

ASIAN AMERICAN ADOLESCENT IDENTITY

by

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(ABSTRACT)

The formation of ego identity in Asian American late adolescents attending Virginia Tech was examined within the frameworks of Erikson's psychosocial theory and Berry, Trimble, and Olmedo's model of acculturation. Ego identity was measured using the Achieved sub-scale of the Revised Version of the Extended Objective Measure of Ego Identity Status, an instrument based on the theoretical constructs of Erikson. Ethnic identity was measured using the Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure and American Identity was measured using the American Identity Measure, both developed by Phinney. It was hypothesized that ethnic identity and American identity would be significant predictors of ego identity status. One hundred students of Asian descent attending Virginia Tech participated in this study. There were significant results for the T-test comparisons between the Asian-born and American-born subgroups for the variables ego identity, ethnic identity, and American identity. This study revealed that American-born respondents had higher average scores on the three identity measures. It also revealed that ethnic identity and American identity are significant predictors of ego identity for this group of individuals, supporting the hypothesis.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT ii

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS iii

TABLE OF CONTENTS v

LIST OF TABLES vii

LIST OF FIGURES vii

I. INTRODUCTION 1

 Purpose 1

 The Asian American Population 2

 Acculturation and Ethnic Identity 3

 Ego Identity 6

 Rationale and Hypothesis 8

II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE 10

 Ego Identity 10

 Ethnic Identity 11

 The Asian American Population 12

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY 14

 Participants 14

 Procedure 14

 Measures 15

 Analysis 17

IV. RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION 19

	Description of the Sample	19
	Correlation Analysis.....	23
	T-Tests.....	29
	Regression Analysis	32
V.	SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION.....	34
	Summary and Significant Findings	34
	Limitations	37
	Implications and Recommendations	37
VI.	REFERENCES.....	39
VII.	APPENDICES.....	42
	Appendix A: Questionnaire.....	43
	Appendix B: IRB Certificate of Exemption.....	49
	Appendix C: Letter from Dean.....	51
	Appendix D: IRB Consent Form.....	53
	Appendix E: Letter from the Researcher.....	55
VIII.	VITA	56

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE 1:	Marcia's Four Ego Identity Statuses	8
TABLE 2:	Data Summary Table.....	20
TABLE 3:	Results of the Three Identity Measures	23
TABLE 4:	Reliability for the Three Identity Scales.....	23
TABLE 5.1:	Correlations (Pearson) – Total Sample	24
TABLE 5.2:	Correlations (Pearson) – Asian-born Subjects	25
TABLE 5.3:	Correlations (Pearson) – American-born Subjects.....	26
TABLE 6:	Results of the T-Tests.....	30
TABLE 7:	Results of the Multiple Regression Analysis	33

LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE 1.1:	Linear Model of Acculturation.....	4
FIGURE 1.2:	Two-dimensional Model of Acculturation.....	5
FIGURE 2:	Age of Immigration of Asian-born Subjects	21
FIGURE 3:	Gender and American Identity	28
FIGURE 4:	Age and American Identity.....	29

CHAPTER I: Introduction

Purpose

This study investigates ego identity status and how it is affected by ethnic identity and mainstream American identity in Asian American college students. Because the process of developing an identity or a sense of self is a very complex and emotional process and considering that identity formation is the main psychosocial task of adolescence (Erikson, 1968), it is a topic of great importance. Adolescents need to examine their personal identity and beliefs in areas such as occupation, politics, and gender roles. Identity formation is even more complex in bicultural adolescents who must consider additional factors. As part of their identity formation process, minority youths examine their ethnicity and its implications in their lives as they seek to establish a secure sense of ethnic or racial identity (Phinney, 1990). In addition to examining their ethnicity, they are likely to consider their role and position in the wider society of mainstream America.

Asian American adolescents are challenged with a unique set of experiences. These adolescents must adapt and adjust to two cultures which differ in values, beliefs, and behavior norms. They attend American schools and face a predominantly Caucasian society, yet stepping foot in the door of their home may be a whole different world as they regard family rules and traditional customs. Even those individuals whose families are more “Americanized,” experience some degree of personal conflict in the area of identity. One particular adolescent may not speak a word of his mother tongue, have no foreign accent in his English, and wholly accept the values commonly classified as American, yet his physical features set still him apart from the mainstream American society. Another adolescent may identify with her ethnic culture,

participate in cultural activities and reject the ways of the mainstream American society although she is an American citizen and lives in a mostly White community. During the course of their lives, both of these adolescents may confront differing demands and be presented with cultural conflicts. Researchers have suggested that living among two seemingly separate cultural groups may be problematic for some individuals (Park, 1928). Youth of ethnic minority cultures must consider their ethnicity and decide for themselves what significance it has on their lives.

Particularly in recent decades, there have been an increasing number of both immigrants from Asian countries as well as a greater number of American-born Asians. This trend has brought on a great deal of investigations on the part of cross-cultural researchers in studying various aspects of this population. While there is a fair amount of research on Asian Americans and minorities in general, few studies focus on the area of cultural identities involving Asian American adolescents. Because of unique experiences encountered by Asian Americans as a group, we cannot generalize these. To try and gain a deeper understanding of this complex phenomenon, I have examined the ways in which Asian American adolescents deal with being a part of two cultures. The results of this study may open new doors to helping Asian American adolescents adjust to their circumstances and make the most out of their advantageous position.

The Asian American Population

In studying Asian Americans, I emphasize that the term “Asian American” applies to members of more than 25 groups that have been classified as a single group because of their common ethnic origins in Asia and the Pacific Islands, similar physical appearance, and similar cultural values (Uba, 1994). This classification of a multitude of groups under the single term Asian Americans carries some potential dangers. For example, important differences among

groups can be overlooked. In fact, Asian Americans are culturally and experientially quite diverse; they differ in degrees of acculturation, migration experiences, occupational skills, cultural values and beliefs, religion, primary language, personality syndromes, income, education, average age, ethnic identity, and so forth. Another danger is the possibility of the formation of stereotypes. Just as there are interethnic differences, there are also intra-ethnic differences (variations within each Asian American group). Each Asian national group has not only a distinctive cultural heritage but also a different history and different reasons for immigrating to America (Takaki, 1990). However, for the purposes of this investigation, I assume the commonalities that bond them as a group and the similarities in their acculturation process keeping in mind that they are not *all* the same.

Acculturation and Ethnic Identity

Acculturation is sometimes used synonymously with ethnic identity, but they do not represent the same concept. They should be distinguished because acculturation deals broadly with changes in cultural attitudes, values, and behaviors that results from contact between two distinct cultures (Berry, Trimble, & Olmedo, 1986). Ethnic identity can be thought of as an aspect of acculturation, in which the concern is how the individual relates to his or her own ethnic group. Relationship to the majority group, then, is the other aspect of acculturation, and is important in considering psychological adjustment of bicultural individuals. Ethnic identity must be combined with dominant group membership for an individual to be considered biculturally competent.

Acculturation refers to the changes that occur as a result of continuous contact between two distinct cultures (Berry, Trimble, & Olmedo, 1986). It was first proposed that cultural

identity fell on a linear scale. This meant that an individual was either very “ethnic,” or assimilated to the American culture, or at any level in between. It also meant that development of a cultural identity moved from a level of feeling like he or she was only a part of their ethnic group to being more assimilated. Berry et al. (1974) developed a two dimensional model of acculturation, which suggests that two critical issues determine the type of acculturation: (a) the extent to which individuals consider it of value to identify with and maintain the cultural characteristics of their own ethnic groups and (b) the importance one attributes to maintaining positive relationships with the larger society and other ethnic groups. The levels of acculturation include assimilation, which is the outcome when ethnic group members choose to identify solely with the culture of the dominant society and to relinquish all ties to their ethnic culture. Integration is strong identification and involvement with both cultures. Separation involves exclusive focus on the cultural values and practices of the ethnic group and little or no interaction with the dominant society, and marginality is defined by the absence or loss of one’s culture of origin and the lack of involvement with the dominant society. Figures 1.1 and 1.2 show graphical representations of the two models of acculturation.

