COMPARING MARITAL SATISFACTION, ACCULTURATION, AND PERSONALITY
ACROSS ASIAN-MIXED COUPLES AND ASIAN COUPLES IN THE UNITED STATES

A Dissertation

by

SHINHWA LEE

BS, Hanyang University, Republic of Korea, 1999
MS, Texas A&M University-Commerce, 2005

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

COUNSELOR EDUCATION

Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi
Corpus Christi, Texas

August 2013

COMPARING MARITAL SATISFACTION, ACCULTURATION, AND PERSONALITY
ACROSS ASIAN-MIXED COUPLES AND ASIAN COUPLES IN THE UNITED STATES

A Dissertation

by

SHINHWA LEE

This dissertation meets the standards for scope and quality of
Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi and is hereby approved.

Richard Balkin, PhD   Richard Ricard, PhD
Chair   Committee Member

Mary A. Fernandez, PhD   Robert Wooster, PhD
Committee Member   Graduate Faculty Representative

JoAnn Canales, PhD
Dean, College of Graduate Studies

August 2013

ABSTRACT

As a relatively new but increasing issue, cross-cultural relationships are an area in need of further study. Most previous research in this area has been focused on issues among cross-cultural couples due to cultural differences; other possible factors, such as personality characteristics, are limited. Moreover, only limited research studies were conducted with Asian with non-Asian couples.

The purpose of this study was to compare marital satisfaction, acculturation, and personality characteristics across Asian-mixed couples and Asian couples in the United States through research questions of (a) the relationship among levels of acculturation, personality, and levels of marital satisfaction of Asians in Asian couples and Asian-mixed couples, (b) levels of acculturation based on their gender and marriage types, (c) levels of marital satisfaction based on their gender and marriage types, and (d) personality characteristics based on marriage types.

The sample included 22 Asian males and 27 Asian females having an Asian partner, 4 Asian males and 23 Asian females having a non-Asian partner, and 14 non-Asian males and 2 non-Asian females having an Asian partner.

A quantitative study using an explanatory non-experimental design and a correlational design was conducted. Regressions, ANCOVA, ANOVA, and MANOVA analyses were conducted with collected date using the Suinn-Lew Asian Self-Identity Acculturation Scale, the Big Five Inventory, the Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale, and Demographic Questionnaire.

The findings in this study include (a) no relationship among the acculturation level, personality, and the marital satisfaction level of Asians in Asian couples and Asian-mixed couples, (b) significantly higher levels of acculturation in Asians in Asian-mixed couples, (c) no

differences in levels of marital satisfaction among individuals in Asian couples and Asian- mixed couples, (d) significantly higher levels of openness, conscientiousness, and extraversion in individuals in Asian-mixed couples.

Implications from this study for counselor educators, practitioners, and future counselors include (a) being aware of several personality characteristics of Asian-mixed couples that possibly work as strengths and protective factors in their marriage, (b) opening and exploring issues based on wider and holistic views rather than focusing solely on cultural differences, (c) avoiding stereotypes and pre-assumptions, and (d) understanding basic Asian values.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to God for granting many blessings and getting me through this experience.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It has been long a journey with both unforgettable joy and difficult moments to complete my doctorate, and I cannot finish this journey without acknowledging the tremendous support from many people. First, I would like to gratefully acknowledge my dissertation committee chair, Dr. Richard Balkin, for all his support, encouragement, and care during my entire doctoral program, including completing this dissertation. Dr. Balkin has been an excellent mentor, supporter, advisor, and editor for me. I truly appreciate his superior understanding of statistics, research, and editing knowledge and his time commitment. I want to specially thank Dr. Balkin for encouraging and collaborating with me on publications and presentations, as well as giving me a fantastic opportunity to work as an editorial assistant for several professional journals. They were great opportunities for my professional and personal growth. Also, thanks are extended to Dr. Balkin for the endless support and guidance for preparing me to become a new professional. It is a great blessing to have Dr. Balkin as my dissertation committee chair.

I was also fortunate to have great committee members. I truly appreciate Dr. Richard Ricard for encouraging me to research further, suggesting fabulous ideas, and cheering me up with his warm smile and great humor. I would like to acknowledge Dr. Mary A. Fernandez for her outstanding efforts in helping me to find potential participants and editing my dissertation, while providing unconditional encouragement. As my internship and licensure supervisor, she holistically cared, supported, and guided me during the entire doctoral program and continues to do so now. I also sincerely appreciate my graduate faculty representative, Dr. Robert Wooster, for his great commitment of his time and effort to edit my dissertation, as well as suggesting new ideas coming from a different profession.

I would like to express my appreciation to Dr. Anneliese Singh, Dr. Mei Tang, Dr. Kimberly Frazier, and Ms. Cyndy Yu-Robinson for posting and recruiting potential participants for my dissertation via their associated academic listserves and social communities. Especially, I want to thank to everyone who completed my survey. I also appreciate Ms. Erin Sherman for assisting with the IRB approval process for my dissertation and Dr. JoAnn Canales, Ms. Lori Shearin, and Ms. Denaire Fish for assisting the dissertation formatting and graduation process.

I would like to acknowledge Dr. Robert Smith, Dr. Marvarene Oliver, Dr. Mary L. Holt, Dr. Manuel Zamarripa, Dr. Karen M. Hunnicutt-Hollenbaugh, Dr. Yvonne Castillo, and Dr. Lisa Wines for enriching my knowledge and strengthening my research, presentation, and teaching skills, as well as being good mentors and supervisors. I also want to thank Ms. Rachel Perez, Ms. Shannon Jackson, and Ms. Donna DeGaish for assisting me during my doctoral program. Especially, I appreciate all the additional hard work they provided regarding my status as an international student.

I would like to thank my cohort peers within the doctoral program: Courtney H., Courtney A., Stefani, Darla, Erica, Pam, Sneha, Lauren, and Rita. Without your support and friendship, I could not successfully complete my doctorate, especially as an international student being alone in the United States. Thank you for teaching me a new culture and assisting in my acculturation process. I also gratefully appreciate all of my friends, church members, and pastors who support, believe, and encourage me as well as pray for me. I cannot address each one's name here, but your name is always in my heart.

Last but not least, I want to specially thank my lovely family for all their encouragement, support, care, and prayers with great love. Although my family is physically far from me, they

never stop supporting and caring for me, so I can always feel their love. Especially, I truly appreciate my parents who devote everything they have to support me and show the greatest love. They always tell me that they are so proud of me and blessed to have me as a daughter, but it is the greatest blessing that I have such great parents who give me endless love and a wonderful family.

  To all of these people and many others, your support and love will be appreciated and unforgettable for me. I could not complete my doctorate without you. Thank you so much!!

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLES

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Globalization allows people more opportunities to have contact with other cultures and to build intimate, cross-cultural relationships, perhaps resulting in an open and accepting view of cross-cultural relationships in society (Jacobson & Heaton, 2008). Along with this movement, the U. S. Census Bureau (2 012a) reported that 10% of married couples in 2010 were cross-cultural couples, compared to less than 2% in 1970 when factoring in all racial combinations. This demographic increase in the number of cross-cultural couples attracted the attention of society as a whole and the counseling profession in particular (Henriksen, Watts, & Bustamante, 2007).

Before exploring variables related to cross-cultural couples, clarification of the term *cross-cultural couple* is necessary. A cross-cultural couple refers to a couple with each partner coming from a different culture (Gudykunst, 1994). Culture is generally defined as shared beliefs, values, and behaviors that foster a sense of shared identity and community among members of a group (Gudykunst, 1994; Samovar & Porter, 1995; Triandis, 1994) and includes ethnicity, race, religion, and education. Based on the broader meaning of culture, every couple can be cross-cultural if there are differences in gender, spiritual background, or social status (Falicov, 1995). However, the term, *cross-cultural couple*, is widely used to emphasize ethnic or racial differences (Kim, 2008). The term, *cross-cultural couples*, is used interchangeable with interracial or intercultural couples in this study.

Concerns and issues related to couple relationships are important within the counseling profession. Most married couples would probably agree and understand that all marriages have relationship issues (Tallman & Hsiao, 2004). Even though some couples share the same

language and ethnicity, conflicts often arise due to different personalities, beliefs, or behavioral patterns. Cross-cultural couples are from different racial/ethical groups, often creating additional conflicts due to language barriers or different traditional and cultural backgrounds (Falicov, 1995; Fu & Heaton, 2000). According to Hsu (2001), "intercultural couples have a greater likelihood of encountering problems because they hold even more diverse values, beliefs, attitudes, and habits than couples who are of similar cultures" (p.225). Fu, Tora, and Kendall (2001) found that cross-cultural marriages may create higher levels of stress and conflict, and the couples may have less satisfying marital relationships compared to same culture marriages.

Although empirical research on cross-cultural couples remains limited, most researchers suggest that cultural differences contribute to marital distress and should be addressed in counseling (Bhugra & DeSilva, 2000; Hsu, 2001; Waldman & Rubalcava, 2005). Bustamante, Nelson, Henriksen, and Monakes (2011) reported that early research on the sources of stress for cross-cultural couples focused on profound differences in cultural values and worldviews, negative societal and family reactions, difficulties and differences in values, beliefs, and customs between two partners, distinct communications styles, religious and ethnic beliefs, and unbalanced views of cultural differences. For example, Bhugra and De Silva (2000) characterized cross-cultural couples as having two additional sources of difficulty, which are macrocultural and microcultural difficulties. Macrocultural difficulties are from negative societal or family attitudes. Microcultural difficulties are from individual differences in habits, beliefs, values, and customs. Also, Bustamante et al. (2011) found childrearing practices, time orientation, gender role expectations, and external pressures from extended family members as the primary stressors. Additionally, if each partner speaks a different language, more severe issues may become evident. According to Waldman and Rubalcava (2005), the communication

and understanding of emotions is a vital component of a functional marriage in any context, but the possibility for misunderstanding is significantly increased for cross-cultural couples.

Although many researchers focused on several culture-related difficulties and stressors (Bhugra & De Silva, 2000; Bustamante et al., 2011; Fu, Tora, & Kendall, 2001; Hsu, 2001; Sullivan & Cottone, 2006; Waldman & Rubalcava, 2005), others concentrated on strengths and unique coping strategies in many cross-cultural couples with healthy and satisfying marriages, despite all the difficulties. Heller and Wood (2000) asserted that being a cross-cultural couple might increase mutual understanding and intimacy, because each partner could be open to discuss differences rather than assuming or projecting similarity and agreement about some issues. Similarly, Biever, Bobele, and North (1998) explained cross-cultural couples have deeper involvement between partners, a greater degree of commitment, and more awareness and acceptance of differences through the process of negotiating cultural differences and managing negative perceptions from the society and family. In addition to strengths, researchers insisted that maintaining a balanced view of cultural differences is an important strategy of healthy cross-cultural couples (Bustamante et al., 2011; Falicov, 1995). Using recent qualitative research, Bustamante et al. (2011) identified six coping strategies employed by cross-cultural couples: gender role flexibility, humor about differences, cultural deference or a tendency to defer to the culture-related preferences of a partner, recognition of similarities, cultural reframing, and a general appreciation for one another's culture.

Focusing on coping mechanisms in studies of cross-cultural couples is especially important. According to Bustamante et al. (2001), generally one partner tends to defer more to the other person's culture among cross-cultural couples, which may result in offsetting cultural differences in their relationships. For example, one partner usually deferred to the other

3

partner's language, spent more time with the other partner's family or friends, and shared the other partner's cultural preferences. Similarly, Gottman, Driver, and Tabares (2002) defined this pattern of cultural deference as allowing one's partner to have influence over another. In addition Gottman et al. (2002) indicated that the failure of husbands to accept or to defer to their partner was one predictor of divorce among cross-cultural couples. However, Gottman et al. likely did not examine Asian-mixed couples, so future research needs to examine the impact of cultural deference in Asian-mixed couples.

Statement of the Problem

Relationships between couples have always been a concern in individual and family counseling, particularly in a society with a high divorce rate; the marriage rate was .68% and the divorce rate was .36% in 2011 although divorce data were excluded from six states (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2013). As two individuals merge their lives into one, various challenges and difficulties occur due to differences in personality, beliefs, and communication styles. Cross-cultural couples usually have additional difficulties in honoring one's own cultural beliefs, values, and customs, as well as adapting to the culture of a partner. Despite an increase in the number of cross-cultural couples, minimal empirical research is published concerning cross-cultural couple relationships (Bustamante et al., 2011; Sullivan & Cottone, 2006).

Cultural differences may be primary contributors to marital distress or dissatisfaction among cross-cultural couples, but few quantitative research studies examined how cultural differences affect marital satisfaction, especially among Asians who have a cross-cultural marital relationship. As one of the increasing ethnic groups in the United States, about 14.7 million people (4.7%) identified their ethnicity as Asian (U.S. Census Bureau, 2011a).

4

Additionally, only limited research dealt with the relationship between personality characteristics and marital satisfaction in cross-cultural couples, although researchers found a relationship between certain personality characteristics and marital satisfaction among general couples (Luo et al., 2008; O'Rourke, Claxton, Chou, Smith, & Hadjistavropoulos, 2011).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to compare marital satisfaction, cultural differences, and personality characteristics across Asian-mixed couples and Asian couples in the United States. The researcher examined how the level of acculturation and personality characteristics affected the level of marital satisfaction among Asian participants based on marriage types in either cross- or intra-cultural relationships; if the level of acculturation for Asian participants was different based on their gender and spouses' ethnicity; and if the level of marital satisfaction was different among individuals based on their gender and marriage types. Finally, the researcher studied if there were any particular personality characteristics in individuals who have cross-cultural relationships compared with those who have intra-cultural relationships.

Research Questions

The following research questions were addressed in the study:

1. To what extent is there a relationship among levels of acculturation, as measured by the Suinn-Lew Asian Self-Identity Acculturation Scale (SL-ASIA), personality characteristics, as measured by the Big Five Inventory (BFI), and levels of marital satisfaction, as measured by the Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale (RDAS) of Asians in Asian couples and Asian-mixed couples?

2. To what extent is there a difference in levels of acculturation, as measured by the SL-ASIA, of Asians based on the gender and spouses' same or different ethnicity?

3. To what extent is there a difference of marital satisfaction, as measured by the RDAS, of Asians based on the gender and marriage types in either cross- or intra-cultural relationships?

4. To what extent is there a difference of personality characteristics, as measured by the BFI, among individuals in Asian couples and Asian-mixed couples?

Given what is known about Asian culture, a working hypothesis for this study was that levels of acculturation and certain personality characteristics, such as agreeableness or neuroticism, would affect levels of marital satisfaction; Asians in Asian mixed couples and possibly female Asians would have higher levels of acculturation; no differences in levels of marital satisfaction among individuals in Asian couples and Asian mixed couples as well as in males and females; and higher levels of openness and agreeableness in individuals in Asian-mixed couples than individuals in Asian-couples.

Significance of the Study

As an increasing number of couples engage in cross-cultural relationships due to proximity and societal trends reflecting a more open and accepting view of cross-cultural relationships (Jacobson & Heaton, 2008; Molina, Estrada, and Burnett, 2004), concerns related to cross-cultural couples become increasingly important for professional counselors and counselor educators. Particularly, the number of Asian and Asian-mixed couples is increasing. The U.S. Census (2011) reported that about 26% of immigrants are from an Asian country, and Asian population is expected to more than triple by 2050. Also, among all newlyweds, 30% of Asians (about 40% of females and 20% males) married with non-Asians in the United States in 2008 (Taylor el al., 2010). This study could benefit professional counselors and counselor educators who work with or teach methods of working with cross-cultural couples, especially Asian-mixed couples.

From this study, the impact of levels of cultural differences and personality on cross-cultural relationships was clarified and supported by empirical evidence. Awareness among professional counselors and counselor educators of unique dynamics and strengths of cross-cultural relationships could assist cross-cultural couples in their goal of a healthy and satisfying marital relationship. As a result, the divorce rate among cross-cultural couples could be reduced.

This study could enhance multicultural competencies of professional counselors and counseling educators, professional training of counselors, and benefit cross-cultural couples and families. Hsu (2001) stressed the importance of the counselor's cultural competence as the starting point for working with cross-cultural couples. Moreover, multicultural competencies are emphasized within professional counseling standards. The *Code of Ethics* by the American Counseling Association (ACA, 2005) and the *2009 Standards* of the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP, 2009) highlighted the critical need for practitioners to enhance cultural sensitivity and responsiveness when working with diverse client populations (Sheely-Moore & Kooyman, 2011). Therefore, this study could help professional counselors and counselor educators gain a higher level of multicultural competence.

Population and Sample

For the purpose of this study, the sample included Asian and non-Asian individuals in Asian couples and Asian-mixed couples. Specifically, there were five groups of participants: Asian males married to Asian females, Asian females married to Asian males, Asian males married to non-Asian females, Asian females married to non-Asian males, and non-Asians married to Asians. Participants' ethnicity was reported through self-identification. All participants lived in the United States. Minimum age for participants was 18 years old. The targeted sample size was thirty for each group for a total sample size of 150; however, the final

count of participants in the study was 92 (22 Asian males and 27 Asian females who have an Asian partner, 4 Asian males and 23 Asian females who have a non-Asian partner, and 14 non-Asian males and 2 non-Asian females who have an Asian partner).

