The Social Relationships of Asian Americans through a Cultural Lens: Relationships as
Outcomes and Contexts

by

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Abstract

Research often emphasizes the importance of social relationships in the lives of Asian Americans yet few studies have examined their social networks. Much of the existing literature is limited by studying Asian Americans as a homogenous group with a focus on family. Asian Americans are least likely to use mental health services and are thought to rely on their social network for support. Recently, there have been important changes in the dynamics and reliance on family members partially caused by social and economic changes as well as geographic mobility. This dissertation examines the question of social relations and help seeking behavior among Asian Americans with three studies. This dissertation used data from the Asian American subsample (n=1628) of the National Latino and Asian American Study (NLAAS) and focused on participants who identified as Chinese (n=600), Filipino (n=508), or Vietnamese (n=520). Ages ranged from 18 to 95 years old (*M*=41.51, SE=.63) with 47.5% men and 52.5% women.

In the first study, variations in relationship quality with spouse, relatives, and friend by cultural and demographic factors were explored. Results indicate that not all relationships are high in positive relationship quality. Relationship quality varied by cultural and demographic factors. Results also suggest that there are similarities in patterns of relationship quality with the general US population and other ethnic minorities.

The second study examined relationship profiles of married and unmarried Asian Americans. Findings suggest that Asian Americans have different types of relationship quality profiles including a profile high in positive quality and one low in positive quality. Profile membership varied by cultural and demographic factors. The high positive quality profile was associated with better mental health.

The third study addressed the implications of social relationships by exploring their association with the use of mental health services. Results indicate that social relationships may facilitate help seeking behavior and are only used as an alternative to mental health services for certain groups. Positive relationship quality with relatives and friends was associated with help seeking behavior. This varied by cultural and demographic factors. Receiving encouragement to seek help was not related to help seeking behavior.

Chapter I

Social Relationships in Asian Americans as Predictors and Outcomes

Social relationships are central in the lives of Asian Americans; they serve as a vital resource. Asian Americans typically describe their relationships as highly supportive and it is generally believed that they rely on their social network for all of their needs (Die & Seelbach, 1988). This high support has been linked to numerous positive outcomes such as higher self-esteem (Kang, Shaver, Sue, Min, & Jin, 2003; Uchida, Kitayama, Mesquita, Reyes, & Morling, 2008) and higher life satisfaction (Kang et al., 2003). Having highly supportive social ties is also believed to be related to low mental health service use; since Asian Americans are assumed to use social ties instead of formal or informal services (Abe-Kim, Takeuchi, & Hwang, 2002; Uba, 1994). Existing literature, however, has been limited by treating Asian Americans as a homogenous group (Uba, 1994) and focusing on familial relationships. Recent research suggests the importance of recognizing the diversity within Asian Americans. Differences have been documented in social relationships between ethnic subgroups (e.g. Mui & Cross, 2003; Serafica, Weng, & Kim, 2000; Zhang & Ta, 2009), generation status (e.g. Serafica et al., 2000), and gender (e.g. Way, Cowal, Gingold, Pahl, & Bissessar, 2001) but few have examined various relationship types, e.g. family versus friendship relationships or spousal versus parental relationships. Research has also suggested that the strength of the

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family unit is decreasing (Kim & McKenry, 1998) which may lead to either Asian

Americans seeking support from other relationships or service organizations to meet their

needs, or to Asian Americans having their needs unmet. The following studies will

explore the social relationships of Asian Americans, with a specific focus on factors that

influence relationship quality with family and friends as well as their association with

help seeking behavior involving mental health related services.

Theoretical Framework

The association between social relationships and health is well established. Social

relationships are often sources of support and encouragement for engaging in health

behaviors such as service utilization. As such social relationships are generally

considered a context for development and support; however, they are also an outcome.

Social relationships are a result of individual and life experiences (Antonucci, Langfahl,

& Akiyama, 2004).

In the Convoy Model, individuals are surrounded by a dynamic network of close

others that moves across time and contexts (Kahn & Antonucci, 1980). This network is

shaped by personal (e.g. age, gender) and situational (e.g. resources, demands) factors

and is a source of support and challenges. Their social network as well as their personal

and situational factors then affects individuals' behavior, health and well-being. These

associations are influenced by the cultural context in which they occur. Culture affects

the historical and life experiences that shape social relationships (Harevan, 1994). For

example, Asian immigrant laborers pre-1965 experienced a large amount of

discrimination including laws that limited the immigration of individuals from Asian

countries. In response, ethnic communities were created and groups of Asian Americans

pooled together their social resources (Zhou, 1992). Culture also establishes norms and practices that influence social interactions and how those social interactions are perceived (Antonucci et al., 2004). In traditional Asian cultures, individuals are expected to respect and obey the wishes of their elders, especially elders within their family (e.g. parents, grandparents) (Zhou, 1992; Zhou, 2006; Zhou & Bankston, 1998). The following studies used the Convoy Model as a framework to better understand the influence of cultural and demographic factors on social relationships as well as the link between social relationships and help seeking behavior for mental health issues.

Relationship Quality

Relationships involve both positive and negative qualities (Antonucci, Birditt, & Webster, 2010; Antonucci et al., 2004). Positive and negative relationship quality at one time was thought to be two ends on a continuum, however, empirical evidence suggests that relationships can be characterized by both positive and negative relationship quality at the same time (e.g. Antonucci, Lansford, & Akiyama, 2001; Finch, Okun, Barrera, Zautra, & Reich, 1989; Ingersoll-Dayton, Morgan, & Antonucci, 1997; Rook, 1984). Relationships may make the individual feel cared for but they may also make the individual feel irritated (Birditt, Jackey, & Antonucci, 2009). Both positive and negative relationship quality have positive and negative implications for well-being. Relationship quality has been found to have greater influence on well-being than structural characteristics (e.g. social network size, contact frequency) with negative quality more highly associated than positive quality (Antonucci et al., 2010). How support is perceived may depend on the developmental stage the individual is in. For example, individuals in early adulthood may perceive advice from family about healthy eating habits as

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supportive while individuals in old age may feel smothered.

Positive Quality. Positive relationship quality refers to the extent to which individual's feel that they are cared for, understood by, and can rely on their social partners. Relationships characterized by positive quality provide the individual with feelings of comfort and love. Generally, positive relationship quality is considered to be beneficial to individuals but it can also have negative implications (Antonucci et al., 2001). Too much support or unwanted support can lead to individuals feeling smothered or helpless (Antonucci et al., 2001; Smith & Goodnow, 1999).

The social relationships of Asian Americans are often assumed to be positive at all ages because of the cultural emphasis on group goals and group harmony (Serafica et al., 2000; Taylor et al., 2004). Asian Americans typically report high levels of family cohesion and support from their family (Kim & McKenry, 1998) but low support from both close and general friendships (Way & Chen, 2000).   This suggests that Asian Americans experience positive relationships quality with family but relationships outside of the family should be further explored.

Negative Quality. Negative relationship quality is the extent to which individuals characterize their relationship with their social partner as demanding or irritating. Typically, negative relationship quality is thought to have negative implications for well-being such as leading to feelings of being overwhelmed or overburdened. However, negative relationship quality can also influence positive aspects of well-being (Antonucci et al., 2001; Birditt et al., 2009). For example, a social partner may control the individual's diet to improve their health.

Literature regarding negative relationship quality in Asian Americans has focused

on cultural conflict. Cultural conflict involves differing views about the cultural beliefs and practices in which an individual engages. The most common cultural conflict studied is intergenerational conflict, which involves conflict that arises when there is discord between generations regarding cultural views and practices (Chung, 2001). This may not be as relevant for recent immigrants because of advances in media and communication. Individuals around the world are exposed to American culture through television, the internet, magazines, and other forms of media. Before immigration, families may have already decided to incorporate aspects of US culture and/or maintain aspects of their traditional culture. Given the interconnectedness of Asian Americans (Serafica et al., 2000; Taylor et al., 2004), other aspects of negative relationship quality such as being too demanding or irritating may have important implications for individual well-being. In a cross-cultural study of individuals in the US and Japan, Takahashi and colleagues (2002) found that conflict was not highly negatively correlated with affect. This suggests that individuals from Asian cultures do experience conflict in their relationships but negative qualities like conflict may not be associated with the same outcomes as is the case among individuals from western cultures.

Relationship Types

In general, social relationships vary in the benefits and challenges they provide individuals by relationship type (Birditt et al., 2009; Serafica et al., 2000). Research on social relationships in Asian Americans predominantly involves family as they are viewed as the main source of support (Die & Seelbach, 1989; Zhang & Ta, 2009). Literature suggests however, that Asian Americans have a wider social network involving friends and community groups (e.g. Die & Seelbach, 1989; Mui & Cross, 2003).

Spousal Relationship. The spousal relationship is a long-lasting and intimate relationship and serves as a main source of support for individuals. Research on social relations in adults has primarily focused on the marital relationship as individuals tend to turn to their spouses to share times of joy and seek comfort from them in times of stress and/or sadness (Antonucci et al., 2001). The literature also suggests that while spouses are a source of close and intimate support, they are also the source of irritation and stress (Antonucci, Akiyama, & Lansford, 1998). The spousal relationship may change across time as individuals experience different developmental milestones such as changes in their job and job responsibilities, becoming parents, or becoming caretakers for family members. These changes in roles may strengthen and/or strain the marital relationship.

Asian Americans are more likely to be married (Zhou & Xiong, 2005) and least likely to get divorced compared to all other ethnic groups (Reeves & Bennett, 2004), yet there remains little research on the spousal relationship among Asian Americans. Traditional Asian beliefs ascribe stereotypical gender roles within the spousal relationship with men as the decision maker and financial provider while women are in charge of household responsibilities and raising children (Chin, 2000). The spousal relationship in Asian Americans is often depicted as harmonious as husband and wife work together for the benefit of the family unit (Chin, 2000; Zhou, 1992). The spousal relationship may be a main source of support, as they must depend on each other as they adapt to a new country together and/or face challenges such as discrimination. Traditional gender roles are not found among all Asian American marital dyads, as spousal roles have been adapted to social and economic circumstances in the US (Kibria, 1994; Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2003; Hondagneu-Sotelo & Cranford, 1999; Mahler & Pessar,

2006; Pessar, 2005; Suarez-Orozco & Qin, 2006). Previous literature has revealed that the marital relationship among Asian Americans also has conflict and strain (e.g. Chin, 2000). In the US, women experience an increase in power within the family and are presented with more opportunities outside of the home. Men's struggle to acquire jobs that will support their family financially and high labor demands for women as domestic workers often necessitates wives joining the workforce and in some instances they become the primary financial provider (Chin, 2000; Kibria, 1994). Men often view the decrease in power at home and these new freedoms afforded to the women in the household as a threat to maintaining their cultural heritage. In response, men may enforce traditional gender roles because they are feeling marginalized in other areas of their life such as work or society at large, where they have little or no control (Espin, 2006; Espiritu, 2001; Kibria, 1994; Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2003; Mahler & Pessar, 2006; Suarez-Orozco & Qin, 2006; Tang & Dion, 1999). To fulfill traditional gender roles, women face high demands from their family as they are expected to work to contribute financially as well as meet all the household responsibilities (Zhou, 1992). Spouses, while a main source of support especially for recent immigrants, may also be a source of conflict and stress.

Family. Family is an important resource for individuals and a central part of their social networks throughout their lives. Relationships with family are dynamic across the lifespan as role changes are associated with both consistency and change (Brubaker, 1990). Individuals are often recipients of support from their family during childhood and are expected to reciprocate as they enter adolescence and adulthood (Zhou, 1992; Zhou, 2006; Zhou & Bankston, 1998). As individuals go through adulthood, they may start

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families of their own becoming spouses and parents. Individuals may also experience role reversals during adulthood, as they are needed to provide care for their aging parents (Zhou, 1992; Zhou, 2006; Zhou & Bankston, 1998). Family relationships generally vary in both their both positive and negative qualities (Antonucci et al., 2010; Birditt et al., 2009).

Social support research suggests that family is the main source of emotional, financial, and practical support for Asian Americans (Die & Seelbach, 1989; Zhang & Ta, 2009). This reliance on family may be a result of feelings of mutual obligation (Antonucci et al., 2004; Taylor, Welch, Kim, & Sherman, 2007). For example, parents are obligated to care and provide for their children, especially when their children are young, while their children must reciprocate when their parents enter later life. The centrality of the family, however, may no longer be applicable to Asian Americans, as family dynamics have changed due to geographic mobility, smaller families, and fewer multigenerational households. Age-related role expectations are changing. Some Asian American parents no longer expect their child to care for them in their old age because they do not want to burden their child (Kim & McKenry, 1998). As a main source of support, family relationships can have both positive and negative qualities. Individuals may feel overwhelmed by familial responsibilities such as being a cultural broker, having to help out financially, and assisting with childcare. The effect of family responsibilities may depend on the individual's age. Individuals in adolescence may feel burdened by the adult responsibilities (i.e. translator, cultural broker) they are given as they try to have the same experience as other individuals their age.

Friends. Friendships differ from familial relationships as they involve nonrelated

peers whose relationships are based more on shared experiences and interests (Crohan & Antonucci, 1989). As friendships are typically relationships of choice, previous research has found that friendships are characterized by positive qualities more so than negative. Generally, friends are sources of companionship and emotional support (Antonucci et al., 2001; Birditt et al., 2009). For ethnic minorities, friends are also an important source of informational support, providing information regarding job opportunities (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1994) and social services (Zhou & Xiong, 2005) among other areas.

The focus on family has led to few studies on Asian American friendships (Serafica et al., 2000) with most exploring friendship selection and/or comparing friendships by ethnic group. Asian Americans often select friends of the same ethnicity as they share similar backgrounds (e.g. Ying et al., 2001). Existing research beyond friend selection is scattered with different aspects of social relationships explored among different age groups. Asian American adolescents report low support from their close and general friendships (Way & Chen, 2000) while college age Asian Americans have friends but do not use them for direct support or ask for help when they have a problem (Taylor et al., 2007). Studies of Asian American elderly have found they use friends for informational support (Mui & Cross, 2003) and companionship (Wong, Yoo, & Stewart, 2005). Little attention has been given to exploring the quality of friendships in adults. One study focusing on Asian American women suggests that friendships may not be beneficial as they extend their role as caretakers in their familial relationships to their friendships leading to feelings of obligation to provide friends with the same care and support as family (Serafica et al., 2000). Friends may fulfill different roles at different ages, as an individual's support needs change across the lifespan.

In summary, the social relationships of Asian Americans have both positive and negative qualities. Nevertheless, the cultural context of Asian Americans suggests that the experience and influence of positive and negative relationship quality may be different for Asian Americans. Differences in the influence of positive and negative relationship quality may affect the association between social relationships and help seeking behaviors. For example, an individual may seek emotional support from their supportive social network rather than seeking help from a professional. These studies focus on both positive and negative relationship quality in various relationship types such as spouse, family, and friends to better understand relationship dynamics and its implications for service use for mental health issues in Asian Americans.

Chapter II

Study 1: Asian American Relationship Quality through a Cultural Lens

Asian Americans are one of the fastest growing groups in the US making up 4.3%

of the population in 2000, a 63% increase from 1990 (US Census, 2001; Zhou & Xiong,

2005), as a result of both immigration and births. Research on Asian Americans

continues to be limited by the assumption that all Asian Americans are predominantly

influenced by a general Asian culture and have not considered differences at the

individual and family level as they adapt to the majority culture and the changes that have

occurred in the US such as geographic mobility, economic fluctuations, and labor force

demands (e.g. Kim & McKenry, 1998; Wong et al., 2005). The current understanding of

social relationships of Asian Americans is predominantly linked to Confucian beliefs

such as filial piety, obedience, and collectivism (e.g. Oyserman, Coon, & Kemmelmeier,

2002; Takahashi, Ohara, Antonucci, Akiyama, 2002; Taylor et al., 2004). Recent

research, however, challenges these notions. For example, Asian American elderly no

longer expect their adult children to care for them because they do not want to be a

burden to them (Wong et al., 2005) or because their child does not live nearby (Mui &

Cross, 2003). Changes in dynamics of social relationships and the support exchange in

Asian Americans have implications for health, well-being, and needs for services as it has

been previously assumed that family primarily supports and provides for the needs of its

members.

Asian Americans are thought to have strong supportive ties with their social network, particularly with familial relationships (Die & Seelbach, 1989; Zhang & Ta, 2009). Much of this is based on the idea that individuals from Asian cultures are collectivist/interdependent, a perspective based on Confucian beliefs. Collectivism/interdependence involves placing the group's goal before the individual's. The individual focuses on maintaining social ties and group harmony by engaging in behavior that benefits the overall group and avoids behavior that may disrupt group harmony and/or brings attention to them as an individual. Individuals from collectivist cultures are thought to be discouraged from expressing negative emotions, engaging in conflict, or discussing their problems (Takahashi et al., 2002; Taylor et al., 2004). This concept provides a useful framework for understanding the social relations of Asian Americans but does not take into account the heterogeneity among Asian Americans and that the cultural values it is based on may have been adapted to fit within the US culture. Previous work that has explored the relevance of collectivism revealed that while there are differences between cultures considered to be collectivist and individualist there are also similarities (Takahashi et al., 2002). Oyserman and colleagues (2002) found in a meta-analysis that being family focused is not just a characteristic of collectivist cultures but individualistic cultures as well. This study builds on previous work by acknowledging the heterogeneity within Asian Americans and exploring the variations in both positive and negative relationship quality by specific Asian cultural and demographic factors.

Social Relationships

Social relationships have both positive qualities, which involve feelings of being cared for and understood as well as negative qualities such as social partners being too demanding (Antonucci et al., 2010; Antonucci et al., 2004). Both positive and negative relationship quality are associated with positive and negative well-being (Antonucci et al., 2001). The quality of one's social relationships, however, varies by relationship type as each has their own roles and expectations (Antonucci et al., 2010). Previous literature indicates that positive and negative relationship quality varies by demographic factors such as age and gender. Older individuals report relationships lower in conflict and stress than younger individuals (Birditt & Fingerman, 2003; Birditt, Fingerman & Almeida, 2005; Fingerman, Hay, & Birditt, 2004). Individuals may learn to regulate their emotions and/or focus on positive relationships as they age. Adult women, however, often indicate that their close relationships are a main source of stress (Antonucci, 2001; Antonucci et al., 1998). This may be a result of the roles they occupy within their social relationships such as kin keeper and/or the tendency to be affected more by the negative aspects of their social relationships than men (Antonucci et al., 1998). The current study builds on the existing literature by exploring the variations in positive and negative relationship quality by cultural and demographic factors for multiple relationship types.

Cultural and Demographic Heterogeneity

The term Asian American encompasses numerous diverse countries without accounting for different languages, cultures, religions, generation status, reasons for immigration, and cultural history (Gee, 2004; Takeuchi et al., 1998; Zhou & Xiong, 2005). This study explores how various cultural factors, such as ethnic subgroup,

generation status, planned immigration, English proficiency, and religion, and demographic factors, such as age, gender, and marital status, influence positive and negative relationship quality in Asian Americans.

Ethnic Subgroup. Previous research has treated Asian Americans as a homogenous group or looked at specific ethnic subgroups predominantly focusing on East Asian counties (Uba, 1994). Each ethnic subgroup has their own cultural beliefs and practices as well as history with the US that may influence available social resources and relationship dynamics.

Vietnamese. Little is known about the social relations of Vietnamese Americans (Die & Seelbach, 1988). They may have experienced the most disruption in their social network and have the most need for social support when they immigrated as many came to the US as refugees (Lin, Tazuma, & Masuda, 1979; Uba, 1994; Zhou & Xiong, 2005).

The influx of Vietnamese immigrants began after 1965 with the majority immigrating as refugees after 1970. Unlike other Asian groups, Vietnamese were forced out of their country of origin with little preparation for their departure and little control over where they settled once in the US. Vietnamese typically immigrated as families but had few resources, limited formal education, little to no English proficiency, and a lack of familiarity with US culture (Zhou & Bankston, 1998).

Vietnamese immigrated in different waves. The first wave was predominantly military personnel, professionals and members of the Catholic Church. Vietnamese continued to leave as they experienced harsh treatment directed towards those who fought with or helped the US. Refugees were placed in camps before they settled in the US. It is in these camps where refugees created communities for social support. Programs for the

camps were created to help refugees learn English, job skills, and to help with personal problems. Although families immigrated together, often times not all members of the family immigrated together or they were split up during the immigration process. Reunification for these families was a slow process (Zhou & Bankston, 1998).

Unlike other ethnic subgroups, Vietnamese received support from social and government institutions during their immigration process (Kibria, 1994). Voluntary agencies took financial and personal responsibility for families for up to two years. Refugees were also eligible for numerous types of public assistance. Initially, Vietnamese refugees were settled across the US with no ethnic enclaves for support because US refugee policy was focused on residential dispersal. Vietnamese refugees engaged in secondary migration due to better job opportunities and to be closer to family. This led to Vietnamese refugees regrouping in larger concentrations and forming ethnic communities (Zhou & Bankston, 1998). Vietnamese immigrants who lived in ethnic enclaves found their social relations within the community to be vital resources providing both social and economic resources (Kibria, 1994). Circumstances surrounding Vietnamese Americans' immigration and how the US handled their arrival affects available social resources and relationship dynamics, especially perceptions of social relationships. The social networks of Vietnamese Americans were often disrupted as family and/or friends were separated or missing (Zhou & Bankston, 1998). This may lead to valuing the relationships they do have and viewing them more positively. Limited social networks may also lead to more demands both formal and informal, as there are fewer people to fulfill individuals' social support needs.

Filipino. There has been limited research on Filipino Americans (Uba, 1994) yet

they are one of the largest Asian ethnic subgroup in the US (Zhou & Xiong, 2005).

Filipino Americans have the unique history of coming from a country that has been

colonized by numerous European countries as well as the US. Filipino Americans are

traditionally Catholic (Tan & Dong, 2000; Zhou & Xiong, 2005) so they may not be

influenced by cultural practices that are linked to Confucian beliefs such as filial piety.

In 1902, the Philippines became an US territory. The first wave of immigrants

came to the US as American nationals. They were allowed to live and travel in the US but

they could not become naturalized citizens. Early immigrants were predominantly men

students sponsored by the government to attain a degree in the US and then return to the

Philippines. The next set of student immigrants came to the US between 1910 and 1938

but the government did not sponsor them. Many did not finish their degree and decided to

remain in the US, which led to their employment as unskilled laborers. They did not have

the education and they lacked citizenship so they had limited job options. These student

immigrants joined the second wave of immigrants who were unskilled laborers. Many of

these early immigrants did not start families or bring their families to the US because

they were denied numerous rights including unemployment benefits, owning real estate

in many states, and obtaining marriage licenses (Liu, Ong, & Rosenstein, 1991).

Immigration decreased in the early 1930s due to quotas put in place by the

Tydings-McDuffie Act as racial animosity heightened. It was difficult to establish

communities as there were few Filipino families in the US and many immigrants were

migratory workers. Communities developed where immigrant students went to school

and places where migratory workers tended to be but there was little cultural uniformity

as the immigrant population came from numerous places in the Philippines. Any

increases in the Filipino American community were to the unskilled labor force or wives of servicemen (Liu et al., 1991).