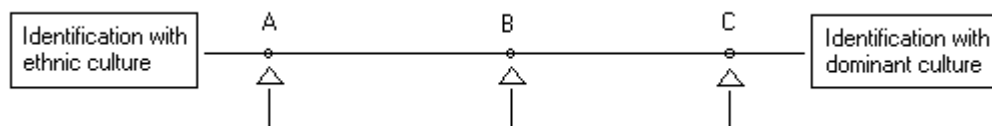


Figure 1.1. Linear Model of Acculturation

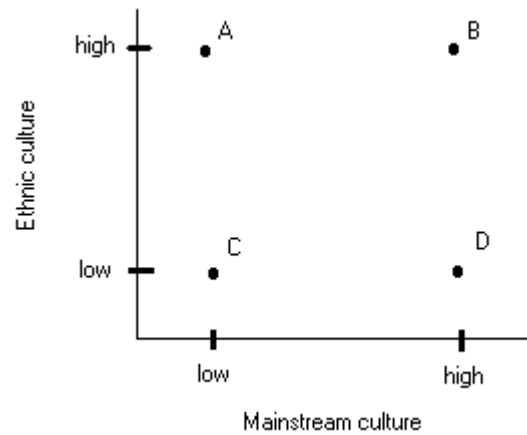


Figure 1.2. Two-dimensional Model of Acculturation

In figure 1.1, “A” represents an individual who relates closely with his or her ethnic culture and heritage but is not familiar with or chooses not to be a part of the dominant culture. “B” represents an individual with moderate levels of identification with both cultures. “C” represents an individual who is not familiar with or chooses not to be a part of his or her ethnic culture. Figure 1.2 also shows individuals with varying levels of acculturation, but having a high level of identification with one culture does not necessarily mean having a low level of identification with the other. “A” is an individual like “C” in the previous model. “B” represents an individual with high levels of identification with both the ethnic and dominant cultures, whereas “C” represents an individual who does not relate closely to either culture. Lastly, “D” in the two-dimensional model is similar to “A” described in the linear model.

The concept of ethnicity encompasses more than race. It also refers to beliefs, ways of communicating, attitudes, values, and behavior norms shared by a group in a culture (Uba, 1994).

It is an underlying factor in personality. Broadly speaking, ethnic identity refers to a person's sense of belonging with other members of the ethnic group, based on shared ethnic characteristics (Phinney, 1990). It is an aspect of a person's social identity that has been defined as that part of an individual's self-concept that derives from his or her knowledge of membership in a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership (Phinney, 1992). As identity is thought to underlie or explain a lot of the individual's intentions, emotions, reactions and in general--life (Harris, 1985), ethnic identity constitutes a certain schema. This schema engenders the general knowledge, beliefs, and expectations that a person has about his or her ethnic group; functions as a cognitive, information-processing framework or filter within which a person perceives and interprets objects, situations, events and other people; and serves as a basis for a person's behavior (Uba, 1994).

Although there are key components of ethnic identity within specific ethnic groups, common to ethnic identity of all group members are self-identification as a group member, a sense of belonging, and attitudes toward one's group (Phinney, 1992). For example, in the case of Asian Americans, cultural attitudes play a major role in their ethnic identity (Phinney, 1992).

Ego Identity

In relation to bicultural competence, it is important to focus on ego identity development. This involves the evolution of an individual's sense of self-sufficiency and ego-strength. This sense develops, in relationship to the individual's psychosocial experience, to the point where a psychologically healthy individual has a secure sense of who he or she is or is not (De La Torre, 1977). According to Erikson (1968), this is the main psychosocial task of adolescence and young

adulthood. The development of a conscious awareness of personal identity where one is established as a unique individual requires a synthesis of superego demands, ego ideals, individual capabilities and societal expectations (Marcia, 1967). This sense of self interacts with the individual's cultural context in a reciprocally deterministic manner to develop an ethnic identity (Mego, 1988).

Identity is an internal, self-constructed dynamic organization of drives, abilities, beliefs and individual history. The better developed this structure is the more aware individuals appear to be of their own weaknesses in making their way in the world. The less developed the structure, the more confused individuals seem about their own distinctiveness from others and the more they have to rely on external sources to evaluate themselves. The identity structure is dynamic, not static. Elements are continually being discarded and added (Marcia, 1980).

To identify the various stages of ego identity development, Marcia (1967) developed the identity status paradigm. It describes four identity statuses based on the presence or absence of exploration and commitment in the areas of occupation, religion, politics, and philosophy of life, friendship, dating, sex roles, and recreation. The four statuses include diffusion, which describes an individual who has neither engaged in exploration nor made a commitment, and foreclosure, which describes an individual who has made a commitment without exploration. Moratorium, which describes an individual in the process of exploring with out having committed, and achievement, one who has a firm commitment following a period of exploration are the other two. Refer to Table 1.

Table 1

Marcia's Four Ego Identity Statuses

Status	Commitment	Exploration
Diffusion	no	no
Foreclosure	yes	no
Moratorium	no	yes
Achievement	yes	yes

Rationale and Hypothesis

Identity development has been described as the primary psychosocial task of adolescence and young adulthood. Furthermore, Waterman (1985) has stated that those issues which are central to ego identity formation vary among individuals with attention being focused on “those areas in a person’s life in which important decisions must be made.”

I have studied a group of Asian American late adolescents who attend a predominately White university. For this group of individuals, I expected that their sense of self identification with both ethnic and American cultures are those central issues as suggested by Waterman.

There is evidence that being identified with only a single culture whether ethnic or mainstream is generally more stressful than identification or involvement with both. This would prevent the individuals with high ethnic identity and low American identity, or conversely, individuals with low ethnic identity and high American identity, from having an achieved ego identity status. This also means that I expect to see a correlation between achieved ego identity status and high ethnic and American identities.

This study investigates the following question. How are measures of ego identity status affected by ethnic identity and American identity?

The hypothesis is as follows:

H1: A significant relationship exists between ego identity and the two other personality variables, ethnic identity and American identity after controlling for demographic variables.

CHAPTER II: Review of Literature

The following review explores existing literature on identity development and cultural identity. It also includes literature concerning Asian American adolescents pertinent to this study.

Ego Identity

Erik Erikson (1968) set forth a theory of ego development to account for the interactions between psychological, social, historical, and developmental factors in the formation of personality. He has had the greatest impact on current perceptions of adolescent personality development and provided a theoretical framework for measuring identity formation. Erikson (1956) stated that “The term identity...connotes both a persistent sameness within oneself and a persistent sharing of some kind of essential character with others (p.57).”

Throughout his writings, he proposes that the self-sameness and continuity is expressed through a “conscious state of individual identity,” and unconscious striving for a “continuity of personal character,” a continuing process of “ego synthesis,” and an “inner solidarity” with a group’s “ideals and social identity (p. 128).”

Adolescents adopt many different strategies to help them resolve their own personal identity crisis. They try out many different roles, join many different social groups. Out of these experiences, they gradually piece together a cognitive framework for understanding themselves-- a self schema. Once formed, this framework remains fairly constant and serves as a guide for adolescents in many different contexts (Uba, 1994).

Streitmatter (1988) studied a group of adolescents to examine identity development. The variables race/ethnicity, sex and grade were examined as potential mediating factors. Minority

students were found to be significantly more foreclosed in this study. Streitmatter suggests that it is possible that the ethnic minorities were less likely to have an achieved ego identity because they felt less comfortable in the environment and were therefore less likely to take risks or seek experiences conflicting with expectations provided by adults in their lives.

Research examining the relationship between ethnic identity and ego identity has produced conflicting results. Ethnic identity formation and ego identity development was studied by Looney (1989). The subjects in this sample were Black college students. A significant inverse relationship was found between ego development and racial identity although a positive relationship was hypothesized. Looney suggested that this result meant that if an individual has a strong ego, it is self-defined, whereas if an individual with a weak ego, it may be defined by others. Other possible explanations include social and cultural differences in the definition of self and the perception of development, identity, and change.

Phinney (1989) studied American-born high school students of varying races to investigate ethnic identity. Analyses of in-depth interviews concluded that subjects with high ethnic identities also had higher ego identity statuses and better psychological adjustment. Although the particular issues faced by each group was different, the process of identity development was similar.

Ethnic Identity and Acculturation

There are three stages to ethnic identity formation, according to Phinney (1993). They are as follows: (a) unexamined; (b) searchers; (c) identity-achieved. She states “adolescents who have explored ethnicity as a factor in their lives and are clear about the meaning of their ethnicity are likely to show better overall adjustment than those who have not considered their ethnicity or

are unclear about it (p. 75).” Low scores on the Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure indicates an unexamined ethnic identity, moderate scores indicate searchers, similar to Marcia’s moratorium status for ego identity, and high scores on the scale indicate ethnic identity achieved.