Methodology

The researcher designed a quantitative study using an explanatory non-experimental design and a correlational design to evaluate four questions: (a) the relationship among the level of acculturation, personality, and the level of marital satisfaction of Asians in Asian couples and Asian-mixed couples, (b) the differences of the level of acculturation of Asians based on gender and their spouses' same or different ethnicity, (c) the differences of marital satisfaction level of individuals based on gender and marriage types, and (d) the differences of personality characteristics among individuals in Asian couples and Asian-mixed couples. A quantitative research design helps to clarify and generalize results of this study (Creswell, 2009).

Procedures

Permission from a university Institutional Review Board was obtained before selecting participants and collecting data. The researcher recruited samples using both online tools and personal contact. Online tools were emails through several listserves and academic and social circles and postings on various community websites of potential Asian participants who married individuals of either same or different ethnicity. Emails and online postings included a description of eligible participants, a request for participation, a brief explanation of the purpose of the research, a description of the steps to follow in order to participate, and a hyperlink directing participants to the survey at SurveyMonkey.com. The researcher also contacted possible participants through academic, social, and personal circles including local communities, schools, and churches.

The researcher used SurveyMonkey.com, an internet-based research company, to collect data online. The researcher also collected data through in-person assessments. In addition to the online informed consent or in-person information document, four instruments were completed: (a) basic demographic survey including gender, ethnicity of oneself and spouse, years of living in the United States, number of children, and duration of marriage, (b) the Suinn-Lew Asian Self-Identity Acculturation Scale (SL-ASIA), (c) the Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale (RDAS), and (d) the Big Five Inventory (BFI). Data was collected for about 8 months.

Data Analysis

With collected data, the researcher used the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) 18.0 to analyze a multiple regression, a simple regression, a factorial ANCOVA, a factorial ANOVA, and a MANOVA to obtain the information needed to answer the research questions. Descriptive statistics related to demographic information were reported. Also, the researcher verified the necessary model assumptions prior to any data analyses.

To identify the relationship among cultural differences, personality characteristics, and marital satisfaction of Asians among Asian couples and Asian-mixed couples, a multiple regression analysis was conducted using the subscales of BFI and the RDAS, and a simple regression analysis was conducted using the SL-ASIA and the RDAS. The predictability of marital satisfaction by the level of acculturation and personality characteristics was determined by the result. Also, to answer the differences of the level of acculturation of Asians based on their gender and their spouses' same or different ethnicity, a factorial ANCOVA analysis was conducted using the SL-ASIA and a demographic questionnaire. Based on a theoretical assumption and verified necessary model assumptions, the years of living in the United States was used as the covariate. To ascertain the differences of the level of marital satisfaction among

9

individuals in Asian couples and Asian-mixed couples based on their gender and their marriage types, a factorial ANOVA analysis was conducted using the RDAS and demographic questionnaire. In addition, to discover the importance of differing personality characteristics among individuals in Asian couples and Asian-mixed couples, a MANOVA analysis was conducted using the subscales of BFI and the demographic questionnaire.

Limitations

This study had several limitations. Random assignment is not possible in an explanatory non-experimental study, so there was some possibility of uncontrolled and unmeasured confounding variables and limitation to represent the target population that affects the generalizability of findings (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2006). There was no control of participants' temporary or accidental circumstances affecting tentative marital relationships (e.g., recent trauma, pregnancy, or other seminal events).

Also, a large sample size (e.g. thirty for each group) was required to ensure generalizability and the statistical and practical power, but securing enough individuals in Asian couples and Asian-mixed couples to meet the criteria necessary to apply advanced statistical measures was difficult. In this study, comparative statistics were evaluated across an unbalanced design, thereby limiting generalizability and statistical power.

Definition of Terms

Acculturation: The process whereby the attitudes and/or behaviors of people from one culture are modified as a result of contact with a different culture (Sodowsky & Plake, 1992).

Asian: Individuals who defined their ethnicity as an Asian.

Asian couples: Married couples consisted of two Asians.

Asian-mixed couples: Married couples consisted of an Asian and non-Asian partner.

Coping Strategy/Mechanism: Methods or skills to manage external or internal conflicts, problems, or stress.

Confounding variables: Uncontrollable and unnoticeable influence variables.

Cross-cultural couples: Couples with two individuals who represented different ethnicity/racial groups (Gudykunst, 1994). It is interchangeable with interracial marriage, interethnic marriage, intercultural marriage, intermarriage, and mixed marriage.

Culture: Shared beliefs, values, and behaviors that foster a sense of shared identity and community among member of a group (Gudykunst, 1994; Samovar & Porter, 1995; Triandis, 1994)

Cultural deference: Taking the cultural perspective of another person, a willingness to choose to assimilate in an effort to accommodate cultural disparities (Bustamante et al., 2011)

Ethnicity: The concept of a group's identity, including the common ancestry through which individuals have evolved shared values and customs (Hays, 2007).

Macroculture: Predominant culture in the given society, like nationality, language, and races (Bhugra & De Silva, 2000).

Marital distress: Unpleasant emotional, mental, or physical feelings usually caused by conflicts in marriage.

Micro culture: The various small units of culture among the society like habits, beliefs, and values (Bhugra & De Silva, 2000).

Multicultural competence: Understands other people's worldviews and appreciate other cultures while aware of one's own values and biases (Arredondo, Tovar-Blank, & Parham, 2008).

Personality: Individual differences in characteristic patterns of thinking, feeling, and behaving (Kazdin, 2000).

Stressor: Something with the potential to cause a stress reaction (Greenburg, 2009).

Chapter Summary

The counseling profession began to focus on issues related to cross-cultural couples as this population increased in the United States. Many researchers looked at difficulties and conflict that cross-cultural couples have and agreed that cultural differences, such as language barriers, different cultural values and social views, childrearing, and gender-role expectations, are a major difficulty (Bhugra & DeSilva, 2000; Hsu, 2001; Waldman & Rubalcava, 2005). Several researchers also mentioned strengths of a deeper involvement, greater degree of commitment, and more awareness and acceptance of differences (Biever, Bobele, & North, 1998; Heller & Wood, 2000). Despite previous research in this area, scholars agree there is minimal empirical research published concerning cross-cultural couple relationships (Bustamante et al., 2011; Sullivan & Cottone, 2006) and most research heavily focused on cultural differences without considering other factors like personality characteristics (Garcia, 2006). Additionally, there is limited research related to Asian-mixed couple relationships, although Asians are one of the fastest growing ethnic groups in the U. S. (U.S. Census Bureau, 2011a).

The purpose of this study was to compare marital satisfaction, cultural differences, and personality characteristics across Asian-mixed couples and Asian couples in the United States. Four research questions were identified to specifically explore the purpose of the study. This study is significant because the findings could help counselor educators, practitioners, and trainees to better understand and more adequately assist this population. Also, more effective counseling would be beneficial for Asian couples and Asian-mixed couples. Due to the

12

extremely unbalanced ratio in gender of Asians in Asian-mixed couples (4 males and 23 females), comparing gender differences was not possible. However, Taylor et al. (2010) identified that Asian women are twice more likely than Asian men to be married with non-Asian partners, and this study is representative of this trend.

Organization of Remaining Chapters

Chapter 2 covers a comprehensive review of the literature about multiculturalism in counseling, cross-cultural couples, and Asian couples and Asian-mixed couples. Chapter 3 describes the methodology and procedures of the study. Chapter 4 reports findings of the study. Chapter 5 includes a discussion, implications, limitation, and recommendations for future studies.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This study identified how the level of acculturation and personality characteristics affected the level of marital satisfaction among Asian participants based on marriage types in either cross- or intra-cultural relationships. The researcher also examined if the level of acculturation for Asian participants was different based on their gender and spouses' ethnicity, if the level of marital satisfaction was different among individuals based on their gender and marriage types, and if there were any particular personality characteristics in individuals who have cross-cultural relationships compared with those who have intra-cultural relationships.

In this chapter the researcher provides a comprehensive review of the literature about multiculturalism in counseling, cross-cultural couples, and Asian couples and Asian-mixed couples. Historical background and statistical information are informed related to ethnic diversity, multicultural movement, cross-cultural couples, and Asian couples (Arrendondo, Tovar-Blank, & Parham, 2008; Aubrey, 1977; Biever, Bobele, & North, 1998; Brady-Amoon, 2011; Kreider & Simmons, 2003; U. S. Census Bureau, 2007, 2011a, 2011b, 2012a, 2012b). Previous research on cross-cultural relationships is cited including (a) cultural impacts (Stolorow, Atwood, & Orange, 2002; Waldman & Rubalcava, 2005), (b) difficulties and issues (Bustamante, Nelson, Henriksen, & Monakes, 2011; Cools, 2006; Falicov, 1995; Frame, 2004; Waldman & Rubalcava, 2005), (c) strengths and potential benefits (Bhugra & De Silva, 2000; Foeman & Nance, 1999; Gareis, 2000; Ho, 1990), and (d) marital qualities, such as marital satisfaction or marital happiness, of cross-cultural couples with/without comparing same cultural couples (Fu, Tora, & Kendall, 2001; Heller & Wood, 2000; Hohmann-Marriott & Amato, 2008; Kim, Edwards, Sweeney, & Wetchler, 2012; Leslie & Letiecq, 2004). Theoretical and practical

frameworks to counsel cross-cultural couples are addressed (Biever et al., 1998; Sullivan & Cottone, 2006; Wong, 2009).

Diversity and Multiculturalism

The United States features a racially and ethnically diverse population. The U. S. Census Bureau (2011a) reported that the U. S. population consists of White or European American (63.7%), Hispanic or Latino (16.4%), Black or African American (12.2%), Asian (4.7%), American Indian or Alaska Native (0.7%), Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander (0.2%), and other or mixed races (2.1%). In many areas of the country, Hispanic/Latino populations are higher than White or European American populations (U. S. Census Bureau, 2011b). Also, in almost 10% of the nation's 3,141 counties, the minority population is more than 50% (U.S. Census Bureau, 2007).

In the mid-20th century the multicultural movement brought attention to the increasing diversity of the United States population (e.g., increasing immigrant population, international students/employees) in reaction to oppressive and discriminatory sociopolitical forces in the United States (Brady-Amoon, 2011). Brady-Amoon defined *multiculturalism* as "the appreciation, acceptance, and promotion of multiple ethnic cultures in society" (p. 139). Multiculturalism also was associated with revaluing disrespected identities and changing dominant patterns of representation and communication that marginalize certain groups (Young, 1990).

Although multiculturalism consists of different ethnicities and races, a more inclusive definition also accounts for differences in religion, gender, educational level, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, and physical and mental ability (Hays, 2005). In this respect, Hardy and Laszloffy (1995) defined culture as a "broad multidimensional concept that includes but is

not limited to ethnicity, gender, social class, and so forth" (para. 9). Culture includes traditions

of thoughts and behaviors that can be socially acquired, shared, and passed on to new

generations (Smedley & Smedley, 2005). In other words, culture is a learned system of shared

beliefs, values, norms, symbols, customs, behaviors, and artifacts that members of a group utilize

to make sense of their world and one another, as well as foster a sense of shared identity and

community (Gudykunst, 1994; Samovar & Porter, 1995).

Multiculturalism in Counseling

As a current trend, multiculturalism was identified as the fourth force in the counseling

profession (Pedersen, 1991). Historically, along with the Civil Rights and feminist movements

in 1960s and 1970s in the U. S., the counseling profession started to address the necessity of

culturally sensitive counselors (Aubrey, 1977) and infuse multiculturalism in counseling training

(Arrendondo et al., 2008). Brady-Amoon (2011) explained that multicultural awareness in the

counseling profession reflected the growing need of counselor educators and practitioners to

understand and support the important impact of clients' racial, ethnic, cultural background, and

worldviews on their mental and psychological functions.

In 1996, the council of Association for Multicultural Counseling and Development

(AMCD), a division of American Counseling Association (ACA), developed the Multicultural

Counseling Competencies to guide counselors' multicultural sensitivity (Arredondo et al., 1996).

The Multicultural Counseling Competencies provided three key areas for counselors to consider

(a) counselor awareness of personal assumptions, values, and biases, (b) understanding the

worldview of the culturally different client, and (c) development of suitable intervention

strategies and techniques. Besides AMCD's advocating toward counselors' multicultural

competencies, the *2005 ACA Code of Ethics* infused multiculturalism to indicate the importance

of multicultural awareness for counselors (ACA, 2005). Also, the *2009 Standards* of the Council

for Accreditation of Counseling & Related Educational Programs (CACREP) focused on

multicultural related education for future counselors (CACREP, 2009).

With professional organizational awareness, many researchers began to conduct

multicultural research. D'Andrea and Heckman (2008) reviewed and evaluated multicultural

outcome research during the last 40 years, and reported that 634 multicultural counseling

research studies were completed and 211 studies were related to multicultural outcome research.

D'Andrea and Heckman also noted that while multicultural counseling and research initially

focused on race and ethnicity, it now includes various factors such as gender, sexual orientation,

socioeconomic status, religious, education, and physical/mental ability. Professional

requirements for multicultural sensitivity in counselor education programs and counseling

practice and the amount of previous research related to multicultural issues demonstrated the

importance of multiculturalism in counseling.

Research in Multicultural Counseling Related to Couples and Families

Within the context of research in multicultural counseling, various studies related to

families and couples were conducted. Based on recent research, the following topics and

populations were studied:

(a) multicultural competencies or attitudes of educators, supervisors, and practitioners

related to family and couple counseling (e.g. Banks & Fedewa, 2012; Murphy, Park, & Lonsdale,

2006);

(b) specific ethnic groups including African American families and couples (e.g.

Awosan, Sandberg, & Hall, 2011; Kelch-Oliver, 2011; Mandara, Murray, Telesford, Varner, &

Richman, 2012), Mexican American families and couples (e.g. Blocklin, Crouter, Updegraff, &

17

McHale, 2011; Marin & Huber, 2011), Native American families (e.g. Limb & Hodge, 2011),

Asian American families and couples (e.g. Hung, 2006; Kim, Gonzales, Stroh, & Wang, 2006;

Miller & Lee, 2009), immigrant or refugee families (e.g. Dillon, Rosa, Sanchez, & Schwartz,

2012; Dow & Woolley, 2011; Wycoff, Tinagon, & Dickson, 2011), and families and/or couples

in other countries (e.g. Deng, 2012; Quek & Fitzpatrick, 2013; Sandberg, Yorgason, Miller, &

Hill, 2012; Ng, Loy, Mohdzain, & Cheong, 2013; Vieira, Ávila, & Matos, 2012);

(c) cross-cultural couples (e.g. Bustamante et al., 2011; Fu & Wolfinger, 2011; Inman,

Altman, Kaduvettoor-Davidson, Carr, & Walker, 2011; Jordan, Lovett, & Sweeton, 2012; Kim et

al., 2012);

(d) non-ethnic related specific groups including military families or couples (e.g. Asbury

& Martin, 2012; Davis, Ward, & Storm, 2011), single parent families (e.g. Nixon, Greene, &

Hogan, 2012), homosexual families (e.g. Goldberg, Downing, & Moyer, 2012; Oswald &

Lazarevic, 2011; Pope & Cashwell, 2013), low-income families (e.g. Gassman-Pines, 2011;

Rienks, Wadsworth, Markman, Einhorn, & Etter, 2011; Saleh, & Hilton, 2011), physical

disability families (e.g. Neely-Barnes & Graff, 2011), and religious minority families (e.g.

Schnall, Pelcovitz, & Fox, 2013).

Cross-Cultural Couples

Among many issues related to multiculturalism and couples' counseling, cross-cultural

marriage is a relatively new but increasing issue. Gudykunst (1994) defined cross-cultural

marriage as the marriage between two individuals coming from different cultures, particularly

different ethnic or racial groups. As one of the essential parts of culture, ethnicity is the concept

of a group's identity, including the common ancestry through which individuals have evolved

shared values and customs (Hays, 2007). The term *cross-cultural marriage* is also

interchangeably used with interracial marriage, interethnic marriage, intercultural marriage, intermarriage, and mixed marriage.

Historically, cross-cultural marriage was socially and legally prohibited in the United States. In 1967, the rejection of anti-miscegenation laws by the U. S. Supreme Court effectively legalized cross-cultural marriage. After legalization, cross-cultural marriage continues to increase. According to the recent report by the U. S. Census Bureau (2012a), cross-cultural opposite-sex married couples grew by 28% over the last decade from 7% in 2000 to 10% in 2010; 18% of opposite-sex unmarried couples and 21% of same-sex unmarried couples identified as cross-cultural relationships. The U. S. Census Bureau also reported the most common ethnic combinations of cross-cultural population, which are White with Hispanic, White with Asian, and White with African American.

In the past, negative views toward cross-cultural couples were evident (Biever et al., 1998), but cross-cultural couples are more widely accepted now in the United States. Some people continue to believe that cross-cultural marriages experience more stress, are more dysfunctional, and have an increased likelihood of divorce compared to same-cultural couples (Frame, 2003). However, based on a report by the Pew Research Center (Taylor et al., 2010), most Americans approved of cross-cultural marriage, and more than 60% were willing to accept and support family members if they wanted a cross-cultural marriage.