The majority of Filipino immigrants came to the US after the Immigration Act of 1965 was enacted. Many came to the US by way of family reunification with the focus on spouses and parents. There was an increase in marriages for Filipinos, as men were allowed to send for their wives, men returned to the Philippines to get married, and there were more Filipinas in the US. Similar to other ethnic subgroups Filipino immigrants ranged in SES from the unskilled to the professional. In the mid-1960s through the 1970s, many immigrated as health practitioners because of the shortage in medical personnel while unskilled laborers continued to immigrate to provide cheap labor (Liu et al., 1991). The relationship and history between the Philippines and the US as well as the context under which Filipinos immigrate to the US may lead to differences in social support needs as well as the norms and practices that shape social interactions compared to other ethnic subgroups. For example, Filipino Americans usually do not have to overcome a language barrier or struggle to transition into the US labor market as they have learned English in the Philippines (Zhou & Xiong, 2005).

Chinese. Most research has been done on Chinese Americans who are one of the largest (Zhou & Xiong, 2005) and oldest Asian subgroups in the US. Individuals from China began immigrating to the US in the 1800s with dreams of finding gold and returning to China rich. After slavery was abolished there was high demand for cheap labor so many Chinese immigrants came to the US as contract laborers under the coolie system. Companies would pay for the individual's passage to the US and emigration fees and then the individual would work off the debt. It was difficult to pay their debt,

however, because the companies would pay them barely enough to survive. Early

immigrants were sojourners or people who did not intend to settle in the US, rather they

wanted to make money in the US and return to their families in China. Most of the early

immigrants were poor men with families who remained in China and to whom they

planned to return. A smaller group was merchants who immigrated with their family. For

the most part, these early immigrants kept to themselves with no interest in assimilating

to the US. Social networks were developed among people who came from the same

village or area in China. In the late 19th century, hostility towards Chinese laborers grew

and led to the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1882. As a result many immigrants did not visit

their families in China because they would be denied re-entry to the US. Chinese

immigration decreased dramatically with the majority immigrating as "paper sons" or

men with falsified documents claiming they were the sons of someone US born or a

merchant. As noted above, the majority of the Chinese Americans in the US were men

sojourners with little education and poor English ability. They formed bachelor

communities to provide one another social support and protection, grouping themselves

by family or clans. Many migrated east to escape the discrimination in the west (Zhou,

1992).

Political world events led to change in Chinese American communities. During

the Communist takeover in the 1940s, the Chinese were allowed to immigrate to the US

as refugees. The Chinese Exclusion Act was repealed in 1943 and the War Brides Act of

1945 was enacted. The change in legislation allowed more Chinese women to immigrate

and families to be reunited resulting in a more balanced sex ratio among the Chinese

community in the US (Zhou, 1992).

In 1965, the Immigration Act of 1965 was enacted which led to the largest

increase in Chinese immigration. Unlike prior Chinese immigration, this new wave is

diverse, originating from numerous countries and ranging in SES as well as skill sets. The

majority of this new wave comes from Hong Kong, Taiwan, mainland China, Korea, and

other Southeast Asian countries. They range in skills from unskilled laborers to skilled

professionals. One of the main goals of the changed legislation was family reunification.

Chinese immigrants are no longer coming to the US with the mindset of returning home

but rather to settle. Many are bringing family over to the US through family-chain

migration (Zhou, 1992). Due to US immigration legislation, Chinese Americans are the

oldest ethnic subgroup in the US but still consists of a large immigrant population (Zhou

& Xiong, 2005). Chinese Americans' immigration experience and experience within the

US influences their social relationships and affects the social resources available,

relationship dynamics, as well as gender roles and expectations. For example, Chinese

Americans who immigrated before 1965 are less likely to have a spouse and family in the

US leading to more reliance on friends (Zhou, 1992).

The current understanding regarding the social relationships of Asian Americans

comes predominantly from research that involves Chinese Americans. Their experience,

however, may be different from other subgroups such as Vietnamese and Filipino

Americans.

Generation Status. Challenges an individual must overcome, their needs, and the

resources they have available to them are influenced by the individual's generation status.

Social support is particularly important for all immigrants as they adapt to a new country.

The social network of immigrants is integral to their adjustment as they rely on them for

emotional and informational support to help navigate a new country (Lin et al., 1979; Kuo & Tsai, 1986; Serafica et al., 2000). Immigrants in general, typically select friends from the same ethnic group especially if they live in an ethnic enclave (Serafica et al., 2000). Immigration is likely to strain familial relationships as family roles may change as they adapt to their new circumstance such as the wife becoming financial provider (Chin, 2000) or children taking on more responsibilities due to language barriers (Wong et al., 2005). Timing of immigration may affect an individual's social resources and support needs. Due to immigration restrictions, Asian Americans who immigrated pre-1965 were less likely to have social resources from family, which increased their dependence on support from friends (Zhou, 1992).

Age of immigration may influence an individual's immigration experience, as it is associated with developmental issues the individual is experiencing while adapting to a new country and the resources made available to them. Individuals who immigrate before age 12 grasp US cultural values and learn English faster than those who immigrate at older ages, as they will have received the majority of their schooling in the US. Generally these individuals will have the same opportunities as those born in the US (Takeuchi, Hong, Gile, & Alegria, 2007). Individuals who immigrate between ages 13 and 17 years old may experience the most challenges as they are trying to form their identities while adapting to a new country (Espin, 2006). These individuals may struggle to keep up in school while learning English. They also may have difficulties fitting in with their peers as they adjust to a new culture while their parents try to maintain traditional values and practices. Those who have immigrated between the ages 18-40 have received most, if not all, of their schooling in another country and may have difficulties learning English

(Takeuchi et al., 2007). These individuals may have social networks limited to those who share their language of origin due to English language limitations. Those who attend college in the US have less difficulty acquiring a job while those who did not may find it difficult to transfer their schooling and experience (Takeuchi et al., 2007). Individuals who are 40 years or older when they immigrate may have to overcome a decrease in status as they may not be able to transfer their higher level established careers from their native country to the US. Many may also have the majority of their social network in their country of origin leading to social isolation (Takeuchi et al., 2007).

Individuals who are first generation born in the US are said to straddle two worlds (Chung, 2001). These individuals are likely to have high expectations placed on them as often many parents immigrate to the US making sacrifices so that their children could have better opportunities. Particularly in Asian American families, parents provide large amounts of support to help their child achieve. It is then the child's responsibility to increase the family's social status through high achievement in school and by attaining well-paying and respected job (Kibria, 1994; Zhou, 2006). Power dynamics within the family are often altered, as parents may not speak English while the child does. The child then must act as a cultural broker acting as a language translator as well as explaining US culture to their parents and their culture of origin to outsiders (Mahler & Pessar, 2006).

Less is known about individuals considered second generation born or later. Little research has been done on Asian Americans of later generations because the number of Asian Americans considered second generation or later is small due to government immigration policies (Zhou, 1992; 2006). Ethnic identity research on Asian Americans, however, suggests that individuals of later generation status (e.g. second

generation US born) identify less with their culture of heritage and a stronger affiliation with the American culture (Phinney, 1990; Tsai & Curbow, 2001; Tuan, 1999).

English Proficiency. Language barriers are a common challenge immigrants' experience. English proficiency, the ability to read, write, and speak English, affects with whom an individual interacts and the dynamic of their interactions. Individuals who are limited in their English ability may have difficulty communicating and establishing relationships with individuals who do not speak their native language. This may be especially restrictive for individuals who do not live in ethnic enclaves, leading to more dependence on family. A study on interracial same-sex friendships in Asian American women found that English proficiency was a problem for less intimate relationships (Sudweeks, Gudykunst, Ting-Toomey, & Nishida, 1990). If Asian Americans with limited English proficiency are unable to establish intimate friendships, it may lead to a stronger dependence on familial relationships.

English proficiency also affects relationship dynamics in immigrant homes. Power dynamics within relationships are altered when there is a large discrepancy in English ability (Espin, 2006; Zhou & Bankston, 1998). Those with limitations may become reliant on those who are proficient to communicate for them. Previous research illustrates changes in family dynamics when there are varying levels of English proficiency (Espin, 2006). Children often gain power in the family, as they are needed not only as translators but also as cultural brokers for their parents (Mahler & Pessar, 2006). This increase in power, however, also comes with an increase in demands from family, as they are responsible for communicating with social services, medical professionals, and schools.

Communication within families is influenced by the English proficiency of its family members. Studies have found that as English proficiency increases the individual loses their proficiency in their native language (Portes & Hao, 2002). As this occurs conflict within the family often increases as the individual loses the ability to effectively communicate with their parents (Portes & Hao, 2002). Family members with more traditional beliefs may also perceive the individual as becoming 'too Americanized' and as turning away from their culture of origin (Zhou & Xiong, 2005). In a study of East Asian, Filipino, and Latin American adolescents, adolescents who spoke a different language than their parents discussed less and had lower cohesion with their parents (Tseng & Fuligni, 2000).

Planned Immigration. The context in which individuals leave their country of origin and are received in their new country affects how they perceive their social interactions. Based on this, Ogbu (1990) outlined three types of immigrants: autonomous, immigrant, and involuntary minorities. Autonomous minorities are minorities only in number as their social mobility is not limited. Immigrant minorities are those who generally immigrate voluntarily with the expectation that they will have better educational and economic opportunities as well as more political freedom in the US. These individuals believe that with hard work barriers to social mobility can be overcome. Individuals brought to the US through slavery, conquests or colonization are involuntary minorities. These individuals believe that their lives were better in their country of origin than in the US where social, economic, and political barriers have been created to oppress them (Ogbu, 1990). Asian Americans generally immigrate to the US by choice or as refugees and therefore can be categorized as immigrant minorities. Within

this category, however, variations in preparedness for immigration affect the resources that will be available to the individual in the US.

Individuals who plan their move to a new country can anticipate and plan for the change in their social network as they leave family and friends (Kuo & Tsai, 1986). These individuals have more control over where they move such that they can settle near family and/or friends or an ethnic enclave, increasing the likelihood that support will be available to them during their transition. These individuals can plan for the changes they may experience by speaking with people already living in the US. Individuals who are unable to plan their exit, such as refugees may experience disruptions in their social networks, as they are likely to lose contact with family and/or friends (Atkinson, Ponterotto, & Sanchez, 1984; Serafica et al., 2000; Uba, 1994). These individuals may also have more of a need for support as they cope with the trauma of their home country such as religious persecution (Lin et al., 1979; Uba, 1994). Refugees may be particularly vulnerable. They often do not choose where they settle and are at the mercy of government programs or other sponsors such as churches, which was the case for many Vietnamese refugees (Zhou & Bankston, 1998).

Gender. Gender affects relationship dynamics as it dictates role expectations and ascribes appropriate behavior in social interactions. In general, women report less positive and more negative relations than men (Antonucci, 2001). Social relationships may be influenced by gender differently for Asian Americans due to cultural norms. Gender is a complex construct for Asian Americans as roles and role expectations are influenced by traditional gender beliefs, age of the individual, circumstances in which their family immigrates, and adaptations to gender roles that occur once in the US.

Traditional gender beliefs in Asian cultures draw a large distinction between men and women. Men have all the power regarding decision making and access to resources as they are expected to perpetuate the family name and support the family financially. Women from birth are not considered part of their natal family because they will belong to their future husband's family once they are married. As a result, traditionally families invest little in girls because it is considered a waste or loss of resources. To compensate their family for what they do invest, a girl often works for the family without pay (e.g. work in fields), provides their natal family support throughout their lives, and in some cases when a girl marries her husband's family pays a dowry or bride price. A woman gains status once she is married. Her status is then dependent upon that of her husband's status within his family. Once married, a woman's role is to care for her husband as well as bear and raise children (Zhou, 1992).

Gender dynamics change when family members immigrate. Depending on labor demands husbands and/or wives may immigrate before the rest of the family. Historically, when husbands immigrated before their wives and children they would either do so to establish themselves before sending for their family or return to their native country (sojourners). These circumstances afforded women both constraints and freedoms. Their husband's family and/or community monitored their behavior and activities but they also gained decision making power in areas such as finances in their husband's absence (Hondagneu-Sotelo & Cranford, 1999; Pedraza, 1991; Pessar, 2005). Their husbands, particularly those who immigrated prior to 1965, lived in bachelor communities leaving the men to take on responsibilities usually given to women (e.g. cooking, cleaning, etc.). Due to these adaptations, once the family was reunited, husbands

were more willing to help their spouse with household responsibilities (Pessar, 2005; Pessar & Mahler, 2001). Changes in the labor market has led to a higher demand for women so women are often immigrating before their families or with their husbands but leaving their children behind with family (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2003; Pedraza, 1991). Contributing financially to the family increases women's decision making power within the family but the separation from their children, especially, if it is for long periods of time, lead to disruptions in the social networks of the child. The child must adapt to parents leaving and then the child must adapt to the reemergence of their parents and the loss of their caregiver once reunited (Suarez-Orozco, Todorova, & Louie, 2002).

In the US, traditional gender roles and expectations are modified to adapt to the new contexts and circumstances Asian Americans experience. Women experience both new opportunities and constraints while men experience a decrease in power and status. Changes in the labor market and men's struggle to find work to support the family has led to the expectation that women contribute financially to the family household (Kibria, 1994). Women who contribute financially to the household are given more decision making power, specifically increased influence in family financial decision making (Mahler & Pessar, 2006; Pessar, 2005; Suarez-Orozco & Qin, 2006). Women also have the opportunity to have social lives and own property (Hondagneu-Sotelo & Cranford, 1999). Men, however, experience a decrease in status and power in multiple domains including work and home (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2003; Mahler & Pessar 2006; Pessar, 2005; Suarez-Orozco & Qin, 2006). Education and experience attained in a different country often does not transfer to the US leading to immigrant men taking jobs below their skill set with little opportunity for career growth. At home, men lose power to

women, as they are no longer the primary financial provider (Kibria, 1994).

In response to the loss of power in the home, men may attempt to regain power by enforcing traditional gender roles on the women in the household. Women are expected to be submissive, self-sacrificing, nurturing, and docile (Abraham, 1999) by taking care of household and childcare responsibilities in addition to working. Women are also seen as kin-keepers and cultural bearers, receiving pressure from family to maintain interconnectedness among the family and family networks (Espiritu, 2001; Suarez-Orozco & Qin, 2006) as well as continue cultural practices and keep cultural values alive. Daughters experience the most restrictions as their sexual purity is equated with maintaining traditional values and must be protected by the men in the family (Espin, 2006; Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2003; Mahler & Pessar, 2006). This leads to daughters being restricted in many ways including activities, clothes, friendships and romantic relationships. Women often oppose the traditional gender role ascribed to them leading to increased family conflict (Suarez-Orozco & Qin, 2006; Tang & Dion, 1999). Sons, however, are monitored much less and are allowed numerous freedoms. Men in the family are expected to have sons of their own to carry on the family name and take care of their parents in their old age (Tang & Dion, 1999). Gender affects the roles and expectations placed on the individual as well as how they interact, their perceptions and expectations of those interactions.

Age. Age also affects the context of one's social relationships as it is associated with various developmental milestones and changes in role expectations. As individuals go through the life course they experience different developmental needs, which may affect their social relationships (Antonucci et al., 2004). In late adolescence and emerging

adulthood, particularly for those who go to college, dynamics within social networks change. The importance of friendships may increase as individuals spend more time with their peers and engage in new experiences such as living away from home. During this time, however, family is still an influential social resource (Lau, Quadrel, & Hartman, 1990). As individuals shift into early adulthood, establishing careers and families become focal points. Expectations also increase as individuals may be expected to contribute financially and provide assistance to family, as they no longer have to focus on academics. In middle adulthood, individuals may be strained by their social network as they meet the needs of their family of procreation and help care for their aging parents (Grundy & Henretta, 2006; Riley & Bowen, 2005). Individuals in late adulthood and old age experience a status change. Health issues may lead to an increase in need for social support to care for them or assist with daily tasks. Individuals, however, may perceive the support they are given as encroaching on their independence (Antonucci & Akiyama, 1995). For example, an adult daughter whose father has high blood pressure may be expected to monitor everything her father eats, especially if he is a widower. At the same time individuals at this stage may experience more positive relationship quality than negative relationship quality. Studies on social relationships in general suggest that as individuals age they are less likely to report low quality relationships as they have eliminated problem relationships and improved emotion regulation (Carstensen, Isaacowitz, & Charles, 1999), although low quality spousal relationships remains stable (Akiyama, Antonucci, Takahashi, & Langfahl, 2003).

Culture influences the link between age and social relationships. Asian culture dictates role expectations for individuals across the lifespan. These role expectations may

influence relationship quality, especially if there are differences in cultural beliefs between relationship members. Filial piety and obedience to elders influences relationship dynamics for Asian Americans across the life course. Parents and other family support the child, often making personal sacrifices, during the child's younger years with the expectation of reciprocity at a later point in the lifespan (Zhou, 1992; Zhou, 2006; Zhou & Bankston, 1998). Children are also expected to respect their elders, especially their parents and defer to their parents' decisions throughout their lives even when they are the care providers for their aging parents. This could be a result of traditional Asian beliefs that elevates the status of elders as individuals who are respected and wise, which may lessen the change in power dynamics for elderly Asian Americans (Zhou & Bankston, 1998). Individuals across the life course experience different developmental demands, changes in their roles as well as role expectations. Relationship quality with individuals in one's social network may vary as individuals face different developmental milestones and variations in role expectations. Relationships may be supportive, stressful or both as individuals are confronted with these challenges.

Other Factors

Other demographic factors that are associated with relationship quality are religion, marital status and socioeconomic status (SES). These factors may serve as indicators of the social resources available to the individual.

Religious Affiliation. Religious affiliation is often used as an indicator of an individual's religious beliefs and practices; however, it also provides individuals with social opportunities and increased access to societal resources. Immigrants, in particular, may find religious affiliation to be an important resource. Ethnic Christian churches (e.g.

Chinese Community Church, Chinese Lutheran Church, etc.) help ease the assimilation process for immigrants by identifying Christian values that correspond with traditional ethnic values, thus integrating the different cultures (Yang, 1999). In general, affiliating with a religion provides an individual opportunity to meet new people and maintain existing ties through church events (Serafica et al., 2000). The broader an individual's support network the more access they may have to societal resources such as job opportunities.

Marital Status. The spousal relationship influences an individual's social network. Research on social relations has found that the marital relationship becomes a focal relationship for individuals representing a primary source of support but also irritation (Antonucci et al., 1998). Being married also adds additional roles (e.g. husband/wife, son/daughter-in-law, sister/brother-in-law) and the demands of those roles may affect other relationships. For example, individuals may have less time for friends due to spousal responsibilities or individuals may rely more on friends for support if there is conflict with their spouse. Individuals who are married are more likely to be parents. Responsibilities associated with being a parent also influence an individual's social relationships. The spousal relationship may be strained due to disagreements about the division of childcare responsibilities.

Socioeconomic Status. SES is also a factor that influences an individual's social resources and will be included as a control variable in this study. In part due to immigration post 1965, Asian Americans represent a wide range of SES. Asian American immigrants post-1965 are moving to the US with a variety of educational backgrounds (e.g. educated professionals, manual laborers, etc.) and economic resources (Zhou &

Xiong, 2005). This range in SES has implications for relationship dynamics. Individuals with low SES often work with their social network, especially family, to pool together resources (Kibria, 1994). For example, extended family members may live together to pool income and share household and childcare responsibilities creating a sense of mutual dependence. Individuals with higher SES may not need to rely on others in their social network who would expect reciprocal support from them. Higher SES may also indicate multiple family members contributing financially. SES influences settlement patterns as well. Individuals from lower SES tend to settle in downtown areas in ethnic enclaves. Once settled in these enclaves, there is little interaction with other ethnic groups and few opportunities for upward mobility. Given these limited resources, there is often little change in SES between generations. Individuals with higher SES settle in suburbs and/or areas with diversity that provides better opportunities and access to resources (Zhou, 2006). The SES of these individuals is likely to improve over generations as they increase their chances of attaining higher levels of education and better paying jobs.

To sum, Asian Americans are often incorrectly perceived to be a group that is uniformly influenced by traditional Asian American beliefs. Research has begun to recognize the diversity within Asian Americans and acknowledge that ethnic subgroups may have different cultural beliefs and practices that govern their social interactions. They have been depicted as a group with an overall strong supportive social network and close familial ties; however, relationships characterized by negative quality may be more prevalent than previously believed. Relationship dynamics may vary depending on the cultural beliefs and practices to which individuals ascribe as situational factors such as geographic mobility and the historical changes in the relationship Asian Americans have

with the US such as the Immigration Act of 1965 (Kim & McKenry, 1998; Wong, Yoo, & Stewart, 2005). These same factors may also lead to similarities with other ethnic groups (i.e. African Americans, Latinos, etc.) as they share common experiences such as the immigration process.

Present Study

This study addresses the broad question: does the heterogeneity within Asian Americans influence the quality of their social relationships? Three specific questions will be examined: (1) Does positive and/or negative relationship quality with spouse, relatives, and family vary by cultural and demographic factors?; (2) Do these patterns vary for specific ethnic subgroups?; and (3) Do these patterns vary by demographic factors? Cultural and demographic factors affect social resources such as disruptions in social networks, social resource needs, role and role expectations in social relationships, ability to effectively communicate with others, ability to understand others' perspectives, and an individual's social opportunities.

Circumstances that involve limited social resources may influence perceptions regarding the quality of one's relationships. Most Vietnamese Americans immigrated as refugees who experienced trauma in their home country, disruptions in their social network, and were spread out across the country once they arrived in the US (Lin, Tazuma, & Masuda, 1979; Uba, 1994; Zhou & Bankston, 1998; Zhou & Xiong, 2005). Vietnamese Americans may value the social support they do have and look past the negative aspects of their relationships. I hypothesized that Vietnamese Americans are more likely to report having high positive relationship quality across relationship types and low negative relationship quality with spouse. Similarly, Asian American immigrants

who did not plan their immigration are less likely to have social resources, choose where they live and be familiar with the US and US culture (Atkinson, Ponterotto, & Sanchez, 1984; Serafica et al., 2000; Uba, 1994). Not planning their immigration may exacerbate the challenges immigrants face as they adapt to a new country leading spouses to rely on each other for support. The challenges they experience may unite the couple but it may also lead them to become dependent on one another. Therefore, I postulated that Asian Americans who did not plan their immigration will report high positive and negative relationship quality with their spouse.

Relationship dynamics may be influenced by the immigration experience. The spousal relationship may be influenced by generation status as previous research has found that immigrant men experience a loss in power in all areas of their lives while better job opportunities has led to women gaining power and freedom (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2003; Hondagneu-Sotelo & Cranford, 1999; Kibria, 1994; Mahler & Pessar, 2006; Pessar, 2005; Suarez-Orozco & Qin, 2006). I hypothesized that Asian Americans who immigrated to the US will report low positive and high negative relationship quality with spouse. For Asian Americans who are first generation born in the US, the confusion of belonging to two worlds may cause conflict in their spousal relationship as they determine what cultural values they maintain from their culture or heritage and what values they adopt from US culture. The spousal relationship may be influenced if there are differences in values or role expectations between spouses. I postulated that Asian Americans who are first generation born will indicate high negative relationship quality with spouse.

Friends may be an important social resource for Asian American immigrants as

previous literature suggests Asian American immigrants chose friends with similar backgrounds (Ying et al., 2001) and that friends are an important source of information (i.e. jobs, available services) (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1994; Zhou & Xiong, 2005). I also hypothesized that Asian American immigrants will report high positive relationship quality with friends.

The ability to effectively communicate in English may also influence relationship dynamics. Spouses may be one of a few with whom an individual with low English proficiency can effectively communicate. Asian Americans with high English proficiency, however, may be relied upon to be a translator and cultural broker. Thus, I postulated that Asian Americans with high English proficiency will have low positive and high negative relationship quality with spouse. High English proficiency may increase with whom an individual can interact and increase their chances of making friends with individuals who share the same experiences or interests. I hypothesized that Asian Americans with high English proficiency will have higher positive relationship quality with friends.