In Phinney, Chavira, and Williamson’s (1992) study on acculturation attitudes, generation of immigration was shown to be a factor only in the Asian American high school student sample. The results of the study indicated that Asian-born Asian American high school students had higher separation scores, which might not be surprising, but the other ethnic groups studied (Hispanic, Black, White, Mixed, and other) did not show the same results. Naturally, we would like to determine if this compromises their chances for a sense of well being.

The Asian American Population

In the introduction, it is noted that although each Asian national group has its own history and culture, there are similarities between the groups. One includes their shared experience as minorities with two culture (or multi-culture) lives, and another includes their treatment by the mainstream. Another very important similarity between Asian national groups has to do with common beliefs and values. Ibrahim (1997) lists six basic beliefs and values consistent for South Asian Americans. Some of these overlap with assumptions that other Asian Americans hold, which are described as follows:

1. Self-respect, dignity, and self-control: From early childhood, the importance of these three variables is emphasized. Each person is empowered to achieve self-respect, dignity, and self-control. All excesses are abhorred. The person is seen as an individual in a familial context. Individuality of a person is encouraged within the boundaries and limits of the family. The highest ideal is to achieve a self-identity free of material needs.
2. Respect for the family/filial piety: Parents are to be honored and revered. The family extends horizontally and laterally, these various relationships are valued, and appropriate respect is given to each family member.

3. Respect for age: It is assumed that the older a person gets, the more maturity and knowledge he or she has. Older persons are respected for these attributes. Families go to elders to resolve familial conflicts. They also turn to older family members for advice and support when they are in a crisis or when relationships are disrupted in social or work relationships.
4. Humility: It is extremely important to not make oneself the center of attention or to discuss one's accomplishments. It is expected that the more people achieve, the more humble they will be. Others in the group and the community are expected to extol the virtues and accomplishments of group members. It is also very important not to draw attention to yourself by posing as someone who is better than others. This value is misunderstood in the United States as the person having a low self-concept, or maybe not being as accomplished as mainstream colleagues assume the person to be. This value also backfires in the competitive world of the age of information, where Asian Americans may share their knowledge and others may gain from it. Credit is not given to the person who originally put forth the ideas because the person did not request the recognition based on the value of humility. (pp. 45-46)

Literature on Asian Americans indicate that there may be yet a “generation” per say that does not classify as either second generation (American-born) or first generation (Asian-born). They are referred to as the “1.5” generation.” These Asian American individuals have sociocultural characteristics and psychological experiences very distinct from either the first or second generation ethnic American. Biologically, the notion of a “1.5” generation is of course absurd, but this term characterizes those who accompanied their parents to the United States before adolescence. Since they were Asian-born, they were formally considered first generation immigrants. But because from their parents (first generation) and their own offspring (second generation) - hence their designation as a “1.5” generation. These individuals may have a greater advantage to be biculturally competent because of their length of stay in the U.S. This information leads us to question whether other types of experiences that first or second

generation immigrants could be exposed to that might increase their chances of being biculturally competent if they so desire.

CHAPTER III: Methodology

Several measures have been used to investigate the experiences of adolescents of Asian descent living as citizens and permanent residents of the United States. Subjects were asked to fill out a questionnaire which included a scale on ethnic identity, a scale on ego identity, a measure of American identity, and a demographics section. (See Appendix A.)

Participants

The investigation was held at Virginia Tech, a fairly large comprehensive research university (student population approximately 25,000) located in Southwest Virginia. Asian and Asian American students make up approximately 6% of the population. The participants were 100 undergraduate students, equal numbers of males and females. The criteria for inclusion in this study are as follows: (a) must be of Asian descent, (b) must be a permanent resident of the U.S., and (c) must be over the age of 18.

Procedure

To try and involve a diverse group of students that fall within the criteria as described above, several methods were implemented: 1) A sign up sheet was posted in the extra credit bulletin for introductory psychology students; 2) Student organizations which are geared towards Asian Americans were contacted; 3) Letters were mailed to students who had identified themselves as Asian American upon application to the university. A diverse group of students of Asian descent was preferred for this study to get a wide range of perspectives regarding late adolescent identity.

This research project was IRB exempted because it involved only survey procedures in which the subjects cannot be directly identified and the responses did not put subjects at any risk

of criminal or civil liability, nor was it potentially damaging to the subject's standing, financial or otherwise. See Appendix B for certificate of exemption.

To draw interest and increase participation, a letter of support was sought from the Associate Dean of Students in charge of Multicultural Affairs. This letter was shown and read to students who attended the organizational meetings. (See Appendix C.) An IRB consent form (Appendix D) was distributed to the students and collected before administration of the questionnaire. All of this was done in a classroom setting and the questionnaire itself took approximately 20 minutes to complete. Most of the total responses received came from these meetings. The mail-outs included the IRB consent form, a letter from the researcher (Appendix E), the letter from the Associate Dean of Students, the questionnaire, and a self-addressed envelope to be mailed on-campus. Only a handful (8%) of the respondents were collected via campus mail.

Measures

The questionnaire for this study included the following scales: (See Appendix A.)

Ego Identity- For this variable, the revised version of the Extended Objective Measure of Ego Identity Status (EOM EIS) (Bennion & Adams, 1986) was used. This scale was chosen because it was derived from Erikson's (1956) theory of ego identity development and can be used to categorize individuals into one of Marcia's four identity statuses. Since this study is only interested if the adolescent has an achieved ego identity or not, only the achieved scale was used.

The revised version of the EOM EIS include ideological (occupation, politics, religion, and philosophical lifestyle) and interpersonal (friendship, dating, sex roles, and recreation) domains. The 16 items selected from the instrument include the two achievement items from

each of the eight content areas. Items are rated on a 6-point scale ranging from 1 (strongly agree) to 6 (strongly disagree).

The internal consistency using Cronbach alpha for the achieved scale was 0.75 for the ideological scale and 0.80 on the interpersonal scale for a sample of college students.

Ethnic Identity- Ethnic identity will be measured using the Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (Phinney, 1992). This is an objective measure to be used with adolescents and young adults from all ethnic groups. It includes 14 items that assess three components of ethnic identity: 1) sense of belonging to, and attitudes toward, one's ethnic group (5 items); 2) ethnic identity achievement, based on exploration and commitment (7 items); and 3) ethnic behaviors and customs (2 items).

Also included in this measure are 6 items for other group orientation. Attitudes and orientation toward other groups are conceptually distinct from ethnic identity, but are included because they may interact with it as an aspect of one's social identity in the larger society. They are also included to provide contrast items to balance the ethnic identity items.

All 20 of these items are rated on a 4-point scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree). There is also one open-ended response for ethnic self-identification and three multiple-choice questions on the participant's ethnicity and ethnicity of the participant's mother and father. These are not scored but are used as background variables.

A high score on the 14 ethnic identity items indicates a strong identification with one's ethnic group. This measure has a reliability of $\alpha = 0.90$ with college students for ethnic identity and a reliability of $\alpha = 0.74$ for other group orientation.

American Identity- This measure, developed by Phinney (1997) was designed to determine the participant's sense of being American. It originally included eight statements to which participants indicated agreement on a 4-point scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree). One item related to participation in American culture such as music, movies, books, and television has been dropped in recent research, because it does not assess identity.

Responses will be summed and a mean score will be obtained. A high score indicates a strong American identity. This measure had a reliability of Cronbach alpha = 0.88 with a high school sample.

Demographics- The demographic section of this questionnaire asks the subject his or her gender, age, and year in school. It also contains items which ask the student to report level of education of mother and father, parent's yearly income, type of community the student lived in before coming to college, and grade point average. To assess generation of immigration, the following information was collected: place of birth, number of years spent in the U.S. (for Asian-born respondents), and cultural heritage. This background information was obtained to give a description of the sample and to determine if the information had any predictive value for ego identity status, or were correlated highly with the other dependent variables, ethnic identity and American identity.

Analysis

For the first phase of analysis, descriptive analysis was conducted to gain an overview of the data. At the next phase of analysis, t-test comparisons were conducted with the independent variable "place of birth" with levels Asian-born and American-born. Finally, in the last phase,

multiple regression was conducted to assess the interaction between ethnic identity, American identity, and identity status.