Although there are well-established theories and various strategies in the family, couple, and marriage counseling field, additional studies of cross-cultural couples are necessary to understand and provide better services for this population. Research and literature were published in counseling and related professions under the following areas: (a) cultural impacts (Stolorow et al., 2002; Waldman & Rubalcava, 2005), (b) difficulties and issues (Bustamante et

19

al., 2011; Cools, 2006; Falicov, 1995; Frame, 2004; Waldman & Rubalcava, 2005), (c) strengths and potential benefits (Bhugra & De Silva, 2000; Foeman & Nance, 1999; Gareis, 2000; Ho, 1990), and (d) marital qualities, such as marital satisfaction or marital happiness, of cross-cultural couples with/without comparing same cultural couples (Fu, Tora, & Kendall, 2001; Heller & Wood, 2000; Hohmann-Marriott & Amato, 2008; Kim et al., 2012; Leslie & Letiecq, 2004).

Cultural Impacts

Many researchers focused on cultural differences as a main cause of conflict in cross-cultural marriages, and they mostly agreed that it is essential to understand how cultures impact individuals' subjective worlds (Biever et al., 1998; Bustanmante et al., 2011; Falicov, 1995; Garcia, 2006; Waldman & Rubalcava, 2005). Individuals form an identity in their social and cultural context (Roland, 1988), so it is impossible to understand personhood without considering his/her culture. "People are born into a culture, and an individual's sense of personal identity will always be constructed within a familial-cultural-relational surround" (Waldman & Rubalcava, 2005, p. 233).

As a learned system of shared beliefs, values, norms, customs, and behaviors that members of a group utilize to make sense of their world and one another (Gudykunst, 1994; Samovar & Porter, 1995), individuals of all cultures tend to believe that their cultural values and norms represent truth and/or the way things ought to be (Waldman & Rubalcava, 2005). Stolorow, Atwood, and Orange (2002) concluded that humans tend to see their own perspectives as the measure of the truth and automatically judge others that they disagree with as unrealistic or incorrect. Similarly, Waldman and Rubalcava (2005) explained that cultural surroundings provide the primary schemas that unconsciously impact individuals to develop their way of

thinking, feeling, and behaving, and often lead to interpreting others' behavior based on their own beliefs.

In this sense, for cross-cultural couples, each partner is likely to have different values, habits, views, rules, relationships, and ways of resolving differences that possibly bring about conflicts (Cools, 2006), because each partner tends to believe his/her own values and norms as the truth and judges his/her partner based on his/her perspectives. McGoldrick and Preto (1984) explained that couples might have more difficulties understanding each other and adjusting to marriage when they have greater cultural differences, because cultural values strongly influence the shaping of individual's attitudes and expectations regarding gender roles, sexuality, child rearing, communication styles, emotional expression, conflict managing, and the degree of intimacy.

For instance, Hofstede (1980) initially suggested the idea of individualism and collectivism as being two distinct cultural and social constructs. Collectivistic societies emphasize the needs and values of the group including family. In contrast, individualistic societies focus on individuals' autonomy and independence. Individuals who grew up under a collectivistic or an individualistic society formed their own perspective based on their context and believe their own perspective as the way that human beings should follow (Waldman & Rubalcava, 2005). If each partner comes from a strongly individualistic society, as opposed to a collectivistic society, conflict could occur due to the different perspectives. Therefore, admitting cultural differences and understanding the impact on the individual and the relationship may be very important for cross-cultural couples.

Issues and Difficulties

Bustamante et a1. (2011) found four main stressors in cross-cultural married couples: child rearing practices, time orientation, gender role expectations, and external pressures from extended family members. Similarly, Frame (2004) also identified three major difficulties among cross-cultural marriage couples including gender role, language, and raising children. More specific challenges were found by Cools (2006) including language, communication, adaptation, friends, raising children, gender roles, and traditions.

Raising children. Although different parenting styles exist between couples regardless of cultural preferences, such as authoritarian, authoritative, and permissive (Baumrind, 1991), cultural differences may bring more conflicts in parenting styles. Chua (2011) asserted that most western parents try to respect children's individuality, encourage what children want to do, help to build self-esteem; however, most Chinese parents, including other Asian parents, think that they know what is best for their children and have to prepare their children for it with heavy value placed on education and career. For example, a husband from the western culture might think his wife from China is too strict regarding the children's education and feels she infringes upon the children's rights.

Time orientation. Hall (1991) described polychronic time culture and monochronic time culture. He explained that individuals from polychronic time culture, such as Africa and South America, do many things simultaneously, are more flexible with schedules, and are more concerned with people and the present moment; however, individuals from monochronic time culture, such as North America and Europe, prefer to do one task at a time, emphasize schedule, and organize and plan their lives. For example, a wife from monochronic time culture might complain that her husband from a polychronic time culture is very lazy or irresponsible.

Gender role expectation. Differences in gender role expectations are an area of major conflict between cross-cultural couples. Some Asian countries, such as China, South Korea, and Japan, traditionally had clear gender role differences for husbands and wives based on Confucianism. A husband took a higher position than a wife did, a husband was a breadwinner, and a wife took care of the children and all the housework (Kim, 1997). Conversely, couples' gender roles are more flexible and have more balance of power in American culture (Botkin, Weeks, & Morris, 2000). For instance, a husband from a traditional Asian culture might expect his wife to obey him and take care of most house chores, but the wife coming from American culture might think this is unfair or constitutes gender discrimination.

Extended family systems. In addition to conflicts between couples, many cross-cultural couples experience external pressure from extended family members (Bustamante et a1., 2011; McGoldrick, Giordano, & Pearce, 1996). When couples come from two different cultures, they might have different family systems and relationships. For example, an individual from a collectivistic Asian society views marriage not as the joining of two individuals but as the joining of two families (Lee & Mock, 2005). Individuals from collectivistic, Asian culture may keep a very close relationship with parents, think it is important to respect and listen to parents, and assume responsibility to take care of elderly parents (Fong, 1994). However, if one comes from an individualistic society, which emphasizes the individual's needs, desire, and personal boundary (Hofstede, 1980), that individual might think that the spouse from a collectivistic culture is overly concerned about parents and the parents are overly dependent, too prone to interfere with the couple's business or invade the couple's and individual's boundaries.

Although cross-cultural marriage is gaining wider acceptance, there are still some negative views from society and limited family acceptance compared to same cultural couples

(Frame, 2004; Luck & Carrington, 2000; Taylor et al., 2010). Often cross-cultural couples marry despite family opposition and have to continue to deal with an unsupportive family. McGoldrick, Giordano, and Pearce (1996) reported that family opposition would increase stress around family celebrations and rituals because cross-cultural couples, particularly those from a different culture, has to adjust to new family traditions, cultures, and system with limited support. Also, an individual from a different culture might experience increased anxiety, tension, isolation, rejection, and possible oppression in a family or friends gathering (Carter & McGoldrick, 1999; Falicov, 1995).

Language and communication styles. Waldman and Rubalcava (2005) and Cools (2006) also highlighted the potential miscommunication or misunderstanding as a stressor in cross-cultural marriage. If couples' native languages are different, they may have difficulty understanding each other. In addition to language barriers, different communication styles based on each individual's culture could bring some conflicts (Oetzel, Dhar, & Kirschbaum, 2007).

When an individual learns and experiences different cultures, he/she also constructs personal meaning about the culture, which becomes part of the personal language and communication style (Waldman & Rubalcava, 2005). Therefore, culture and language or communication styles cannot be separated. Also, communication is a dynamic and interactive process, and the interpretation of the messages of the sender and receiver is not always the same because each one interprets based on his/her own thinking process (Patel, Li, & Sooknanan, 2011).

For instance, there are two different ways to delivering similar messages. Hall (1976) explained that transmitted messages usually contain minimal information because of the long-term relationships and mutual understanding in culturally homogeneous societies like China,

Japan, Korea, and Africa. In contrast, transmitted messages may require more information when addressing diverse, individualistic societies such as United States and Europe. Also, most collectivistic societies use an indirect style of speech compared to a direct style of speech in individualistic societies which focus more on "I" (Gudykunst, 1994).

Others. Cross-cultural couples might have challenges attributable to differing attitudes towards work and leisure, holiday traditions, expressions of affection, and problem-solving strategies (Biever et al., 1998). For examples, Seki, Matsumoto, and Imahori (2002) found that Americans show a higher level of openness, expressiveness, and physical contact to express intimacy, while Japanese couples show greater understanding of the partner to express intimacy. Related to attitudes towards work and leisure, Asians in the United States value hard work more than other U. S. populations (Taylor et al., 2010). Also, Chan, Barnes-Holmes, Barnes-Holmes, and Stewart (2009) found that North Americans showed more negative attitudes toward work and positive attitudes toward leisure than Canadians and Irish.

Strengths and Potential Benefits

Although cross-cultural couples have difficulties and conflicts, they also have some unique benefits and strengths. Cross-cultural couples already know and admit they have many differences, so instead of assuming or projecting similarity and agreement about some issues to a partner, they are more willing to self-disclose and talk about issues and differences that potentially increase mutual understanding and intimacy (Heller & Wood, 2000). With the process of discussing and negotiating their differences, cross-cultural couples may be more open to understanding and accepting differences (Biever et al., 1998). Furthermore, children of cross-cultural couples might be more accepting of differences toward others (Ho, 1990).

Biever et al. (1998) identified that negative attention from family or society may increase couples' tolerance. Foeman and Nance (1999) reported that cross-cultural couples develop stronger ties through the process of withstanding and overcoming negative outside pressure. Frame (2004) suggested that individuals in cross-cultural relationships could build a unique sense of identity and decrease ethnocentrism. Also, cross-cultural couples possibly bring new cultures and diversity to the family system and eventually reduce stereotypes and ethnocentric attitudes in the family, neighborhood, and society (Gareis, 2000).

Marital Quality

For cross-cultural couples, challenges and stress due to cultural differences can influence couples' marital quality, satisfaction, or happiness. In addition to relational challenges, lack of family members' approval may negatively affect the couples' relationships (Falicov, 1995).

Previous researchers show incongruent results related to marital quality and satisfaction. Fu et al. (2001) found that cross-cultural married couples faced higher levels of stress and conflict and had less satisfying marital relationships compared to same cultural married couples in Hawaii. Zhang and Hook (2009) found cross-cultural married couples were less stable in their marriage. Also, several researchers showed higher divorce rates among cross-cultural married couples (Bramlett & Mosher, 2002; Bratter & King, 2008; Phillips & Sweeney, 2006).

Bratter and King (2008) reported that White male with non-White female couples did not show significant differences in the divorce rate compared with White couples, but White male with African American female couples showed substantially less divorce rates. However, White female with non-White male couples showed higher divorce rates. Similarly, another study revealed that White/African American couples had no significant differences in the divorce rate compared with same cultural couples, although White with Latino(a) couples had slightly higher

26

divorce rates (Fu & Wolfinger, 2011). By contrast, Heller and Wood (2000) found no difference in the level of intimacy between cross-cultural couples and same cultural couples.

Without considering whether cross-cultural married couples have lower levels of marital quality, it is important to understand how cross-cultural married couples cope with stress, prevent potential troubles, and have higher marital quality. Bustamante et a1. (2011) identified four coping mechanisms of cross-cultural couples: gender role flexibility, humor, cultural deferences by one partner, and cultural reframing or the development of blended values and expectations that redefined the cross-cultural relationship. Cultural transformation may be a necessary coping or adapting mechanism for couples or individuals. For this process, individuals need to adopt an adaptive and flexible view of cultural differences that allows spouses to maintain their own unique values, negotiate conflict areas, and develop a new cultural code that symbolically and literally integrates both cultures (Falicov, 1995). Individuals in cross-cultural marriages may form a new and unique hybrid culture based on the partner and his/her own culture (Casmir, 1993), along with establishing new rituals (Frame, 2004).

Individuals who establish strong identities may be more likely to have successful cross-cultural relationships (Gareis, 2000). Leslie and Letiecq (2004) studied African American and White cross-cultural couples and found that people who have pride in their own race but also accept and respect others races and cultures experience higher marital quality (Leslie & Letiecq, 2004). Kim et al. (2012) found differentiation and acculturation were important factors on relational satisfaction within White and Asian cross-cultural couples. Furthermore, Wong (2009) suggested that learning each partner's culture, practicing communication and negotiation skills, establishing strong identity, and having mutual understanding would be helpful with pre-marital

counseling. Also, empathy, patience, flexibility, and openness can be important factors in a successful cross-cultural relationship (Gareis, 2000).

Besides unique areas that impact cross-cultural couples' marital quality, there are also general factors that influence marital satisfaction of both cross-cultural and same cultural couples. For instance, communication and understanding of emotions is a vital component of a functional marriage (Waldman and Rubalcava, 2005). When couples negotiate and manage conflict, both partners must seek to maintain and achieve marital satisfaction (Tallman & Hsiao, 2004). Rosen-Grandon, Myers, and Hattie (2004) found that respect, forgiveness, romance, support, and sensitivity are key components to a loving marriage and identified seven important characteristics for marital satisfaction: lifetime commitment, loyalty to spouse, strong moral value, desire to be a good parent, faith in God, religious/spiritual commitment, and the presence of forgiveness.

Counseling Cross-Cultural Couples

Counselors need to understand cross-cultural couples and have the appropriate knowledge to provide adequate services to them. Sullivan and Cottone (2006) insisted that counselors should address cultural similarities and differences, while specifically considering how cultural differences contribute to the distress among cross-cultural couples. Also, Hsu (2001) recommended that counselors have the cultural competency to work with cross-cultural couples and help couples to understand not only the behaviors, thoughts, and feelings rooted in their own culture, but those of their partner's culture as well.

Counselors also need to carefully assess conflicts and difficulties in cross-cultural couples. Difficulties from cultural differences in cross-cultural couples may be mistakenly considered as personality or emotional problems of one or both partners (Biever et al., 1998).

However, counselors also should avoid assuming that all conflicts in cross-cultural couples are due to the cultural differences (Garcia, 2006). Although there is limited empirical research about counseling strategies or interventions, scholars suggested counseling strategies and possible approaches for cross-cultural couples such as postmodern approach, culturally based couple therapy, and premarital inventories (Biever et al., 1998; Sullivan & Cottone, 2006; Wong, 2009).

Postmodern Approach

Biever et al. (1998) proposed postmodern narrative therapy for working with cross-cultural couples as a culturally sensitive, collaborative, and strength-based approach. One of the key concepts in the postmodern approach is social constructionism--focusing on the couple's own reality in their context, but also their interactions with others (Gregen, 1985). A basic concept of the postmodern approach toward cross-cultural couples is that each partner tends to have very different subjective reality constructed under different cultural and social context, but differences do not necessarily mean wrong or incorrect. Rather than interpreting or evaluating each partner's reality, focusing on how, what, or when each one's idea works for them is necessary.

In general, based on collaborative efforts with clients, postmodern narrative counselors seek to help couples to understand their own and their partner's reality by seeing conflicts not as problems but as differences and finding their own way to address problems. Biever and colleagues suggested seven principles of postmodern narrative therapy to cross-cultural couples, including developing a collaborative and curious stance, developing openness and the generation of alternative understanding, exploring clients' ideas about causes of problem, viewing cultural differences as one explanation of conflicts, encouraging a both/and 'other' stance, searching for

liberating traditions within each culture, viewing impasse as an attempt to impose beliefs/values on others, and working with stories.

In developing a collaborative and curious stance, counselors need to collaboratively work with clients to explore their unique understanding of problems. In developing openness and the generation of alternative understanding, counselors create opportunities for new and different understanding of the concerns of clients. Counselors can use "How else?" questions to clients and themselves, such as, "How else can it be explained?" In exploring clients' ideas about the causes of problems, counselors and clients need to understand the clients' own perception and thinking process about problems based on clients' own words. Counselors should avoid expressing agreement or disagreement with the client's explanation.

In viewing cultural differences as one explanation of conflicts, counselors carefully use their knowledge of cultural differences to recognize patterns of behaviors or thoughts related with couples' issues. Counselors may help couples to understand differences by seeing some issues from each partner's cultural context. In encouraging a both/and stance, counselors need to help couples to see both cultures and subjective realities, and find useful and workable ideas from both perspectives. Searching for liberating traditions within each culture is based on the assumption that some less desirable behaviors can be reconsidered as more valued and positive ways within larger cultural traditions. Counselors can help each client to see some partners' behaviors or expected behaviors for him/her as a valuable and meaningful tradition in the partner's culture even though he/she does not need to agree with them.

In viewing impasse as an attempt to impose beliefs/values on others, counselors need to evaluate if there is attempted imposition of one or more ideas when counseling seems stuck. They need to balance couples' stances and help them to be more open and value different

perspectives. As the last principle, counselors need to work with stories. In a narrative

approach, counselors see the problems as stories that clients tell and can be changed by

storytellers. Counselors need to help clients to continue to write their story but in the way they

want or works for them.

Culturally Based Couple Therapy

Sullivan and Cottone (2006) summarized and outlined culturally based couple therapy for

cross-cultural couples. They addressed different ways of identifying and conceptualizing

problems among cross-cultural couples. For examples, based on the racially based approach,

conflicts and issues are examined through innate cultural-racial hostility presented in the

relationship (e.g., racial oppression and inferiority). However, from the nonracially based point

of view, most researchers focus on specific cultural characteristics that individuals hold or

conceptualize within a broad spectrum of cultural traits while examining communication systems

between couples as possible conflicts. In addition, letting couples find and identify their own

issues is more important than counselors identifying and conceptualizing couples based on their

own approach.