One of the central reasons for immigrating is to provide younger generations with more opportunities. Asian American families often sacrifice so that school-aged or younger family members have an opportunity to achieve academically and in their career (Zhou, 1992; Zhou, 2006; Zhou & Bankston, 1998). I predicted that Asian Americans who immigrated as children or are first generation born as well as those in early adulthood will report higher positive relationship quality with spouse.

I also hypothesized that Asian Americans in late adulthood or older will report

higher positive relationship quality across relationship types. In traditional Asian culture, older individuals hold a respected status (Zhou & Bankston, 1998) and according to filial piety older individuals are cared for and supported by younger family members. However, I predicted that Asian Americans in middle adulthood will report high negative relationship quality with spouse. Previous work on social relationships suggests that individuals experience strain and conflict in their marital relationship (Brubaker, 1990; Grundy & Henretta, 2006; Riley & Bowen, 2005).

I postulated that there will be gender differences in relationship quality with men reporting higher positive quality with spouse and women reporting higher negative quality with spouse as well as higher positive quality with relatives and friends. Women are expected to support their husband (Zhou, 1992) and maintain kinship ties (Espiritu, 2001; Suarez-Orozco & Qin, 2006). Previous work suggests that women in general are more likely to characterize their relationships as negative (Antonucci, 2001; Fingerman, Hay, & Birditt, 2004) and report having close intimate friends in their social network (Adams & Blieszner, 1995).

I also predicted that relationship quality would vary by marital status and religious affiliation. Spouses are a main source of support (Antonucci et al., 1998; Antonucci et al., 2001) and without the intimate support of a spouse individuals need to find support from other relationships. I hypothesize that unmarried Asian Americans will report higher positive relationship quality with relatives and friends. Religious affiliation provides individual with social opportunities to meet new people and maintain existing ties (Serafica et al., 2000). This may lead to individuals making friends with others who have similar beliefs, experiences, and interests. I hypothesize that Asian Americans with a

religious affiliation will have higher positive relationship quality with friends.

Asian ethnic subgroups vary in their culture and history with the US including experiences with US government, immigration patterns, and treatment within the US, which may influence available social resources and relationship dynamics. For example, Vietnamese Americans are more likely to have immigrated as refugees (Zhou, & Bankston, 1998), Filipino Americans are more likely to have been exposed to US culture prior to immigration (Zhou & Xiong, 2005), and Chinese Americans are more likely to have established ethnic communities as they have been in the US the longest (Zhou, 1992; Zhou & Xiong, 2005). Therefore I also hypothesize each ethnic subgroup will vary in positive and negative relationship quality for all relationship types by generation status, English proficiency, planned immigration, and age.

Lastly, gender roles and expectations may vary by life stage as well as cultural values and norms. Individuals may need to fulfill different roles and/or obligations depending on their developmental stage. Asian American men are expected to achieve academically and later provide financially for their family (Tang & Dion, 1999; Zhou, 1992) while women are expected to maintain family ties and provide care for family members (Espiritu, 2001; Suarez-Orozco & Qin, 2006; Zhou, 1992). Relationship dynamics may also be influenced differently for men and women depending on their generation status. The cultural beliefs and values that influence gender norms and expectations may vary by generation status as ethnic identity research suggests that later generations identify more with beliefs associated with the American culture and less with traditional Asian beliefs (Phinney, 1990; Tsai & Curbow, 2001; Tuan, 1999). Thus, I hypothesize that positive and negative relationship quality with all relationship types will

vary by gender differently depending on age and generation status.

Method

Participants

This study used data from the National Latino and Asian American Study (NLAAS) a household survey. The NLAAS is a nationally representative stratified probability sample of non-institutionalized Latino and Asian Americans 18 years old and over in the US who was interviewed from May 2002 to December 2003.

This study specifically examines Asian Americans (n=1628) who identified as Chinese (n=600), Filipino (n=508), and Vietnamese (n=520). Participants who were categorized as other Asian Americans (i.e. Japanese, Korean, and Asian Indian) were excluded from the study due to the heterogeneity of the group. There are 762 men and 866 women ranging from 18-95 years old (*M*=41.51, *SE*=.63). Sixty-eight percent identified as married. See *Table 1*.

Procedure

Beginning in May 2002 to December 2003, 2095 Asian Americans (1611 primary respondents and 484 secondary respondents) were interviewed in person and over the telephone using computer-assisted software regarding their demographics, incidence of mental illness, treatment, health status, employment status, social relations and acculturation/assimilation experiences. The NLAAS employed multiple sampling strategies that included core sampling of primary sampling units (metropolitan areas and counties) and secondary sampling units selected using probability proportion size and information about household units and household numbers were collected. Density

supplemental sampling was used where census-block groups with greater than 5% of the density of the target ethnic group was sampled and secondary respondents were selected from households where a primary respondent had already been interviewed. Weights were developed to account for joint probability of selection and adjusted to match census numbers. Primary respondents, those in the core and high-density samples, were interviewed face-to-face unless it was not feasible or the respondent specifically requested a telephone interview. Secondary respondents were interviewed over the telephone. Interviewers had similar linguistic and cultural backgrounds to the respondents. Interviews were conducted in English, Mandarin, Tagalog, and Vietnamese according to the participant's preference. For further information of the NLAAS protocol and sampling methods, see (Heeringa et al., 2004).

Measures

Positive Relationship Quality. Four items were used to measure positive relationship quality with spouse ($\alpha = .83$). Items included how much their spouse or partner really cares about them, understands the way they feel about things, can rely on them for help for a serious problem, and can open up when they need to talk about their worries. Participants responded to all items on a scale of $1 = a$ lot to $4 = $ not at all. Responses were reverse coded and a mean composite of the reverse coded items was calculated.

To measure positive relationship quality with relatives ($\alpha = .80$) and friends ($\alpha = .85$) participants reported on 2-items for each relationship type. Participants indicated how much they could rely on their relatives or friends for help when they have a serious problem and open up when they need to talk about their worries. Responses were rated on

a scale of 1 = a lot to 4 = not at all which where reverse coded and a mean composite was calculated for each relationship type.

Negative Relationship Quality. Negative relationship quality with spouse was measured with 4-items. Participants indicated how often their spouse or partner made too many demands, criticized them, let them down when they were counting on them, and got on their nerves. Responses were rated on a scale of 1 = often to 4 = never which were reverse coded and a mean composite was calculated (α = .74). A similar reliability estimate is found in research using comparable items (Umberson, 1992).

Ethnic Subgroup. Participants indicated the ethnic subgroup to which they felt they belonged. The three categories indicate 1 = Vietnamese, 2 = Filipino, and 3 = Chinese.

Generation status. Participants reported their country of birth, their parents' country of birth, and their grandparents' country of birth as well as age at immigration for those who immigrated to the US. Birth country of participants, their parents, and their grandparents, is used to establish participants' generation status. When determining generation status, if one or both parents were born outside of the US, the participant was categorized as immigrant. If both parents were born in the US, country of birth for grandparents was examined to determine whether the participant was first or second generation born. If any of the grandparents were born outside of the US, the participant was treated as if all of the grandparents were not born in the US. Participants also reported their age at immigration, which was categorized as 0-12 years old, 13-17 years old, 18-34 years old, and 35+ years old. Generation status incorporated both country of birth and age of immigration. Participants were categorized so that 1 = immigrant at age

35+ years old (20%), 2 = immigrant at 18-34 years old (41%), 3 = immigrant at 13-17 years old (7%), 4 = immigrant at 0-12 years old (12%), 5 = first generation born in the US (14%) and 6 = second generation or later (6%).

Planned Immigration. Participants reported the degree to which their move was planned or not on a scale of 1 = carefully planned to 4 = poorly planned at all. Responses to this item were reverse coded and then split into 3 categories 1 = little to no planning (16%), 2 = planned (63%), 3 = not applicable (referring to US born Asian Americans) (21%).

English Proficiency. To measure English proficiency, participants reported on 3 items regarding how well they write, speak, and read in English (α =.97). Responses were rated on a scale of 1 = poor to 4 = excellent. A mean composite of the 3 items was calculated and then a median split was used such that 1 = low proficiency and 2 = high proficiency.

Age and Gender. Participants reported their date of birth and their gender. Age, consistent with lifespan research involving national samples, was categorized into four groups, 1 = 18 to 30 years old (28%), 2 = 31 to 40 years old (25%), 3 = 41 to 50 years old (21%), and 4 = 51 to 95 years old (26%) (Mroczek & Kolarz, 1998). Gender was coded as 0 = women and 1 = men.

Religion. Participants indicated their religious preference from a list of 48 religions or other. Based on responses, three categories were created indicating 1 = Western religions (i.e. Catholic, Baptist, Lutheran, etc.) (50%), 2 = other religions (i.e. indigenous religions) (24%), and 3 = no religion (i.e. no religious affiliation, atheist, etc.) (26%).

Marital Status. Participants also indicated their current marital status. Marital status was assessed as a dichotomous variable with 1 = currently married and 2 = not currently married.

Control Variable. Socioeconomic status was assessed as household income. Household income is a composite of seven sources of income, participant, spouse, social security, government, family, and other (Leu et al., 2008). Income was then categorized into four categories, 1 = \$0 to 10,999 (14.7%), 2 = \$11,000 to 39,999 (21.9%), 3 = \$40,000 to 75,000 (22.7%), and 4 = above \$75,000 (40.8%).

Results

Analyses began with an examination of descriptive characteristics of the variables to explore the presence of univariate outliers or extreme non-normality. All study variables had less than 10% missing data. Due to poor reliability, measures for negative relationship quality relatives and negative relationship quality friends were not used; therefore, the planned analyses involving these measures were not conducted. To test all research questions, a factorial analysis of variance (ANOVA) for each relationship and relationship quality type was run using the general linear model analysis in the complex samples module in SPSS to adjust for complex survey design weights and sampling. SES was controlled for in all analyses.

Relationship Quality, Cultural, and Demographic Factors

Positive Quality Spouse. A 3 (ethnic subgroup: Vietnamese, Filipino, Chinese) x 6 (generation status: immigrant at age 35+ years old, immigrant at 18-34, immigrant at 13-17, immigrant at 0-12, first generation born in the US, second generation or later) x 3 (planned immigration: planned, unplanned, US born) x 2 (English proficiency: high, low)

x 4 (age: 18-30 years old, 31-40, 41-50, 51+) x 2 (gender: men, women) x 3 (religious

affiliation: western religion, other religion, no religion) x 2 (marital status: married,

unmarried) ANOVA showed that the main effect of ethnic subgroup, generation status,

English proficiency, planned immigration, age, and gender was significant, $F(17, 23) =$

7.95, $p < .001$. Results from planned contrasts are in partial support of the hypothesis.

Contrasts reveal that there is a difference between ethnic subgroups with Vietnamese and

Filipino Americans reporting higher levels of positive quality than Chinese Americans,

$F(2, 38) = 3.91$, $p = .03$. Contrasts also indicated that there are variations in positive

quality by generation status ($F(5, 35) = 3.21$, $p = .02$) with Asian Americans who

immigrated at age 0 to 17 years old reporting lower levels of positive quality than those

who immigrated between ages 18 to 34. Asian Americans who immigrated between 13

and 17 years old as well as first generation born indicated having lower levels of positive

quality than Asian Americans who immigrated at age 35 or older and second generation

born. Asian Americans with high English proficiency reported higher levels of positive

quality than low English proficiency, $F(1, 39) = 18.68$, $p < .001$. Asian Americans whose

immigration was poorly planned indicated having lower levels of positive quality than

those who planned their immigration and did not immigrate, $F(2, 38) = 4.08$, $p = .03$.

Asian Americans 41 to 50 years old reported lower levels of positive quality than those

18 to 40 years old $F(3, 37) = 4.46$, $p = .01$. Asian men reported higher levels of positive

quality than women, $F(1, 39) = 14.57$, $p < .001$. See *Table 3.*

Negative Quality Spouse. The 3 (ethnic subgroup: Vietnamese, Filipino,

Chinese) x 6 (generation status: immigrant at age 35+ years old, immigrant at 18-34,

immigrant at 13-17, immigrant at 0-12, first generation born in the US, second generation

or later) x 3 (planned immigration: planned, unplanned, US born) x 2 (English proficiency: high, low) x 4 (age: 18-30 years old, 31-40, 41-50, 51+) x 2 (gender: men, women) x 3 (religious affiliation: western religion, other religion, no religion) x 2 (marital status: married, unmarried) ANOVA was significant ($F_{(17, 23)} = 5.39$, $p < .001$), indicating that there are main effects for ethnic subgroup, generation status, and age. Findings from planned contrasts reveal partial support for hypothesis 2. Contrasts show Vietnamese Americans indicate having lower levels of negative quality than Filipino and Chinese Americans, $F_{(2, 38)} = 12.52$, $p < .001$. Contrasts also reveal that there are variations by generation status ($F_{(5, 35)} = 2.74$, $p = .03$), Asian Americans who immigrated at 13 to 34 years or older indicated higher negative quality than those who immigrated at 35 years old or older. First generation born also reported having higher negative quality than second generation. Negative quality varied across age groups ($F_{(3, 37)} = 3.67$, $p = .02$) with Asian Americans 18 to 30 years old reporting lower levels of negative quality than those 41 years old or older. Asian Americans 31 to 40 years old also indicated lower negative quality than those 41 to 50 years old. See *Table 3*.

Positive Quality Relatives. The 3 (ethnic subgroup: Vietnamese, Filipino, Chinese) x 6 (generation status: immigrant at age 35+ years old, immigrant at 18-34, immigrant at 13-17, immigrant at 0-12, first generation born in the US, second generation or later) x 3 (planned immigration: planned, unplanned, US born) x 2 (English proficiency: high, low) x 4 (age: 18-30 years old, 31-40, 41-50, 51+) x 2 (gender: men, women) x 3 (religious affiliation: western religion, other religion, no religion) x 2 (marital status: married, unmarried) ANOVA revealed there are significant main effects for ethnic subgroup, generation status, English proficiency, gender, marital status, and

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religion, $F(18,24) = 38.15$, $p < .001$. Planned contrasts reveal partial support for hypotheses 3. Simple contrasts indicate that there are differences between ethnic subgroups with Vietnamese reporting higher levels of positive quality than Filipino and Chinese Americans, $F(2, 38) = 3.91$, $p = .03$. Contrasts also indicated that there are variations in positive quality by generation status ($F(5, 37) = 2.69$, $p = .04$) with Asian Americans who immigrated at age 35 years or older reporting lower levels of positive quality than those who immigrated at age 0 to 12 and 18 to 34 years old as well as first generation born. Asian Americans who are first generation born also indicated higher positive quality with relatives than second generation. Asian Americans with high English proficiency reported higher levels of positive quality than Asian Americans with low English proficiency, $F(1, 41) = 60.61$, $p < .001$. Asian women reported higher levels positive quality than men, $F(1, 41) = 8.80$, $p = .01$. Asian Americans with a religious affiliation indicated higher levels of positive quality than those with no affiliation, $F(2, 40) = 9.42$, $p < .001$. Asian Americans who are currently married indicate higher levels of positive quality than those who are not married, $F(1, 41) = 7.78$, $p = .01$. See *Table 3*.

Positive Quality Friends. The main effects 3 (ethnic subgroup: Vietnamese, Filipino, Chinese) x 6 (generation status: immigrant at age 35+ years old, immigrant at 18-34, immigrant at 13-17, immigrant at 0-12, first generation born in the US, second generation or later) x 3 (planned immigration: planned, unplanned, US born) x 2 (English proficiency: high, low) x 4 (age: 18-30 years old, 31-40, 41-50, 51+) x 2 (gender: men, women) x 3 (religious affiliation: western religion, other religion, no religion) x 2 (marital status: married, unmarried) ANOVA was significant ($F(18, 24) = 59.72$, $p < .001$), revealing that there are main effects for ethnic subgroup, English proficiency, age,

gender, marital status, and religion. Results from planned contrasts reveal partial support for hypothesis 4. Contrasts indicate that there are differences between ethnic subgroups with Vietnamese Americans reporting lower levels of positive quality than Filipino and Chinese Americans, $F(2, 40) = 15.79$, $p < .001$. Asian Americans with high English proficiency reported higher levels of positive quality than Asian Americans with low English proficiency, $F(1, 41) = 12.73$, $p = .001$. Contrasts also show variations by age with Asian Americans 18 to 30 years old reporting higher levels of positive quality than Asian Americans 31 to 40 and Asian Americans 41 to 50 years old reporting higher levels than those 51 years old or older, $F(3, 39) = 10.51$, $p < .001$. Asian American women reported higher levels of positive quality than men, $F(1, 41) = 8.80$, $p = .01$. Asian Americans who affiliate with western religions indicate higher levels of positive quality than those with no religion, $F(2, 40) = 4.34$, $p = .02$. Asian Americans who are not currently married indicate higher levels of positive quality than those who are married, $F(1, 41) = 15.12$, $p < .001$. See *Table 3*.

Ethnic subgroup by Cultural and Demographic Factors

Hypothesis 5, that patterns of positive and negative relationship quality for all relationship types would vary by generation status, English proficiency, planned immigration, and age differently for each ethnic subgroup was not supported. The 3 (ethnic subgroup: Vietnamese, Filipino, Chinese) x 6 (generation status: immigrant at age 35+ years old, immigrant at 18-34, immigrant at 13-17, immigrant at 0-12, first generation born in the US, second generation or later) x 3 (planned immigration: planned, unplanned, US born) x 2 (English proficiency: high, low) x 4 (age: 18-30 years old, 31-40, 41-50, 51+) x 2 (gender: men, women) x 3 (religious affiliation: western religion,

other religion, no religion) x 2 (marital status: married, unmarried) ANOVA with interactions for positive relationship quality with spouse was not statistically significant. Interaction models for positive relationship quality with relatives and friends as well as negative relationship quality with spouse were each statistically significant, however, no interactions were significant.

Relationship Quality, Age, Gender, and Generation Status

Hypothesis 6, relationship quality for all relationship types will vary by gender differently depending on age and generation status, was partially supported. Interaction models for negative quality spouse and positive quality relatives were statistically significant; however, none of the interactions were significant.

Positive Quality Spouse. The 3 (ethnic subgroup: Vietnamese, Filipino, Chinese) x 6 (generation status: immigrant at age 35+ years old, immigrant at 18-34, immigrant at 13-17, immigrant at 0-12, first generation born in the US, second generation or later) x 3 (planned immigration: planned, unplanned, US born) x 2 (English proficiency: high, low) x 4 (age: 18-30 years old, 31-40, 41-50, 51+) x 2 (gender: men, women) x 3 (religious affiliation: western religion, other religion, no religion) x 2 (marital status: married, unmarried) ANOVA with age and gender interactions for positive relationship quality spouse was significant, $F(25, 15) = 7.14$, $p<.001$. Men reported higher levels of positive relationship quality across age groups than women. Trends across age groups, however, differed by gender with a decrease in positive spousal relationship quality for women across age groups and men indicating a decrease in positive relationship quality until middle adulthood. Middle-aged to older men report higher levels of spousal relationship quality. See *Figure 1*.

Positive Quality Friends. For positive relationship quality friends, the 3 (ethnic subgroup: Vietnamese, Filipino, Chinese) x 6 (generation status: immigrant at age 35+ years old, immigrant at 18-34, immigrant at 13-17, immigrant at 0-12, first generation born in the US, second generation or later) x 3 (planned immigration: planned, unplanned, US born) x 2 (English proficiency: high, low) x 4 (age: 18-30 years old, 31-40, 41-50, 51+) x 2 (gender: men, women) x 3 (religious affiliation: western religion, other religion, no religion) x 2 (marital status: married, unmarried) ANOVA with age and gender interactions was significant, $F(25, 17) = 33.77, p<.001$. Both genders report a decline in positive relationship quality across age groups but women indicate higher levels of positive relationship quality than men at all ages. See *Figure 2.*

Discussion

Social relationships are important social resources for Asian Americans as they adapt to a new culture and overcome the challenges of being an ethnic minority. Social relationships provide an individual with support and feelings of being cared for but they are also sources of criticism and demands (Birditt, Jackey, & Antonucci, 2009). Relationship quality for Asian Americans in this study varied by demographic and cultural factors with different patterns for positive and negative relationship quality as well as relationship type.

Trends across Relationship Types

Overall, Asian Americans in this study reported higher positivity with spouse than relatives and friends. Positive relationship quality was high with spouses but moderate with relatives and friends. The spousal relationship was also characterized as low to moderate in negativity. Supporting previous literature, findings from this study illustrate

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that there are variations in relationships by ethnic subgroup (Gee, 2004; Takeuchi et al., 1998; Zhou & Xiong, 2005). Ethnic subgroup membership represents various factors such as culture, historical background, and reception in the US, which may influence the contextual experiences of Asian Americans leading to differences in social interactions and support needs.

Trends for relationship quality with spouse and relatives by generation status and planned immigration suggest that immigration experience and adaptation may influence the dynamics of these relationships. Family relationships may be most affected by how an individual navigates being in a new culture. The beliefs and practices an individual decides to maintain from their cultural heritage or adopt from mainstream American culture may influence their interaction with their social network as they may differ in role expectations. For example, in Asian cultures women may be expected to spend most of their time with family helping with household responsibilities (Zhou, 1992) while women in more mainstream American culture are afforded more freedoms which often include spending more time with individuals outside of their family (Mahler & Pessar, 2006; Pessar, 2005; Suarez-Orozco & Qin, 2006). Variations by generation status and planned immigration may also indicate differences in circumstances and challenges. For example, Asian Americans who are second generation born in the US are often treated as foreigners even though they are US born (Kodama, McEwen, Liang, & Lee, 2002) while immigrants are faced with the challenge of trying to achieve success while adapting to a new country. Circumstances such as these may push family relationships apart or bring them together with a unifying goal.

Cultural and demographic factors may facilitate social interactions. Variations in

relationship quality with relatives and friends by English proficiency and religious affiliation indicate that certain circumstances may be more conducive for social interactions. Being proficient in English may help improve relationships as Asian Americans are better able to effectively communicate with more Americanized family members and individuals outside of their ethnic group as well as have greater access to resources. Religious affiliation may represent an important resource for relationships outside of marriage. Religious organizations may assist individuals seeking to meet individuals with similar beliefs and offer social activities that help maintain relationships.

Role expectations associated with age, gender, and marital status may also influence relationship types differently. Roles and expectations for spouses and friends may change over time while relationships with relatives may remain more consistent. Overall, Asian Americans indicate a decline in positive qualities and an increase in negative qualities in the spousal relationship across age groups. Younger individuals may have fewer responsibilities and be able to focus on the marital relationship while older individuals have multiple roles and responsibilities that could lead to strain and conflict between spouses as is characteristic of individuals in midlife (Brubaker, 1990; Grundy & Henretta, 2006; Riley & Bowen, 2005). There is also a decline in positive qualities with friends across age groups. The decline may indicate a shift in focus to family relationships later in life for Asian Americans. If Asian Americans have their support needs fulfilled by family members who are reciprocating the support they provided previously they may not seek friendships, even those that are high in positive qualities.

Differences in relationship quality by gender may be indicative of different gender roles and expectations. Results of this study indicate that Asian American women

have higher positive relationship quality with relatives than men. Asian women are seen as kin-keepers because they are expected to maintain social ties among family members (Espiritu, 2001). Their role as kin-keepers (i.e. keeping in contact, organizing family gatherings, etc.) may result in Asian American women having more positive ties with relatives than men. Marital status may influence an individual's support needs from other relationships as those without the intimate relationship of a spouse may need more support from family and friends. As previously mentioned, marriage is important in Asian cultures (Chin, 2000; Zhou, 1992), therefore, marital status may also indicate whether the individual has fulfilled the expectations of their social network.