CHAPTER IV: RESEARCH FINDINGS

Description of the Sample

Questionnaires were distributed at meetings of several Asian student group organizations at Virginia Tech. The majority of responses came from these meetings, a handful were responses to mail-outs. The questionnaire was comprised of a total of 63 items which included scales for ego identity, ethnic identity, American identity, and a demographics section (See Appendix A). Responses were collected from 100 Asian American students attending Virginia Tech. The vast majority of respondents completed the entire questionnaire with a few exceptions. Two students did not fill in the ethnic self-identification item of the ethnic identity measure (MEIM), three neglected to report their GPA, and one failed to respond to the question on parents' yearly income.

Table 2 below lists responses to the demographic items gender, age, class status, GPA, mother and father's level of education, parental income, type of community and cultural heritage. There were nearly an equal number of male and female subjects and the mean age of the respondents was 20 ($SD = 1.75$). Most of the parents of the subjects were highly educated; more than half of the parents were reported as having had at least a college education.

TABLE 2

Data Summary Table

VARIABLE	LEVELS	TOTAL SAMPLE N = 100	ASIAN-BORN n = 55	AMERICAN-BORN n = 45
Gender	Male	53 (53%)	33 (60%)	20 (44%)
	Female	47 (47%)	22 (40%)	25 (56%)
Age	18	14 (14%)	3 (5%)	11 (24%)
	19	33 (33%)	11 (20%)	22 (49%)
	20	20 (20%)	14 (25%)	6 (13%)
	21	14 (14%)	9 (16%)	5 (11%)
	22	9 (9%)	9 (16%)	0 (0%)
	23	4 (4%)	3 (5%)	1 (2%)
	24	6 (6%)	6 (11%)	0 (0%)
Class Status	Freshman	24 (24%)	15 (27%)	9 (20%)
	Sophomore	39 (39%)	12 (22%)	27 (60%)
	Junior	17 (17%)	12 (22%)	5 (11%)
	Senior	13 (13%)	10 (18%)	3 (6%)
	5 th Year	3 (3%)	3 (5%)	0 (0%)
	Other	4 (4%)	3 (5%)	1 (2%)
GPA	Less than 2.0	8 (8%)	4 (7%)	4 (9%)
	2.0 to 2.499	14 (14%)	9 (16%)	5 (11%)
	2.5 to 2.999	47 (47%)	19 (35%)	28 (62%)
	3.0 to 3.499	22 (22%)	7 (13%)	5 (11%)
	3.5 or above	6 (6%)	3 (5%)	3 (6%)
Mother's Level of Education	Elementary School	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
	Middle School	1 (1%)	1 (2%)	0 (0%)
	High School	27 (27%)	14 (25%)	13 (29%)
	Tech. or Voc. Training	2 (2%)	2 (4%)	0 (0%)
	Some College	12 (12%)	4 (7%)	8 (18%)
	Completed College	44 (44%)	24 (44%)	20 (44%)
	Graduate School	14 (14%)	10 (18%)	4 (9%)
Father's Level of Education	Elementary School	3 (3%)	3 (5%)	0 (0%)
	Middle School	1 (1%)	1 (2%)	0 (0%)
	High School	35 (35%)	20 (36%)	15 (33%)
	Tech or Voc. Training	5 (5%)	2 (4%)	3 (6%)
	Some College	13 (13%)	8 (15%)	5 (11%)
	Completed College	36 (36%)	16 (29%)	20 (44%)
	Graduate School	7 (7%)	5 (9%)	2 (4%)
Parental Yearly Income	Less than 20,000	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
	21,000 to 40,000	46 (46%)	23 (42%)	23 (51%)
	41,000 to 60,000	26 (26%)	16 (29%)	10 (22%)
	61,000 and above	27 (27%)	16 (29%)	11 (24%)
Type of Community	Urban	19 (19%)	15 (27%)	4 (9%)
	Suburban	74 (74%)	36 (65%)	38 (84%)
	Rural	7 (7%)	4 (7%)	3 (6%)
Cultural Heritage	Chinese	9 (9%)	2 (4%)	7 (15%)
	Filipino	29 (29%)	6 (11%)	23 (51%)
	Korean	47 (47%)	41 (75%)	6 (13%)
	Vietnamese	7 (7%)	2 (4%)	5 (11%)
	Thai	2 (2%)	1 (2%)	1 (2%)
	Mixed Heritage	6 (6%)	3 (5%)	3 (6%)

Generation of Immigration

The demographics section of the questionnaire included items to determine students' generation of immigration. A little over half of the students are first generation immigrants or Asian-born (55 %) and 45% were born in the U.S. (Refer to Table 2.)

Of the students who indicated that they were American-born, two reported that their mothers were born in the United States as well and three reported that their fathers were also born in the United States. Thus the great majority of American-born respondents can be classified as second generation Asians Americans, only three are classified as third generation.

Age of Immigration

Asian-born students were asked to indicate what age they immigrated to the United States. Thirteen percent of them immigrated to the States between the ages of 1 and 5, 17% came between 5 years of age to 10 years of age, 13% between the ages of 10 and 15, and 12% of the respondents immigrated to the United States after the age of 15. (See Figure 2.)

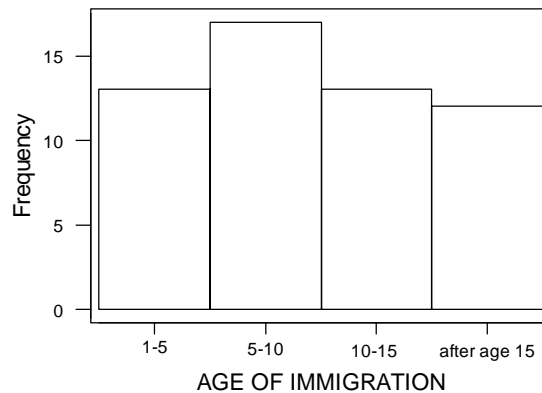


Figure 2. Age of Immigration of Asian-born Students

Students were also asked if they had lived in a country other than the one congruent to their cultural heritage. Three students responded that they were born in their native country and lived in another country before coming to the U.S.

Because there was a low number of students who were classified as third generation Asian Americans, second generation and third generation students were combined to form a “American-born” sub-sample. Similarly, those students who indicated that they resided in a country other than that of their native origin were few in number. They were combined with the other first generation immigrants to create a sub-sample labeled “Asian-born.” Perhaps if there were more respondents that fit into the categories mentioned above, they could possibly have been studied as separate groups. Because the result in this case would be lacking in power, the two groups, “American-born” and “Asian-born” will suffice for this study.

Ego Identity, Ethnic Identity, and American Identity

Students had a mean score of 2.22 (SD = 0.27) on the Achieved section of the ego identity scale, ranging from 1.44 to 5.0. The mean ethnic identity score was 3.4 (SD = 0.51), ranging from 1.78 to 4.0. The American identity scale had a mean of 2.97 (SD = 0.85) with this sample, ranging from 1.0 to 4.0. The results are shown in Table 2.

Table 3

Results of the Three Identity Scales

Scale	Mean	Minimum	Maximum	SD
Ego Identity	2.22	1.44	5.0	0.27
Ethnic Identity	3.40	1.78	4.0	0.51
American Identity	2.97	1.00	4.00	0.85

Internal consistency was found to be quite high for these scales. The reliability measures for the scales are shown in Table 4.

Table 4

Reliability for the Three Identity Scales

Scale	Cronbach's alpha
Ego Identity	.8912
Ethnic Identity	.9155
American Identity	.9485

Correlation Analysis and Discussion

Correlation analysis was computed using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation procedure. Three separate correlation matrices were examined to determine the presence of multicollinearity and to examine the relationship between variables. (See Tables 4.1 to 4.3.) Table 4.1 included the total sample ($N = 100$), Table 4.2 included only the Asian-born sub-sample ($n = 55$), and Table 4.3 included only the American-born sub-sample ($n = 45$).