In addition Sullivan and Cottone (2006) reported various therapeutic strategies, suggested

by previous scholars, to work with cross-cultural couples. Some strategies include educating

clients about cultural differences and the impact of cultures, being culturally competent

counselors, helping couples to understand each other's culture and tolerant with differences, and

assisting couples to build and transition into a new culture. Sullivan and Cottone also concluded

that counselors should not assume all conflicts in cross-cultural couples are due to the cultural

differences.

Pre-Marital Inventories

Wong (2009) suggested that pre-marital inventories (PIs) could help develop strong, marital relationships for cross-cultural couples. According to Wong, pre-marital education and pre-marital inventories may help people to build concrete connections in their marriage by identifying their risks, resilience, and other factors that may influence their relationship. Also, PIs generally focus on both weaknesses and strengths in couples' relationships. Through PIs, cross-cultural couples can understand each other and their relationship better. Cross-cultural couples can also learn ways to work with their weaknesses and expand their strengths in their relationships.

Wong (2009) also suggested utilizing eco-systems theory in the development of PIs. Eco-systems theory emphasizes considerations of the multiple relationships that link individuals to the bigger systems like couples, family, and society. Under this approach, counselors could help cross-cultural couples to understand various systems and levels that might affect their marital relationships.

Asian Couples and Asian-Mixed Couples in the United States

Asian applies to 23 Asian groups, and the category of Asian Pacific Islander includes 15 Pacific Islander groups (Asian American Health Forum, 1990). Based on the U. S. Census Bureau (2012b), the largest Asian populations are Chinese, Asian Indian, Filipino, Korean, Vietnamese, and Japanese. Each Asian group has its own culture including language, history, and religion, but it is often categorized and researched as one ethnic group under broader views like collectivism, Confucianism, or Buddhism.

The U. S. Census Bureau (2011a) reported the Asian population in 2010, which numbered 4.7% of the total population, as the fourth largest group in the United States. Also, Asians grew faster than any other major race group between 2000 and 2010 in the United States.

Based on the U. S. Census Bureau (2012b), between 2000 and 2010, the Asian population increased 43.3%, whereas the total U. S. population which grew by only 9.7%. Besides the growing population of U. S. born Asians and Asian immigrants, the Institute of International Education (2010) also reported that over 55 % of international students are from countries in Asia.

The U. S. Department Health and Human Services reported that Asian women showed the highest probability of the first marriage lasting 20 years; both Asian men and women presented the lowest rates of divorce from the 2006-2010 National Survey (Copen, Daniels, Vespa, & Mosher, 2012). The majority of Asians are married with Asians, but cross-cultural marriages between Asian with non-Asian groups are increasing. In 2008, among all newlyweds, 30% of Asians (about 40% of females and 20% males) married with non-Asians in the United States (Taylor el al., 2010). Also, an Asian/White couple is the largest population among Asian-mixed couples, and the second largest population of all cross-cultural couples in 2010 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012a).

Among cross-cultural couples, when Asians coming from mostly collectivistic societies get married with non-Asians, especially from individualistic societies, they tend to have conflicts and issues such as gender role expectations, communication, and connection with extended family members (Bustamante et a1., 2011; Frame, 2004). Kim and colleagues recently studied White with Chinese, South Korean, and Japanese cross-cultural couples, finding that levels of acculturation and differentiation were significantly related with marital satisfaction, but attachment style was not associated with relationship satisfaction.

Although some findings and suggestions were proposed, only limited research about the marital relationship was done, despite the rapidly increasing number of Asian involved in cross-

cultural relationships (Kim et al., 2012). Also, most research related to cross-cultural couple relationships heavily focused on cultural differences without considering personality characteristics (Garcia, 2006) although several personality characteristics were widely considered as important factors for intra-marital relationships (O'Rourke, Claxton, Chou, Smith, & Hadjistavropoulos, 2001). Therefore, a study of the impact of personality characteristics as well as cultural differences in Asian cross-cultural couples compared with Asian couples would be necessary to help counselors to better understand and more adequately assist this population.

Chapter Summary

Chapter 2 reviewed the literature about multiculturalism in counseling, cross-cultural couples, and Asian couples and Asian-mixed couples including historical information, previous research, and theoretical/practical frameworks. A comprehensive review about how culture affects individuals and how different cultural backgrounds play an important role in cross-cultural couples was provided. Individuals form their self-concept through their social and cultural contexts (Roland, 1988), and individuals of all cultures tend to believe that their cultural values and norms represent truth and/or the way things ought to be (Waldman & Rubalcava, 2005). For cross-cultural couples, each partner is likely to have different values, habits, views, rules, relationships, and ways of resolving differences that possibly bring about conflicts (Cools, 2006), because each partner tends to believe his/her own values and norms as the truth and judges his/her partner based on his/her perspectives.

Previous research on cross-cultural couples has addressed issues and conflicts like raising children, time orientation, gender role expectation, extended family system, language and communication styles (Bustamante et al., 2011; Cools, 2006; Frame, 2004), potential benefits and strengths like openness and acceptance (Biever et al., 1998), and marital quali. Also, the

researcher reviewed theoretical/practical frameworks to counsel cross-cultural couples to assist in conceptualizing previous and current foci and ways to work with cross-cultural couples. Finally, background information about Asian couples and Asian-mixed couples in the United States was provided to understand the need for this study.

Organization of Remaining Chapters

In chapter 3, the methodology and procedures of this study are discussed. Chapter 4 reports descriptive data of participants and results of statistical analyses. In chapter 5, discussion based on results, implications for counselor educators, practitioners, and trainees, limitations, and recommendations for future studies are addressed.

CHAPTER 3

METHOD

The following is presented in this chapter: research questions, research design, descriptions of the participants, instrumentation, and procedures of data collection and data analysis.

The purpose of this study was to compare marital satisfaction, cultural differences, and personality characteristics across Asian-mixed couples and Asian couples in the United States. The researcher examined how the level of acculturation and personality characteristics affected the level of marital satisfaction among Asian participants based on marriage types in either cross- or intra-cultural relationships; if the level of acculturation for Asian participants was different based on their gender and spouses' ethnicity; and if the level of marital satisfaction was different among individuals based on their gender and marriage types. Finally, the researcher studied if there were any particular personality characteristics in individuals who have cross-cultural relationships compared with those who have intra-cultural relationships.

Research Design

The study is quantitative using an explanatory non-experimental design and a correlational design to evaluate four questions: (a) the relationship among levels of cultural difference, personality characteristics, and levels of marital satisfaction of Asians in Asian couples and Asian-mixed couples, (b) the differences in levels of acculturation of Asians based on the gender and spouses' same or different ethnicity, (c) the differences of marital satisfaction of individuals in Asian couples and Asian-mixed couples based on the gender and marriage types, and (d) the differences of personality characteristics among individuals in Asian couples and Asian-mixed couples.

The independent variable was five comparison groups: Asian males who married an Asian female, Asian females who marred an Asian male, Asian males who married a non-Asian female, Asian females who married a non-Asian male, and non-Asians who married an Asian. As dependent variables, the SL-ASIA was used to measure participants' levels of acculturation to indicate cultural differences between couples, the BFI to measure personality characteristics of participants, the RDAS to measure participants' levels of marital satisfaction, and the demographic questionnaire to gather the information about gender and spouses' ethnicity used as specific variables. Information of participants' years of living in the United States via the demographic questionnaire was collected as a potential covariate.

Participants

Asian and non-Asian individuals in Asian couples and Asian-mixed couples were selected for this study. Emails, online postings, and personal contact were used to recruit possible participants through several listserves, academic and social circles, and various web community sites of Asians. Convenience sampling was used because all participants are relied on voluntary participants. Sample size was based on an a priori power analysis with G*Power 3.1 using a minimum level of power as .80, which is usually considered as an adequate power (Cohen, 1988). Based on the analysis, the target sample size was 150 (30 Asian males and 30 Asian females who have an Asian partner, 30 Asian males and 30 Asian females who have a non-Asian partner, 30 non-Asians who have an Asian partner). The target sample size for each group was initially considered as balanced sample size to robust heterogeneous variances with having normality (Dmitrov, 2012). The final count of participants in the study was 92 (22 Asian males and 27 Asian females who have an Asian partner, 4 Asian males and 23 Asian females

who have a non-Asian partner, 14 non-Asian males and 2 non-Asian females who have an Asian partner).

<center>**Measures**</center>

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

Suinn, Rickard-Figueroa, Lew, and Vigil (1987) originally developed the SL-ASIA to measure cognitive, behavioral, and attitudinal components of Asian American Acculturation based on the Acculturation Rating Scale for Mexican Americans. Later, Suinn, Ahuna, and Khoo (1992) revised and validated the current version of the SL-ASIA, which is a 21 multiple-choice item, self-report assessment. Respondents use a 5-point scale raging from 1 (exclusively Asian) to 5 (exclusively Westernized).

Within 21 items in the SL-ASIA, five items assess for behaviors, four items assess for language, 4 items assess identity, four items assess friendships, three items assess generational and geographic background, and one item assesses attitudes (Suinn et al., 1987, 1992). A final acculturation score is the mean score, which is calculated by dividing the total score by the number of items on the scale, so it ranges from 1 to 5. People with scores close to 1 are considered Asian-identified or in the low acculturation level; people with scores around 3 are considered bicultural; people with scores close to 5 are considered Western-identity or in high acculturation level (Suinn et al., 1987).

Previous research evaluated the reliability and validity of the SL-ASIA. Based on previous research, internal consistency for reliability of scores ranged from .83 to .91 with Asian American groups like combined Asian groups, Chinese Americans, Korean Americans, Japanese Americans, and Filipino Americans (Atkinson & Gim, 1989; Ownbey & Horridge, 1998; Park & Harrison, 1995; Solberg, Choi, Ritsman, & Jolly, 1994; Suinn et al., 1987, 1992; Tata & Leong,

<center>38</center>

1994). However, internal consistency of scores ranged slightly lower, from .68 to .79, with Japanese international students, Cambodian/Vietnamese refugees, and English-speaking Asians living in Singapore (Kodama & Canetto, 1995; Lese & Robbins, 1994; Suinn, Khoo, & Ahuna, 1995). The SL-ASIA might not be adequate with some populations such as temporary residents, refugees, or Asians living in other countries; however, scores on the SL-ASIA still have a satisfactory level of internal consistency with the Asian American population (Ponterotto, Baluch, & Carielli, 1998).

Using factor analysis as evidence of internal structure, Suinn et al. (1992, 1995) identified five factors: Reading/Writing/Cultural Preference, Ethnic Interaction, Generational identity, Affinity for Ethnic Identity and Pride, and Food Preference. Later, Ownbey and Horridge (1998) identified one additional factor, Asian contact. For construct validity with age upon arrival in the U.S., years of residence in a non-Asian neighborhood, age upon starting school in the U. S., years of school attendance in the U.S., years of residence in the U. S., and self-rating of acculturation, Suinn et al. (1992) found a moderate to high correlation ($|r| > .5$) between scores on the SL-ASIA and four variables: age upon arrival in the U.S., self-rating of acculturation, years of school attendance in the U. S., and years of residence in the U. S. The smallest correlation was with years of residence in a non-Asian neighborhood ($r = .41$). Additionally, several studies reported strong and consistent convergent-related validity evidence (Park & Harrison, 1995; Suinn et al., 1992, 1995, 1987; Tata & Leong, 1994). Numerous research studies used the SL-ASIA to evaluate levels of acculturation in Asians (e.g. Atkinson & Gim, 1989; Jackson, Keel, & Lee, 2006; Lese & Robbins, 1994; Park & Harrison, 1995; Roesch, Wee, & Vaughn, 2006).

Big Five Inventory (BFI)

John, Donahue, and Kentle (1991) constructed the BFI, a 44-item, self-reported assessment, to briefly access five personality traits: extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism, and openness. Among 44 items in the BFI, 8 items measure extraversion, 9 items measure agreeableness, 9 items measure conscientiousness, 8 items measure neuroticism, and 10 items measure openness. Responses are recorded with a Likert-scale ranging from 1 (*disagree strongly*) to 5 (*agree strongly*). Scoring is separately reported based on each personality traits. The BFI instrument was downloaded from the website, http://www.ocf.berkeley.edu/~johnlab/bfi.htm, for this research with permission by the copyright holder, Oliver P. John.

Although the BFI does not provide an official manual with published norms, previous research demonstrated evidence of validity and/or reliability based on various norm groups (Hampson & Goldberg, 2006; John & Srivastava, 1999; Rammstedt & John, 2007; Worrell & Cross, 2004). For the internal consistency of scores on the subscales, John and Srivastava (1999) reported .79 to .88 for undergraduates in the U.S., and Worrell and Cross (2004) reported .70 to .83 for African American college students in the U. S. Also, mean of 8-week test-retest reliabilities was .83 in undergraduates in the U.S. (Rammstedt & John, 2007). With middle adulthoods in the U. S., Hampson and Goldberg (2006) found that about 3-year test-retest reliabilities ranged from .70 to .79.

John and Srivastava (1999) also examined convergent evidence with two other instruments: Trait Descriptive Adjectives (TDA) and NEO Five Factor Inventory (NEO-FFI). Across all five traits, the mean of convergent validity was .81 between BFI and TDA and was .73 between BFI and NEO-FFI. Also, by confirmatory factor analysis, standardized validity of each trait of BFI scores was .92 with .94 for extraversion, .92 for agreeableness, conscientiousness,

and openness, and .90 for neuroticism. The average validity coefficient of BFI scores (.92) was higher than TDA (.87) and NEO-FFI (.79). Numerous research studies used the BFI to measure five major personality traits (e.g. Hampson & Goldberg, 2006; Hart, Stasson, Mahoney, & Story, 2007; Rammstedt & John, 2006; Worrell & Cross, 2004).

Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale (RDAS)

Busby, Christensen, Crane, and Larson (1995) revised and reconstructed the RDAS, a 14-item, self-reported assessment, to measure marital function and quality of marital relationship. The RDAS consisted of three subscales: the Dyadic Consensus (6 items), Satisfaction (4 items), and Cohesion (4 items). For 13 items, responses are recorded with a Likert-type scale ranging from 0 (*always disagree*) to 5 (*always agree*), 0 (*all the time*) to 5 (*never*), 0 (*never*) to 4 (*every day*), and 0 (*never*) to 5 (*more often*). Scores can range from 0 to 69 with higher scores reflecting higher marital satisfaction.

Busby et al. (1995) reported that the RDAS had strong construct validity evidence, internal consistency, and high correlations compared with other marital quality measures. Based on the scores with a sample of distressed and non-distressed couples ($n = 242$), the Cronbach's alpha (internal consistency) reliability coefficient is .90; the Guttman split-half reliability coefficient is .94; the Spearman-Brown split-half reliability is .95. Also, using confirmatory factor analysis, internal structure of the RDAS structure with distressed and non-distressed samples were evidenced. Numerous research studies used the RDAS to measure the level of marital distress or the level of marital satisfaction (e.g. Linda et al., 2008; Nezhad & Goodarzi, 2011; Reid, Carpenter, & Draper, 2011).

Demographic Questionnaire

Additional demographic information from participants was collected to identify variables possibly attributing to differences in marital status, levels of acculturation, or personality characteristics. Two variables used in this study were the participants' gender and spouses' ethnicity. Also, as a covariate possibly attributing to levels of acculturation, information regarding years of living in the U. S. was collected. Also, five questions were added to gather information for future analyses: (a) years of being married with the current spouse, (b) number of children, if any, who live in the participant's household (c) the participant's highest degree, (d) primary religious orientation, if any, and (e) the region of the U. S. where the participant lives.

Reliabilities with Samples in This Study

Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) 18.0 was used to conduct reliability analyses to check internal consistency of items in the SL-ASIA, each subscale of the BFI, and RDAS with the 92 samples in this study. For twenty-one items of the SL-ASIA, Cronbach's alpha was .91 with 76 Asian samples in this study because only Asians took the SL-ASIA. For BFI scores, Cronbach's alpha was .78 for 8 items of extraversion, .76 for 9 items of agreeableness, .74 for 9 items of conscientiousness, .77 for 8 items of neuroticism, and .73 for 10 items of openness. Cronbach's alpha was .82 for 14 items of the RDAS.

<div align="center">

Data Collection Procedure

</div>

Participants were recruited through several academic listserves including the Asian American Counseling Association and the Asian American Psychological Association; social web community sites including the National Association of Asian American Professionals; Asian churches, personal blogs of Asians, and researcher's personal academic and social circles via both facial contact and emails. Emails and web postings included description of eligible participants, a request for participating, a brief explanation of the purpose of the research, a

description of the steps to follow in order to participate, and a hyperlink directing participants to the survey at SurveyMonkey.com.

SurveyMonkey.com, an internet-based research company, was used to collect data. Participants completed an online consent form, demographic questionnaire, the RDAS, the BFI, and the SL-ASIA through SurveyMonkey.com. The online consent form included a brief explanation of the purpose of the research, description of eligible participants, potential risks, discomforts, and anticipated benefits, procedures of the research, data security, and researcher's contact information. Participants could choose if they agreed to participate in the survey at the end of the online consent form. Data also were collected through hardcopy versions of the information document, the SL-ASIA, the RDAS, the BFI, and the demographic questionnaire. In the information document, a brief explanation of the purpose of the research, description of eligible participants, potential risk, discomforts, and anticipated benefits, procedures of the research, data security, and researcher's contact information were addressed. Participants generally took 20 to 30 minutes to complete the entire assessment. Recruiting participants and collecting data continued for about 8 months.