Similarities in Relationship Quality

Findings from this study highlight the importance of exploring the heterogeneity within Asian American subgroups but also illustrate similarities between Asian Americans and the general US population as well as other ethnic minorities.

General US Population. Context and circumstance could affect the resources available to an individual, which in turn may influence relationship dynamics. Filipino Americans report high positive and negative spousal quality, which are patterns similar to those found in spousal relationships among the general US population (Antonucci et al., 2001). This suggests that the similarities between the Philippines and the US (e.g. no language barrier because Filipinos speak English) may result in the need for fewer resources and the availability of more resources (i.e. job skills and training are transferable to the US) for Filipino Americans compared to other Asian ethnic subgroups.

Across age groups Asian American men in this study indicate higher levels of

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positive relationship quality with spouse than women. This supports previous research that has found men have smaller social networks than women but report high spousal support (Antonucci et al., 1998). Gender differences are particularly pronounced for Asian Americans 51 years old and older. This is consistent with previous research that suggests marital satisfaction is lower during middle years than earlier years of marriage (Brubaker, 1990). It is also during this age period that individuals are often expected to care for their aging parents in addition to their other roles and responsibilities (Grundy & Henretta, 2006; Riley & Bowen, 2005). The role of care provider often falls to women (e.g. Abraham, 1999; Zhou, 1992). As women struggle to fulfill their multiple responsibilities they may not feel understood or supported by their spouse as they are held to different expectations. Similar to patterns found for positive relationship quality with spouse, both genders in this study indicate a decline in positive friendship quality across age groups but women report higher friendship quality than men. Asian American women also report higher positivity with relatives than men. This may provide further support for women having larger social networks than men (Antonucci et al., 1998). Previous work on the general US population has found that women have larger and more diverse social networks than men. Women are thought to have more intimate relationships with friends and family compared to men who tend to have an intimate relationship only with their spouse (Adams & Blieszner, 1995).

   Ethnic Minorities. Results from this study support the conclusion that age at immigration influences the immigration experience (Takeuchi et al., 2007) and suggests this may affect relationship dynamics for Asian Americans, especially the spousal relationship. In this study, Asian Americans who immigrated later during adulthood and

second generation born or later report higher positivity and lower negativity with spouse than Asian Americans who immigrated during adolescence or earlier and first generation born. Previous literature has suggested that individuals who immigrate between the ages of 13 and 17 years old experience the most challenges as they are discovering their identities while adapting to a new culture (Espin, 2006; Takeuchi et al., 2007). First generation born ethnic minorities also face many challenges as they belong to two worlds, which often lead to cultural conflict (Chung, 2001). The challenges young immigrants and first generation born Asian Americans face early in life may lead to variations in which values and practices they maintain and which they do not. This may decrease the chances of having a spouse who shares the same values and practices. Asians who immigrated as adults may be more likely to be married before they immigrated and share the same values and practices as their spouses. The marital dyad may also be strengthened when they share the immigration experience.

Contrary to relationship quality with spouses, Asian Americans in this study who immigrated later in adulthood and second generation born or later indicated lower positivity with relatives than those who immigrated during young adulthood or earlier as well as first generation born. It is common for families, especially those who have immigrated, to focus on the younger family members and invest familial resources in the support of younger generations so that they can achieve academically and improve the family's social status (Kibria, 1994). Asians who immigrated at older ages may also have more support needs than their relatives are providing. Previous research has found that individuals who immigrate later in adulthood have difficulties in learning English and are less likely to have transferable job skills which may affect available resources (e.g.

limited social network, decrease in SES etc.) (Takeuchi et al., 2007). First generation born Asian Americans in this study also report higher positivity with relatives than second generation or later, which is contrary to the hypothesis. Despite the potential cultural conflict first generation born Asian Americans may experience with their family, this finding supports previous claims that adult immigrants are focused on investing in younger family members so that they might succeed in the US and improve the family status (Kibria, 1994).

Results from this study while contrary to previous findings with adolescents, provides a more comprehensive understanding of the role of English proficiency in relationship dynamics. Previous literature suggests higher English proficiency for adolescents is associated with family conflict because it may lead to changes in power dynamics (Espin, 2006; Mahler & Pessar, 2006; Portes & Hao, 2002). Higher English proficiency leads to changes in power dynamics with children acting as cultural brokers for parents (Espin, 2006; Mahler & Pessar, 2006) and adolescents losing their native language resulting in difficulties in communicating effectively with parents (Portes & Hao, 2002). Often older family members view this as the adolescent is becoming 'too Americanized' (Zhou & Xiong, 2005). Findings from this study, however, indicate that high English proficiency for Asian American adults was related to higher positive relationship quality with spouse, relatives, and friends. This suggests that adults' English proficiency may not lead to a loss of native language or native culture. English proficiency may be a useful tool as it allows individuals to communicate for themselves and/or family members with various institutions (e.g. schools, government assistance programs, etc.). This could decrease external stressors and improve relationship quality.

Friendships for Asian Americans in this study are also influenced by English proficiency. Being able to effectively communicate in English may provide Asian Americans the opportunity to broaden their social network to individuals who do not speak their native language. This may have important implications for Asian Americans who do not live in ethnic enclaves or near other Asian Americans from their country.

Variations in Relationship Quality

Results from this study suggest that cultural and demographic factors indicate differences in contexts and circumstances affecting individuals' support needs and available resources.

Ethnic subgroup differences between Vietnamese Americans and Filipino and Chinese Americans in this study may highlight the differences in generational status and history with the US between the ethnic subgroups. The majority of Vietnamese Americans in this study are immigrants. The immigration process is often associated with changes in social resources as immigrants leave members of their social network behind in their country of origin, reunite with social network members from whom they have been separated, and/or add new relationships. This process could be exacerbated for Vietnamese in particular as they are more likely to have immigrated as refugees. Vietnamese refugees are more likely to have experienced disruptions in their social ties due to separation or loss of loved ones during the immigration process and through separation as a result of the US government's goal of geographic dispersion (Zhou & Bankston, 1998). Many were settled in areas with few other minorities (Zhou & Bankston, 1998) which may have led to a strong reliance on familial ties, particularly

spouses, and weaker friendship ties, due to a shared or lack of shared experience (i.e. being a refugee) and/or language barriers. Having a small social network could result in relationships with high positive qualities and low negative qualities. Vietnamese may view their familial relationships as high in positive qualities because circumstances have led to their reliance on one another for support and comfort. Vietnamese may also view their familial relationships as low in negative qualities as they are aware of their limited social resources. For example, they may not view spousal demands to take on household responsibilities as too demanding because they know there is no one else to ask.

Affiliating with a religion may lead to an increase in social resources for Asian Americans as it provides individuals with social opportunities. Religious affiliation may help strengthen ties with relatives as it could indicate shared beliefs and values as well as provide opportunities for familial gatherings such as Sunday family dinners. Friendships may also be influenced, especially for those who recently immigrated, as religious affiliation could lead to opportunities to meet new people with similar beliefs and values.

Marital status may also be indicative of available resources. Asian Americans in this study who are not married indicate having lower positivity with relatives but higher positivity with friends. Asian Americans who are not married may not be family focused and instead rely on other relationships for support such as friends. Traditionally, the marital relationship is highly valued in Asian cultures (Chin, 2000; Zhou, 1992) so individuals who chose not to marry may not feel understood or supported by relatives who practice traditional values. Unmarried Asian Americans in this study also includes individuals who are divorced or widowed thus some individuals may increase their support expectations of their relatives to fill the absence of the intimate support a spouse

provides. This increase may be more than their relatives can or wish to provide.

Asian Ethnic Subgroups

In this study, differences in relationship quality by cultural and demographic factors did not vary for Asian ethnic subgroups. The factors explored in this study were more general in nature (i.e. English proficiency, whether immigration was planned or not, religious affiliation, etc.) and may be similar across ethnic groups. For example, there are individuals from both Vietnam and China who have immigrated to the US as refugees (Zhou, 1992; Zhou & Bankston, 1998). Specific cultural beliefs and practices may be better indicators of differences between Asian ethnic subgroups. Future studies should explore the influence of specific cultural beliefs and practices on relationship quality.

Planned Immigration

Contrary to the hypotheses, planned immigration had little influence on relationship quality for Asian Americans in this study. Positive spousal quality was higher for immigrants who planned their immigration. The planning process may unify the spouses as they work together for a common goal or individuals who view their relationship with their spouse as low in quality may not want to plan to immigrate with them. Negative spousal quality and positive relationship quality with other relationship types were not influenced by whether immigration was planned or not. Other aspects of the immigration process such as reasons for leaving country of origin, who they are immigrating with, and area they are relocating to should be explored as it is a complicated process.

Limitations

It is important in reporting these findings to acknowledge the limitations of this study. This study was limited in two aspects regarding the measures used; (1) no negative relationship quality measures and (2) positive relationship quality measures for relatives and friends used 2 items. There were no negative relationship quality measures for relatives or friends. As previously mentioned, due to low reliability these measures were excluded from the study. Results from this study do suggest that Asian Americans experience negative qualities in their relationships and that there are variations by cultural and demographic factors. Future studies should explore negative relationship quality with relatives and friends. Measures used for positive relationship quality with relatives and friends were only 2-items. Positive relationship quality involves numerous aspects but this study was limited to individual's feelings that they could rely on and open up to relatives/friends. Positive relationship quality with relatives and friends should be explored further as it may have important implications for women and unmarried individuals. Each measure, however, did indicate good reliability.

The NLAAS is a cross-sectional study. Longitudinal research would better capture how relationship quality varies across the lifespan. Cohort and developmental effects cannot be assessed in cross-sectional designs. Thus, the influence of specific events such as the legislation banning the immigration of specific Asian ethnic groups, such as Chinese Exclusion Act or the surge of Asian immigrants after 1965, could not be ascertained.

The sample was also limited in the number of individuals between late adulthood and old age. The last age group represents a large age range due to the limited number of

individuals in middle to late adulthood particularly late adulthood. There are numerous different developmental issues occurring during these 40 years. It is during these decades that social relationships may be particularly important as individuals experience age-related declines both in physical and mental health. Future studies need to explore social relationships of these individuals further.

Implications

The purpose of this study is to examine whether the heterogeneity among Asian Americans influences their social relationships. The findings of this study have important implications for our understanding of the social relationships of Asian Americans. The findings do not support the argument that all Asian Americans have highly supportive social relationships. This has two implications. First, there may be groups of Asian Americans (e.g. women in middle adulthood, refugees, etc.) whose needs are not being met because it is generally believed that their social network is meeting their needs. Second, the variations in relationship quality suggest that the positive outcomes reported by Asian Americans cannot be completely attributed to having supportive ties and there may be other contributing factors that should be explored in future studies.

Findings from this study reveal that there are some similarities in the patterns of relationship quality between Asian Americans and the general US population. This suggests that relationship dynamics among Asian Americans cannot be solely attributed to traditional Asian cultural norms and values. Asian Americans' evaluation of their social support may not be as different from the general US population as has been suggested or the differences may be in other characteristics of social relationships. Findings also indicate similarities with other ethnic minorities. The similarities in the

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challenges ethnic minorities face by immigrating at certain developmental stages have important implications for intervention and outreach programs. For example, to help adolescent immigrants as they face identity issues and adapting to a new culture, programs to facilitate peer support groups and improve communication between parents and children should be implemented. Programs should also focus on encouraging and teaching adult immigrants English. Findings from this study suggest that English proficiency may lead to improved communication and power dynamics within the family.

Results from this study suggest that spouses are a main source of support, especially for men, while the role relatives and friends have in the individual's life may vary by support needs and developmental stage. This has implications for outreach and intervention programs in meeting the needs of individuals.

Conclusion

This study suggests that context and circumstances influence Asian American adults' perceptions of the positive and negative qualities of their social relationships. Relationships in the social networks of Asian American adults may not all be characterized by positive qualities. Results from this study suggest that there are commonalities and differences in relationship quality both among Asian American adults as well as between Asian American adults and the general adult US population. Relationship quality may vary depending on the availability of social resources, how individuals adapt to a new culture, role expectations, and ability to communicate. Findings suggest that role expectations differ by age, generation status, and gender. Asian Americans' social networks may not be limited to familial ties as Asian Americans in this study report having supportive family and friendship ties. Variations in relationship

quality have important implications for health, well-being, and need for services as some

Asian Americans may be more vulnerable than others such as unmarried Asian

Americans with low English proficiency. Further exploration into the implications of

relationships with positive and/or negative qualities for Asian Americans should be

conducted.

Chapter III

Study 2: Profiles of Relationship Quality and Well-Being among Asian Americans

Asian Americans' social relationships are generally characterized as close, harmonious, and a vital source of support (Taylor et al., 2004). Asian Americans' better well-being compared to other ethnic groups is often attributed to their strong social ties (Zhang & Ta, 2009); however, few studies have included multiple relationship types simultaneously and their implications for well-being. In general, previous research has explored the association between the quality of specific relationship types or the combination of multiple relationship types with well-being (Birditt & Antonucci, 2007). Dynamics within the social network might vary for Asian Americans in particular as social roles may be influenced by cultural beliefs, role expectations, as well as available resources and/or opportunities. For example, power dynamics among couples may change as traditionally in Asian cultures men are the primary financial providers but employment opportunities in the US may lead to women becoming primary financial providers (Kibria, 1994). Role expectations, availability of resources, and support needs may vary by age and generation status. For example, expectations may be higher for younger individuals to be financially successful while expectations to provide support may be higher for older individuals (Zhou, 1992; Zhou, 2006; Zhou & Bankston, 1998).

Given Asian Americans reliance on their social network and the lack of knowledge

pertaining to multiple relationship types within the same social network it is important to

understand the dynamics of Asian American social networks.

Social Relations

According to the Convoy Model of Social Relations (Kahn & Antonucci, 1980),

individuals are surrounded by a network of close social ties that both support and

challenge the individual across the lifespan . The convoy is influenced by personal (e.g.

age, gender) and situational (e.g. resources, demands) factors. Generally, individuals

usually identify spouses, best friends, and immediate family (i.e. parents, children,

siblings) as their closest social relationships (Antonucci, Akiyama, & Takahashi, 2004).

Research on social networks explores multiple dimensions including structure (e.g. size

of network, relationship composition), support exchanges (e.g. emotional, instrumental),

and evaluation of support (e.g. satisfied, adequate) (Antonucci & Akiyama, 1987).

Social relationships have both positive qualities which involve feelings of being

understood and supported as well as negative qualities such as social partners being too

demanding or irritating; both of which are associated with health and well-being

(Antonucci et al., 2010). Relationship quality may vary by relationship type as there are

different expectations and functions associated with each type (Birditt et al., 2009).

Relationship Types

Family is an integral part of an individual's social network throughout their lives.

Family, especially for Asian Americans, is a main source of social support (Die &

Seelbach, 1989; Zhang & Ta, 2009). Traditionally, Asian Americans engage in familial

support exchanges due to feelings of obligation and expectations of reciprocity. Older

family members provide support for younger family members so that younger family members can focus on achieving in school and finding employment. As individuals enter old age, younger family members are expected to care for them (Zhou, 1992; Zhou, 2006; Zhou & Bankston, 1998). This may leave individuals feeling supported and/or overburdened with expectations and demands. Family dynamics, however, may differ among Asian Americans due to changes in geographic mobility and household composition (Kim & McKenry, 1998; Wong, Yoo, & Stewart, 2005). Family members may be unable to provide support because they lack the resources or they are not geographically nearby.

Research on social relations in adults has primarily focused on the marital relationship as spouses are a main source of support as well as stress for most individuals (Antonucci et al., 1998; Antonucci et al., 2001). The spousal relationship is an important social relationship for Asian Americans as there is a strong emphasis on marriage in traditional Asian culture (Chin, 2000; Zhou, 1992). The intimate nature of the spousal relationship may lead to spouses becoming an important source of support as Asian Americans adjust to living in the US and experience other challenges such as discrimination. Traditional expectations, however, may lead to stress and tension between spouses (Chin, 2000; Kibria, 1994). For example, limited opportunities may cause a shift in power dynamics in the household as wives become the primary financial provider (Kibria, 1994). Tension in the marital relationship may also arise as roles change such as more job responsibilities and/or becoming parents (Grundy & Henretta, 2006; Riley & Bowen, 2005).

Friendships unlike familial relationships are characterized as relationships of

choice (Crohan & Antonucci, 1989; DuPertuis, Aldwin, & Bosse, 2001; Sherman, de Vries, & Lansford, 2000). Generally, friends are a source of companionship and emotional support as individuals generally choose friends based on shared interests or experiences (Crohan & Antonucci, 1989). Friends may also be a source of other types of support depending on the needs of the individual which may change depending on their developmental stage. For example, friends provide informational support for ethnic minorities to assist in their adjustment to a new culture (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1994; Lin et al., 1979; Kuo & Tsai, 1986; Serafica et al., 2000; Zhou & Xiong, 2005). Previous literature suggests that friends are not a main source of support for Asian Americans in times of need and are used more for companionship (Taylor et al., 2007; Wong, Yoo, & Stewart, 2005).

Relationship Profiles

Previous literature suggests that relationship profiles provide a more comprehensive understanding of social networks (Henry, Tolan, & Gorman-Smith, 2005). Creating profiles of social relationships is one effective approach to exploring multiple relationships simultaneously (Birditt & Antonucci, 2007). Many of the previous profiles that examine relationship quality focus on childhood and adolescence (Harvey & Bray, 1991; Levitt et al., 2005; Mandara & Murray, 2002) or on familial ties (Fincham & Linfield, 1997; Fisher & Ransom, 1995; Harvey, Curry, & Bray, 1991). In a study that did explore relationship quality in adults (ages 22 to 79), Birditt and Antonucci (2007) found five different relationship quality profiles among married adults with best friends. Two profiles had no variation between relationship types indicating either all high positive and low negative quality or high negative and low positive quality. Two other

profiles indicated variations between familial relationships (spouse, parents, and children) and friends while the last profile revealed differences between the spousal relationship, and friends and family. Findings from this study and previous literature exploring multiple relationships suggest three patterns of social network dynamics: spillover, independent, and counteractive.

Social Network Dynamics

Relationship dynamics with one or more relationships in an individual's network may *spillover* and influence interactions with other relationships in the network. This affect could be positive or negative as illustrated in Birditt and Antonucci's (2007) study where they found both a high positivity with low negativity profile and a low positivity with high negativity profile. Previous research on childhood and adolescence suggest familial ties have a positive influence on other relationships (Brennan & Shaver, 1995; Bryant & Conger, 1999; Way & Chen, 2000). The parent-child relationship in particular has been linked to the child's friendships and later romantic relationships (e.g. Brennan & Shaver, 1995; Way & Chen, 2000). Research on adults support the centrality of the spousal relationship with marital success related to feeling supported by one's overall social network (Bryant & Conger, 1999).

Conversely, individuals may also learn negative patterns of behavior from their social network. Research concerning the spousal relationship and its effect on their relationship with their children (e.g. Kerig, Cowan, & Cowan, 1993) as well as studies on the influence of work or other life stressors on the spousal relationship (e.g. Mathews, Conger & Wickrama, 1996) suggest a negative spillover effect. Stress or conflict in one relationship such as spouse, parent, or co-worker may strain an individual, leading them

to feel like the responsibilities of other relationships are too demanding. Previous literature on friendships in Asian Americans suggest that Asian American women may feel burdened by their friendships as they feel obligated to provide their friends with the same amount of support as family (Serafica et al., 2000).

As mentioned previously, different relationship types may serve different needs and people become a part of an individual's social network in different ways (i.e. formally prescribed or by choice). Individuals are more likely to share common interests and viewpoints as their friends because they chose to have a relationship with these individuals (Crohan & Antonucci, 1989; DuPertuis et al., 2001; Sherman et al., 2000). The ability to choose members of one's social network may affect how relationships influence one another. The relationships in an individual's network is said to function *independently* when the relationship with one individual does not influence the other. For example, conflict or tension with parents regarding cultural differences may not influence an individual's relationship with their friends as they are more likely to share similar viewpoints as suggested by Birditt and Antonucci's (2007) high quality spouse/family (positive and low quality with familial ties but high negativity with friends) and the low spouse/family quality profiles (positive and low quality with friends but high negativity with family).

Relationships may also be *counteractive*. In this case because of a lack of support from one relationship, especially a formally prescribed relationship, an individual seeks and/or receives support from other relationships to compensate. For example, an individual whose spouse is not supportive or encouraging may eventually engage in less intimate exchanges with their spouse and turn to friends for emotional support. This may

result in a social network profile similar to the high family/friend quality profile where relationship quality with family and friends was high in positive but low in negative quality while the spousal relationship was moderate in both positive and negative quality (Birditt & Antonucci, 2007).

Cultural and Individual Differences in Profiles

Cultural and demographic factors influence the context in which social interactions occur affecting an individual's needs and available resources (e.g. Harevan, 1994; Kahn & Antonucci, 1980). In particular, context may vary by specific Asian ethnic group as each has their own history with the US, different cultures, and different circumstances of immigration. Since Vietnamese Americans tend to have immigrated as refugees and experienced disruptions in their social relationships (Lin et al., 1979; Uba, 1994; Zhou & Xiong, 2005); they may view the social relationships they do have more positively. Chinese Americans, however, may have more variation in relationship quality across relationship types. As a group, Chinese Americans may have better access to resources as they are the oldest Asian American ethnic subgroup in the US and have established ethnic communities (Zhou, 1992), which may increase their likelihood of expressing negative perceptions. Filipino Americans also have better access to resources as they are more likely to speak English, to immigrate with more resources, and to have transferable job skills (Zhou & Xiong, 2005). Previous research suggests that Filipinos may have more friend oriented social networks as Filipino American college students reported high levels of support from friends compared to Chinese and Vietnamese Americans (Gloria & Ho, 2003).

Generation status may also influence context and needs. Immigrants are focused

on adjusting to a new country and utilize their social network for not only emotional support but for informational support as well (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1994; Lin et al., 1979; Kuo & Tsai, 1986; Serafica et al., 2000; Zhou & Xiong, 2005). Immigrants may be more likely to be harmonious with their network as they work together to adjust and improve their life situations. Later generations may experience more variations in relationship quality between relationship types (Rhee, Chang, & Rhee, 2003). For example, first generation individuals born in the US may have more conflict with family as a result of cultural differences (Chung, 2001) and turn to friends for support as they are more likely to share similar values.

Other factors may affect an individual's access to social resources leading to differences in social network dynamics. As previously mentioned the context of immigration affects social resources available to an individual. Specifically, if immigration is planned an individual may prepare by establishing relationships with people living in the US, selecting where they live, and/or learning about the US (Ho, 1990). Individuals who do not or are unable to plan their immigration are more likely to experience disruptions in their social networks such as leaving family members behind in their country of origin or being separated from family and friends in the placement process (Atkinson, Ponterotto, & Sanchez, 1984; Serafica et al., 2000; Uba, 1994). English proficiency, the ability to read, write, and speak English, influence an individual's ability to effectively communicate. It also influences the power dynamics within the social network (Espin, 2006; Zhou & Bankston, 1998). Immigrants with low English proficiency may have difficulty communicating and having relationships with individuals who do not speak their native language. In addition, to communicate with

people who speak English, they may need to rely on others with higher English proficiency as is seen in families with varying levels of English proficiency (Espin, 2006; Mahler &Pessar, 2006). Affiliating with a religion may provide the opportunity for a broader social network. For example, religious events provide opportunities to meet new people who are not necessarily a part of their ethnic group.