Table 5.1
Correlations (Pearson) - Total Sample

N = 100

	EGO IDEN	ETHNIC I	AMERICAN	AGE	GENDER	CLASS ST	FATHER E	MOTHER E	INCOME	GPA
ETHNIC I	0.557									
AMERICAN	0.501	0.376								
AGE	-0.132	-0.118	-0.430							
GENDER	0.083	0.091	0.316	0.033						
CLASS ST	-0.043	-0.023	-0.120	0.781	0.224					
FATHER E	-0.072	0.127	-0.096	-0.035	0.023	0.023				
MOTHER E	-0.110	-0.104	-0.203	0.099	0.012	0.128	0.730			
INCOME	-0.090	-0.209	-0.163	0.149	-0.038	0.148	0.174	0.261		
GPA	-0.000	-0.019	0.020	0.006	0.067	0.132	-0.037	0.010	0.071	
BORN in	-0.345	-0.270	-0.669	0.478	-0.155	0.216	-0.114	0.052	0.117	0.082

Table 5.2

Correlations (Pearson) – Asian-Born Subjects $n = 55$

	EGO IDEN	ETHNIC I	AMERICAN	AGE	AGE OF I	GENDER	CLASS ST	FATHER E	MOTHER E	INCOME
ETHNIC I	0.244									
AMERICAN	0.169	0.097								
AGE	0.190	0.134	-0.143							
AGE OF I	-0.001	-0.158	-0.436	0.362						
GENDER	0.012	0.052	0.372	0.149	-0.159					
CLASS ST	0.209	0.154	0.111	0.862	0.156	0.276				
FATHER E	0.015	0.232	-0.216	0.129	0.135	-0.035	0.085			
MOTHER E	0.170	0.144	-0.191	0.080	0.035	-0.082	0.069	0.732		
INCOME	0.285	0.039	0.010	0.135	-0.121	-0.187	0.133	0.156	0.220	
GPA	-0.126	-0.195	0.050	0.078	0.264	0.066	0.085	-0.087	-0.046	0.041

Table 5.3

Correlations (Pearson) - American-born Subjects $n = 45$

	EGO IDEN	ETHNIC I	AMERICAN	AGE	GENDER	CLASS ST	FATHER E	MOTHER E	INCOME
ETHNIC I	0.747								
AMERICAN	0.718	0.586							
AGE	-0.159	-0.212	-0.238						
GENDER	0.049	0.052	0.159	0.084					
CLASS ST	-0.190	-0.166	-0.175	0.584	0.265				
FATHER E	-0.268	-0.085	-0.275	-0.225	0.064	-0.030			
MOTHER E	-0.357	-0.398	-0.302	0.098	0.156	0.228	0.761		
INCOME	-0.320	-0.423	-0.322	0.068	0.162	0.126	0.240	0.306	
GPA	0.163	0.250	0.204	-0.263	0.103	0.184	0.062	0.071	0.088

For the total sample, correlations were found between the following sets of variables: ego identity and ethnic identity ($r = 0.557$); ego identity and American identity ($r = 0.501$); and ethnic identity and American identity ($r = 0.376$). Seemingly high correlations were also found between gender and American identity ($r = 0.316$).

Ethnic identity and American identity, which are two of the independent variables in the regression equation, were correlated. However, the correlation was not high compared with the correlation between ego identity and the other two identity variables ethnic identity and American identity. Acknowledging that these scales measure different constructs, this finding does not indicate presence of multicollinearity with respect to the multiple regression analysis (see section on Multiple Regression).

Gender and American identity were moderately correlated. This finding is interesting because gender is not highly correlated to either ego identity or ethnic identity. From the correlation matrices of the two sub-samples, note that the correlation coefficients for these two variables are moderate for the Asian-born sub-sample ($r = 0.372$) but low for the American-born sub-sample ($r = 0.159$). The correlation was positive, which means that Asian-born females tended to have higher American identities than their male counterparts. Part of the high correlation coefficient in the Asian-born sub-sample may be accounted for by the fact that females immigrated at slightly earlier ages (gender and age of immigration: $r = -0.159$). We might also speculate that because females in general are more social than males, females from Asian countries who immigrate to the United States are likely to adapt better or more quickly thus explaining this result.

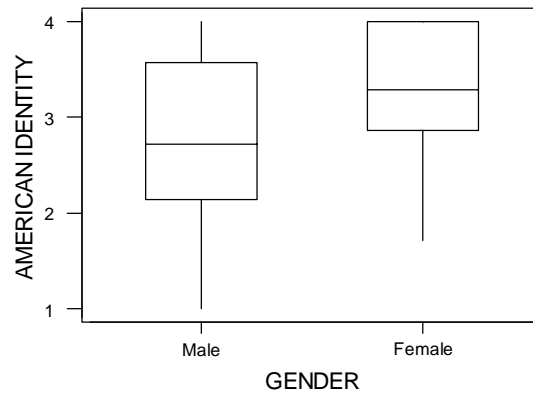


Figure 3. Gender and American Identity

The correlation coefficient for the variables ego identity and age were found to be low, which is in contrast to the studies reviewed. This most likely resulted because this sample was homogeneous in age in comparison to the other studies. Most used a wider range of ages (for example, middle school and high school samples) whereas subjects in this sample were all college students.

In this study, age was found to be highly correlated with many other variables including American identity (total sample: $r = -0.430$), place of birth (total sample: $r = 0.478$), and age of immigration (Asian-born sub-sample: $r = -0.436$). Most of this is a result of the distribution of age within the sample. Younger subjects tended to be born in the U.S. and older subjects immigrated here from Asian countries. As for the Asian-born sub-sample, this pattern continues and is manifested in the variable age of immigration. The older the subject, the later his or her age of immigration. American identity scores were indirectly related to age in this way.

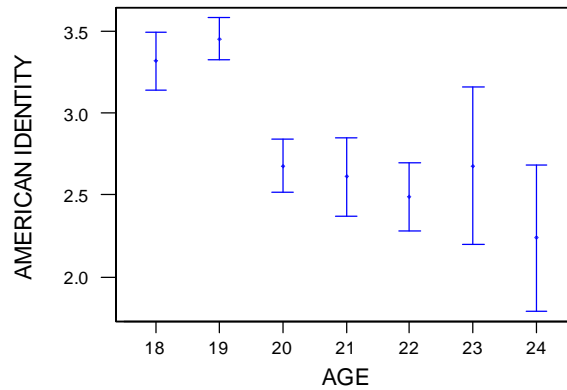


Figure 4. Age and American Identity

T-tests

A series of t -test comparisons were conducted with the independent variable as country of birth. There were two levels to the independent variable: American-born and Asian-born. The dependent variables were the three identity scales (ego identity, ethnic identity, and American identity) and a few demographic variables (age, gender, GPA, and mother's level of education).

Table 6

Results of the T-test

Variable	<u>M</u> ,American-born	<u>M</u> ,Asian-born	<u>t</u> Values
Ego Identity	4.09	3.52	3.52, p<.0007
Ethnic Identity	3.57	3.29	2.76, p<.0069
American Identity	3.60	2.45	9.23, p<.0000
Age	19.20	20.78	-5.63, p<.0000
Gender (0=male,1=female)	.55	.40	1.55, p<.12
GPA	2.95	3.11	-.81, p<.42
Mother's Education	5.04	5.20	-.53, p<.60

As seen in the table, the results were significant for the three identity scales as well as the demographic variable age. All others were not statistically significant.

The finding with the easiest or most logical explanation may be the t-test result for the variable American identity. This makes sense because those individuals who were born in the United States have spent a longer time within the American culture and also have American citizenship. An Asian-born subject has had less time to develop a strong American identity.

It should follow then, that the Asian-born subjects would have a stronger ethnic identity than American-born subjects, however, in this study the reverse was true. The American-born subjects had a significantly higher mean score for the ethnic identity scale as well. I had neglected to consider the following rationale: We can speculate that the American-born sample

had much more time to consider their ethnic identities. This is because ethnic identity is secure and taken for granted for an individual who is part of the dominant culture. It is common to hear a member of the dominant group (as with Whites in the United States) say that they have no ethnic identity. There is yet another possibility in explaining why these results were found. American-born individuals (who, in general, have a strong identification with the American culture) have begun to focus on identifying with their ethnic culture. This is brought about by the changing values in American society that puts more emphasis on celebrating diversity, which accounts for the higher ethnic identity scores in American-born respondents. More recent immigrants, on the other hand, are presumably focused on assimilating to their new culture. It is possible that they detach themselves from their ethnic culture (resulting in a lower average ethnic identity score) as they try to accept the American values. Recent immigrants will still, however, have lower American identities than American-born individuals because they have not had as much of an opportunity to adapt to the culture.