Data Analysis

Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) 18.0 was used to conduct a multiple regression, a factorial ANCOVA, a factorial ANOVA, and a simple regression to obtain the information needed to answer the research questions. Before conducting these data analyses, basic statistical descriptions, such as means, standard deviations, and range scores, about demographic information were conducted. Also, model assumptions for each analysis were checked.

Model Assumption

Normality of the data was evaluated by reviewing the box-plots for the larger sample size and the result of Shapiro-Wilk for the small sample size (under 30), and homogeneity of variance by interpreting the Levene's test of equality analysis. For a regression, the linear relationship between the criterion variable and predictor variables and homoscedasticity were checked. For a factorial ANCOVA, correlation between the level of acculturation and the years of living in the U. S. and homogeneity of regression were verified. For a MANOVA, correlations among dependent variables were verified.

Statistical Analyses

To determine the relationship among levels of acculturation, personality characteristics, and levels of marital satisfaction among Asians in Asian couples and Asian-mixed couples, a simple regression was conducted on RDAS scores based on SL-ASIA scores among Asians in both Asian couples and Asian mixed couples. Another simple regression was conducted on RDAS scores based on SL-ASIA scores among Asians in only Asian-mixed couples. A multiple regression was conducted on RDAS scores based on BFI subscales' scores among Asians in both Asian couples and Asian-mixed couples. The SL-ASIA score and BFI subscales' score were used as predictor variables and the RDAS score was used as a criterion variable. The predictability of levels of marital satisfaction by the acculturation level and personality characteristics was determined based on the result.

A factorial ANCOVA was conducted on SL-ASIA scores across gender and spouses' same or different ethnicity among Asians in both Asian couples and Asian-mixed couples to find the differences in acculturation levels of Asians. The SL-ASIA score was used as a dependent variable, and gender and their spouses' same or different ethnicity were used as independent variables. Based on the theoretical assumption, the years of living in America affected the level

44

of acculturation was used as covariate. Any significant differences in acculturation levels between Asians in Asian couples and Asian-mixed couples were defined based on the result.

A factorial ANOVA was conducted on RDAS scores across gender and marriage types in individuals among Asian couples and Asian-mixed couples to find the differences of levels of marital satisfaction between gender as well as between individuals in Asian couples and Asian-mixed couples. The RDAS score was used as a dependent variable, and gender and their spouses' same or different ethnicity were used as independent variables. Any significant differences in levels of marital satisfaction across gender and marriage types were defined based on the result. Additionally, a one-way ANOVA was conducted to explore group differences between Asian individuals and non-Asian individuals among Asian-mixed couples on RDAS scores. The RDAS score was used as a dependent variable, and individuals' ethnicity was used as an independent variable. Any significant differences in levels of marital satisfaction between Asians and non-Asians among Asian-mixed couples were defined based on the result.

A one-way MANOVA was conducted on five subscales of the BFI to determine different personality characteristics between individuals in Asian couples and Asian-mixed couples. Five subscales' scores of the BFI were used as dependent variables, and a marriage type was used as an independent variable. Any significant personality characteristics among individuals in Asian couples and Asian-mixed couples were defined based on the result.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, methods and procedures to obtain necessary data to answer research questions were explained. Participants were recruited using academic listserves, online social web communities, Asian churches, and personal blogs as well as face-to-face contact through researcher's personal academic and social circles. The Suinn-Lew Asian Self-Indentity

Acculturation Scale (SL-ASIA), the Big Five Inventory (BFI), the Revised Dyadic Adjustment

Scale (RDAS), and a demographic questionnaire were used in the survey.

 Ninety-two participants completed surveys either hardcopy survey or online survey via

Surveymonkey.com. Based on collected data, multiple regression, simple regression, factorial

ANCOVA, factorial ANOVA, one-way ANOVA, and one-way MANCOVA analyses were

conducted to define each research question.

Organization of Remaining Chapters

In the two following chapters, results of analyses and discussion will be outlined.

Chapter 4 will present descriptive data of participants and results of statistical analyses. In

chapter 5, the results, limitation of the research, implication for counselor educators,

practitioners, and trainees, and recommendation for future research will be discussed.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

This study identified how the level of acculturation and personality characteristics affected the level of marital satisfaction among Asian participants based on marriage types in either cross- or intra-cultural relationships. The researcher also examined if the level of acculturation for Asian participants was different based on their gender and spouses' ethnicity, if the level of marital satisfaction was different among individuals based on their gender and marriage types, and if there were any particular personality characteristics in individuals who have cross-cultural relationships compared with those who have intra-cultural relationships.

This chapter presents a description of the demographic profile of participants in this study, descriptive statistics of the variables, and results of data analyses for the following research questions.

1. To what extent is there a relationship among levels of acculturation, as measured by the Suinn-Lew Asian Self-Identity Acculturation Scale (SL-ASIA), personality characteristics, as measured by the Big Five Inventory (BFI), and levels of marital satisfaction, as measured by the Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale (RDAS) of Asians in Asian couples and Asian-mixed couples?

2. To what extent is there a difference in levels of acculturation, as measured by the SL-ASIA, of Asians based on the gender and spouses' same or different ethnicity?

3. To what extent is there a difference of marital satisfaction, as measured by the RDAS, among individuals in Asian couples and Asian-mixed couples based on the gender and marriage types?

47

4. To what extent is there a difference of personality characteristics, as measured by the BFI, among individuals in Asian couples and Asian-mixed couples?

Participant Demographics

Asian and non-Asian individuals in Asian couples and Asian-mixed couples participated in this study. Emails, online postings, and personal contact were used to recruit possible participants through several academic listserves including the Asian American Counseling Association and the Asian American Psychological Association; social community websites including the National Association of Asian American Professionals and Asian churches; personal blogs of Asians; and the researcher's personal academic and social circles. Participants completed either the hardcopy survey or the online survey via SurveyMonkey.com. One hundred twenty-four people accessed the online survey, and 74 people completed it, a rate of approximately 60%. Additionally, eighteen people completed the hardcopy survey. Therefore, the total of 92 surveys were utilized. Table 1 provides classification, gender, and sample size of the participants.

Table 1

Sample Size

| | Asian couples | | Asian-mixed couples | | | |
| | | | Asians | | Non-Asians | |
	n	Percent	*n*	Percent	*n*	Percent
Male	22	23.91%	4	4.35%	14	15.22%
Female	27	29.35%	23	25.00%	2	2.17%

In Asian couples, the average age of male participants was 41.32 (ranges from 28 to 59) and of female participants was 34.81 (ranges from 24 to 50). The average of years living in the

U. S. was 15.72. The average of years being married with current spouse was 8.50 with one missing response. In Asian-mixed couples, the average age of male participants was 40.22 (ranges from 28 to 59) and of female participants was 39.24 (rages from 23 to 75). The average of years living in the U. S. was 28.48. The average of years being married with current spouse was 11.16 with 2 missing responses.

Of the 27 Asian participants in Asian-mixed couples who indicated their spouses' ethnicity, 18 (66.7%) reported as Caucasian, 7 (25.9%) as Hispanic/Latino(a), and 2 (7.4%) as Mixed/Other. Of the 16 non-Asian participants in Asian-mixed couples, 6 (37.5%) reported as Caucasian, 1 (6.3%) as African American, 7 (43.8%) as Hispanic/Latino(a), and 2 (12.5%) as Mixed/Others. Of the 92 participants, 16 (17.4%) reported living in the Northeast, 1 (1.1%) in the mid-Atlantic, 11 (12%) in the Southeast, 4 (4.3%) in the Midwest, 33 (35.9%) in the South, 18 (19.6%) in the West, and 9 (9.8%) in the Northwest.

Statistical Analyses

Research Question 1

To define predictability of levels of marital satisfaction by levels of acculturation, two simple regression analyses were conducted on RDAS scores based on SL-ASIA scores among all Asians and Asians having a cross-cultural relationship. Descriptive statistics for each of the observations are in Table 2. RDAS scores were normally distributed. Scatterplots were analyzed, and no curvilinear relationships between the criterion variable and the predictor variable or heteroscedascity were evident.

There was no statistically significant relationship between RDAS scores and SL-ASIA scores among Asians in both Asian-couples and Asian-mixed couples, $F(1, 74) = .197$, $p = .658$ (see Table 3). A small effect size was noted with .3% of the variance accounted for in the model,

$R^2 = .003$. Thus, the level of acculturation was not a statistically significant predictor of the level of marital satisfaction among Asians. Given the sample size of $n = 76$, statistical significance would be detected for small effect size, $R^2 > .096$.

Also, there was no statistically significant relationship between RDAS scores and SL-ASIA scores among Asians having a cross-cultural relationship, $F(1, 25) = .103$, $p = .751$ (see Table 3). A small effect size was noted with .4% of the variance accounted for in the model, $R^2 = .004$. Thus, the level of acculturation was also not a statistically significant predictor of the level of marital satisfaction among Asians in a cross-cultural relationship. Given the sample size of $n = 27$, statistical significance would be detected for large effect size, $R^2 > .239$.

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics for RDAS and SL-ASIA

	All Asians			Asians in Asian-mixed couples			Non-Asians in Asian-mixed couples		
	n	Mean	SD	n	Mean	SD	n	Mean	SD
RDAS	76	50.96	7.63	27	50.85	8.20	16	51.31	6.20
SL-ASIA	76	2.48	0.63	27	2.96	0.49	–	–	–

Table 3

Simple Regression Results for RDAS

Predictor	Group	B	SE B	β	t	p	sr^2
SL-ASIA	All Asians	-0.63	1.41	-0.05	-0.44	0.66	0.003
	Asians in Asian-mixed couples	1.08	3.36	0.06	0.32	0.75	0.800

To define predictability of levels of marital satisfaction by personality characteristics, a multiple regression analysis was conducted on RDAS scores based on scores in each subscale (Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Neuroticism, and Openness) of the BFI among all Asians including those in Asian couples and Asian-mixed couples. Descriptive statistics for each of the observations are in Table 4. RDAS scores were normally distributed. Scatterplots were analyzed, and no curvilinear relationships between the criterion variable and the predictor variables or heteroscedascity were evident.

There was no statistically significant relationship between RDAS scores and each BFI subscales' scores among Asians, $F(5, 70) = 1.144$, $p = .345$. A small effect size was noted with approximately 8% of the variance accounted for in the model, $R^2 = .076$. Thus, personality classifications were not statistically significant predictors of the levels of marital satisfaction in Asians (see Table 5). Given the sample size of $n = 76$, statistical significance would be detected for medium effect size, $R^2 > .154$.

Table 4

Descriptive Statistics for RDAS and BFI in Asians

	n	Mean	SD	RDAS	E	A	C	N	O
RDAS	76	50.96	7.63		0.013	0.198	0.059	-0.242*	-0.026
Extraversion(E)	76	25.72	5.23		–	0.057	0.252*	0.015	0.391*
Agreeableness(A)	76	34.00	5.19			–	0.595*	-0.512*	0.132
Conscientiousness(C)	76	32.91	4.93				–	-0.289*	0.171
Neuroticism(N)	76	23.12	5.16					–	-0.070
Openness(O)	76	33.78	4.66						–

*$p < .05$

Table 5

Multiple Regression Results for RDAS

Predictor	B	SE B	β	t	p	sr^2
Extraversion	0.08	0.19	0.06	0.44	0.66	0.002
Agreeableness	0.24	0.24	0.16	1.02	0.31	0.014
Conscientiousness	-0.15	0.23	-0.10	-0.65	0.52	0.006
Neuroticism	-0.28	0.20	-0.19	-1.43	0.16	0.027
Openness	-0.11	0.21	-0.07	-0.53	0.60	0.004

Research Question 2

A factorial analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was used to examine differences in levels of acculturation among Asians based on the gender and spouses' same or different ethnicity across scores of the SL-ASIA controlling for years of living in the United States. Descriptive statistics are in Table 6. Assumptions of normality, homogeneity of covariance, and homogeneity of regression were met for this analysis. Dimitrov (2009) noted covariates should be correlated to the dependent variable. The relationship between the scores of the SL-ASIA and years of living in the United States indicated a moderate to strong relationship ($r = .71, p < .001$). Thus length of residence in the United States appeared to be a tenable covariate that was important to control in this study.

An alpha level of .05 was utilized. There was not a statistically significant interaction between gender and spouses' same or different ethnicity, $F(1,71) = .326, p = .570, \eta_p^2 = .005$. A small effect size was noted, with .5% of the variance accounted for in the model. A statistically

significant difference was not noted between gender groups across the score of the SL-ASIA, F (1,71) = .492, p = .485, η_p^2 = .007. A small effect size was noted, with .7% of the variance accounted for in the model. However, a statistically significant difference was noted between Asians with Asian spouses and Asians with non-Asian spouses across the score of the SL-ASIA, F (1, 71) = 10.685, p = .002, η_p^2 = .131. A moderate to large effect size was noted, with approximately 13% of the variance accounted for in the model. Thus, Asians in cross-cultural marriages showed higher levels of acculturation than Asians in intra-cultural marriages.

Table 6

Descriptive Statistics and Adjusted Means for the Score of SL-ASIA across Different Groups

	Asians having Asian partner				Asians having non-Asian partner			
	n	Mean	SD	Adjusted Mean	n	Mean	SD	Adjusted Mean
Male	22	2.11	0.38	2.24	4	2.87	0.67	2.74
Female	27	2.30	0.63	2.40	23	2.97	0.47	2.76

Research Question 3

To define differences in levels of marital satisfaction among participants based on the gender and cross- or intra-cultural marriage types, a 2 X 2 ANOVA was conduced on RDAS scores across the gender and marriage types. An alpha level of .05 was utilized. Males and females were normally distributed. The marriage type was also normally distributed for cross-cultural marriage and intra-cultural marriage. Variances were homogeneous, F_{Levene} (3, 88) = 1.626, p = .189.

There was not a statistically significant interaction between gender and the marriage type, F (1, 88) = .556, p = .458. Also, there were no statistically significant differences either in gender or in the marriage type. For gender, F (1, 88) = .869, p = .354, and a small effect size was noted, d = .185. For the marriage type, F (1, 88) = .017, p = .898, and a small effect size was noted d = .0004 (see Table 7). Thus, there were no differences in levels of marital satisfaction between males and females as well as between individuals in Asian couples and Asian-mixed couples. Given the sample size of n = 92, statistical significance would be detected for a medium effect size, d = .59.

Additionally, a one-way ANONVA was conduced to explore group differences between Asians and non-Asians among Asian-mixed couples based on RDAS scores. An alpha level of .05 was utilized. Individuals in Asian-mixed couples were normally distributed. Variances were homogeneous, F_{Levene} (1, 41) = .983, p = .327. No statistically significant difference was found between Asian and non-Asian individuals in Asian-mixed couples, F (1, 42) = .038, p = .847, and a small effect size was noted, d = .061 (see Table 2). Thus, among individuals having a cross-cultural relationship, there was no difference in levels of marital satisfaction between Asian individuals and non-Asian individuals. Given the sample size of n = 43, statistical significance would be detected for a large effect size, d = .876.

Table 7

Average RDAS Score across Gender and Marriage Type

	Asian couples			Asian-mixed couples		
	n	Mean	SD	*n*	Mean	SD
Male	22.00	51.18	6.41	18	52.56	6.25
Female	27	50.89	8.22	25	49.92	8.14

Research Question 4

To determine different personal characteristics among individuals in Asian couples and Asian-mixed couples, an one-way MANOVA was conducted on five subscales – extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism, and openness- in the BFI. An alpha level of .05 was utilized. Descriptive statistics for the dependent variables across individuals in Asian couples and Asian-mixed couples are in Table 8. Assumptions for normality were met based on box-plots, and for homogeneity of covariances (Box's $M = 30.813$, $p = .016$) were met. A statistically significant difference was identified between individuals in two different marriage types and five dependent variables, Wilks' $\lambda = .867$, $F (5, 86) = 2.632$, $p = .029$. Approximately 13% of the variance in the model was accounted for in the combined dependent variables across different marriage types of individuals, yielding a small effect. The study has a moderate effect size ($f^2 = .15$). Based on sensitivity power analysis, statistical significance would be detected with small effect size ($f^2 = .09$) with given sample size of $n = 92$.

A post hoc discriminant analysis was conducted to determine how the differences of each group of individuals were manifested across the dependent variables. There was one discriminant function, and it was significant, Wilks' $\lambda = .87$, $\chi^2 (5) = 12.46$, $p = .029$. Openness loaded strongly ($r = .82$) and had a moderate relationship ($\beta = .68$), conscientiousness loaded moderately ($r = .68$) and had a moderate relationship ($\beta = .54$), and extraversion loaded moderately ($r = .53$) and had a small relationship ($\beta = .12$) to the discriminant function (see Table 9). Agreeableness and neuroticism also loaded and had relationship to the discriminant function, but not strongly affected (see Table 9). Based upon these results, individuals having cross-cultural relationships (in Asian-mixed couples) tend to have greater openness and

conscientiousness and some level of extraversion than individuals having intra-cultural

relationships (in Asian couples).