Social relationship profiles vary by demographic factors such as age and gender (Birditt & Antonucci, 2007). Individuals may have different needs at different developmental stages. Specific relationships may also fulfill different roles at different ages. Previous literature suggests that, in general, older individuals have more family oriented networks and are less likely to report low quality networks (Connidis & Davies, 1992). According to socio-emotional selectivity theory, as individuals' age they are more selective regarding network membership and are more likely to focus on meaningful relationships (Carstensen, Isaacowitz, & Charles, 1999). They are also thought to be better at regulating their emotions. This may especially apply to Asian Americans, as traditionally elders are given an honored status (Zhou & Bankston, 1998). The tradition of filial piety requires that children provide support and care for their elders (Zhou, 1992; Zhou, 2006; Zhou & Bankston, 1998). Previous literature has found that Asian American adolescents are dissatisfied with their social support (Lorenzo, Frost, & Reinherz, 2000) but also report more social support from friends than family (Gloria & Ho, 2003).

Women, in general, are more likely to have close intimate friendships in their network (Adams & Blieszner, 1995). They report more negative relationship quality and less positive relationship quality than men (Antonucci, 2001; Fingerman, Hay, & Birditt, 2004). Women have a broader social network (Vaux, 1985) but feel overburdened by

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their relationships (Antonucci et al., 2001). Similarly, Asian American men may be more likely to report high quality relationships than women as traditionally more value is placed on being a man. Men are expected to perpetuate the family name and become the main financial provider , which may lead to more support from family (Tang & Dion, 1999). Asian American women are expected to maintain family ties as they are the kin-keepers of the family (Espiritu, 2001; Suarez-Orozco & Qin, 2006), which may result in more family oriented profiles.

Relationship Quality and Well-being

Research on relationship quality and well-being has focused on a combination of perceptions of multiple relationship types or specific relationship types (Birditt & Antonucci, 2007). Previous literature on the combination of multiple relationship types found that social networks characterized as negative have been linked to less happiness (Antonucci et al., 1998). Studies exploring specific relationship types reveal that the spousal relationship compared to friends and other family has a higher association with overall well-being (Antonucci et al., 2001); however, friends have been linked to increased daily well-being (Sherman, de Vries, & Lansford, 2000). Similarly, the better physical and mental health Asian Americans experience is often partially attributed to the centrality of family relationships (Chung, 1991; Ross-Sheriff, 1991). Zhang and Ta (2009) found that for Asian Americans, family cohesion (i.e. feeling close with family and valuing family togetherness) was more strongly related to higher self-rated physical and mental health than support from friends and extended family (i.e. feeling they could rely on them for emotional support).

Previous literature suggests two theories on the link between relationship profiles

and well-being. Cantor's (1979) hierarchical-compensatory model states individuals prefer all support from their spouse, thus suggesting that high positive quality with spouse is associated with better well-being. Weiss' (1965) functional specificity model, however, states no one relationship can fulfill all support needs of an individual. This implies that support from multiple sources which meet different support needs is related to higher well-being.

Recent studies on profiles and well-being provide support for the functional specificity model. Birditt and Antonucci (2007) found that people reporting two out of the three sources of support no matter the relationship type was associated with higher well-being. Positive quality friendships, however, did not compensate for low quality spousal or family relationships. This profile reported lower well-being than the profile with low quality for all relationship types, which provides some support for the importance of family ties. For profiles with no best friend, relationship quality was influential for well-being while family was not which supports the importance of the spousal relationship. Levitt and colleagues (2005) found similar findings with children. Children with support from multiple sources compared to those with just close family indicated less loneliness and higher self-concept.

Present Study

This study is guided by three main questions: (1) Are Asian Americans' social relationships all harmonious or are there variations in quality across relationship types?; (2) Does the heterogeneity among Asian Americans lead to differences in social relationship profile membership?; and (3) do the relationship profiles differentially predict well-being. I hypothesized that Asian American adults will have different social

relationship profiles, reflecting both harmonious and diverse social networks that reflect

the three patterns of relationship dynamics. The emphasis on close ties and cohesion in

traditional Asian culture (Espiritu, 2001; Suarez-Orozco & Qin, 2006) may lead to

networks that are characterized by positive relationship quality with all relationships as

individuals support one another for the betterment of the group. Emphasis on close ties

may also lead to negative relationship quality across relationship types. If one

relationship is characterized by conflict or one individual is too demanding this may

influence everyone in the group because it disrupts group harmony. Differences in

cultural values and practices between social network members that often arise between

generations (Chung, 2001) could results in individuals with networks that vary in quality

between family ties (spouse and relatives) and friends. Asian Americans may also have

profiles that vary between relationship types as they are faced with challenges of being an

ethnic minority such as discrimination and adjusting to a new culture. There may be a

lack of support or conflict that arises that leads the individual to seek support from other

network members.

I postulated that Asian Americans will vary in profile membership by cultural and

demographic factors. Limiting circumstances may affect an individual's view of their

existing social resources leading individuals to feel grateful for the social resources they

do have thus viewing their relationships more positively. Limitations such as disruptions

in social networks, being socially isolated, and the lack of access to resources that many

Vietnamese Americans (Lin et al., 1979; Uba, 1994; Zhou & Xiong, 2005), immigrants

(Lin et al., 1979; Kuo & Tsai, 1986; Serafica et al., 2000), Asian Americans with low

English proficiency (Espin, 2006; Mahler & Pessar, 2006), and immigrants with

unplanned migration (Atkinson, Ponterotto, & Sanchez, 1984; Serafica et al., 2000; Uba, 1994) experienced. I hypothesized that Vietnamese Americans, immigrants, Asian Americans with low English proficiency, and immigrants with unplanned immigration will be more likely to belong to all positive or all negative relationship profiles.

Conversely, social interaction with a broader population and better access to resources may lead to variation in relationship dynamics. Asian ethnic subgroups such as Chinese (Zhou, 1992) and Filipino Americans (Zhou & Xiong, 2005) that have more exposure to US culture may feel it is more acceptable to express negative feelings. Better access to social resources may also increase the likelihood of individuals expressing dissatisfaction with relationships because they have other social resources. Without a unifying goal that many immigrants have (i.e. adjusting and improving their life situation), US born Asian Americans may experience more variation in the quality of their relationships (Rhee et al., 2003). US born may also experience conflict with their social network as some may try to maintain traditional values and others are adopting American values. I postulated that Chinese and Filipino Americans and Asian Americans who are born in the US will be more likely to belong to diverse social network profiles.

Role expectations may also affect profile membership. I hypothesized that women are more likely to belong to a negative quality profile than men. In general, women are more likely to feel overburdened by their social relationships (Antonucci et al., 2001). In traditional Asian culture, more value is placed on being a man (Tang & Dion, 1999). This may lead to less support given to women or women not feeling supported by their social network. I also hypothesized that older Asian Americans are more likely to belong to positive quality profiles while younger Asian Americans will have relationship quality

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profiles with variations between relationship types. In general, older individuals are less likely to belong to low quality networks (Connidis & Davies, 1992). Particularly in Asian cultures, older individuals are given an honored status and cared for by younger generations (Zhou, 1992; Zhou, 2006; Zhou & Bankston, 1998)

I predicted that profiles with family relationships characterized as high in positive relationship quality will have better well-being. Previous literature emphasizes the importance of family relationships for Asian Americans and their well-being as they are a central source of support (Die & Seelbach, 1989; Zhang & Ta, 2009).

Method

Participants

This study used data from the National Latino and Asian American Study (NLAAS) a nationally representative stratified probability sample of non-institutionalized Latino and Asian Americans 18 years old and over in the US. For further information regarding specifics of the study and the study procedure please refer to study 1.

This study focuses on the Asian American subsample (n = 1628) of NLAAS. This subsample consists of 762 men and 866 women ranging from 18-95 years old (*M*=41.51, *SE*=.63). Sixty-eight percent identified as married. There are three ethnic subgroups in the subsample, including participants who identified as Chinese (n=600), Filipino (n=508), and Vietnamese (n=520). See *Table 1*.

Measures

Positive Relationship Quality. Four items were used to measure positive relationship quality with spouse including how much their spouse or partner cares,

understands their feelings, can talk about their worries, and rely on them for help (α = .86). All items were measured on a scale of 1 = a lot to 4 = not at all. Responses were reverse coded and a mean composite of the reverse coded items was taken.

Positive relationship quality with relatives (α = .80) and friends (α = .85) used 2-items for each relationship type. Participants indicated how much they could rely on their relatives or friends for help when they have a serious problem and open up when they need to talk about their worries. Responses were rated on a scale of 1 = a lot to 4 = not at all which where reverse coded and a mean composite was taken for each relationship type.

Negative Relationship Quality. Negative relationship quality with spouse was measured with 4-items. Including items such as how often their spouse or partner made too many demands, criticized them, and got on their nerves. Responses were rated on a scale of 1 = often to 4 = never which were reverse coded and a mean composite was taken (α = .74). A similar reliability estimate is found in research using comparable items (Umberson, 1992).

Ethnic Subgroup. Participants indicated the ethnic subgroup to which they felt they belonged. Two dummy coded variables were created to indicate Vietnamese and Filipino with Chinese as the reference group.

Generation status. Participants reported their country of birth, their parents' country of birth, and their grandparents' country of birth as well as age at immigration for those who immigrated to the US. Birth country of participants, their parents, and their grandparents is used to establish participants' generation status. When determining generation status, if one or both parents were born outside of the US, the participant was

categorized as immigrant. If both parents were born in the US, country of birth for grandparents was examined to determine whether the participant was first or second generation born. If any of the grandparents were born outside of the US, the participant was treated as if all of the grandparents were not born in the US. This is consistent with previous studies (Jackson et al., 2007). Participants also reported their age at immigration, which was categorized as 0-12 years old, 13-17 years old, 18-34 years old, and 35+ years old. This uses the same categorization as Takeuchi and colleagues (2007). Generation status incorporated both country of birth and age of immigration. Participants were categorized so that 1 = immigrant at age 35+ years old, 2 = immigrant at 18-34 years old, 3 = immigrant at 13-17 years old, 4 = immigrant at 0-12 years old, 5 = first generation born in the US and 6 = second generation or later.

Planned Immigration. Participants reported the degree to which their move was planned or not on a scale of 1 = carefully planned to 4 = not planned at all. Responses to this item were reverse coded and then split into 3 categories 1 = little to no planning, 2 = planned, 3 = not applicable (referring to US born Asian Americans).

English Proficiency. To measure English proficiency, participants reported on 3 items regarding how well they write, speak, and read in English (α =.97). Responses were rated on a scale of 1 = poor to 4 = excellent. A mean composite of the 3 items was taken.

Age and Gender. Current age was calculated from date of birth. Gender was coded as 0 = women and 1 = men.

Religious Affiliation. Participants indicated their religious preference from a list of 48 religions or other. Based on responses two dummy coded variables were created to indicate Western religions (i.e. Catholic, Baptist, Lutheran, etc.) and other religions (i.e.

indigenous religions) with no religion (i.e. no religious affiliation, atheist, etc.) as the reference group.

Well-being. Utilizing a similar approach as Zhang and Ta (2009), well-being is measured using self-rated physical health and self-rated mental health. Self-rated physical health is included as Asian Americans have been found to be more likely to express somatic symptoms as opposed to emotional symptoms (Leong & Lau, 2001; Zhang, Snowden, & Sue, 1998). Participants were asked "How would you rate your overall physical/mental health?" on a five-point scale from (1) excellent to (5) poor. Each measure was reversed coded. Self-rated health measures have construct and criterion validity (Patrick & Erickson, 1993). Self-rated health measures have been associated with morbidity, mortality, and health care utilization (Benyamini & Idler, 1999; Ferraro, Farmer, & Wybraniec, 1997; Idler & Benyamini, 1997; Mossey & Shapiro, 1982; Wilson & Kaplan, 1995).

Control Variable. Socioeconomic status was assessed as household income. Household income is a composite of seven sources of income, participant, spouse, social security, government, family, and other (Leu et al., 2008) (M=71383.40, SE=2705.05).

Analysis Plan

First, latent profile analyses (LPA) were conducted to identify profiles of relationship quality. Then differences in profile membership by cultural and demographic factors were assessed with ANOVAs.

To identify profiles of relationship quality, LPA in Mplus Version 6.1 (Muthen & Muthen, Los Angeles CA, 2010) was conducted to adjust for sample weights and design effects. In this pattern-centered approach, participants are sorted into groups where

individuals are similar to others within their group and different from those in other groups using a probabilistic grouping procedure (Muthén & Muthén, 2000; Pastor, Barron, Miller, & Davis, 2007; Vermunt & Magidson, 2002). LPA provide fit indices which address potential issues with subjectivity and over/underestimation of data patterns that are characteristic of more exploratory techniques. Previous research, however, cautions against using the goodness-of-fit indices alone (Nylund, Asparouhov, & Muthén, 2007). Therefore, goodness-of-fit indices, parsimony, interpretability, and previous theoretical and empirical literature were considered when determining the number of profiles.

To determine the number of profiles, two- to five-profile solutions were estimated and compared using fit indices and the interpretability of the *N* and *N*-1 profile solutions. To address the potential problem of local maxima, the number of random sets of starting values was increased to 1,000, the number of iterations to 20, and the number of final-stage optimizations to 100 (Muthen & Muthen, 2008). Once the number of profiles was determined, the stability of the solution was examined by increasing the number of random starts to 5,000, the number of iterations to 100, and the number of final-stage optimizations to 500. The solution was considered valid if the solution and fit indices were replicated. Fit indices for the estimated models are displayed in *Table 6.*

To evaluate cultural and individual differences between relationship quality profiles for married Asian Americans, the final categorical class codes and multinomial logistic regression in Mplus were used. Multinomial logistic regression is an extension of binary logistic regression, which allows the outcome variable to have more than two nominal categories (Tabachnick & Fidell, 1996). Relationship quality profiles for

unmarried Asian Americans were examined using binary logistic regression in the complex samples module SPSS Version 18.0 to adjust for survey weights and design effects. The complex samples module was used as opposed to Mplus because the maximum likelihood analyses in Mplus only account for replicate weights.

To explore the association between relationship profiles and well-being, analyses of variance (ANOVA) were performed. Two ANOVAs with planned simple contrasts were performed, one for physical health and one for mental health, for married and unmarried Asian Americans were examined. Cultural and demographic factors were controlled for as they have been found to be associated with profile membership. SES was controlled for in all logistic regressions and ANOVAs. SES is a measured by household income. Households may represent single (i.e. nuclear family) or multiple family units (e.g. nuclear family unit in addition to aunt and uncle). Larger household incomes may represent more financial resources, larger families and/or multiple financial contributors. ANOVAs were conducted using the general linear model (GLM) analysis in the complex samples module in SPSS Version 18.0 to adjust for complex survey weights and design effects.

Results

Descriptives were examined for univariate outliers and extreme non-normality. All study variables had less than 10% missing data. Due to poor reliability, measures for negative relationship quality relatives and negative relationship quality friends were not used. Variations between married and unmarried individuals were also examined before separate LPA of relationship quality were conducted for each group.

Married and Unmarried Asian Americans

First, I examined differences between married and unmarried Asian Americans in their cultural and demographic factors as well as their relationship quality. Asian Americans who were not currently married were younger, $F(1,41) = 79.96$, $p<.001$; more likely to have immigrated between ages 0 to 17 years old or be US born, $F(3.25, 133.24) = 28.03$, $p<.001$; have higher English proficiency, $F(1,41) = 53.71$, $p<.001$; and have lower SES, $F(1,41) = 21.32$, $p<.001$. Additionally, married Asian Americans were more likely to affiliate with an other religion while unmarrieds were more likely to report no religious affiliation, $F(1.72, 70.68) = 5.45$ $p<.01$. Unmarried Asian Americans also reported higher positive relationship quality with friends than married Asian Americans, $F(1,41) = 55.13$, $p<.001$ but there was no significant difference in positive relationship quality with relatives. Because the spousal relationship is a main source of support and because of the emphasis on marriage in traditional Asian culture, separate profile analyses were conducted for married and unmarried Asian Americans.

Profiles of Relationship Quality among Married Asian Americans

To determine profiles of relationship quality for married Asian Americans, an LPA was conducted with positive and negative quality for spouse as well as positive quality for relatives and friends. The three-profile solution was optimal because of the better interpretability of the solution, and acceptable fit indices.

The three profiles were named on the basis of an examination of the relationship quality mean scores graphed according to the LPA solution (see *Figure 3*). Participants in the *low quality network* (*n=164*) profile rated all relationships low in positivity as well as

spouse low in negativity. Asian Americans in the *high quality spouse* (*n=356*) profile

rated their spouse as positive with low negativity and their relatives and friends low in

positivity. Individuals in the *high quality network* (*n=615*) profile rated all of their

relationships as positive and spouse as low in negativity.

Next, to examine whether there were cultural and individual differences in profile

membership, a multinomial logistic regression was performed. Ethnic subgroup,

generation status, planned immigration, English proficiency, age, gender, and religious

affiliation were used to predict profile membership, controlling for SES. The comparison

group for profile membership was low quality network. Ethnic subgroup, generation

status, English proficiency, and planned immigration significantly predicted profile

membership. In partial support of the hypothesis, individuals who did not plan their

immigration were less likely to belong to the high network quality profile (odds ratio, .12;

95% confidence interval [CI], .02 to .66; *p=.04*) and Filipino Americans were more likely

to belong to the high network quality (odds ratio, 3.11; 95% CI, 1.66 to 5.83; *p=.003*) or

high quality spouse profiles (odds ratio, 5.14; 95% CI, 2.82 to 9.37; *p<.001*) than the low

network quality profile. Contrary to my hypothesis, Vietnamese Americans are more

likely (odds ratio, 2.95; 95% CI, 1.62 to 5.38; *p=.003*) and individuals who are first

generation born (odds ratio, .08; 95% CI, .02 to .39; *p=.009*) were less likely to belong to

the high quality spouse profile than the low network quality profile. Asian Americans

with higher English proficiency were more likely to belong to the high network quality

than the low network quality profile (odds ratio, 1.85; 95% CI, 1.41 to 2.43; *p<.001*).

There were no significant differences by age, gender, or religious affiliation.

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Profiles of Relationship Quality among Unmarried Asian Americans

To identify profiles of relationship quality for unmarried Asian Americans, an LPA was conducted with positive quality for relatives and friends. These analyses are considered exploratory as they only include one dimension of relationship quality. The two-profile solution was optimal due to better interpretability of the solution, and acceptable fit indices.

The two profiles were named on the basis of an examination of the relationship quality mean scores graphed according to the LPA solution (see *Figure 4*). Participants in the *low quality network* (*n=*135) profile rated all relationships low in positivity. Asian Americans in the *high quality network* (*n=*345) profile rated all relationships high in positivity.

Next, cultural and individual differences in profile membership were examined using a binary logistic regression. Ethnic subgroup, generation status, planned immigration, English proficiency, age, gender, and religious affiliation were used to predict profile membership controlling for SES. The comparison group for profile membership was low quality network. Ethnic subgroup, English proficiency and age significantly predicted profile membership. As hypothesized, Asian Americans with a higher English proficiency (odds ratio, 1.60; 95% CI, 1.07 to 2.38; *p*=.02) were more likely to be in the high quality network profile than the low quality network profile. Contrary to my hypothesis, Vietnamese Americans (odds ratio, .50; 95% CI, .29 to .87; *p*=.02) and older Asian Americans were less likely to be in the high quality network profile compared to the low quality network profile (odds ratio, .96; 95% CI, .94 to .98;

p<.001). Profile membership did not significantly differ by generation status, planned immigration, gender, or religion.

Relationship Quality Profiles and Well-Being

The links between relationship quality profiles and well-being were examined using ANOVAs with all cultural and demographic factors as well as SES as controls. In partial support of my hypothesis, there were differences in self-rated mental health by profile membership for married Asian Americans, $F(18,22)= 7.72$, $p < .001$. Married Asian Americans in the high quality network profile reported the highest self-rated mental health while those in the low quality network reported the lowest (see *Table 7*). Models for physical health for married Asian Americans and models for physical and mental health for unmarried Asian Americans were not statistically significant.

<div align="center">

Discussion

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This study provides a more comprehensive understanding of Asian American social relationships and their implications for well-being. Results from this study suggest that Asian Americans' social networks are varied. Most Asian Americans in this study feel highly supported by their social network, however, there are also many who feel a lack of support. Profile membership for Asian Americans in this study is influenced by cultural and demographic factors. There are both similarities and differences in these associations for married and unmarried Asian Americans. Similar to previous studies (Birditt & Antonucci, 2007; Levitt et al., 2005), married Asian Americans with high quality network profiles reported better mental health than other relationship quality profiles. This is considered further below.

Relationship Quality Profiles

As predicted, profiles of relationship quality for Asian Americans included high quality and diverse networks as well as a low quality network. Over half of the participants belonged to the high quality network profile suggesting many Asian Americans have supportive social networks. Results also suggest, however, that there are many Asian Americans who feel unsupported by their social network or only receive support from their spouse. All profiles were low in spousal negativity supporting the collectivistic perspective that suggests Asian Americans are reluctant to speak negatively about social relationships (Takahashi et al., 2002; Taylor et al., 2004).

Contrary to my hypothesis, profiles of relationship quality for unmarried Asian Americans only included high and low quality networks. Over half of the profiles belonged to high quality network profiles. The majority of unmarried Asian Americans in this study may feel supported by their network; however, there is a sizable group who lack support. These findings are interpreted with caution as these analyses did not include negative relationship quality. The inclusion of negative relationship quality may result in more diverse profiles.

Cultural and Individual Differences in Profiles

Differences in profile membership among Asian Americans in this study illustrate the influence of varying circumstances and challenges Asian Americans face being an ethnic minority and/or adjusting to a new culture. Results from both married and unmarried relationship quality profiles suggest availability and access to resources as well as changing roles within social networks influence profile membership.

In this study, English proficiency was important for profile membership as Asian Americans with high English proficiency were more likely to belong to the high quality network regardless of marital status. This is consistent with Zhang and Ta's (2009) finding that positive friendship quality was related to higher English proficiency. Findings also provide further understanding of research with children and adolescence. Some studies have found that better English proficiency leads to conflict within families as family members are unable to communicate effectively (Portes & Hao, 2002) and English proficiency is viewed by older generations as turning away from their Asian culture (Zhou & Xiong, 2005). Better English proficiency for adults, however, may help bridge the gap between adults and children as well as younger generations. These Asian American adults are likely to be able to communicate more effectively, not be reliant on a translator, and have increased access to resources (e.g. Espin, 2006; Mahler & Pessar, 2006; Portes & Hao, 2002; Zhou & Bankston, 1998).