The t -test result was also significant for the variable ego identity. American-born subjects had a higher mean score on the achievement section of the EOM EIS. This result has several possible explanations. Erikson's (1968) theoretical framework used in developing this measure of ego identity was based on a Western cultural perspective. It is speculated that there may be a cultural bias to the test, resulting in higher scores for the American-born subjects. One other possible explanation for higher ego identity scores in American-born subjects has to do with cultural influence on maturity. Asian children and adolescents seem to be indulged more than what is considered "normal" in America. The reasoning behind this is that one has plenty of time later on to learn self-care skills; therefore, youngsters should be allowed to indulge in a

dependent position as long as they can (Berg & Jaya, 1993). This gives Asian-born group a later start in forming their independent ego identity. Yet another alternative explanation for this finding is available, but since it is synonymous with the one to come in the regression analysis, it will be explained later in this chapter.

The question arises, then of whether there were significant differences in internal reliability measures between the two sub-samples. It might be speculated that a lower internal reliability score for the Asian-born sub-sample might have caused the greater variance and a lower mean for each of the three measures of identity. In actuality, all of the reliability scores (Cronbach's alpha) were found to be above .80 for both sub-samples in each of the three identity measures.

Age is also a variable that had a significant result on the t -test. What this says about the sample is that the individuals followed the trend in the immigration pattern of Asian Americans. There was a significant influx of Asians to this country in the late 70's and 80's. This explains why the older subjects tend to be Asian-born and the younger respondents were American-born.

Regression Analysis

It was hypothesized that American identity and ethnic identity would be highly correlated with ego identity. It was also expected that some of the demographic variables (age, parent's level of education, and GPA) would be correlated with the achieved identity status. The results of the correlation matrix show that ethnic identity and American identity are correlated with ego identity, but the demographic variables are not. Consequently, age, parent's level of education, and GPA have been dropped from the regression analysis.

The regression formula for ego identity as the criterion variable and ethnic identity and American identity as the predictor variables is as follows:

$$\text{Ego Identity} = 0.411 + 0.701 \text{ Ethnic Identity} + 0.327 \text{ American Identity}$$

The coefficient table is shown in Table 7. This is a significant finding, which supports the hypothesis. Ethnic identity and American identity seem to be the best predictors of ego identity.

Almost 68% of the variance in ego identity can be accounted for by these two variables.

Table 7

Results of Multiple Correlation Analysis

Predictor	B	P
Ethnic identity	0.701	0.000
American Identity	0.327	0.000
$R^2 = 67.8\%$		

CHAPTER V: Summary and Conclusion

Summary and Significant Findings

In this study, ego identity, ethnic identity, American identity, and background of Asian American late adolescents were investigated. The sample included 100 Asian American college students and information was gathered through administration of a 63 item questionnaire. Specifically examined in this study was the relationship between ego identity and two types of cultural identity, ethnic identity and mainstream American identity. According to Erikson (1968), the main psychosocial task of adolescence identified as ego identity formation. Although this complex phenomenon has previously been studied for Asian American subjects, most of the research has focused on differences between racial groups. A more in-depth investigation of ego identity status in Asian Americans was needed.

For minority group adolescents who live in the United States, ethnic self-identification is central to the development of an achieved ego identity status. It should follow then, that American identity will also be a central issue if one lives in a society that has a dominant culture different from his or her own. These adolescents must identify with the mainstream culture also. The two-dimensional model of acculturation (Berry et al, 1974) gives us a theoretical base or foundation on which to study the construct of cultural identity in Asian American students.

Three separate identity measures were included in the questionnaire. The measurement for ego identity was extracted from the revised version of the EOM EIS (Bennion & Adams, 1986). Only the achievement scale (16 items) was used, and a high score represented achieved ego identity status. To assess ethnic identity, Phinney's (1992) MEIM (23 items) was utilized and on this scale, a high score indicated a strong identification with one's ethnic group. The

American identity measure (7 items), also developed by Phinney (1997) determined the participant's sense of being American. Likewise, on this scale a high score indicated a strong sense of identification with the American culture. Means for these three scales were comparable to those in previous studies that contained college student samples.

Background information was collected through the demographics section (15 items). It included questions on the subjects gender, age, grade point average, type of community the student came from, parents' education and income, and generation of immigration. The demographic items were used not only to get a general picture of this sample, but also to determine other important influences on ego identity. Studies reviewed which included these background variables mainly contained samples of middle school and high school students. They reported that age, grade point average, and socioeconomic status were related to identity status. The present study, however, did not generate the same results. This was probably the case because this sample consisted of college students only. This means that there are two obvious differences. The first is that they are an older group, the second is that they are more homogeneous than a high school sample. It can be assumed that older adolescents are more independent than adolescents of high school age, hence family background is a less salient predictor of ego identity. Furthermore, because identity is an ever-changing process, there is continuing development. It can be assumed that because this college sample has already passed the more rocky teenage phase, the results contained less variance. Because it was found that the background variables have very low or no correlation with ego identity, these variables did not seem to be influential in determining ego identity status.

The sample for this study was broken down into two groups, American-born and Asian-born, for a t -test comparison. The sample divided this way gives us a view on differences between the second generation Asian Americans and their first generation counterparts. The t -test comparisons were significant for the three identity measures. The Asian-born sample was further investigated to see if age of immigration was correlated with other variables. Both the t test for place of birth and correlations for age of immigration for the Asian-born sub-group were reported to be significant. This indicates that generation of immigration and age of immigration are both factors in determining the strength of ethnic and American identities.

Keeping this in mind, we move on to the multiple regression analysis. Based on the theoretical frameworks used in this study and previous research, it was anticipated that ego identity would be significantly correlated with cultural identity variables. The results of the analysis supported this hypothesis. For the total sample, the study shows that ethnic identity and American identity are indeed significant predictors for ego identity status. This finding emphasizes the importance of an individual's sense of affiliation to their ethnic culture and also the mainstream American culture. Thus, both factors contribute to the strength of ego identity in Asian American adolescents. All of these factors determine how strong an individual's sense of self-sufficiency is. A conscious awareness of personal identity is paramount for the development of a healthy individual. In other words, if this structure is better developed, one is more aware of his or her distinctiveness and will use this knowledge to pave his or her own way in the American society.

Limitations

One limitation of the present research is that the sample was too homogeneous, being drawn from only one university. If a larger and more diverse sample could be obtained, a few other factors could have been examined including, for example, the “1.5” generation and differences between cultural groups within the Asian American population.

Including students from different types of universities could enhance this study, because findings might be different in a setting that includes a greater percentage of Asian students. It is also noted that the findings from this study are not generalizable to a non-college sample and/or Asian American youth in general.

Studying a construct as complex as identity is difficult because there are numerous factors, many of which are interrelated. This study included only quantitative analyses, but combining it with qualitative methods could have enhanced it by gaining more in-depth knowledge of the experiences and challenges faced by individuals in this population and the respective influences on late adolescent identity development.

Implications and Recommendations for Future Research

Although ego identity has been widely studied, the greater percentage of variance in this construct still remains unexplained. There is much room for further research.

In this study, we were presented with a fairly large difference in identity scores between the Asian-born and American-born sub-samples. This leads to the question of whether or not Asian-born individuals have a different perspective of identity altogether. There may be different process of development for each population. Instead of measuring identity in Asian-born

individuals through conventional scales developed through the a Western viewpoint, how can it be assessed through the “lenses” more consistent with the Asian cultures?

It is also possible that the two sub-samples are presented with differing life experiences which influence the formation of identity. Perhaps a qualitative study could draw out what those specific experiences might be. Another important factor to consider is stress. The type or amount of stress caused by having a minority status may differ for recent immigrants and second generation Asian Americans.

Within the Asian American population, the “1.5 generation” subgroup is a new concept that needs further investigation. Perhaps if there is a way to minimize the correlation of age to age of immigration, other factors (besides amount of time spent in the U.S.) could be studied to account for differences in ethnic and American identity and their relationship to ego identity.

It was observed that a noticeable correlation exists between American identity and gender for the Asian-born sub-sample. Asian-born females had higher American identity scores than their male counterparts. This finding is interesting and warrants further explanation to describe precisely why this result occurred.

This newfound information has implications for many groups. Because it emphasizes the importance of ego identity development along with the significance of ethnic and American cultural identity on ego identity status, developers of multicultural programs, high school and college guidance counselors and other people influential in the lives of Asian American youth and young adults may find this information useful.

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APPENDIX A
QUESTIONNAIRE

We are interested in your feelings and attitudes about yourself and the future. Read each item and indicate to what degree it reflects your own thoughts and feelings. If a statement has more than one part, please indicate your reaction to the statement as a whole. Mark your answer on the line preceding the question number.