Table 8

Descriptive Statistics for BFI

Dependent Variables	Individuals in Asian couples			Individuals in Asian-mixed couples		
	n	Mean	SD	*n*	Mean	SD
Extraversion	49	24.53	4.66	43	26.80	6.26
Agreeableness	49	33.59	5.03	43	34.95	5.66
Conscientiousness	49	32.08	4.18	43	34.79	6.01
Neuroticism	49	22.94	5.22	43	21.63	5.88
Openness	49	32.96	4.67	43	36.26	5.77

Table 9

Correlation and Coefficients and Standardized Function Coefficients

Dependent Variables	Correlation and Coefficients	Standardized Function Coefficients
Openness	0.82	0.68
Conscientiousness	0.68	0.54
Extraversion	0.53	0.12
Agreeableness	0.33	0.01
Neuroticism	-0.31	-0.02

Chapter Summary

Based on the survey responses of ninety-two Asian and non-Asian individuals in Asian couples and Asian-mixed couples, various analyses were used to answer research questions. Two simple regression analyses were conducted, but there were no significant relationships between levels of marital satisfactions and levels of acculturation among all Asians, and even Asian individuals having a cross-cultural relationship. A multiple regression analysis was conducted, but there was no significant relationship between levels of marital satisfaction and personality characteristics among Asians. Two factorial ANOVA analyses were conducted, but there were no significant differences in levels of marital satisfaction across gender and different marriage types among all participants and between Asian individuals and non-Asian individuals among Asian-mixed couples. However, Asian individuals in Asian-mixed couples showed slightly higher acculturation levels than Asian individuals in Asian-couples. Also, individuals in Asian-mixed couples showed higher openness and conscientiousness and tended to be more extraversion than individuals in Asian-couples.

Organization of Remaining Chapters

The final chapter will discuss results of the study. Limitations of this research and implications for counselor educators, practitioners, and trainees will be also discussed. Recommendations for future research will be provided.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

This chapter includes the following: discussion about results presented in chapter 4, implications and recommendations for counselor educators, practitioners, and trainees, limitations of the research, and recommendations for future research.

The purpose of this study was to compare marital satisfaction, cultural differences, and personality characteristics across Asian-mixed couples and Asian couples in the United States. The researcher examined how the level of acculturation and personality characteristics affected the level of marital satisfaction among Asian participants based on marriage types in either cross- or intra-cultural relationships; if the level of acculturation for Asian participants was different based on their gender and spouses' ethnicity; and if the level of marital satisfaction was different among individuals based on their gender and marriage types. Finally, the researcher studied if there were any particular personality characteristics in individuals who have cross-cultural relationships compared with those who have intra-cultural relationships.

Discussion of Results

Personality Characteristics Among Individuals in Asian Couples and Asian-Mixed Couples

Individuals in Asian-mixed couples showed significantly higher levels of openness, conscientiousness, and extraversion than individuals in Asian couples in this study. Because there was no previous quantitative study about personality traits in Asian-mixed couples and cross-cultural couples, this finding is a meaningful cornerstone in this field, explaining the unique dynamic of Asian-mixed couples and possible strategies to maintain their marriage. Higher levels of openness and extraversion of individuals in Asian-mixed couples probably gave more opportunities to be actively engaged, honest, and unreserved with others, which may

58

contribute to the decision to be with a partner from a different culture. Higher levels of openness and conscientiousness may lead individuals in Asian-mixed couples to be more willing to discuss and deal with marital conflicts and be conscious of their partner's feelings and ideas. These personality characteristics are possible strengths for individuals in Asian-mixed couples leading to increased resilience and marital stability.

Extant research on personality characteristics of Asians in mixed couple relationships is not salient in the literature. However, increased openness, conscientiousness, and agreeableness found in Asian-mixed couples are consistent with previous research related to cross-cultural couples. Gareis (2000) conducted qualitative research and reported that empathy, patience, flexibility, and openness could be important factors in a successful cross-cultural friendship. Heller and Wood (2000) also argued that cross-cultural couples are more willing to be open and talk about issues and differences, and it potentially increases mutual understanding and intimacy. Biever, Bobele, and North (1998) suggested that cross-cultural couples may be more open to understanding and accepting differences due to the process of discussing and negotiating their differences, and negative attention from family or society may increase couples' tolerance and intimacy. Furthermore, Rosen-Grandon, Myers, and Hattie (2004) found respect, forgiveness, romance, support, and sensitivity are key components to a loving marriage.

Relationship Among Marital Satisfaction, Acculturation, and Personality Characteristics

In this study the level of acculturation of Asians in Asian-mixed couples did not significantly predict the level of marital satisfaction. Hence, higher levels of acculturation for Asians in Asian-mixed couples do not directly affect levels of marital satisfaction. In explaining this finding, Asians in Asian-mixed couples already knew and admitted that cultural differences exist with their partners (Heller & Wood, 2000), but they were willing to be in a committed

59

relationship with their partner because they probably concluded the cultural differences were not important or that such differences appeared manageable. Additionally, this study demonstrates that higher levels of openness and conscientiousness may help to manage cultural differences as well. Higher levels of extraversion and openness traits of Asians in Asian-mixed couples may even encourage new behaviors and learning opportunities with their partners. The lack of significance between acculturation and martial satisfaction is meaningful because it minimizes the negative role of cultural differences in Asian-mixed couples' marital relationships. Therefore, cultural differences may actually be a positive characteristic in marriage, as opposed to being conceived of as an impediment or source of conflict (Biever et al., 1998; Falicov, 1995; Heller &Wood, 2007; Hsu, 2001 Waldman & Rubalcava, 2005) for Asian-mixed couples.

The lack of a significant relationship between acculturation and marital satisfaction was not consistent with some previous research. Most previous researchers insisted cultural differences were a main cause of conflicts and distress in cross-cultural couples (Biever et al., 1998; Falicov, 1995; Heller &Wood, 2007; Hsu, 2001 Waldman & Rubalcava, 2005), and other researchers found relationships between cultural differences and marital satisfaction or marital quality (Kim, Edwards, Sweeney, & Wetchler, 2012; Negy &Snyder, 2000).

For instance, Kim, Edwards, Sweeney, and Wetchler (2012) found acculturation was an important factor on relational satisfaction among Asians having White partners. However, the current study included various racial partners (rather than only White spouses) and a wider range in the length of time of individuals' living in the United States and in duration of marriage with current partners. Also, Kim and her colleagues used the Couples Satisfaction Index (CSI) to measure relationship satisfaction and the Stephenson Multigroup Acculturation Scale (SMAS) to measure acculturation; however, the Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale (RDAS) and the Suinn-

Lew Asian Self-Identity Acculturation Scale (SL-ASIA) were used in this study. The wider

parameters set for participants and the use of different instruments may account for

inconsistencies found in the results of this study.

Negy and Snyder (2000) identified a significant relationship between acculturation and

marital distress of Mexican American wives and non-Hispanic White partners, particularly in

role orientation and child rearing; however, they did not find any relationship between

acculturation and marital distress of Mexican American husbands and non-Hispanic White

partners. In the current study no specific measures about role orientation or child rearing were

utilized, but broader and more general items on marital relationships were covered.

Relationships among constructs such as role orientation, child rearing, and affective

communication may be not enough to generalize the relationship between the level of marital

satisfaction and the level of acculturation, because marital relationships may be complicated with

multiple influential factors.

Furthermore, Bustamante, Nelson, Henriksen, and Monakes (2011) conducted a

qualitative study and explained that moderate acculturation, as opposed to being highly

acculturated or minimally acculturated, was an important aspect to increased marital satisfaction.

Keeping in mind the quantitative nature of the present study and the results of Bustamante et al.,

the relationship between acculturation and marital satisfaction should have been curvilinear, with

higher levels of marital satisfaction exhibited with moderate levels of acculturation; however,

this was not the case.

Another finding in this study was that personality characteristics do not significantly

predict the level of marital satisfaction of Asians in Asian-mixed couples as well as for Asians in

Asian couples. Although individuals including Asians in Asian-mixed couples showed higher

levels of personality traits of openness, conscientiousness, and extraversion in the previous

findings in this study, no relationship between personality characteristics and marital satisfaction

in Asians was evident. Marital satisfaction may be hard to predict based on the five primary

personality characteristics, but more specific personality traits and aspects, such as respect and/or

forgiveness, may affect marital satisfaction in Asians. Thus, the martial satisfaction or marital

quality of Asians in Asian-mixed couples, possibly including Asians in Asian couples, should be

considered on broader and wider spectrum including Asian cultural norms, additional personality

traits, and cultural differences.

There is no salient research on the relationship between personality characteristics and

marital satisfaction in Asian-mixed couples. However, earlier studies about personality

characteristics and marital quality were conducted with same cultural couples and found a

consistently negative relationship between the marital satisfaction and neuroticism (e.g., Kelly &

Conley, 1987; Schmitt, Kliegel, & Shapiro, 2007), but generally positive relationships with

openness, agreeableness, and conscientiousness in couples of Western cultures (e.g., Watson &

Humrichouse, 2006). An extraversion trait showed an inconsistent relationship with marital

satisfaction (e.g., Lester, Haig, & Monello, 1989; Chen et al., 2007). Although they are not

exactly comparable, the findings in this study are somewhat inconsistent with previous research.

The inconsistent results may be explained by different norms determining the quality of a

marital relationship in Asian cultures (Chen et al., 2007). Most previous research studies on the

relationship between the marital quality and personality were conducted in Western cultures.

Also, the Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scales (RDAS) was developed and evaluated on Western

cultures. Seki, Matsumoto, and Imahori (2002) indicated Japanese couples highly valued

understanding partners in intimacy relationships. Not only the relationship between couples, but

also a relationship with children and even extended family members is important in most Asians'

marital relationships, which is not considered in the RDAS. Additionally, Chen et al. (2007)

found in Japanese couples that a person's particular personality characteristics affected the

partner's level of marital adjustment, but not his/her own level of marital adjustment. For

example, husband's neuroticism related with wife's marital satisfaction and wife's extroversion

related with husband's marital satisfaction in Japanese couples. Chen et al.'s study indicated

some personality traits may relate with partners' marital satisfaction in Asians.

Acculturation Among Asians in Asian Couples and Asian-Mixed Couples

In this study Asians with non-Asian partners presented moderately higher levels of

acculturation than Asians with Asian partners, although, all Asian participants showed some

level of acculturation. Due to the lack of extant research on this topic, comparative results are

not available. Nevertheless, this finding is significant due to providing empirical support for

previous assumptions and qualitative findings that both individuals or at least one individual in

cross-cultural couples acculturates into the other partner's culture (e.g., Bustamante et a1., 2011;

Casmir, 1993; Falicov, 1995). This result also appears to be a logical conclusion considering

that Asians living in the United States tend to learn and adopt American (or Western) culture

including language, attitudes, customs, and values to some degree, regardless of whether they

belong to an Asian community or not.

Bubenzer and West (1992) identified that couples merge different perspectives related to

history, values, and worldviews when two individuals become a couple whether they identify as

same cultural couples or cross-cultural couples. Couples who come from similar cultures still

share common language and general values, perspectives, and traditions. Therefore, Asians with

Asian partners are likely to keep their general Asian culture, such as language, food, and

collectivistic values and traditions even though they use English and adopt some customs for their careers or within American communities.

On the other hand, cross-cultural couples need to achieve an adaptive and flexible view of cultural differences that allows spouses to maintain individuated values, negotiate conflict areas, and develop a new cultural code that symbolically and literally integrate both cultures (Falicov, 1995). Acculturation is a pertinent process for cross-cultural couples with partners and families at home. Asians in Asian-mixed couples living in the United States often acculturate at home as well as at work and in their social community. Asians in Asian-mixed couples who live in the United States and their partners who are likely from American (Western) cultures are more likely to defer to their partners' Western culture, which would likely impact the levels of acculturation in Asians with non-Asian partners more than Asians with Asian partners. Bustamante et a1. (2011) identified one partner's cultural deference as one of the coping mechanisms of cross-cultural couples.

Marital Satisfaction Among Individuals in Asian Couples and Asian-Mixed Couples

Individuals in Asian couples and in Asian-mixed couples did not show differences in the level of marital satisfaction in this study. In other words, although cross-cultural couples have additional difficulties and conflicts due to the greater cultural differences (McGoldrick & Preto, 1984), they do not have less marital satisfaction, at least for Asian-mixed couples in this study. This finding suggests a more positive perspective towards the marital relationships of Asian-mixed couples. Also, considering the previous findings of higher levels of some personality characteristics of individuals in Asian-mixed couples as well as the higher level of acculturation of Asians in Asian-mixed couples, marital satisfaction appears to not be impacted.

Cross-cultural couples, like most married couples, are likely to experience relationship issues (Tallman & Hsiao, 2004). All couples need to negotiate through conflicts. Compared to Asians in Asian couples, higher levels of openness, conscientiousness, and extraversion probably help individuals in Asian-mixed couples to be more open to differences, discuss and negotiate differences and conflicts, and attend to their relationship and partner. Also, higher levels of acculturation may help the couple negotiates and accepts cultural differences. Heller and Wood (2000) mentioned that instead of assuming or projecting similarity and agreement about some issues with a partner, there is a willingness to self-disclose and talk about issues and differences which potentially increases mutual understanding that leads to intimacy in cross-cultural couples.

Furthermore, Asians usually consider family very important, and maintaining family wellbeing tends to be a priority rather than focusing on their own individual needs (Kim, Atkinson, & Umemoto, 2001). The U. S. Department of Health and Human Services reported that Asian women showed the highest probability of having a first marriage last up to 20 years; both Asian men and women presented the lowest rates of divorce from the 2006-2010 National Survey data (Copen, Daniels, Vespa, & Mosher, 2012). Most Asian females, influenced by Buddhism and /or Confucianism cultures, emphasize family harmony, respect for husbands, and caring for children (Hamid, Simmonds, & Bowles, 2009). Thus, all these unique mechanisms contribute to a stable marriage for Asian-mixed couples.

In existing research, cross-cultural couples reported less marital satisfaction and higher divorce rates (e.g., Bratter & King, 2008; Fu, Tora, & Kendall, 2001; Zhang & Hook, 2009). Conversely, White male with non-White female couples did not show significant differences in divorce rates compared with White couples (Bratter & King, 2008) as well as White with African American couples (Fu & Wolfinger, 2011). This finding is consistent with the present study in

that no differences in marital satisfaction between Asian couples and Asian-mixed couples were evident.

Research Implications and Recommendations

The Association for Multicultural Counseling and Development (AMCD) developed the Multicultural Counseling Competencies to guide counselors' multicultural sensitivity (Arredondo et al., 1996). ACA infused multiculturalism into the *2005 ACA Code of Ethics* to indicate the importance of multicultural awareness for counselors (ACA, 2005). Also, the *2009 Standards* of Council for Accreditation of Counseling & Related Educational Programs (CACREP) focused on multicultural related education for future counselors (CACREP, 2009).

D'Andrea and Heckman (2008) reviewed previous multicultural outcome research studies conducted across various topics and populations; however, studies in cross-cultural couples are rare in counseling research despite the need to focus on unique and different relational issues (Bustamante et al., 2011; Sullivan & Cottone, 2006). Even though there is a rapidly increasing Asian population in the U. S, only limited research on Asian with non-Asian couples was present in the literature (Kim et al., 2012). Most research related to cross-cultural couples' relationships focused on cultural differences, but no previous research study considered personality characteristics (Garcia, 2006). In fact, the majority of literature on cross-cultural relationships emphasized the hardship of establishing and maintaining cross-cultural relationships, but rarely recognized successful and healthy cross-cultural relationship (Gaines & Agnew, 2003).

Based on the lack of research and the unique needs, marital satisfaction, acculturation, and personality of Asians in both Asian-mixed couples and Asian couples were evaluated and compared. The findings in this study yielded several recommendations of benefit to counselor

66

educators, practitioners, and future counselors who work, teach, and serve Asians especially Asian-mixed couples. Practitioners and future counselors should be aware of higher levels of openness, conscientiousness, and extraversion of individuals in Asian-mixed couples; these personality characteristics for Asian-mixed couples possibly strengthen and benefit their cross-cultural relationships. Although this study found no significant relationship between levels of marital satisfaction and specific personality characteristics, some personality characteristics of individuals within the couple may be integral to problem solving and enhancing the relationship (Biever et al., 1998; Gareis, 2000; Rosen-Grandon, Myers, & Hattie, 2004). Higher levels of openness, conscientiousness, and extraversion may help Asian-mixed couples to be more open to differences, discuss and manage conflicts and issues, and maintain their relationships. These personality characteristics may serve as protective factors to conflicts arising in marriage for cross-cultural couples.

Practitioners and future counselors should be aware of cultural differences in cross-cultural couples, but also not assume that all conflicts are due to cultural differences. Cross-cultural couples may have difficulties because of cultural differences (Bhugra & De Silva, 2000; Fu, Tora, & Kendall, 2001; Hsu, 2001; Sullivan & Cottone, 2006; Waldman & Rubalcava, 2005), but it is not likely the predominant reason for conflicts. Therefore, counselors should be cautious of biases and stereotypes in their examination of couples' conflicts. Practitioners and future counselors should recognize that the amount of cultural differences or levels of acculturation does not necessarily relate with the marital satisfaction in Asian-mixed couples, because they already acknowledged that they could not avoid cultural differences when they chose to have a cross-cultural marriage. Additionally, higher levels of openness, conscientiousness, and extraversion of individuals in Asian-mixed couples probably helps them manage conflicts and

67

protect their marriage despite the differences. Compared to Asians in Asian couples, moderately higher levels of acculturation for Asians in Asian-mixed couples can explain a greater degree of accommodation and acceptance of different cultures, which possibly positively impacts their marriage.