Married. Individual and immigration-related factors influence profile membership for married Asian Americans in this study. Married Vietnamese Americans tended to belong to the high quality spouse profile. Spouses may be particularly central to Vietnamese Americans' social networks as they are less likely to be separated if they experience disruptions in their social network and they share a personal history with each other. The immigration experience and integrating to a new country may lead to Vietnamese Americans needing the intimate support spouses provide. Filipino Americans tended to belong to the high quality network and high quality spouse profiles. Filipino Americans' relationship may have more positivity because they have resources and skills (Zhou & Xiong, 2005) before immigrating that help their transition leading to less strain

on their social relationships. Asian Americans who did not plan their immigration were less likely to belong in the high quality network profile. The stress and strain of the immigration process may be exacerbated when there is little to no planning as they are less likely to have resources leading to increased needs (Atkinson et al., 1984; Lin et al., 1979; Serafica et al., 2000; Uba, 1994; Zhou & Bankston, 1998). Their social networks may be unable to meet their needs as there are too many demands and/or their social network has limited resources themselves. First generation Asian Americans are less likely to belong to the high quality spouse network profile. The generation status of the spouse is unknown, therefore, it is also unknown whether or not spouses share the same generation status. First generation Asian Americans' status may be associated with feelings of belonging to two worlds (Chung, 2001). This may influence how supported they feel by one's social network as they try to navigate between mainstream US culture and the culture of their family's origin. Unlike immigrants, first generation Asian Americans do not have the unifying circumstance of the shared immigration experience with their spouse.

Unmarried. In this study, unmarried Vietnamese Americans tended to belong to the low quality network profile. This suggests that Vietnamese Americans have support needs that are not being met. During the immigration process, Vietnamese Americans may have become separated from their social network members, have had to leave them behind in their home country, and/or moved to a place that is isolated from other ethnic minorities (Zhou & Bankston, 1998). Vietnamese Americans may also have high support needs as many immigrate to the US as refugees (Lin et al., 1979; Uba, 1994; Zhou & Xiong, 2005). The disruptions in their social network in combination with high support

needs may lead to Vietnamese Americans who are unmarried with support needs that their social network cannot meet. Older Asian Americans who are unmarried were more likely to belong in the low quality network. These individuals may have more needs as spouses are a main source of support (Antonucci et al., 1998; Antonucci et al., 2001) especially as individuals enter old age when spouses often serve as caretakers (Brubaker, 1990). Relationship quality with family ties may be low as filial piety is structured around the parent-child relationship (e.g. Zhou, 1992; Zhou, 2006; Zhou & Bankston, 1998) and unmarried Asian Americans may not have a child to provide them with support.

Relationship Profiles and Well-Being

Relationship quality profile membership was associated with mental health only for married Asian Americans in this study. Asian Americans in both the high quality network and the high spouse quality network indicated higher mental health than those in the low quality network; however, Asian Americans in the high quality network profile reported better mental health than individuals in the high quality spouse profile. Similar to research on relationship profiles with the general population (Birditt & Antonucci, 2007; Levitt et al., 2005), these findings support the functional specificity model (Weiss, 1965) as multiple sources of support were associated with better mental health. These findings provide support for Asian Americans' better mental health being partially attributed to supportive social ties (Chung, 1991; Ross-Sheriff, 1991).

Limitations

There are limitations in this study that should be addressed in future studies.

There were no measures of negative relationship quality for relatives and friends included in the profiles. This limits our understanding of Asian Americans' social networks. The lack of gender differences as well as the lack of differences in self-rated physical and mental health by profile membership may be attributed to the absence of negative relationship quality. Women are more likely to characterize their social relationships negatively (Antonucci, 2001; Fingerman, Hay, & Birditt, 2004). Negative relationship quality has also been associated with positive well-being (Antonucci et al., 2001; Birditt et al., 2009). For example, an individual may perceive their spouse as irritating because they are constantly reminding them to take their medication or to eat healthier but it also improves the individual's health. Future studies should explore specific family relationships. Traditional Asian culture ascribes roles for each family member that may change as Asian Americans integrate into the US culture and influence network dynamics (e.g. Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2003; Hondagneu-Sotelo & Cranford, 1999; Kibria, 1994; Mahler & Pessar 2006; Pedraza, 1991; Pessar, 2005; Suarez-Orozco & Qin, 2006; Suarez-Orozco et al., 2002). For example, traditionally daughters are expected to spend time with their mothers assisting them in household responsibilities. When daughters integrate into mainstream US culture they may spend more time with their peers. Future studies should also examine profile membership and other measures of well-being more closely associated with relationship quality. The use of one-item self-rated health measures may be too global.

Implications

This study examined Asian American social networks and their association with well-being. Findings indicate that Asian Americans do have social networks high in

positive relationship quality and those networks were associated with better self-rated mental health. This also reveals that there are Asian Americans with social networks characterized by low positive relationship quality. These results illustrate the importance of examining the heterogeneity among Asian Americans. The current understanding of Asian Americans and their social relationships neglects groups of Asian Americans that may be disadvantaged and/or vulnerable. Further research needs to be conducted to identify vulnerable populations and their support needs in order to create intervention and outreach programs. Results from this study suggest that unmarried Vietnamese Americans, unmarried Asian Americans in middle to late adulthood, and Asian Americans who did not plan their immigration may be at particular risk.

Findings from this study provide further support for the importance of Asian American adults learning English. Creating programs that encourage and facilitate learning English may lead to improvement in relationship dynamics in the home and better access to resources. This may eventually lead to less support needs from sources outside of the individual's social network.

Conclusion

This study provides insight into the dynamics within Asian American social networks. Not all Asian Americans in this study have highly supportive social networks. The heterogeneity within Asian Americans is reflected in the different relationship quality profiles. This highlights the importance of accounting for the context of social networks. Consistent with studies on the general population (Birditt & Antonucci, 2007; Levitt et al., 2005), multiple sources of positive support for married Asian Americans is

associated with better well-being. This suggests that for Asian Americans both friends and family are important for mental health.

Chapter IV

Study 3: Asian American Social Relationships and Help Seeking Behavior

Recently, much attention has been given to the lack of mental health service use by Asian Americans. The literature indicates that Asian Americans do experience mental health problems. They have similar if not higher prevalence rates of mental health problems as European Americans (e.g. Lee, Lei, & Sue, 2001; Sue, Sue, Sue, & Takeuchi, 1995) and those receiving treatment present severe cases (Sue & Morishima, 1982; Uba, 1994). Currently, research is focused on understanding who utilizes services and who does not among Asian Americans. Social relationships have been discussed as both an alternative (e.g. Abe-Kim et al., 2002; Uba, 1994) to and a facilitator of mental health service use (e.g. Lin & Cheung, 1999; Nicdao, Hong, & Takeuchi, 2008). Nevertheless, few studies have focused specifically on social relationships and most explore the influence of family in general. This study builds on previous research and focuses on examining the role of specific social relationships in the help seeking process.

Mental Health

In recent decades, research has illustrated that with regards to mental health, Asian Americans are not the "model minority" (Takeuchi et al., 2007). In fact, many subpopulations within Asian Americans are considered at risk for mental health problems (e.g. Browne & Broderick, 1994; Nicholson, 1997; Sue et al., 1995). US born Asian

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Americans present higher rates of psychiatric disorders compared to immigrants, however, those who immigrate as children are at greater risk for affective, anxiety, and substance abuse disorders (Takeuchi et al., 2007). Southeast Asians are considered a high risk group, as many have been exposed to environmental stressors such as war, death of loved ones, and the destruction of their home prior to their immigration (Nicholson, 1997; Sue et al., 1995). Elderly Asian immigrants are also thought to be a high risk group as they are at higher risk for dementia and women are at higher risk for suicide (Browne & Broderick, 1994). Asian Americans may be at risk because they may have limited resources when confronting major life stressors (Sue & Morishima, 1982).

Lack of Service Utilization

Numerous studies have been conducted with Asian American adult populations exploring their willingness to use mental health related services. There has been no consensus, however, on the reasons Asian Americans do not use mental health related services. The main reasons given for the lack of service utilization are cultural barriers, lack of cultural and linguistic compatibility, lack of awareness of available resources and limited access (Abe-Kim et al., 2007). Cultural barriers include the shame and stigma associated with having mental health problem as well as attributing symptoms to supernatural causes (Abe-Kim et al., 2002; Lee et al., 2001; Nguyen et al, 2004; Takeuchi, Leaf, & Kuo, 1988). Lack of cultural and linguistic compatibility occurs when service providers are not culturally sensitive to the individual and/or does not speak the same language as the individual (Abe-Kin et al., 2002). Many Asian Americans are unaware of the resources available to them. This is especially true of immigrants (Abe-Kim et al., 2002). There are also many who are unable to access services because they do

not have health insurance (USDHHS, 2001).

Some Asian Americans are unable to seek help from formal services, while others prefer to turn to their social networks. Zhang and colleagues (1998) outlined a pattern of help seeking behavior Asian Americans generally engage in. Individuals begin by trying to resolve the problem themselves and if they cannot they next turn to their friends and family (Abe-Kim et al., 2002). If the problem remains, they turn to community figures for help (Uba, 1994). They may see a physician or a general health care provider with somatic symptoms (Gee, 2004; Lee et al., 2001; Lin & Cheung, 1999; Ying & Miller, 1992).

Social Relationships

Social relationships can influence help seeking behavior in multiple ways: as an alternative to formal services, by facilitating using formal services, or indirectly by promoting/hindering help seeking. Social relationships serving as an alternative has received the most attention in research. Traditionally, mental health problems are viewed as private matters and as inappropriate to discuss with strangers (Huang, 1991; Tung, 1985). Instead, Asian Americans choose to resolve their mental health problems within the family (Sue & Sue, 1990) or discuss problems with friends and family (Zhang, Snowden, & Sue, 1998). Zhang and colleagues (1998) found that Asian Americans are more likely to talk to friends and family compared to mental health professionals, however, compared to whites, they are less likely to talk about their mental health problems in general.

Social relationships can also facilitate help seeking. An individual's social network may facilitate service utilization in numerous ways such as detecting signs of

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mental health issues and encouraging the individual to seek help, informing the individual of available resources or helping to dispel misconceptions about the therapeutic process. Given the close ties between family members, family may be important in service utilization. In some cases, family members may initiate the first visit to a mental health service provider (Lin & Cheung, 1999). Other social ties may have influential roles in service utilization. One study that examined the influence of family and friend support on mental health service use suggests that friends facilitate service use by providing advice and/or information (Nicdao, Hong, & Takeuchi, 2008).

Social relationships may also indirectly influence help seeking behavior. Help seeking behavior frameworks generally assume the individual makes rational service use decisions (Pescosolido, 2006; Pescosolido & Boyer, 1999). The network episode model (NEM) proposed by Pescosolido and Boyer (1999) views the process as more dynamic. In the NEM, an individual's decision making is influenced by their social network interacting with their context. Thus, the influence of their social relationships is reflected in the individual's decision. For example, an Asian American whose family has traditional Asian beliefs will choose not to use formal services for mental health problems. The emphasis on group harmony will dissuade the individual from bringing the family shame by having a mental health problem and/or seeking formal help for it. It would also disrupt family harmony by creating more conflict within the family.

Cultural and Demographic Factors

Previous literature has revealed variations in help seeking behavior by cultural and demographic factors. In a study of inpatient and outpatient mental health service use, East Asians and Filipinos used the most services (Barreto & Segal, 2005). Both ethnic

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subgroups are more likely to be aware of resources and have access due to established ethnic communities and resources when they immigrated compared to other ethnic subgroups (Zhou, 1992; Zhou & Xiong, 1995). Previous literature has also found generational differences with US born Asian Americans more likely than immigrants to use and/or engage in help seeking behavior (Abe-Kim et al., 2007). Immigrants may be more likely to hold traditional views regarding mental health problems and services while US born Asian Americans may be more likely to have beliefs similar to the mainstream culture. Help seeking behavior may also vary by age and gender. Younger Asian Americans have been found to have more positive attitudes towards help seeking (Ying & Miller, 1992). Asian American men, however, are more likely to hold traditional Asian values (Tang & Dion, 1999) making them even less likely to engage in help seeking behavior. Socioeconomic status may also influence access to formal mental health related services as individuals with low SES may not have health insurance.

In summary, social relationships may influence help seeking behavior directly or indirectly, which could lead to either using or not using services. Cultural and demographic factors may influence the role of social relationships by affecting the individual's context.

Present Study

This study will explore the association between social relationships and help seeking behavior. To achieve a better understanding of the role of social relationships in Asian Americans' help seeking behavior, this study will examine both encouragement to seek help by someone and actual help seeking. I will address three questions: (1) What kinds of relationships are associated with being encouraged to seek help? Actual help

seeking?; (2) Is the association between social relationships and encouragement to seek help/actual help seeking influenced by cultural and demographic factors?; and (3) Do specific social relationships influence actual help seeking by encouraging help seeking behavior? I hypothesized that Asian Americans who characterize their relationships with spouse and relatives high in positivity and their relationship with their spouse high in negatively will be less likely to be encouraged to seek help and actually seek help. Previous work has found in some cases family facilitates mental health related service use (Lin & Cheung, 1999) yet, there is still a lack of mental health related service use by Asian Americans. Asian American families may not view mental health related services as negatively as previously thought but their encouragement and possible facilitation may not be viewed favorably by the individual leading the individual to feel unsupported and misunderstood. I also hypothesized that Asian Americans who characterize their friendships high in positivity are more likely to be encouraged to engage in formal help seeking. Previous work suggests that friends are a source of advice and information that actually facilitates service use (Nicdao, Hong, & Takeuchi, 2008).

I postulated that the link between social relationships and encouragement to seek help/actual help seeking will differ by ethnic subgroup and generations status, with Chinese and Filipino Americans as well as US born Asian Americans more likely to be encouraged and to seek help when relationships are positive. Chinese and Filipino Americans (Barreto & Segal, 2005) as well as US born Asian Americans (Abe-Kim et al., 2007) have been found to use mental health related services more often than other groups. I hypothesized that males will be less likely to be given encouragement and engage in help seeking behavior when their relationships are positive. Men are more

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likely to hold traditional Asian values (Tang & Dion, 1999) that do not encourage mental health related service use. I also hypothesized that there will be age differences with younger Asian Americans more likely to be encouraged to and to actually seek help than older Asian Americans. Younger Asian Americans may be more likely to seek help as they have been found to have more positive attitudes towards help seeking (Ying & Miller, 1992).

I postulated that encouragement moderates the association between social relationships and actual help seeking. Due to the cultural emphasis on group harmony (Serafica et al., 2000; Taylor et al., 2004), Asian Americans may be more likely to seek help if they know that their social network supports help seeking behavior.

Method

Participants

This study used data from the National Latino and Asian American Study (NLAAS) a nationally representative stratified probability sample of non-institutionalized Latino and Asian Americans 18 years old and older in the US. For further information regarding specifics of the study and study procedure please refer to study 1.

This study focuses on the Asian American subsample (n = 1628) of NLAAS. This subsample consists of 762 men and 866 women ranging from 18-95 years old (*M*=41.51, *SE*=.63). Sixty-eight percent identified as married. There are three ethnic subgroups in the subsample, including participants who identified as Chinese (n=600), Filipino (n=508), and Vietnamese (n=520). See *Table 1*.

Measures

  Social Relationship. Two types of relationship quality were explored in this study. Four items were used to measure *positive relationship quality* with spouse including how much their spouse or partner cares, understands their feelings, can talk about their worries, and rely on them for help ($\alpha = .86$). All items were measured on a scale of 1 = a lot to 4 = not at all. Responses were reverse coded and a mean composite of the reverse coded items was taken. *Positive relationship quality* with relatives ($\alpha = .80$) and friends ($\alpha = .85$) used 2-items for each relationship type. Participants indicated how much they could rely on their relatives or friends for help when they have a serious problem and open up when they need to talk about their worries. Responses were rated on a scale of 1 = a lot to 4 = not at all which where reverse coded and a mean composite was taken for each relationship type. *Negative relationship quality* with spouse was measured with 4-items. Including items such as how often their spouse or partner made too many demands, criticized them, and got on their nerves. Responses were rated on a scale of 1 = often to 4 = never which were reverse coded and a mean composite was taken ($\alpha = .74$). A similar reliability estimate is found in research using comparable items (Umberson, 1992).

  Ethnic Subgroup. Participants indicated the ethnic subgroup to which they felt they belonged. Two dummy coded variables were created to indicate Vietnamese and Filipino with Chinese as the reference group.

  Generation status. Participants reported their country of birth, their parents' country of birth, and their grandparents' country of birth as well as age at immigration for those who immigrated to the US. Birth country of participants, their parents, and their

grandparents is used to establish participants' generation status. When determining generation status, if one or both parents were born outside of the US, the participant was categorized as immigrant. If both parents were born in the US, country of birth for grandparents was examined to determine whether the participant was first or second generation born. If any of the grandparents were born outside of the US, the participant was treated as if all of the grandparents were not born in the US. This is consistent with previous studies (Jackson et al., 2007).   Participants also reported their age at immigration, which was categorized as 0-17 years old, 18-34 years old, and 35+ years old. This uses similar categorization as Takeuchi and colleagues (2007). After examining the crosstabs of study variables, Asian Americans who immigrated between ages 0 to 12 and 13 to 17 were collapsed to create a category that incorporates Asian Americans who immigrated before adulthood. Generation status incorporated both country of birth and age of immigration. Participants were categorized into 5 groups and then 4 dummy coded variables were created to reflect (1) immigrant at age 35+ years old, (2) immigrant at 18-34 years old, (3) immigrant at 0-17 years old, and (4) first generation born in the US with second generation or later as a reference group.

Age and Gender. Current age was calculated from date of birth. Gender was coded as 0 = women and 1 = men.

Encourage Help Seeking. To measure whether participants were encouraged to seek help, participants responded to whether or not a family member, friend, co-worker, anyone encouraged or pressured them to see a health professional about their emotions, mental health, or substance use in the past year. Due to the overall length of the survey, not all participants were asked whether or not they were encouraged to seek help.

Participants who indicated a need for services or that they had engaged in help seeking behavior were targeted (*n=267*). Participants responded yes or no and a dummy coded variable was created where 0 = no and 1 = responding yes to at least one of the two questions.

Help Seeking Behavior. Help seeking behavior was measured using the item "In the past 12 months, did you go to see [provider on list] for problems with your emotions, nerves, or your use of alcohol or drugs?" (see Abe-Kim et al., 2007). Participants were given a list of 10 types of professional in addition to the option of specifying a professional not included. The list included counselor, social worker, family doctor, spiritual leader and healer. In this study, all types of services were examined. A dummy coded variable based on yes or no responses to the 10-items was used indicating whether (1) participants responded yes to any of the 10 items and (0) participants responded no to all of the 10-items.

Control Variable. Socioeconomic status was assessed as household income. Household income is a composite of seven sources of income, participant, spouse, social security, government, family, and other (Leu et al., 2008) (*M=71383.40, SE=2705.05*).

Analysis Plan

Study variables were examined for univariate outliers, extreme non-normality, and missing data. Due to poor reliability, measures for negative relationship quality relatives and friends were not used. Sample characteristics and relationship quality varied by marital status (see study 2) thus parallel analyses were conducted for married and unmarried Asian Americans for all analyses. Initial models for research question 2 included both main effects and interactions with English proficiency. Main effects and

interactions involving English proficiency for married and unmarried Asian Americans for both encouragement to seek help and help seeking behavior were not statistically significant. This is consistent with previous research using NLAAS has not found statistically significant links between mental health related service use and English proficiency (Abe-Kim et al., 2007; Nicdao et al., 2008). English proficiency was excluded from the final models.

Prevalence rates for both encouragement to seek help and help seeking behavior by relationship quality were conducted. Odds ratios were calculated using binary logistic regression to examine the association between relationship quality and encouragement, as well as help seeking behavior.

Binary logistic regression was also used to examine the links between cultural and demographic factors with relationship quality and encouragement to seek help/help seeking. For analyses involving both encouragement to seek help and help seeking behavior, interaction terms between relationship quality and ethnic subgroup, generation status/nativity, age, and gender were created. All continuous variables were centered before creating interaction terms. First, interaction terms for each relationship type were entered separately because of the number of interactions and the sample size. Second, interaction terms for all relationship types were combined excluding interaction terms not statistically significant for parsimony. Third, to further examine statistically significant interactions a binary logistic regression between relationship quality and encouragement to seek help/help seeking was conducted for each category of the cultural/individual factor.

To explore the association between relationship quality, encouragement to seek

help, and help seeking behavior, hierarchical logistic regression was used. The four steps outlined by Baron and Kenny (1986) were applied. First, a binary logistic regression with relationship quality predicting help seeking behavior was conducted. Second, the link between relationship quality and encouragement to seek help was examined and then third, the association between encouragement to seek help and help seeking behavior was assessed. Fourth, a binary logistic regression with both relationship quality and encouragement to seek help predicting help seeking behavior was conducted. In each step, ethnic subgroup, nativity, gender, and SES were controlled for. To support a hypothesis of mediation all four steps need to be statistically significant; if only the first three are significant, partial mediation has been identified.

All analyses were done using the complex samples module in SPSS 18.0 to account for sample weights and complex design. All analyses also controlled for SES.

Results

To explore the association between social relationships and mental health related service use, I first examined the main effects for relationship quality on encouragement to seek help and help seeking behavior. Next, I looked at the interactions between relationship quality, and cultural and individual factors for both encouragement to seek help and help seeking behavior. Last, I examined whether encouragement to seek help moderated the link between relationship quality and help seeking behavior.

Relationship Quality and Encouragement

As predicted social relationships was significantly associated with whether married Asian Americans were encouraged to seek help while controlling for SES, $F(5,19)=3.29, p<.05$. Married Asian Americans who characterize their friendships as

high in positivity were more likely to be encouraged to use services (odds ratio, 1.91; 95% confidence interval [CI], 1.06 to 3.44; p=.03). In contrast to the association among social relations with friends, married Asian Americans who rated their relationship with their relatives as high in positivity were moderately less likely to be encouraged to use services (odds ratio, .62; 95% CI, .37 to 1.06; p=.08). Positive and negative relationship quality with spouse were not statistically associated with encouragement to seek services. Social relationships were not linked to whether or not unmarried Asian Americans were encouraged to engage in help seeking behavior. See *Table 9*.

Relationship Quality and Help Seeking

Social relationships also predicted actual help seeking behavior while controlling for SES among married Asian Americans, F(5,35)=9.71, p<.001. Married Asian Americans who reported their relationship with their spouses as high in negativity (odds ratio, 1.52; 95% CI, 1.12 to 2.07; p=.009) but their relationships with relatives (odds ratio, 1.41; 95% CI, 1.00 to 2.00; p=.05) and friends (odds ratio, 1.58; 95% CI, 1.15 to 2.17; p=.006) as high in positivity were more likely to use services. Positive quality with spouse was not statistically significant. Social relationships were related to help seeking behavior for unmarried Asian Americans while controlling for SES, F(3,29)=9.06, p<.001. Unmarried Asian Americas who rated their relationship with their relatives high in positivity were more likely to engage in help seeking (odds ratio, 1.70; 95% CI, 1.31 to 2.19; p<.001). Positive quality with friends was not statistically significant. See *Table 9.*

Cultural and Demographic Differences in Relationship Quality and Encouragement

Descriptive analyses of the variables for this research question revealed an uneven distribution across variable categories with some categories of generation status and age

having fewer than 5 participants. To have variables that group together participants that are theoretically similar and categories that have at least 10 participants, generation status was collapsed into immigrant and US born to reflect nativity and age was excluded from analyses with encouragement to seek help. The association between relationship quality and encouragement to seek help varied by gender for married Asian Americans, $F(9,15)$ = 7.52, $p<001$. Contrary to my hypothesis, Asian American men with high positive relationship quality with spouse were moderately more likely to receive encouragement to seek help (odds ratio, 15.27; 95% CI, 1.51 to 1.54.46; $p=.08$). The link between positive relationship quality with spouse and encouragement to seek help was not significant for married Asian American women. See *Table 9*.