1=STRONGLY AGREE

4=DISAGREE

2=MODERATELY AGREE

5=MODERATELY DISAGREE

3=AGREE

6=STRONGLY DISAGREE

- _____ 1. Politics is something that I can never be too sure about because things change so fast. But I do think it's important to know what I can politically stand for and believe in.
- _____ 2. There are many reasons for friendship, but I choose my close friends on the basis of certain values and similarities that I've personally decided on.
- _____ 3. Based on past experiences, I've chosen the type of dating relationship I want now.
- _____ 4. A person's faith is unique to each individual. I've considered and reconsidered it myself and know what I can believe.
- _____ 5. After considerable thought I've developed my own individual viewpoint of what is for me an ideal "lifestyle" and don't believe anyone will be likely to change my perspective.
- _____ 6. I've chosen one or more recreational activities to engage in regularly from lots of things and I'm satisfied with those choices.
- _____ 7. It took me a while to figure it out, but now I really know what I want for a career.
- _____ 8. I've spent some time thinking about men's and women's roles in marriage and I've decided what will work best for me.
- _____ 9. I've thought my political beliefs through and realize I can agree with some and not other aspects of what my parents believe.
- _____ 10. I've gone through a period of serious questions about faith and can now say I understand what I believe in as an individual.
- _____ 11. I've had many different friendships and now I have a clear idea of what I look for in a friend.
- _____ 12. After trying a lot of different recreational activities I've found one or more I really enjoy doing myself or with friends.
- _____ 13. It took me a long time to decide but now I know for sure what direction to move in for a career.
- _____ 14. There are many ways that married couples can divide up family responsibilities. I've thought about lots of ways, and now I know exactly how I want it to happen for me.
- _____ 15. I've dated different types of people and know exactly what my own "unwritten rules" for dating are and who I will date.
- _____ 16. After a lot of self-examination I have established a very definite view on what my own lifestyle will be.

In this country, people come from a lot of different cultures and there are many different words to describe the different backgrounds or ethnic groups that people come from. Some examples of the names of ethnic groups are Mexican-American, Hispanic, Black, Asian American, American Indian, Anglo-American, and White. Every person is born into an ethnic group, or sometimes more than one ethnic group, but people differ on how important their ethnicity is to them, how they feel about it, and how much their behavior is affected by it. These questions are about your ethnicity or your ethnic group and how you feel about it or react to it. Please fill in:

The word I use to describe my ethnicity is _____.

Use the numbers given below to indicate how much you agree or disagree with each statement. Mark your answer on the line preceding the question number.

- 1 = STRONGLY DISAGREE
- 2 = SOMEWHAT DISAGREE
- 3 = SOMEWHAT AGREE
- 4 = STRONGLY AGREE

- _____ 1. I have spent time trying to find out more about my own ethnic group, such as its history, traditions, and customs.*
- _____ 2. I am active in organization or social groups that include mostly members of my own ethnic group.*
- _____ 3. I have a clear sense of my ethnic background and what it means for me.*
- _____ 4. I like meeting and getting to know people from ethnic groups other than my own.
- _____ 5. I think a lot about how my life will be affected by my ethnic group membership.*
- _____ 6. I am happy that I am a member of the group I belong to.*
- _____ 7. I sometimes feel it would be better if different ethnic groups didn't try to mix together.
- _____ 8. I am not very clear about the role of my ethnicity in my life.*(R)
- _____ 9. I really have not spent much time trying to learn more about the culture and history of my ethnic group.*(R)
- _____ 10. I often spend time with people from ethnic groups other than my own.
- _____ 11. I have a strong sense of belonging to my own ethnic group.*
- _____ 12. I understand pretty well what my ethnic group membership means to me, in terms of how to relate to my own group and other groups.*
- _____ 13. In order to learn more about my ethnic background, I have often talked to other people about my ethnic group.*
- _____ 14. I have a lot of pride in my ethnic group and its accomplishments.*
- _____ 15. I don't go out of my way to become friends with people from other ethnic groups.

- 1 = STRONGLY DISAGREE
- 2 = SOMEWHAT DISAGREE
- 3 = SOMEWHAT AGREE
- 4 = STRONGLY AGREE

- _____ 16. I participate in cultural practices of my own group, such as special food, music, or customs.*
- _____ 17. I am involved in activities with people from other ethnic groups.
- _____ 18. I feel a strong attachment towards my own ethnic group.*
- _____ 19. I enjoy being around people from ethnic groups other than my own.
- _____ 20. I feel good about my cultural or ethnic background.*

For the following questions, write in the number that gives the best answer to each question.

- 21. In terms of ethnic identity, I consider myself to be: _____.

 - 1) Asian American or Pacific Islander
 - 2) Hispanic or Latino
 - 3) White or Caucasian, not Hispanic
 - 4) Black or African American
 - 5) American Indian
 - 6) Mixed; parents are from two different groups
 - 7) Other: _____

22. My father's ethnicity is (use numbers above) _____.

23. My mother's ethnicity is (use numbers above) _____.

* – denotes items used to measure ethnic identity

(R) – denotes reversed items



Use the numbers given below to indicate how much you agree or disagree with each statement.

- 4=STRONGLY AGREE
- 3=SOMEWHAT AGREE
- 2=SOMEWHAT DISAGREE
- 1=STRONGLY DISAGREE

- _____ 1. I think of myself as being American.
- _____ 2. I have a strong sense of being American.
- _____ 3. I am proud of being American.
- _____ 4. I feel good about being American.
- _____ 5. Being American plays an important part in my life.
- _____ 6. I feel that I am part of mainstream American culture.
- _____ 7. If someone criticizes America I feel they are criticizing me.

The questions below are designed to help us obtain general information about you for the purpose of adequately interpreting the results of this project. Please answer them as accurately as you can.

- _____ 1. What is your age?
1. 17
 2. 18
 3. 19
 4. 20
 5. 21
 6. 22
 7. 23
 8. Other _____
- _____ 2. What is your gender?
1. Male
 2. Female
- _____ 3. What is your class status?
1. Freshman
 2. Sophomore
 3. Junior
 4. Senior
 5. 5th year
 6. Other _____
- _____ 4. What is the highest level of education completed by your mother?
1. Elementary School
 2. Middle School
 3. High School
 4. Technical/Vocational Training
 5. Some College
 6. Completed College
 7. Graduate School
- _____ 5. What is the highest level of education completed by your father?
1. Elementary School
 2. Middle School
 3. High School
 4. Technical/Vocational Training
 5. Some College
 6. Completed College
 7. Graduate School
- _____ 6. Which category most nearly describes the yearly income of your parent(s)?
1. Less than \$20,000 per year
 2. Between \$21,000 and \$40,000 per year
 3. Between \$41,000 and \$60,000 per year
 4. Above \$61,000 per year

- _____ 7. Prior to coming to Blacksburg, in what type of community did you live?
1. Urban
2. Suburban
3. Rural
4. Other _____
- _____ 8. Which category most nearly describes your current grade point average?
1. 3.5 to 4.0
2. 3.0 to 3.499
3. 2.5 to 2.999
4. 2.0 to 2.499
5. Less than 2.0
- _____ 9. Are you a citizen of the U.S.?
1. Yes (If you mark Yes, skip Question 10, go to Question 11.)
2. No
- _____ 10. Did you live in another country before immigrating to the U.S.?
1. Yes (fill in name of country): _____
2. No
- _____ 11. Were you born in the U.S.?
1. Yes (If you mark Yes, answer Questions 12 and 13, skip Question 14.)
2. No (If you mark No, skip Questions 12 and 13, go to Question 14.)
- _____ 12. Was your mother born in the U.S.?
1. Yes
2. No
- _____ 13. Was your father born in the U.S.?
1. Yes
2. No
- _____ 14. At what age did you immigrate to the U.S.?
1. 1-5 years old
2. 5-10 years old
3. 10-15 years old
4. After age 15
- _____ 15. How do you describe your cultural heritage?
1. Chinese
2. Filipino
3. Japanese
4. Korean
5. Indian
6. Vietnamese
7. Mixed _____
8. Other _____

APPENDIX B

CERTIFICATE OF IRB EXEMPTION

CERTIFICATION OF EXEMPTION OF PROJECTS INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS

Investigator(s): Julie J. Okon
Sponsor: Family and Child Development
Project Title: Asian American Adolescent Identity

Source of Support: Departmental Research Sponsored Research Proposal No. _____

1. The criteria for "exemption" from review by the IRB for a project involving the use of human subjects and with no risk to the subject is listed below. Please initial all applicable conditions and provide the substantiating statement of protocol.