Practitioners and future counselors should not assume Asian-mixed couples are less satisfied with or more distressed in their marriage than Asian couples. Although some previous research found less satisfaction or higher divorce rate in cross-cultural couples (e.g., Bratter & King, 2008; Fu, Tora, & Kendall, 2001; Zhang & Hook, 2009), this study, along with past extant research (e.g., Bratter & King, 2008; Fu & Wolfinger, 2011) found no differences in the level of marital satisfaction. As most married couples have general and unique relational issues (Tallman & Hsiao, 2004), a conflict due to greater cultural differences is unique to cross-cultural couples, but such conflict does not indicate that cross-cultural couples are more distressed in their marriages. Specific personality traits (e.g., openness, conscientiousness, and extraversion) and some level of acculturations may increase Asian-mixed couples' level of marital satisfaction. Therefore, rather than focusing negative aspects or assumptions, counselors should help Asian-mixed couples to expand and draw on these strengths.

An additional recommendation in working with Asian-mixed couples and Asian couples is to know some general Asian values and avoid imposing Western values that lead to misunderstandings and misleading assumptions. The following list is based on Asian values suggested by Kim and his colleagues (2001) and Schoen (2005).

1. each individual should resolve psychological problems on his or her own;

2. family and family reputation is very important, so individuals should avoid misrepresenting family names and follow family norms and expectations to maintain family well-being;

3. respect for parents, elders, and authority figures is important;

4. maintaining interpersonal harmony is important, so individuals need to be accommodating;

5. placing others' needs before considering one's own needs is important;

6. education and occupational achievement is very important.

Counselor educators should educate future counselors about unique and general issues and conflicts as well as strengths of Asian-mixed couples. Counselor educators should help future counselors be culturally sensitive and competent. Also, educators should encourage future researchers and counselors to engage in research related to multicultural relationships due to the lack of research studies and strategies to assist Asian-mixed couples, and even Asian couples.

Limitations

This study had several limitations. First, random assignment is not possible in an explanatory non-experimental study, so there was some possibility of uncontrolled and unmeasured confounding variables and limitation to represent the target population that affects the generalizability of findings (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2006). There was no control of participants' temporary or accidental circumstances affecting tentative marital relationships (e.g., recent trauma, pregnancy, or other seminal events).

Moreover, a large sample size (e.g. thirty for each group) was required to ensure generalizability and the statistical and practical power, but collecting enough data with individuals in Asian couples and Asian-mixed couples with balanced groups ratio that met this

69

criterion was difficult. In this study, comparative statistics were evaluated across an unbalanced design, thereby limiting generalizability and statistical power. In addition, the sample size was smaller for the regression analyses because data of only Asian participants were used. Due to the extremely unbalanced ratio in gender of Asians in Asian-mixed couples (4 males and 23 females), comparing gender differences was not possible. However, Taylor et al. (2010) found that Asian women are twice more likely than Asian men to be married with non-Asian partners, and this study is representative of this trend.

Recommendations for Future Studies

Based on the findings and limitations in this study, future studies need to investigate cross-cultural couples, particularly Asian with non-Asian partners. Because the sample size in this study was small, statistical power and generalizability were limited, especially for predicting the level of marital satisfaction based on the level of acculturation and personality characteristics. Therefore, similar research with larger sample sizes and balanced groups would be helpful for increasing generalizability. In addition, a larger sample size could lead to investigations with more variables pertinent to this research, such as partner's specific ethnicity, gender differences, levels of education, years of being married with the current partner, levels of extended family support, number of children, and religious belief.

Because this study was conducted based on individuals in couples, it was not possible to match couple's response up and compare or contrast couple's responses. Previous research showed the influence and relationship of one partner's cultural deference and particular personalities on the other partner (e.g., Chen et al., 2007; Gottman, Driver, & Tabares, 2002). Although this study did not find any predictability of the level of marital satisfaction based on Asian participants' own levels of acculturation and personality characteristics, it would be

interesting and meaningful to see if there is any relationship or predictability of the level of marital satisfaction of non-Asian partners based on Asian partners and vice versa.

Also, the researcher only recruited participants living in the United States with the assumption that non-Asian partners mostly hold to an American culture and Asians tend to adopt the Western culture. Examination of non-Asian's levels of acculturation toward Asian culture, and how it affects their marriage is non-existent in the literature. Even to examine and compare the degree of acculturation between Asian with non-Asian couples living in the United States and living in a country in Asia might be interesting and meaningful to see how dominant cultures or husband/wife roles play into acculturation.

Finally, developing counseling interventions and/or conducting experimental studies to evaluate interventions for Asian-mixed couples is still necessary. Although there are several recommended counseling interventions for cross-cultural couples (e.g., postmodern approach, culturally based couple's therapy, and pre-marital inventories), empirical research is necessary for evaluation of the aforementioned claims.

Conclusion

The researcher attempted to provide evidence of the relationship of Asian-mixed couples' marital satisfaction, acculturation level, and personality characteristics as compared to acculturation level, marital satisfaction, and personality characteristics among Asian-mixed couples and Asian couples. One of the most pertinent findings is that individuals in Asian-mixed coupes tend to have higher levels of openness, conscientiousness, and extraversion. Also, Asians in Asian-mixed couples showed moderately higher levels of acculturation than Asians in Asian couples. These findings explained that these particular personalities and some level of acculturation help Asian-mixed couples manage conflicts and issues, protect their marriage from

71

possible risks and conflicts that arise in their marriage, and attain similar marital satisfaction with Asian couples. The level of acculturation or personality characteristics did not predict the level of marital satisfaction in Asians in Asian-mixed couples. Based on this finding, cultural differences were not recognized as an essential key in the marital relationships of Asian-mixed couples.

These findings will help counselor educators, practitioners, and future counselors understand Asian-mixed couples to better assist them. Counselors should be open to all possibilities and avoid making assumptions or stereotyping Asian-mixed couples. Counselors need to be aware and understand individual cultural differences and cultural values. Counselors also should focus on Asian-mixed couples' strengths to facilitate their building stronger relationships. It is imperative that counselor educators continue to provide opportunities for future counselors to develop a high level of multicultural sensitivity. Future research is needed with Asian-mixed couples or cross-cultural couples using a larger sample size, paired designs, and more culturally appropriate variables.

REFERENCES

American Counseling Association. (2005). *Code of Ethics*. Alexandria, VA: Author.

Asbury, E. T., & Martin, D. (2012). Military deployment and the spouse left behind. *The Family Journal: Counseling and Therapy for Couples and Families, 20*, 45-50.

Arredondo, P., Tovar-Blank, Z. G., & Parham, T. A. (2008). Challenges and promises of becoming a culturally competent counselor in a sociopolitical era of change and empowerment. *Journal of Counseling & Development, 86*, 261-268.

Atkinson, D. R., & Gim, R. H. (1989). Asian-American cultural identity and attitudes toward mental health services. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 38*, 473-478.

Aubrey, R. F. (1977). Historical development of guidance and counseling and implications for the future. *Personnel and Guidance Journal, 55*, 288-295.

Awosan, C. I., Sandberg, J. G., & Hall, C. A. (2011). Understanding the experience of Black clients in marriage and family therapy. *Journal of Marital & Family Therapy, 37*, 153-168.

Banks, J. R., & Fedewa, A. L. (2012). Counselors' attitudes toward domestic violence in same-sex versus opposite-sex relationships. *Journal of Multicultural Counseling and Development, 40*, 194-205.

Bhugra, D., & DeSilva, P. (2000). Couple therapy across cultures. *Sexual and Relationship Therapy, 15*, 183-192.

Biever, J. L., Bobele, M., & North, M. W. (1998). Therapy with intercultural couples: A post-modern approach. *Counseling Psychology Quarterly, 11*, 181-187.

Blocklin, M. K., Crouter, A. C., Updegraff, K. A., & McHale, S. M. (2011). Sources of parental knowledge in Mexican American families. *Family Relations, 60*, 30-44.

Botkin, D. R., Weeks, M. O., & Morris, J. E. (2000). Change marriage role expectation: 1961-1996. *Sex Roles, 42*, 933-942.

Brady-Amoon, P. (2011). Humanism, feminism, and multiculturalism: Essential elements of social justice in counseling, education, and advocacy. *Journal of Humanistic Counseling, 50*, 135-148.

Bramlett, M. D., & Mosher, W. D. (2002). *Cohabitation, marriage, divorce, and remarriage in the United States*. Vital Statistics and Health Statistics (Series 23, No. 22). Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics.

Bratter, J. L., & King, R. B. (2008). "But Will It Last?": Marital instability among interracial and same-race couples. *Family Relations, 57*, 160-171.

Bubenzer, D. L., & West, J. D. (1992). *Counseling couples*. London: Sage.

Busby, D. M, Christensen, C., Crane, D. R., & Larson, J. H. (1995). A revision of the Dyadic Adjustment Scale for use with distressed and nondistressed couples: Construct hierarchy and multidimensional scales. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy, 21*, 289-308.

Bustamante, R. M., Nelson, J. A., Henriksen, R. C., Jr., & Monakes, S. (2011). Intercultural couples: Coping with culture-related stressors. *The Family Journal: Counseling and Therapy for Couples and Families, 19*, 154-164.

Carter, B., & McGoldrick, M. (1999). *The expanded family life cycle: Individual family, and social perspectives* (3rd ed.). Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2013). *National marriage and divorce rate trends.* Retrieved from http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nvss/marriage_divorce_tables.htm

Chan, G., Barnes-Holmes, D., Barnes-Holmes, Y. & Stewart, I. (2009). Implicit attitudes to work

and leisure among North American and Irish Individuals: A preliminary study. *International Journal of Psychology and Psychological Therapy, 9*, 317-334.

Chen, Z., Tanaka, N., Uji, M., Hiramura, H., & Shikai, N. (2007). The role of personalities in the marital adjustment of Japanese couples. *Social Behavior and Personality, 35*, 561-572.

Chua, A. (2011). *Battle hymn of the tiger mother*. New York, NY: Penguin Group (USA) Inc.

Cohen, J. (1988). *Statistical power analysis for the behavioral sciences* (2nd ed.). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Cools, C. (2006). Relational communication in intercultural couples. *Language and Intercultural Communications, 6*, 262-274.

Copen, C. E., Daniels, K., Vespa, J., & Mosher, W. D. (2012). First marriages in the United States: Data from the 2006-2010 National Survey of Family Growth. *National Health Statistics Reports, 49*, 1-29. Retrieved from http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nhsr/nhsr049.pdf

Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs. (2009). *2009 CACREP standards*. Retrieved from http://www.cacrep.org/template/index.cfm

Creswell, J. W. (2009). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publication, Inc.

D'Andrea, M., & Heckman, E. F. (2008). A 40-year review of multicultural counseling outcome research: Outlining a future research agenda for the multicultural counseling movement. *Journal of Counseling & Development, 86*,356-363.

Davis, J., Ward, D. B., & Storm, C. (2011). The unsilencing of military wives: Wartime deployment experiences and citizen responsibility. *Journal of Marital & Family Therapy, 37*, 51-63.

Deng, L-Y. F. (2012). "Parenting about peace": Exploring Taiwanese parents' and children's

     perceptions in a shared political and sociocultural context. *Family Relations, 61*, 115-128.

Dillon, F. R., Rosa, M. D. L., Sanchez, M., & Schwartz, S. J. (2012). Preimmigration family

     cohesion and drug/alcohol abuse among recent Latino immigrants. *The Family Journal:*

     Counseling and Therapy for Couples and Families, 20, 256-266.

Dimitrov, D. M. (2009). *Quantitative research in education: Intermediate & advanced methods.*

     Oceanside, NY: Whittier Publication, Inc.

Dow, H. D., & Woolley, S. R. (2011). Mental health perceptions and coping strategies of

     Albanian immigrants and their families. *Journal of Marital & Family Therapy, 37*, 95-

     108.

Falicov, C. (1995). Training to think culturally: A multidimentional comparative framework.

     Family Process, 34, 383-388.

Foeman, A., & Nance, T. (1999). From miscegenation to multiculturalism: Perceptions and

     stages of interracial relationship development. *Journal of Black Studies, 29*, 540-557.

Fong, R. (1994). Family preservation: Making it work for Asians. *Child Welfare League of*

     America, 73, 331-341.

Frame, M. W. (2004). The challenges of intercultural marriage: Strategies for pastoral care.

     Pastoral Psychology, 52, 219-232.

Fu, X., & Heaton, T. B. (2000). Status exchange in intermarriage among Hawaiians, Japanese,

     Filipinos and Caucasian in Hawaii: 1983-1994. *Journal of Comparative Family Studies,*

     31, 45-61.

Fu, X., Tora, J., & Kendall, H. (2001). Marital happiness and interracial marriage: A study in a

     multi-ethnic community in Hawaii. *Journal of Comparative Family Studies, 32*, 47-

60.

Fu, V. K., & Wolfinger, N. H. (2011). Broken boundaries or broken marriage? Racial

    intermarriage and divorce in the United States. *Social Science Quarterly, 92*, 1096-1117.

    doi: 10.1111/j.1540-6237.2011.00809.x

Gaines, S., & Agnew, C. (2003). Relationship maintenance in intercultural couples: An

    interdependence analysis. In D. J. Canary, & M. Dainton (Eds.), *Maintaining*

    relationships through communication: relational, contextual, and cultural variations (pp.

    231-253). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associate, Inc., Publishers.

Gall, M. D., Gall, J. P., & Borg, W. R. (2003). *Educational research: An introduction* (7th ed.).

    Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Garcia, D. R. (2006). Mixed marriage and transnational families in the intercultural context: A

    case study of African-Spanish Couples in Catalonia. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration*

    Studies, 32, 403-433.

Gareis, E. (2000). Intercultural friendship: five case studies of German students in the USA.

    Journal of Intercultural Studies, 21, 67-91.

Gassman-Pines, A. (2011). Low-income mothers' nighttime and weekend work: Daily

    associations with child behavior, mother-child interactions, and mood. *Family Relations,*

    60, 15-29.

Goldberg, A. E., Downing, J. B., & Moyer, A. M. (2012). Why parenthood, and why now? Gay

    men's motivations for pursuing parenthood. *Family Relations, 61*, 157-174.

Gottman, J., Driver, J., & Tabares, A. (2002). Building the sound marital house. In N. S.

    Jacobson, & A. S. Gurman (Eds.), *Clinical handbook of couple therapy* (pp. 373-399).

    New York, NY: Guilford Press.

Greenburg, J. S. (2009). *Comprehensive stress management* (11th ed.). New York, NY:

　　McGraw-Hill.

Gregen, K. J. (1985). The social constructionist movement in modern psychology. *American*

　　Psychologist, 40, 266-275.

Gudykunst, W. (1994). *Bridging differences: Effective intergroup communication*. London:

　　Sage.

Hall, E. T. (1976). *Beyond culture*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday/Anchor Press.

Hall, E. T. (1991). Monochronic and polychronic time. In L. A. Samovar & R. E. Porter (Eds.).

　　Intercultural communication: A reader (6th ed.). (pp. 332-339). Belmont, CA:

　　Wadsworth, Inc.

Hamid, P. D., Simmonds, J. G., & Bowles, T. V. (2009). Asian Australian acculturation and

　　attitudes toward seeking professional psychological help. *Australian Journal of*

　　Psychology, 61, 69-76.

Hampson, S. E., & Goldberg, L. R. (2006). A first large cohort study of personality trait stability

　　over the 40 years between elementary school and midlife. *Journal of Personality and*

　　Social Psychology, 91, 763-779.

Hanson, W. E., Creswell, J., Plano-Clark, V., Petska, K., & Creswell, D. (2005). Mixed methods

　　research designs on counseling psychology. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 52*, 224-

　　332.

Hardy, K. V., & Laszloffy, T. A. (1995). The cultural genogram: A key to training culturally

　　competent family therapists. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy, 21*, 227-237.

　　Retrieved from http://search.proquest.com/docview/220964739?accountid=7084

Hart, J. W., Stasson, M. F., Mahoney, J. H., & Story, P. (2007). The Big Five and achievement

motivation: Exploring the relationship between personality and a two-factor model of motivation. *Individual Differences Research, 5*, 267-274.

Hays, P. A. (2007). *Addressing cultural complexities in practice: Assessment, diagnosis, and therapy (2nd ed.).* Alexandria, VA: American Counseling Association.

Heller, P. E., & Wood, B. (2000). The influence of religious and ethnic differences on marital intimacy: Intermarriage versus intramarriage. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy, 26*, 241-252.

Henriksen, R. C., Jr., Watts, R. E., & Bustamante, R. (2007). The multiple heritage couple questionnaire. *The Family Journal: Counseling and Therapy for Couples and Families, 15*, 405-408.

Ho, M. K. (1990). *Intermarried couples in therapy*. Springfield, IL: Thomas.

Hohmann-Marriott, B. E., & Amato, P. (2008). Relationship quality in interethnic marriages and cohabitations. *Social Forces, 87*, 825-855.