Among unmarried Asian Americans, the association between relationship quality and encouragement to seek help varied by ethnic subgroup, nativity, and gender, $F(11,6)$ = 9.66, p=.006. Partially supporting my hypothesis, Vietnamese Americans with high positive relationship quality with relatives were less likely to be encouraged to seek help (odds ratio, .10; 95% CI, .02 to .51; $p=.006$). The association was not statistically significant for Filipino and Chinese Americans. Also in partial support of my hypothesis, Asian American immigrants with higher positive relationship quality reported their friends to be less likely to encourage them to seek help (odds ratio, .27; 95% CI, .11 to .65; p=.01). Contrary to my hypothesis, men were more likely (odds ratio, 1.90; 95% CI, 1.21 to 2.98; $p=.005$) while women were less likely (odds ratio, .33; 95% CI, .19 to .58; $p<.001$) to be encouraged to seek help the higher positive relationship quality with relatives they reported. See *Table 9*.

Cultural and Demographic Differences in Relationship Quality and Help Seeking

The association between relationship quality and help seeking behavior varied by ethnic subgroup, generation status, gender, and age among married Asian Americans, $F(23,17) = 4.44$, p=.001. Higher positive relationship quality with friends for all married Asian Americans was linked with an increased likelihood of engaging in help seeking behavior. The likelihood of engaging in help seeking behavior among Asian Americans with high positive relationship quality with friends varied by ethnic subgroup, generation status, and gender. Contrary to my hypothesis, odds were lower for Filipino Americans (odds ratio, 1.44; 95% CI, 1.04 to 1.99; $p=.001$) compared to all other Asian ethnic subgroups (odds ratio, 2.17; 95% CI, 1.57 to 2.99; $p<.001$). In partial support of my hypothesis, Asian Americans who immigrated at ages 18 to 34 years old (odds ratio, 2.00; 95% CI, 1.42 to 2.82; $p<.001$) and first generation born (odds ratio, 2.01; 95% CI, 1.08 to 3.74; $p=.007$) had the highest likelihood followed by those who immigrated at 35 years old or older (odds ratio, 1.84; 95% CI, 1.29 to 2.62; $p<.001$) compared to all other generations. Partially supporting my hypothesis, Asian American women were more likely to engage in help seeking behavior (odds ratio, 2.73; 95% CI, 1.98 to 3.75; $p<.001$), however, this association was not statistically significant for men. The odds of help seeking behavior also varied for Asian Americans with high negative relationship quality with spouse. As hypothesized, there were age differences with Asian Americans 41 to 50 years old (odds ratio, 4.65; 95% CI, 1.88 to 11.50; $p=.006$) most likely to engage in help seeking behavior when they report high negative relationship quality with spouse followed by Asian Americans 51 years old or older (odds ratio, 2.89; 95% CI, 1.52 to 5.49; $p=.007$). This association was not statistically significant for Asian Americans 18 to

40 years old. See *Table 9.*

Among unmarried Asian Americans, the link between relationship quality and help seeking behavior varied by ethnic subgroup and gender, $F(10,22)= 5.11$, p=.001. Both analyses examining the association between positive relationship quality with relatives and help seeking behavior for Vietnamese Americans and Filipino Americans were not statistically significant. However, analyses examining the group of all other Asian Americans for each interaction (as ethnic subgroup variables were dummy coded) were statistically significant (Vietnamese American: odds ratio, 1.84; 95% CI, 1.33 to 2.54; *p=*.003; Filipino American: odds ratio, 1.85; 95% CI, 1.14 to 3.01; *p=*.03). Thus, Chinese Americans with high positive relationship quality with relatives may be more likely to engage in help seeking behavior, which is contrary to my hypothesis. High positive relationship quality with relatives is also linked to an increased likelihood of help seeking behavior for women (odds ratio, 1.77; 95% CI, 1.29 to 2.42; *p=*.001) but was not statistically significant for men. See *Table 9.*

Relationship Quality, Encouragement, and Help Seeking

Among both married and unmarried Asian Americans, encouragement to seek help did not moderate help seeking behavior. Encouragement to seek help did not predict help seeking behavior (steps 3 and 4) for married Asian Americans. Relationship quality did not predict encouragement to seek help (step 2) and encouragement did not predict help seeking behavior (steps 3 and 4) for unmarried Asian Americans.

Discussion

In this study, relationship quality with all relationship types (spouse, relatives, and friends) among Asian Americans influenced the likelihood of whether or not they

received encouragement to seek help and actual help seeking behavior for mental health related problems. The associations between relationship quality and encouragement to seek help as well as help seeking behavior varied by ethnic group, generation status/nativity, and gender. These patterns differed for married and unmarried Asian Americans. Encouragement to seek help, however, was not linked to actual help seeking behavior. More detail is needed regarding the type of encouragement, the circumstances under which encouragement is given, and who is providing the encouragement to gain a better understanding of what is associated with help seeking behavior.

Encouragement to Seek Help

Positive relationship quality with all relationship types was linked to encouragement to seek help for both married and unmarried Asian Americans in this study. The likelihood of being encouraged to seek help depended on relationship type and varied by cultural and individual factors.

Spouse. Married Asian American men are more likely to receive encouragement to seek help when they reported high positive relationship quality with spouses. In general, spouses are the primary source of support for US men (Antonucci et al., 1998) and findings from study 1 suggest this applies to Asian American men as well. Married Asian Americans who do not feel like they can go to their spouse with their problems may be less likely to discuss their problems with anyone. This would naturally decrease their odds of being encouraged to seek help as their social network may be unaware that they have a problem.

Relatives. The role of relatives in the lives of Asian Americans in this study differed by marital status. The association between low positive relationship quality with

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relatives and receiving encouragement may indicate that married Asian Americans who feel they cannot talk to or get help from relatives for problems have support needs not being fulfilled. Family is a main source of support (Die & Seelbach, 1989; Zhang & Ta, 2009), therefore, married Asian Americans with little to no support from relatives may receive encouragement from their social network to seek support outside of the family.

Unmarried Vietnamese Americans in this study with high positive relationship quality with relatives were less likely to receive encouragement to seek help. Vietnamese Americans may be more likely to retain their traditional values, which are inconsistent with formal service utilization as most came to the US as refugees. Vietnamese Americans are likely to not have been exposed to US culture prior to immigrating (Zhou & Bankston, 1998), decreasing the likelihood that they understand mental illness and related services. Therefore, Vietnamese Americans may not be encouraged to seek help as problems are expected to be managed within the family. The beliefs of family members may be particularly important for unmarried Asian Americans who have traditional Asian values, which emphasize family cohesion.

Among unmarried Asian Americans in this study, high positive relationship quality with relatives increased men's likelihood but decreased women's likelihood of receiving encouragement to seek help. This suggests that while both genders feel supported by their relatives, gender roles and expectations may lead to different responses to support needs by relatives. Traditionally, men have greater access to family resources because they are expected to be providers of the family and to perpetuate the family line (Zhou, 1992). Women, in contrast, are expected to be self-sacrificing and take care of family concerns (e.g. household responsibilities, maintaining family ties, etc.)

(Abraham, 1999). Men may be more likely to receive encouragement to seek help because any problems that they are experiencing may hinder their ability to achieve success and provide for the family while women are expected to endure whatever stresses they might be experiencing.

Friends. In this study, married Asian Americans were more likely to receive encouragement to seek help when they reported having high positive relationship quality with friends. Consistent with previous literature with the general US population, findings from this study indicate that for married Asian Americans friends are a source of emotional support (Antonucci et al., 2001; Birditt et al., 2009). Married Asian Americans may discuss their problems with friends and go to them for advice. Taylor and colleagues (2007), however, found that Asian American college students did not discuss their problems with friends and instead received support indirectly (e.g. doing activities, talking about other topics, etc.). This suggests that friends may have different roles at different life stages or depending on the problem (e.g. conflict with parents versus being plagued by irrational fears).

Asian American immigrants in this study with high positive quality relationship with friends are less likely to receive encouragement to seek help. Friends may be an important resource for unmarried Asian American immigrants as they might not have immigrated with family or have close relationships with proximal family members. Immigrants are more likely to have traditional beliefs and as relationships of choice (Crohan & Antonucci, 1989; DuPertuis et al., 2001; Sherman et al., 2000), friends are also likely to share these beliefs. Supportive friends who view mental health related services negatively are not likely to encourage help seeking behavior.

Help Seeking Behavior

In this study, relationship quality for all relationship types was linked to help seeking behavior for married Asian Americans while only positive relationship quality with relatives was associated for unmarried Asian Americans. The likelihood of engaging in help seeking behavior varied by cultural and individual factors.

Spouse. Negative relationship quality with spouse was linked to help seeking behavior for married Asian Americans in middle adulthood and older. In general, midlife is known as particularly stressful life stage as individuals are attempting to fulfill multiple roles (i.e. responsibilities to children and to parents) (Grundy & Henretta, 2006; Riley & Bowen, 2005). A spouse who they view as demanding and irritating may exacerbate the strain married Asian Americans feel in middle adulthood. This could prompt them to engage in help seeking behavior. As individuals transition into late adulthood they may experience declines in health. Negative relationship quality with spouse for married Asian Americans in late adulthood could indicate spouses attempting to facilitate help seeking behavior. This has been found in research on older adults regarding health behaviors (Rook & Ituarte, 1999). Attempts by the spouse to persuade the individual to talk to a mental health care professional may be viewed as demanding or critical but it may also increase the likelihood that the individual does engage in help seeking behavior.

Relatives. High positive relationship quality with relatives for married Asian Americans increased the likelihood that they engaged in help seeking behavior. Relatives may facilitate help seeking behavior by being supportive and having a positive attitude towards mental health related services. Relatives who are willing to help with problems may be more apt to be open-minded towards mental health issues.

High positive relationship quality with relatives is associated with help seeking behavior for unmarried Chinese Americans. In general, Chinese Americans may view mental health related services more positively than Vietnamese and Filipino Americans because as a group they have been in the US the longest. They are, therefore, likely to benefit from established ethnic communities that provide support, and have better access to resources (Zhou, 1992; Zhou & Xiong, 2005). This may lead Chinese American families to have more positive attitudes towards mental health problems and related services.

Similar to married Asian Americans, unmarried women are more likely to engage in help seeking behavior when they have high positive relationship quality with relatives. Men may be reluctant to engage in help seeking behavior even with the support of relatives because they themselves may have negative attitudes towards mental health related services as they tend to hold traditional Asian beliefs which usually do not regard such services positively (Tang & Dion, 1999).

Friends. The likelihood of engaging in help seeking behavior for married Asian Americans who have high positive relationship quality with friends varied by ethnic subgroup, generation status, and gender. Vietnamese and Filipino Americans were less likely to engage in help seeking behavior. Vietnamese and Filipino Americans may use their friends as alternatives to mental health related services because they have friends who are willing to help them with problems. As previously stated, Vietnamese Americans may be more likely to hold traditional beliefs as many are immigrants and have friends that share those beliefs. This may decrease the chances of engaging in help seeking behavior. Contrary to expectations, Filipino Americans with supportive friends are less

likely to engage in help seeking behavior. Filipino Americans as a group do not face many of the common barriers to mental health related service use that other Asian Americans experience. Filipino Americans are more likely to speak English, to have been exposed to the US culture, and have resources when they immigrate (Zhou & Xiong, 2005). Further research needs to be conducted to gain a more detailed understanding of why Filipino Americans are less likely to seek help despite having supportive social relationships and beneficial characteristics (i.e. speaking English, exposure to US culture).

Married Asian Americans who immigrated at 18 years old or older as well as first generation born Asian Americans are more likely to engage in help seeking behavior when they report having high positive relationship quality with friends. Friends, for married Asian American immigrants, may serve as an important source of informational support as they may have their emotional and instrumental support needs met by their spouses and/or family. Previous research has found that for immigrants, friends are sources of information regarding US culture, jobs, and available resources (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1994; Zhou & Xiong, 2005). Married Asian Americans who immigrated at 18 years old or older may be more likely to engage in help seeking behavior because their friends inform them about mental health issues and available mental health related services. First generation Asian Americans are more likely to have family members who are immigrants. Immigrants tend to hold traditional beliefs, which do not encourage the use of mental health related services (Abe-Kim et al., 2002; Lee et al., 2001; Nguyen et al, 2004; Takeuchi et al., 1988). Friends, however, may not share the same viewpoint and facilitate help seeking behavior by being supportive and viewing mental health

related services more positively.

Married Asian American women are also more likely to engage in help seeking behavior when they report high positive relationship quality with friends. Previous literature has found that women tend to have larger social networks compared to men (Antonucci et al., 1998) and similar findings in study 1 suggest this includes Asian American women. Friends may provide married Asian American women emotional support and facilitate help seeking behavior.

Encouragement and Help Seeking Behavior

Encouragement to seek help was not related to help seeking behavior for Asian Americans regardless of marital status. This may support the NEM model (Pescosolido & Boyer, 1999), where an individual's social network indirectly affects their help seeking behavior by influencing their context. Asian Americans' social network may encourage help seeking behavior by viewing mental health related services positively or discourage help seeking behavior by having negative attitudes towards mental health related services. Social networks may facilitate help seeking behavior through other ways such as educating individuals about mental health issues or accompanying an individual to see a mental health care professional.

<div align="center">

Limitations

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There are limitations in this study that should be noted and addressed in future studies. Not all participants were asked about being encouraged to seek help. This question was limited to individuals indicating a need for services or who had engaged in help seeking behavior. Due to the small number of individuals who reported on encouragement to seek help differences by generation status and age could not be

explored. Because of the way in which participants were asked, it is unknown as to who is encouraging them to seek help. The social network member encouraging the individual may not be their spouse, relative, or friend. A distinction between sought advice and unsolicited encouragement was not made. Future studies should explore the different ways social networks facilitate help seeking behavior in Asian Americans in greater detail and with a larger sample. Social networks may facilitate help seeking behavior in other ways than encouraging service use.

This study suggests that negative relationship quality with spouse is associated with engaging in help seeking behavior for Asian Americans. Future studies should explore the influence of negative relationship quality with relatives and friends. Relationships characterized by negativity may indicate contexts in which Asian Americans are in need of support or contexts that motivate Asian Americans to seek help from mental health related services. Future work should also include English proficiency as previous literature has established language barriers as an important factor in help seeking behavior (e.g. Abe-Kim et al., 2002; Abe-Kim et al., 2007; Ying & Miller, 1992). Asian Americans' social networks may help individuals overcome this barrier.

Future studies should examine the attitudes Asian Americans' social network members have towards mental health related services and their implications for individuals. Findings from this study suggest that social network members may influence help seeking behavior thru their attitudes towards mental health related services.

Implications

The purpose of this study was to explore the role of social relationships in help seeking behavior Findings suggest that relatives and friends have an influential role in

encouraging help seeking and actually using mental health related services. Intervention and outreach programs should focus on changing perceptions about mental health problems and mental health related services behavior by educating Asian Americans about the mental health problems and available services while addressing concerns related to cultural values. Asian Americans may be more willing to use mental health related services if their social network is supportive of the use of those types of services. As has been previously suggested, mental health related services that involve an individual's support network may be beneficial for Asian Americans. Intervention and outreach programs should target Vietnamese Americans and Asian American men as they are least likely to use services when they have social relationships high in positive relationship quality. Men in particular, are less likely to use mental health related services despite being encouraged to use mental health related services and reporting relationships high in positive relationship quality. Findings from this study suggest that they are more likely to hold traditional values that do not encourage mental health related service use.

Conclusion

This study suggests that social relationships for Asian Americans facilitate help seeking behavior. Social relationships may be an alternative for mental health related services but only in specific situations or for certain groups (e.g. Vietnamese Americans). Overall, supportive relationships with relatives and friends increase the likelihood of help seeking behavior for married Asian Americans while only supportive relatives increase the likelihood for unmarried Asian Americans. The influence social relationships have on help seeking behavior may vary depending on the age of the individual. Spouses may exacerbate stressful situations for individuals in midlife and they may try to facilitate help

seeking behavior for individuals in older age. The influence relatives have on help

seeking behavior may vary by gender for unmarried Asian Americans. Gender roles and

expectations may lead to men being more likely to receive encouragement, however, their

traditional values may prevent them from actually seeking help. Women, however, while

perhaps less likely to receive encouragement may be more likely to hold values that

support mental health related service use. Receiving encouragement to seek help is not

related to help seeking behavior, however, the positive attitudes of relatives and friends

towards mental health related services may motivate Asian Americans with mental health

problems to seek mental health related services. Further research is needed to examine

specifically how social network members may facilitate use of mental health related

services to better understand how social relationships influence help seeking behavior.

Chapter V

Conclusion

The current work explores the social relationships of Asian American adults and the implications of these relationships for well-being and help seeking behavior. In study 1, I explored variations in relationship quality among Asian Americans. Overall, relationships with spouses are viewed as high in positive quality compared to relatives and friends. Not all relationships, however, were perceived as highly positive. Some Asian Americans reported certain relationships as low in positive quality or spouses high in negative quality. Patterns of relationship quality found among certain groups of Asian Americans were similar to those found in the general US population. For example, men reported their relationship with their spouse higher in positive quality than women (Antonucci et al., 1998). Findings with generation status were similar to those found in other ethnic minorities (Kibria, 1994; Takeuchi et al., 2007). This suggests the immigration experience influences social relationships similarly across ethnic groups. Perceptions of relationship quality may be influenced by role expectations and availability of resources. Asian Americans may view their relationships differently depending on the gender and/or age role expectations they experience as well as the social resources available to them.

In study 2, I examined profiles of relationship quality and their implications for well-being among Asian Americans. Social networks high in positive quality are found among Asian Americans, however, other types of social networks are also found (i.e. high spouse quality and low network quality). Among married Asian Americans, circumstances may influence profile membership. Individuals with characteristics associated with fewer stressors such as English proficiency were more likely to belong to profiles high in positive quality. Differences in profile membership between married and unmarried Vietnamese Americans suggests spouses are an important social relationship. Spouses may help meet Vietnamese Americans high support needs that many experience as refugees (Lin et al., 1979; Uba, 1994; Zhou & Xiong, 2005). This may be specific for Vietnamese Americans who immigrated during the mid to late 20th century. More recent Vietnamese immigrants may not necessarily be refugees and immigrate under more favorable conditions. Findings from this study provide support for Asian Americans' better mental health being related to their supportive ties (Chung, 1991; Ross-Sheriff, 1991) as Asian Americans in the high positive quality network reported better mental health.

In study 3, I looked at the association between social relationships and help seeking behavior among Asian Americans. All relationship types influenced the likelihood of being encouraged to seek help and help seeking behavior. In general, relationships high in positive quality increased the likelihood of the individual engaging in help seeking behavior. This suggests supportive ties are facilitating service use rather than servicing as an alternative to mental health related services. For certain groups of Asian Americans, however, supportive ties may not view mental illness and seeking help

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for mental health problems positively. These supportive ties may encourage the individual to manage the problem within the family. Individual characteristics may also affect the response of social network members. For example, the expectation that men are the financial provider may encourage social network members to assist the individual in managing the problem in any way. Encouragement to seek help, however, was not associated with engaging in help seeking behavior.

One of the greatest strengths of this work is that it examines two dimensions of relationship quality for multiple relationship types in Asian American adults. Positive outcomes associated with Asian Americans are often attributed to highly supportive social relationships (Kang et al., 2003; Uchida et al., 2008), yet few studies have explored specific relationship types and examined differences within Asian Americans. This study shows that there is variability in the quality of social relationships within Asian Americans but there are also similarities with the general US population and other ethnic minorities. Asian Americans may not view all of their relationships as high in positive relationship quality as some relationships are characterized as low in positive relationship quality or moderate in negative relationship quality. Variations by cultural and demographic factors indicate different contexts lead to different needs. For example, Asian Americans who do not plan their immigration may have more support needs than their social network can provide. Differences also signify variations in the influence of role expectations on relationship dynamics. For example, women are expected to maintain kinship ties, which may lead to women reporting high positive relationship quality with relatives but during middle adulthood women may become overburdened by their multiple family roles. Asian Americans also have similar patterns of relationship

quality as the general US population such as spouses being a primary source of support for men (Antonucci et al., 1998). This study also suggests that the challenges immigrants experience influence their social relationships similarly across ethnic minority groups (Kibria, 1994; Takeuchi et al., 2007).

Another contribution of this work is that it examines multiple relationship types simultaneously which provides a more comprehensive understanding of Asian Americans adults' social networks. Little research has been conducted on multiple relationships but Asian Americans are often described as having close and harmonious social relationships (Taylor et al., 2004). This study suggests that not all Asian Americans have highly supportive networks. Exploring the relationships with spouse, relatives, and friends reveal Asian Americans may have three types of social networks including high network quality, high spouse quality, and low network quality. Variations by cultural and demographic factors in profile membership once again indicate context may influence social relationships. Well-being did vary by profiles of relationship quality. Similar to the general US population, Asian Americans with multiple supportive relationships reported better well-being (Birditt & Antonucci, 2007; Levitt et al., 2005).

The third contribution of this work is that it examines the role of social relationships in help seeking behavior in attempt to understand what kinds of relationships are associated with help seeking behavior and what kinds are linked to not engaging in help seeking behavior. Due to cultural factors, which generally value the internal management of personal problems, Asian Americans under-utilize mental health related services (Abe-Kim et al., 2002; Lee et al., 2001; Nguyen et al, 2004; Takeuchi et al., 1988; Zhang, Snowden, & Sue, 1998). It is believed that they turn to their supportive

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social relationships for help instead (Zhang et al., 1998). Research, however, has just begun to explore the association between social relationships and mental health related service use and the ways in which social relationships may affect service utilization. This study shows that Asian Americans with supportive social relationships are more likely to engage in help seeking behavior. The social relationships of Asian Americans are facilitating help seeking behavior and only in certain circumstances are they used as alternatives to mental health related services. The influence of social relationships on help seeking behavior varies by cultural and demographic factors. Social relationships may encourage help seeking behavior or exacerbate stressful situations depending on the individual's developmental stage and the age at which they immigrated.

These studies begin to help us understand the variations in social relationships among Asian Americans throughout adulthood. Findings from the three studies suggest similar developmental patterns of relationship quality to those found in the general US population; for example, individuals reporting low positive quality during middle adulthood. These studies, however, had a limited number of Asian Americans in old age and future studies should examine the social relationships of older Asian Americans in more detail. Older Asian Americans may have different experiences because in traditional Asian culture, elders are given a respected status (Zhou & Bankston, 1998). Due to geographic mobility and changes in role expectations (i.e. parents do not want to burden their children), this age group may have high support needs (e.g. Kim & McKenry, 1998; Wong et al., 2005).

Findings from this study also suggest the timing of immigration affects social relationships. Depending on when in the lifespan Asian Americans immigrate, they may

face fewer or more challenges as they adapt to the US (Takeuchi et al., 2007). This could influence their social resources and support needs. Future work should explore immigrants longitudinally to gain a better understanding of how the immigration experience and developmental events influence one another.

Studies will need to explore cohort issues. As previously mentioned, immigrants pre-1965 and post-1965 differ in educational background, resources available, job opportunities, and marital status (Liu et al., 1991; Zhou, 1992; Zhou & Bankston, 1998; Zhou & Xiong, 2005). Findings from this study suggest that the circumstances in which Vietnamese Americans immigrated to the US may influence their social relationships and the influence of their social relationships. More recent Vietnamese immigrants may not have similar experiences as they could be immigrating to the US under more favorable circumstances (i.e. with more resources, less disruption in their social relationships, immigrating with family). Advances in technology, has affected the experience of ethnic minorities. Issues of English proficiency and exposure to US culture may be less problematic for more recent immigrants and younger immigrants due to exposure via media. Disruptions in social networks as a result of immigration may also be less of a challenge because of improved communication and ease of travel.