- a. The research will be conducted in established or commonly established educational settings, involving normal education practices. For example:
 - 1) Research on regular and special education instructional strategies;
 - 2) Research on effectiveness of instructional techniques, curricula or classroom management techniques.
- b. The research involves use of education tests (___ cognitive, ___ diagnostic, ___ aptitude, ___ achievement), and the subject cannot be identified directly or through identifiers with the information.
- c. The research involves survey or interview procedures, in which:
 - 1) Subjects cannot be identified directly or through identifiers with the information;
 - 2) Subject's responses, if known, will not place the subject at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subject's financial standing or employability;
 - 3) The research does not deal with sensitive aspects of subject's own behavior (illegal conduct, drug use, sexual behavior or alcohol use);
 - 4) The research involves survey or interview procedures with elected or appointed public officials, or candidates for public office.
- d. The research involves the observation of public behavior, in which:
 - 1) The subjects cannot be identified directly or through identifiers;
 - 2) The observations recorded about an individual could not put the subject at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subject's financial standing or employability;
 - 3) The research does not deal with sensitive aspects of the subject's behavior (illegal conduct, drug use, sexual behavior or use of alcohol).
- e. The research involves collection or study of existing data, documents, recording pathological specimens or diagnostic specimens, of which:
 - 1) The sources are publicly available; or
 - 2) The information is recorded such that the subject cannot be identified directly or indirectly through identifiers.

2. I further certify that the project will not be changed to increase the risk or exceed exempt condition(s) without filing an additional certification or application for use by the Human Subjects Review Board.

Note: If children are in any way at risk while this project is underway, the chairman of IRB should be notified immediately in order to take corrective action.

Julie Okon 4-06-98, [Signature] 4-6-98
Investigator's/Date

Departmental Reviewer/Date

Chair, Institutional Review Board/Date

APPENDIX C

LETTER FROM DEAN



Division of Student Affairs
Dean of Students Office
107 Brodie Hall
Blacksburg, Virginia 24061-0255
(540) 231-3787 Fax: (540) 231-4035

March 26, 1998

Dear Students:

This letter is to ask your support in Julie Ohm's research for her master's thesis in preparation for graduation in 1998. The goal of Julie's research is to study identity in Asian American college students.

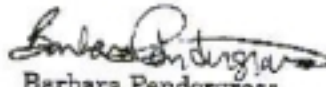
Julie is a graduate student in the department of Family and Child Development. She has served the Asian American population at Virginia Tech through her involvement in AASU (Asian American Student Union) and wishes to continue her contributions to the Asian American community through her research.

As yet, there has not been a great amount of research or wealth of information in this area. Your efforts will help to broaden the knowledge that will be available to developers of multicultural programs, high school and college guidance counselors, and other people influential in the lives of Asian American youth and young adults.

I have assisted Julie by providing her with the mailing list of all Asian American undergraduates enrolled at Virginia Tech. The research survey she asks each of you to complete is composed of 58 multiple-choice questions and one additional item.

Your participation will be greatly appreciated. Thank you in advance for your support of this project.

Sincerely,


Barbara Pendergrass
Associate Dean of Students

BP/jw

APPENDIX D
IRB CONSENT FORM

VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE AND STATE UNIVERSITY

Informed Consent for Participants of Investigative Projects

Title of Project: Asian American Adolescent Identity

Investigator: Julie Ohm
Advisor: Victoria Fu, Ph.D.

I. THE PURPOSE OF THIS RESEARCH/PROJECT

You are invited to participate in a study on identity. The purpose of this study is to explore identity of Asian American students, collecting data from 100 students with similar backgrounds as yourself. All subjects will be over the age of 18 and American citizens of Asian descent.

II. PROCEDURES

You will be asked for 30 minutes of your time to fill out a questionnaire that includes a total of 62 questions. These questions ask you to rate your feelings and attitudes about yourself and the future, about how you feel about your ethnicity and how much their behavior is affected by it, and questions about your background. Please respond to all questions as accurately as possible.

III. RISKS

The questionnaire items are not intended to cause any risk or discomfort.

IV. BENEFITS

No guarantee of benefits has been made to encourage you to participate. Filling out this survey may, however, allow you to think about certain issues related to your ethnicity or other aspects of yourself that you may have not previously given much thought to. In addition, the knowledge gained by this study may contribute to a better understanding of the process of identity and ethnic identity formation in Asian Americans.

V. EXTENT OF ANONYMITY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

Your responses to the questionnaire will be kept strictly confidential. Once you have signed and turned in this form, it will be kept separate from the completed questionnaires. All forms will be stored in a locked compartment that only the researcher has access to. When the data analysis has been completed, surveys will be destroyed.

VI. COMPENSATION

Other than sincere appreciation, there is no compensation for participating in this project.

VII. FREEDOM TO WITHDRAW

You are free to withdraw from this study at any time without penalty. You are free not to answer a specific question or questions.

VIII. APPROVAL OF RESEARCH

This research project has been approved by the Institutional Review Board for Research Involving Human Subjects at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, and by the Department of Family and Child Development.

IX. SUBJECT'S RESPONSIBILITIES

I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

X. SUBJECT'S PERMISSION

I have read and understand the Informed Consent and conditions of this project. I have had all my questions answered. I hereby acknowledge the above and give my voluntary consent for participation in this project.

If I participate, I may withdraw at any time without penalty. I agree to abide by the rules of this project.

Signature

Date

Should I have any questions about this research or its conduct, I may contact:

Julie Ohm, Investigator 552-8973
Dr. Victoria Fu, Faculty Advisor 231-4796
H.T. Hurd, Chair, IRB Research Division 231-9359

APPENDIX E

LETTER FROM RESEARCHER

March 26, 1998

Dear Students:

I am writing this letter to ask you to support a project designed to investigate the beliefs and attitudes of Asian American students. As an Asian American graduate student I have been frustrated by the lack of research in the area of Asian American youth and young adults. Therefore, as my thesis topic I have chosen to examine identity in Asian American college students.

Enclosed is a questionnaire packet containing several areas of questions. The questionnaire takes only about 20 minutes to complete, and the information that you provide cannot be traced back to you and will be held in the strictest confidence. Also included are two copies of an Informed Consent form. Please return a signed copy with the questionnaire. The other one is yours to keep in case you may have questions in the future, or would like to know the results of the study.

A self-addressed envelope is provided, and the questionnaire can be returned via campus mail. For those who live off campus, I would appreciate if you brought the completed questionnaire to the University and dropped it off in a campus mail bin. (One is available in 123 Squires Student Center.)

This information will be valuable to my research as well as to the university as it learns better how to include and provide services to Asian American students. Dr. Barbara Pendergrass, Associate Dean of Students, has reviewed this project and is fully supportive of it.

Thank you so much for your help.

Sincerely,

Julie Ohm
M.S. Candidate, Family and Child Development
College of Human Resources

VITA

Julie Juhye Ohm

EDUCATION

Master of Science, 1999

Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

Department of Family and Child Development (Child Development Emphasis)

Thesis: Asian American Adolescent Identity

Bachelor of Science, 1996

Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

Major: Family and Child Development / 2nd Major: Psychology

EMPLOYMENT AND EXPERIENCE

1998-present	Teacher, School Age Child Care, Fairfax County
1997-1999	Program Coordinator/Teacher/Camp Counselor, Korean YMCA
1998	Intern, Youth Programs, Virginia Cooperative Extension
1996-1998	Head Teacher: Infant Room, Child Development Lab School, Virginia Tech
1996	Group Leader, English Village Course Korea Advanced Institute of Science and Technology

PRESENTATIONS

Workshop: Uncovering the Curriculum in an Infant/Toddler Classroom with Suzanne Natili and Tami Corbett

1998 Virginia Association for Early Childhood Education Conference

Lecture: A Focus on Asian American Students

As part of the Educating Diverse Populations series 1997

College of Education, Virginia Tech

ACTIVITIES:

Family and Child Development Graduate Student Association

Chairperson (1997-1998)

Asian American Student Union

President (1995-1997); Vice-President (1995); Treasurer (1994-1995)