Hsu, J. (2001). Marital therapy for intercultural couple. In W. S. Tseng, & J. Streltzer (Eds.), *Culture and psychotherapy: A guide to clinical practice* (pp. 225-242). Washington, DC: American Psychiatric Press.

Hung, A. H. (2006). The concept of differentiated oneness and implications for Asian American Families. *Journal of Psychology & Christianity, 25*, 226-239.

Inman, A. G., Altman, A., Kaduvettoor-Davidson, A., Carr, A., & Walker, J. A. (2011). Cultural intersections: A qualitative inquiry into the experience of Asian Indian- White interracial couples. *Family Process, 50*, 248-266.

Institute of International Education. (2010). *Open doors on the web*. Retrieved November 21, 2010, from http://www.iie.org/

Jackson, S. C., Keel, P. K., Lee, Y. H. (2006). Trans-cultural comparison of disordered eating in Korean women. *International Journal of Eating Disorders, 39*, 498-502.

Jacobson, C. K., & Heaton, T. B. (2008). Comparative patterns of interracial marriage: Structural opportunities, third party-factors, and temporal change in immigrant societies. *Journal of Comparative Family Studies, 39*, 129-149.

John, O. P., Donahue, E. M., & Kentle, R. L. (1991). *The Big Five Inventory- Versions 4a and 54*. Berkeley, CA: University of California, Berkeley, Institute of Personality and Social Research.

John, O. P., & Srivastava, S. (1999). The Big Five trait taxonomy: History, measurement, and theoretical perspectives. In L. A. Pervin & O. P. John (Eds.), *Handbook of personality: Theory and research* (2nd ed., pp. 102-138). New York: Guilford Press.

Jordan, A. H., Lovett, B., & Sweeton, J. L. (2012). The social psychology of Black-White interracial interactions: Implications for culturally competent clinical practice. *Journal of Multicultural Counseling & Development, 40*, 132-143.

Kazdin, A. E. (Ed.). (2000). *Encyclopedia of psychology: 8 volume set.* Washington, DC: American Psychology Association.

Kelch-Oliver, K. (2011). The experiences of Africa American grandmothers in grandparent-headed families. *The Family Journal: Counseling and Therapy for Couples and Families, 19*, 73-82.

Kelly, E. L., & Conley, J. J. (1987). Personality and compatibility: A prospective analysis of marital stability and marital satisfaction. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 52*, 27-40.

Kodama, K., & Canetto, S. S. (1995). Reliability and validity of the Suinn-Lew Asian Self-

Identity Acculturation Scale with Japanese temporary residents. *Psychology: An International Journal of Psychology in the Orient, 38*, 17-21.

Kim, B. S. K., Atkinson, D. R., & Umemoto, D. (2001). Asian cultural values and the counseling process: Current knowledge and directions for future research. *The Counseling Psychologist, 29*, 570-603. Doi: 10.1177/0011000001294006

Kim, H., Edwards, A. B., Sweeney, K. A., & Wetchler, J. L. (2012). The effects of differentiation and attachment on satisfaction and acculturation in Asian-White American intercultural couple relationships: Assessment with Chinese, South Korean, and Japanese partners in relationships with white American partners in the United States. *The American Journal of Family Therapy, 40*, 320-335. Doi: 10.1080/01926187.2011.616409

Kim, S. C. (1997). Korean American Families. In E. Lee (Ed). *Working with Asian Americans: A guide for clinicians*. New York, NY: The Guilford Press.

Kim, S. Y., Gonzles, N. A., Stroh, K., & Wang, J. J-L. (2006). Parent-child cultural marginalization and depressive symptoms in Asian American family members. *Journal of Community Psychology, 34*, 167-182.

Kim, Y. Y. (2008). Intercultural personhood: Globalization and a way of being. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 32, 359-368.

Kreider, R. M., & Simmons, T. (2003). Marital Status:2000. U. S. Census Bureau. Retrieved from http://www.census.gov/prod/2003pubs/c2kbr-30.pdf

Lee, E., & Mock, M. R. (2005). Asian families. In M. McGoldrick, J. Giordano, & N. Garcia-Preto (Eds.). *Ethnicity & family therapy*. (pp. 269-289). New York, NY: Guilford.

Lese, K. P., & Robbins, S. B. (1994). Relationship between goal attributes and the academic

achievement of Southeast Asian adolescent refugees. *Journal of Counseling Psychology,*

   41, 45-52.

Leslie, L. A., & Letiecq, B. L. (2004). Marital quality of African American and white partners in

   interracial couples. *Personal Relationship, 11*, 559-574.

Lester, D., Haig, C., & Monello, R. (1989). Spouses' personality and marital satisfaction.

   Personality and Individual Differences, 10, 253-254.

Limb, G. E., & Hodge, D. R. (2011). Utilizing spiritual ecograms with Native American families

   and children to promote cultural competence in family therapy. *Journal of Marital &*

   Family Therapy, 37, 81-94.

Luck, C., & Carrington, V. (2000). Race matters. *Journal of Intercultural Studies, 21*, 5-25.

Luo, S., Chen, H., Yue, G., Zhang, G., Zhaoyang, R., & Xu, D. (2008). Predicting marital

   satisfaction from self, partner, and couple characteristics: Is it me, you, or us? *Journal of*

   Personality, 76, 1231-1265.

Mandara, J., Murray, C. B., Telesford, J. M., Varner, F. A., & Richman, S. B. (2012). Observed

   gender differences in African American mother-child relationships and child behavior.

   Family Relations, 61, 129-141.

Marin, M. R., & Huber, C. H. (2011). Mexican American elderly: Self-reported anxiety and the

   mediating influence of family protective factors. *The Family Journal: Counseling and*

   Therapy for Couples and Families, 19, 63-72.

McGoldrick, M., Giordano, J., & Pearce, J. K. (1996). *Ethnicity and family therapy* (2nd ed.).

   New York, NY: Guilford.

McGoldrick, M., & Preto, N. (1984). Ethnic intermarriage: Implication for therapy. *Family*

   Process, 23, 347-364.

McLean, L. M., Jones, J. M., Rydall, A. C., Walsh, A., Esplen, M. J., Zimmermann, C., & Rodin, G. M. (2008). A couples intervention for patients facing advanced cancer and their spouse caregivers: Outcomes of a pilot study. *Psycho-Oncology, 17*, 1152-1156.

Miller, M. J., & Lee, R. (2009). Factorial invariance of the Asian American family conflicts scale across ethnicity, generational status, sex, and nationality. *Measurement and Evaluation in Counseling and Development, 42*, 179-196.

Molina, B., Estrada, D., & Burnett, J. A. (2004). Cultural communities: Challenges and opportunities in the creation of "happy ever after" stories of intercultural couplehood. *The Family Journal: Counseling and Therapy for Couples and Families, 12*, 139-147.

Murphy, M., Park, J., & Lonsdale, N. (2006). Marriage and family therapy students' change in multicultural counseling competencies after a diversity course. *Contemporary Family Therapy, 28*, 303-311.

Neely-Barnes, S. L., & Graff, J. C. (2011). Are there adverse consequences to being a sibling of a person with disability? A propensity score analysis. *Family Relations, 60*, 331-341.

Negy, C., & Snyder, D. K. (2000). Relationship satisfaction of Mexican American and non-Hispanic couples: Issues of acculturation and clinical intervention. *Jounral of Marital and Family Therapy, 26*, 293-304.

Nezhad, M. Z., & Goodarzi, A. M. (2011). Sexuality, intimacy, and marital satisfaction in Iranian first-time parents. *Journal of Sex & Marital Therapy, 37*, 77-88.

Ng, K-M., Loy, J. T-C., Mohdzain, Z., & Cheong, W. (2013). Gender, race, adult attachment, and marital satisfaction among Malaysians. *The Family Journal: Counseling and Therapy for Couples and Families, 21*, 198-207.

Nixon, E., Greene, S., & Hogan, D. H. (2012). Negotiating relationships in single-mother

households: Perspectives of children and mothers. *Family Relations, 61*, 142-156.

Oetzel, J., Dhar, S., & Kirschbaum, K. (2007). Intercultural conflict from a multilevel perspective: Trends, possibilities, and future directions. *Journal of Intercultural Communication Research, 36*, 183-204.

O'Rourke, N., Claxton, A., Chou, P. H. B., Smith, J. Z., & Hadjistavropoulos, T. (2011). Personality trait levels within older couples and between-spouse trait differences as predictors of marital satisfaction. *Aging & Mental Health, 15*, 344-353.

Oswald, R. F., & Lazarevic, V. (2011). "You live where?!" Lesbian mothers' attachment to nonmetropolitan communities. *Family Relations, 60*, 373-386.

Quek, K. M-T., & Fitzpatrick, J. (2013). Cultural values, self-disclosure, and conflict tactics as predictors of marital satisfaction among Singaporean husbands and wives. *The Family Journal: Counseling and Therapy for Couples and Families, 21*, 208-216.

Ownbey, S. F., & Horridge, P. E. (1998). The Suinn-Lew Asian Self-Identity Acculturation Scale: Test with a non-student, Asian-American sample. *Social Behavior and Personality, 26*, 57-68.

Park, S. E., & Harrison, A. A. (1995). Career-related interests and values, perceived control, and acculturation of Asian-American and Caucasian-American college students. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology, 25*, 1184-1203.

Patel, F., Li, M., & Sooknanan, P. (2011). *Intercultural communication: Building a global community*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications Inc.

Pedersen, P. B. (1991). Introduction to the special issue on Multiculturalism as a fourth force in counseling. *Journal of Counseling & Development*, *70*. 4.

Phillips, J. A., & Sweeney, M. M. (2006). Can differential exposure to risk factors explain recent

racial and ethnic variation in marital disruption? *Social Science Research, 35*, 409-434.

Ponterotto, J. G., Baluch, S., & Carielli, D. (1998). The Suinn-Lew Asian Self-Identity

Acculturation Scale (SL-ASIA): Critique and research recommendations. *Measurement & Evluation in Counseling and Development, 32*, 109-124.

Pope, A. L., & Cashwell, C. S. (2013). Moral commitment in intimate committed relationships:

A Conceptualization from cohabiting same-sex and opposite-sex partners. *The Family Journal: Counseling and Therapy for Couples and Families, 21*, 5-14.

Rammstedt, B., & John, O. P. (2007). Measuring personality in one minute or less: A 10-item

short version of the Big Five Inventory in English and German. *Journal of Research in Personality, 41*, 203-212.

Rienks, S. L., Wadsworth, M. E., Markman, H. J., Einhorn, L., & Etter, E. M. (2011). Father

involvement in urban low-income fathers: Baseline associations and changes resulting from preventive intervention. *Family Relations, 60*, 191-204.

Reid, R. C., Carpenter, B. N, & Draper, E. D. (2011). Disputing the notion of psychopathology

among women married to hypersexual men using the MMPI-2-RF. *Journal of Sex & Marital Therapy, 37*, 45-55.

Roesch, S. C., Wee, C., & Vaughn, A. A. (2006). Relations between the Big Five personality

traits and dispositional doping in Korean Americans: Acculturation as a moderating factor. *International Journal of Psychology, 41*, 85-96.

Rogen-Grandon, J., Myers, J., & Hattie, J. (2004). The relationship between marital

characteristics, marital interaction processes, and marital satisfaction. *Journal of Counseling & Development, 82*, 58-68

Saleh, M. F., & Hilton, J. M. (2011). A comparison of the paternal involvement of low-income

fathers in four developmental stages: Adolescence, young adult, and midlife. *The Family Journal: Counseling and Therapy for Couples and Families, 19*, 47-55.

Samovar, L. A., & Porter, R. E. (1995). *Communication between cultures* (2nd ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

Sandberg, J. G., Yorgason, J. B., Miller, R. B., & Hill, E. J. (2012). Family-to-work spillover in Singapore: Marital distress, physical and mental health, and work satisfaction. *Family Relations, 61*, 1-15.

Schmitt, M., Kliegel, M., & Shapiro, A. (2007). Marital interaction in middle and old age: A predictor of marital satisfaction? *International Journal of Aging and Human Development, 65*, 283-300.

Schnall, E., Pelcovitz, D., & Fox, D. (2013). Satisfaction and stressors in a religious minority: A national study of orthodox Jewish marriage. *Journal of Multicultural Counseling and Development, 41*, 4-20.

Schoen, A. A. (2005). Culturally sensitive counseling for Asian Americans/Pacific Islanders. *Journal of Instructional Psychology, 32*, 253-258.

Seki, K., Matsumoto, D., & Imahori, T. T. (2002). The conceptualization and expression of intimacy in Japan and the United States. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology, 33*, 303–319.

Sheely-Moore, A. I., & Kooyman, L. (2011). Infusing multicultural and social justice competencies within counseling practice: A guide for trainers. *Adultspan Journal, 10*, 102-109

Smedley, A., & Smedley, B. D. (2005). Race as biology is fiction, racism as a social problem is real. *American Psychologist, 60*, 16-26.

Sodowsky, G. R., & Plake, B. S. (1992). A study of acculturation differences among

    international people and suggestions for sensitivity to within-group differences. *Journal*

    of Counseling & Development, 71, 53-59.

Solberg, V. S., Choi, K. H., Ritsman, S., & Jolly, A. (1994). Asian-American college students: It

    is time to reach out. *Journal of College Student Development, 35*, 296-301.

Stolorow, R. Atwood, G., & Orange, D. (2002). *Worlds of experiences*. New York, NY: Basic

    Books.

Suinn, R. M., Ahuna, C., & Khoo, G. (1992). The Suinn-Lew Asian Self-Identity Acculturation

    Scale: Concurrent and factorial validation. *Educational and Psychological Measurement,*

    51, 1041-1046.

Suinn, R. M., Khoo, G., & Ahuna, C. (1995). The Suinn-Lew Asian Self-Identity Acculturation

    Scale: Cross-cultural information. *Journal of Multicultural Counseling and Development,*

    23, 139-148.

Suinn, R. M., Rickard-Figueroa, K., Lew, S., & Vigil, P. (1987). The Suinn-Lew Asian Self-

    Identity Acculturation Scale: An initial report. *Educational and Psychological*

    Measurement, 47, 401-407.

Sullivan, C., & Cottone, R. R. (2006). Culture based couple therapy and intercultural

    relationships: A review of the literature. *The Family Journal: Counseling and Therapy*

    for Couples and Families, 14, 221-225.

Tallman, I., & Hsiao, Y-L. (2004). Resources, cooperation, and problem solving in early

    marriage. *Social Psychology Quarterly, 67*, 172-188.

Tata, S. P., & Leorig, F. T. L. (1994). Individualism-collectivism, social-network orientation,

and acculturation as predictors of attitudes toward seeking professional psychological

help among Chinese Americans. *Journal or Counseling Psychology, 41*, 280-287.

Taylor, P., Passel, J. S., Wang, W., Kiley, J., Velasco, G., & Dockterman, D. (2010). *Marrying out: One-in-seven new U. S. marriage is interracial or interethnic.* Retrieved from Pew Research Center: A Social & Demographic Trends Report website: http://pewsocialtrends.org/files/2010/10/755-marrying-out.pdf

Triandis, H. (1994). *Culture and social behavior*. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.

U. S. Census Bureau (2007). *More than 300 counties now "Majority-Minority."* Retrieved from http://www.census.gov/newsroom/releases/archives/population/cb07-113.html

U. S. Census Bureau (2011a). *Overview of race and Hispanic origin: 2010.* Retrieved from www.census.gov/prod/cen2010/briefs/c2010br-02.pdf

U. S. Census Bureau (2011b). *The Hispanic population: 2010.* Retrieved from http://www.census.gov/prod/cen2010/briefs/c2010br-04.pdf

U. S. Census Bureau (2012a). *2010 Census shows interracial and interethnic married couples grew by 28 percent over decade.* Retrieved from http://www.census.gov/newsroom/releases/archives/2010_census/cb12-68.html

U. S. Census Bureau (2012b). *The Asian population: 2010.* Retrieved from http://www.census.gov/prod/cen2010/briefs/c2010br-11.pdf

Vieira, J. M., Ávila, M., & Matos, P. M. (2012). Attachment and parenting: The mediating role of work-family balance in Portuguese parents of preschool children. *Family Relations, 61*, 31-50.

Waldman, K., & Rubalcava, L. (2005). Psychotherapy with intercultural couples: A

contemporary psychodynamic approach. *American Journal of Psychotherapy, 59*, 227-245.

Watson, D., & Humrichouse, J. (2006). Personality development in emerging adulthood: Integrating evidence from self-ratings and spouse ratings. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 91*, 959-974.

Wong, M. G. B. G. (2009). Strengthening connections in interracial marriages through pre-marital inventories: A critical literature review. *Contemporary Family Therapy, 31*, 251-261. doi: 10.1007/s10591-009-9099-1

Worrell, F. C., & Cross, W. E., Jr. (2004). The reliability and validity of Big Five Inventory scores with African American college students. *Journal of Multicultural Counseling and Development, 32*, 18-32.

Wycoff, S., Tinagon, R., & Dickson, S. (2011). Therapeutic practice with Cambodian Refugee families: Trauma, adaption, resiliency, and wellness. *The Family Journal: Counseling and Therapy for Couples and Families, 19*, 165-173.

Young, I. M. (1990). *Justice and politics of differences*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Zhang, Y., & Hook, J. V. (2009). Marital dissolution among interracial couples. *Journal of Marriage and Family, 71*, 95-107.