6. Don't know what generation best fits since I lack some information.

13. Where were you raised?

1. In Asia only
2. Mostly in Asia, some in U.S.
3. Equally in Asian and U.S.
4. Mostly in U.S., some in Asia
5. In U.S. only
14. What contact have you had with Asia?
   1. Raised one year or more in Asia
   2. Lived for less than one year in Asia
   3. Occasional visits to Asia
   4. Occasional communications (letter, phone calls, etc.) with people in Asia
   5. No exposure or communications with people in Asia

15. What is your food preference at home?
   1. Exclusively Asian food
   2. Mostly Asian food, some American
   3. About equally Asian and American
   4. Mostly American food
   5. Exclusively American food

16. What is your food preference in restaurants?
    1. Exclusively Asian food
    2. Mostly Asian food, some American
    3. About equally Asian and American
    4. Mostly American food
    5. Exclusively American food

17. Do you
    1. Read only an Asian language
    2. Read an Asian language better than English
    3. Read both Asian and English equally well
    4. Read English better than an Asian language
    5. Read only English

18. Do you
    1. Write only an Asian language
    2. Write an Asian language better than English
    3. Write both Asian and English equally well
    4. Write English better than an Asian language
    5. Write only English

19. If you consider yourself a member of the Asian group (Oriental, Asian, Asian-American, Chinese-American, etc., whatever term you prefer), how much pride do you have in this group?
    1. Extremely proud
    2. Moderately proud
    3. Little pride
    4. No pride but do not feel negative toward group
    5. No pride but do feel negative toward group
20. How would you rate yourself?
1. Very Asian
2. Mostly Asian
3. Bicultural
4. Mostly Westernized
5. Very Westernized

21. Do you participate in Asian occasions, holidays, traditions, etc.?
1. Nearly all
2. Most of them
3. Some of them
4. A few of them
5. None at all
APPENDIX E

Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS)
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Multi-Health Systems Inc.
908 Niagara Falls Boulevard
North Tonawanda, NY 14120-2060

Bibliographical Reference:

APPENDIX F

Demographic Information Sheet
Demographic Information Sheet

1. Are you currently living with your in-laws?  Yes_______ No_______

2. Please explain why you choose to live with your in-laws? (tradition beliefs, financial reason, child care, etc)

3. Length Stay in the U.S. (yrs): ________________

4. Place of Birth: _______________________

5. What is your total annual household income: ________________

6. Years of education: ________________

7. Highest education degree obtained: ________________

8. Occupation: ________________

9. Age: ________________

10. Primary language in home: ________________

11. Number of person in household: ________________