Future studies need to examine relationship quality further. Negative relationship quality with relatives and friends should be examined as they may have important implications for positive outcomes (e.g. Antonucci et al., 2001; Birditt et al., 2009). Other relationship types should be explored as well. For example, relatives is a broad group and exploring specific family relationships like parents, siblings, and children may provide a better understanding of relationship dynamics.

Studies will also need to explore other aspects of social networks including structural characteristics and types of support exchanged. Structural aspects such as size and relationship composition of social network as well as proximity of social network members may have important implications for relationship dynamics and support needs. Do network members live close by? Are networks made up of mostly family? Support exchanged should also be explored as it may provide a better understanding of relationship expectations from social network members and how social networks influence Asian Americans' health and well-being.

Finally, future studies should investigate the implications of relationship profile membership. As previously mentioned, profiles provide a better overall understanding of social networks. Asian Americans are often described as group oriented (Oyserman et al., 2002; Taylor et al., 2004) so it would be interesting to examine if this translates to their social network and the influence of their social network. Specifically, future work should investigate the influence of individual relationships compared to the overall network on outcomes such as well-being and help seeking behavior.

The larger implications of this work are directed towards expanding our understanding of Asian American adults' social relationships and how they influence behavior and well-being. It is important to recognize the diversity within this ethnic group as well as similarities with the general population and other ethnic minorities. Differences among Asian Americans influence relationship dynamics and their implications. Adulthood is a dynamic life stage as individuals experience different developmental milestones often leading to changes in roles and role expectations. Those roles and role expectations are also influenced by the cultural context of the individual. It

is important to acknowledge the complexity in Asian Americans' social relationships. Social relationships in general serve multiple functions and influence individuals in various ways. Asian Americans like other ethnic groups have relationships that range in their positive and negative qualities. By considering the context in which social relationships occur, we gain a better understanding of how they influence individuals and their lives.
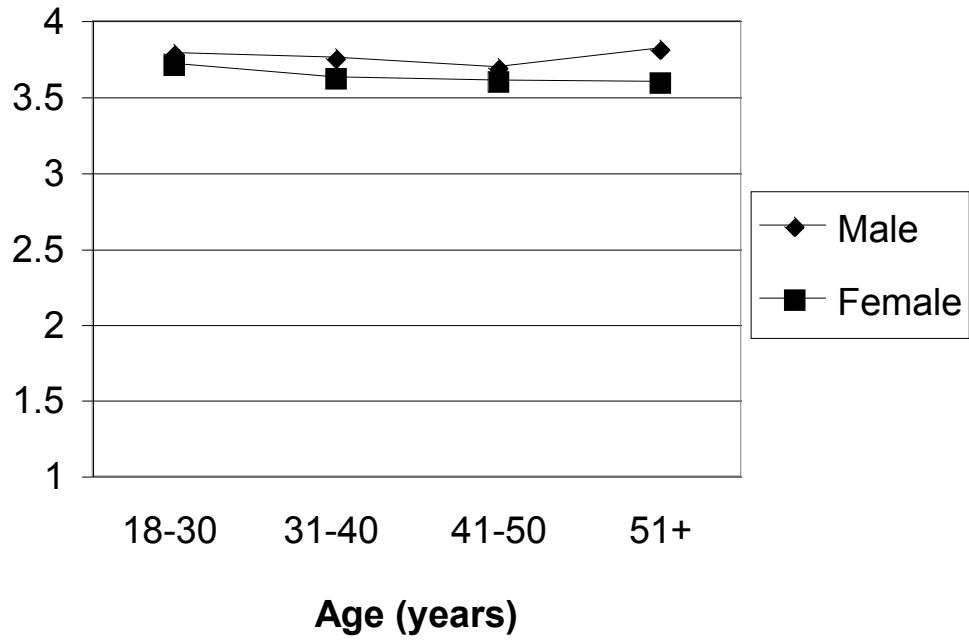
Figure 1. Interaction between age and gender for positive relationship quality with spouse, *F*(25, 15) =7.14*, p<.001*.
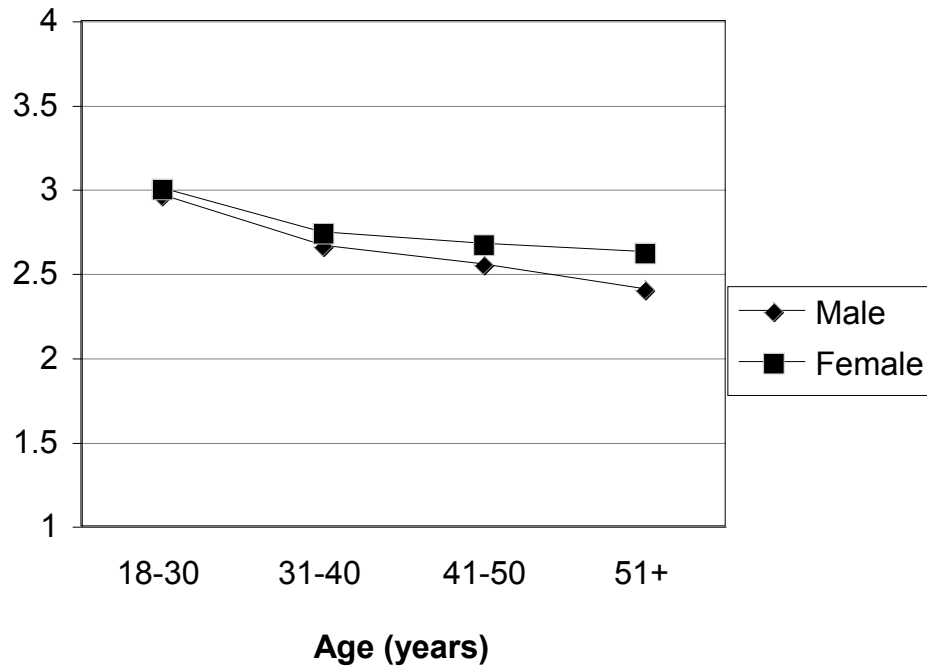
Figure 2. Interaction between age and gender for positive relationship quality with friends, $F(25, 17) = 33.77$, $p < .001$.

Married Asian Americans
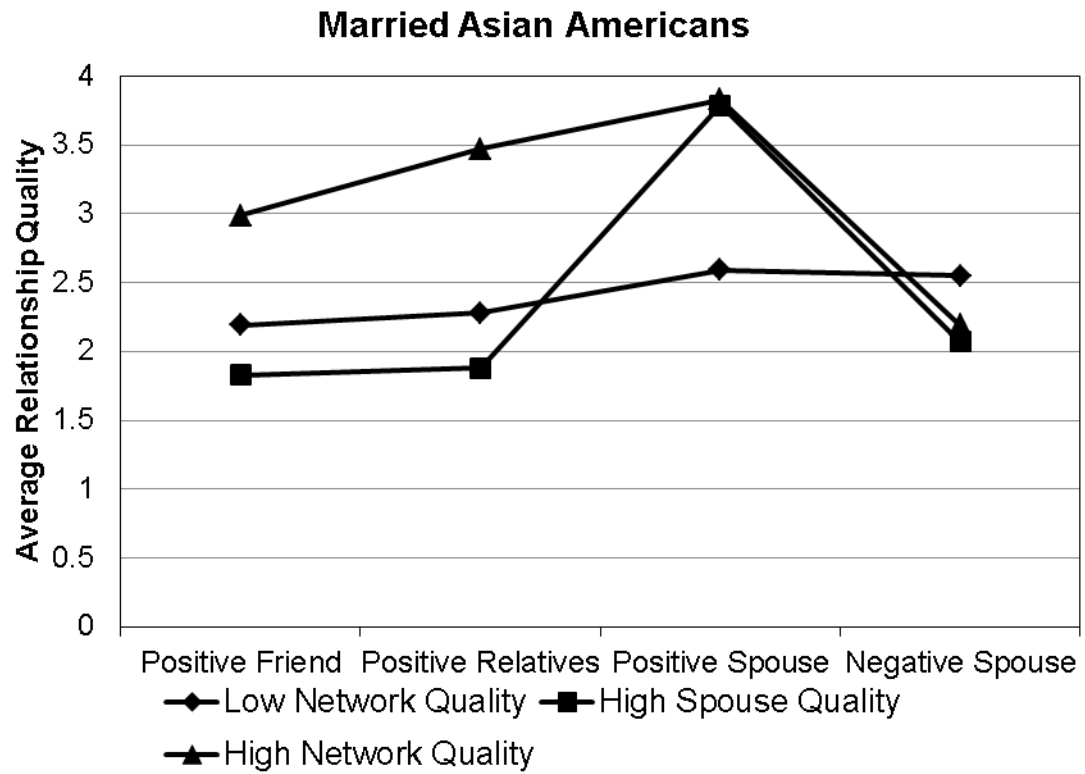
Figure 3. Relationship Quality Profiles for Married Asian Americans.
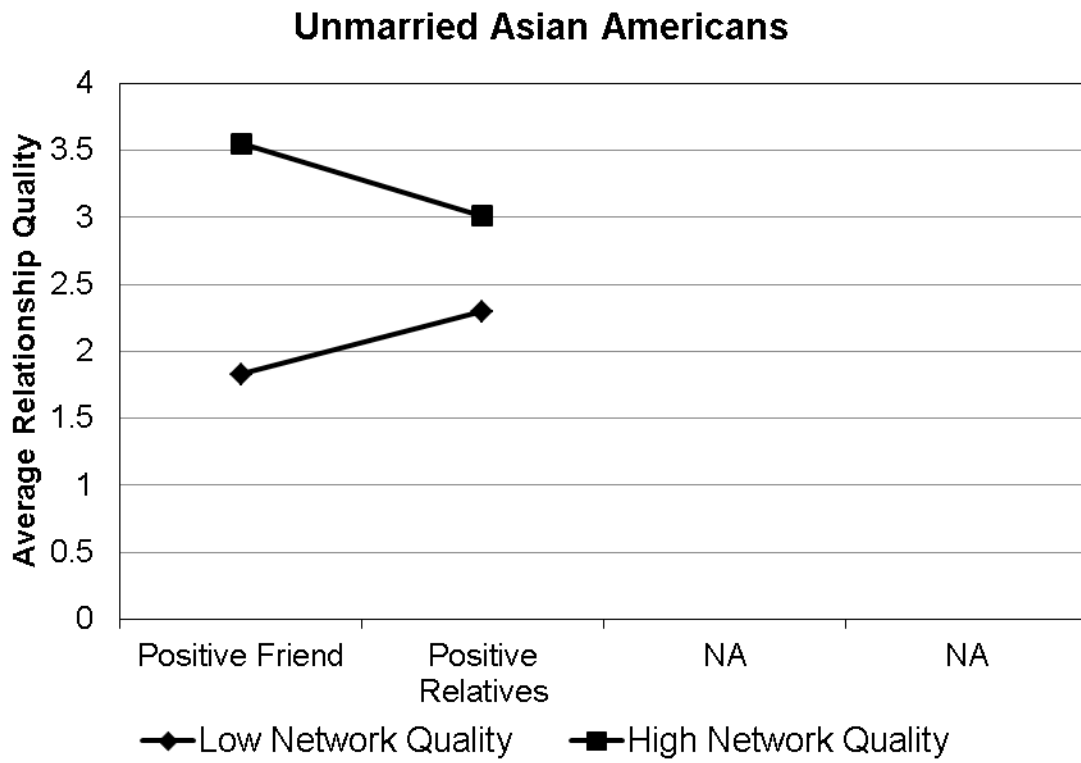
Figure 4. Relationship Quality Profiles for Unmarried Asian Americans.

Table 1
Sample Characteristics and Descriptive Statistics

	All (n=1628)	
	Unweighted Mean (*SE*)	Weighted Mean (*SE*)
Age	42.16(14.93)	41.51(.63)
Gender (men) %	47%	50%
Married %	70%	68%
Immigrant %	81%	80%
English Proficiency (high) %	57%	61%
Planned Immigration %	65%	63%
Religion (Western) %	51%	50%
SES	2.85(1.11)	2.86(.05)
Relationship Quality		
Positive Spouse	3.64(.53)	3.64(.03)
Negative Spouse	2.18(.67)	2.21(.02)
Positive Relatives	2.76(.99)	2.80(.04)
Positive Friends	2.64(.96)	2.69(.04)
Self-Rated Physical Health	3.35(1.10)	3.39(.04)
Self-Rated Mental Health	3.80(1.05)	3.73(.06)
Encourage Help Seeking % (*n*=267)	14%	14%
Help Seeking Behavior %	15%	13%

Table 2
Sample Size for Study 1 across Asian Ethnic Subgroup

	All	Vietnamese	Filipino	Chinese
Relationship Quality				
Positive Quality Spouse	1139	383	345	411
Negative Quality Spouse	1139	383	345	411
Positive Quality Relatives	1621	516	506	599
Positive Quality Friends	1620	516	507	597
Generation Status				
Immigrant 35+	343	167	76	100
Immigrant 18-34	676	227	185	264
Immigrant 13-17	114	41	29	44
Immigrant 0-12	190	67	58	65
First Generation	206	18	114	74
Second Generation +	96	0	45	51
English Proficiency				
High Proficiency	933	151	443	339
Low Proficiency	690	259	63	368
Planned Immigration				
Poorly Planned	241	75	35	131
Planned	1066	419	312	335
US Born	321	26	161	134
Age				
18-30 years old	400	106	144	150
31-40 years old	394	134	112	148
41-50 years old	389	126	111	152
51+ years old	445	154	141	150
Gender				
Male	762	243	235	284
Female	866	277	273	316
Marital Status				
Married	1144	384	346	414
Unmarried	484	136	162	186
Religious Affiliation				
Western Religions	823	202	442	179

Other Religions	443	280	35	128
No Religion	362	38	31	293
Gender x Age				
Male: 18-30 years old	197	53	71	73
Male: 31-40 years old	177	62	44	71
Male: 41-50 years old	180	58	52	70
Male: 51+ years old	208	70	68	70
Female: 18-30 years old	203	53	73	77
Female: 31-40 years old	217	72	68	77
Female: 41-50 years old	209	68	59	82
Female: 51+ years old	237	84	73	80
Gender x Generation Status				
Male: Immigrant 35+	141	71	29	41
Male: Immigrant 18-34	309	105	82	122
Male: Immigrant 13-17	62	23	13	26
Male: Immigrant 0-12	98	37	29	32
Male: First Generation	97	7	58	32
Male: Second Generation +	53	0	23	30
Female: Immigrant 35+	202	96	47	59
Female: Immigrant 18-34	367	122	103	142
Female: Immigrant 13-17	52	18	16	18
Female: Immigrant 0-12	92	30	29	33
Female: First Generation	109	11	56	42
Female: Second Generation +	43	0	22	21
SES				
$0 to 10,999	251	97	56	98
$11,000 to 39,999	380	176	78	126
$40,000 to 75,000	352	115	124	113
Above $75,000	645	132	250	263

Table 3
Relationship Quality by Cultural and Demographic Factors

	Positive Quality Spouse	Negative Quality Spouse	Positive Quality Relatives	Positive Quality Friends
Ethnic Subgroup				
Vietnamese	3.66 (.06)a	1.94 (.05)b	3.68 (.06)b	2.45 (.05)b
Filipino	3.68 (.04)a	2.20 (.05)a	3.66 (.04)a	2.76 (.07)a
Chinese	3.50 (.05)b	2.24 (.04)a	3.50 (.05)a	2.78 (.05)a
Generation Status				
Immigrant 35+	3.71 (.05)e,g	2.04 (.07)c,d	2.46 (.08)c,d	2.54 (.11)
Immigrant 18-34	3.69 (.04)c,d	2.21 (.08)d	2.65 (.07)d	2.62 (.07)
Immigrant 13-17	3.51 (.06)d,e,f	2.32 (.14)c	2.64 (.10)	2.42 (.11)
Immigrant 0-12	3.59 (.04)c	2.17 (.09)	2.67 (.09)c	2.74 (.09)
1st Generation Born	3.50 (.08)g,h	2.12 (.14)e	2.96 (.16)	2.88 (.18)
2nd+ Generation	3.68 (.06)f,h	1.93 (.14)e	2.74 (.16)	2.79 (.17)
English Proficiency				
High	3.73 (.04)i	2.10 (.05)	2.87 (.04)e	2.81 (.06)c
Low	3.49 (.05)i	2.16 (.03)	2.51 (.04)e	2.52 (.05)c
Immigration				
Poorly Planned	3.49 (.06)j,k	2.08 (.08)	2.63 (.10)	2.61 (.09)
Planned	3.62 (.04)j	2.15 (.07)	2.68 (.09)	2.61 (.13)
US Born	3.72 (.05)k	2.16 (.13)	2.76 (.13)	2.78 (.14)
Age				
18-30 years old	3.70 (.05)l	2.00 (.06)f,g	2.73 (.06)	2.97 (.05)d,e
31-40 years old	3.62 (.04)m	2.09 (.05)h	2.66 (.05)	2.64 (.06)d
41-50 years old	3.52 (.04)l,m	2.26 (.04)f,h	2.72 (.05)	2.59 (.06)e,f
51+ years old	3.62 (.05)	2.17 (.05)g	2.65 (.06)	2.46 (.07)f
Gender				
Men	3.66 (.03)o	2.16 (.03)	2.62 (.04)f	2.59 (.04)g
Women	3.56 (.04)o	2.10 (.04)	2.75 (.04)f	2.74 (.04)g
Religion				
Western	3.60 (.04)	2.08 (.05)	2.81 (.03)g	2.75 (.03)h
Other	3.56 (.04)	2.16 (.06)	2.71 (.06)h	2.67 (.07)
No religion	3.68 (.06)	2.15 (.04)	2.54 (.05)g,h	2.58 (.05)h
Marital Status				
Married			2.75 (.04)i	2.52 (.04)i
Not Married			2.62 (.05)i	2.80 (.06)i

Note: Standard errors are in parentheses. Means in same column that share subscripts differ at p < .05

Table 4
Study 1 Results Summary Table

Relationship Quality	Significant Factors	Findings
Positive Quality Spouse	Ethnic Subgroup Generation Status English Proficiency Immigration Age Gender Interactions:	Vietnamese & Filipino > Chinese Immigrants 18-34 > 0-17 Immigrants 35+ & 2nd Generation > 13-17 & 1st Generation High English proficiency > Low English Proficiency Planned & did not immigrate > Unplanned immigration 18-40 > 41-50 years old Men > Women Men: Decrease across age groups until middle adulthood Increase from middle adulthood into late adulthood Women: Decrease across age groups
Negative Quality Spouse	Ethnic Subgroup Generation Status Age	Filipino & Chinese > Vietnamese Immigrants 35+ > 13-34 1st Generation > 2nd Generation 41+ years old > 18-30 years old 41-50 years old > 31-40 years old
Positive Quality Relatives	Ethnic Subgroup Generation Status English Proficiency Gender Religion Marital Status	Vietnamese > Filipino & Chinese Immigrants 0-12 & 18-34 > 35+ High English proficiency > Low English Proficiency Women > Men Western & Other Religions > No religion Married > Not married
Positive Quality Friends	Ethnic Subgroup English Proficiency Age Gender Religion Marital Status Interactions:	Filipino & Chinese > Vietnamese High English proficiency > Low English Proficiency 18-30 years old > 31-50 years old 41-50 years old > 51+ years old Women > Men Western Religions > No religion Not married > Married Men: Decrease across age groups Women: Decrease across age groups

Table 5
Sample Size for Study 2 Variables across Relationship Quality Profiles

	Married				Unmarried		
	All	High Quality	High Spouse	Low Quality	All	High Quality	Low Quality
Self-Rated Physical Health	1144	607	369	159	484	329	151
Self-Rated Mental Health	1144	607	369	159	484	329	151
Relationship Quality							
Positive Quality Spouse	1139	607	369	159			
Negative Quality Spouse	1139	607	369	159			
Positive Quality Relatives	1139	607	369	159	481	329	151
Positive Quality Friends	1141	607	369	159	480	329	151
Asian Ethnic Subgroup							
Vietnamese American	384	142	174	65	136	68	66
Filipino American	346	242	86	17	162	128	32
Chinese American	414	223	109	223	186	133	53
Generation Status							
Immigrant 35+	277	95	128	51	66	16	49
Immigrant 18-34	567	301	183	81	109	69	37
Immigrant 13-17	66	38	17	11	48	29	19
Immigrant 0-12	88	61	18	8	102	80	22
First Generation	90	73	9	6	116	99	17
Second Generation +	53	37	13	2	43	36	7
English Proficiency							
High Proficiency	599	417	139	39	334	271	62
Low Proficiency	543	190	230	120	147	58	88
Planned Immigration							
Poorly Planned	183	72	64	45	58	36	22
Planned	806	418	281	105	260	155	103

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US Born	155	117	24	9	166	138	26
Age							
18-30 years old	134	92	32	8	266	216	50
31-40 years old	333	199	93	40	61	46	15
41-50 years old	328	169	96	61	61	30	30
51+ years old	349	50	369	607	96	37	56
Gender							
Male	553	289	192	66	209	147	61
Female	591	318	177	93	275	182	90
Religious Affiliation							
Western Religions	563	349	163	49	260	188	71
Other Religions	329	131	129	67	114	62	51
No Religion	252	127	77	43	110	79	29
SES							
$0 to 10,999	121	45	55	18	130	77	51
$11,000 to 39,999	241	104	92	45	139	83	55
$40,000 to 75,000	257	38	83	134	95	70	24
Above $75,000	525	58	139	324	120	99	21

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Table 6

Fit Indices for Latent Profile Analyses on Relationship Quality (Final Solutions in Bold)

Profiles	No. Free Parameters	Loglikelihood	AIC	BIC	BIC (N-adj.)	LMR/BLRT p	No. Classes with n < 5% study sample
Married (n = 1,135)							
2	13	-4849.28	9724.57	9790.02	9748.72	.02|.02	0
3	**18**	**-4648.96**	**9333.92**	**9424.54**	**9367.37**	**.04|.04**	**0**
4	23	-4510.28	9066.55	9182.34	9109.29	.52|.53	0
5	28	-4377.06	8810.12	8951.08	8862.14	.21|.21	1
Unmarried (n = 480)							
2	**7**	**-1206.54**	**2427.07**	**2456.29**	**2434.07**	**.00|.00**	**0**
3	10	-1171.81	2363.63	2405.36	2373.63	.07|.08	0
4	13	-1126.90	2279.81	2334.07	2292.81	.05|.06	0
5	16	-1062.35	2156.70	2223.48	2172.70	.18|.20	1

Table 7

Self-Rated Mental Health by Relationship Quality Profiles for Married Asian Americans

Cluster	Self-Rated Mental Health Est (SE)
High Quality Network	3.85 (.12)$_a$
High Quality Spouse	3.67 (.10)$_b$
Low Quality Network	3.47 (.11)$_c$

Note. High quality network differed from high quality spouse and high quality spouse differed from low quality network at $p < .01$. High quality network differed from low quality network at $p < .001$

Table 8
Sample Sizes for Study 3 Variables Across Marital Status

	Encourage-ment		Help Seeking Behavior		Encouragement x Help Seeking Behavior			
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes E x Yes HSB	Yes E x No HSB	No E x Yes HSB	No E x No HSB
Married								
Relationship Quality								
Positive Quality Spouse	17	130	111	1028	13	4	83	47
Negative Quality Spouse	17	130	111	1028	13	4	83	47
Positive Quality Relatives	17	130	111	1028	13	4	83	47
Positive Quality Friends	17	130	111	1030	13	4	83	47
Asian Ethnic Sub group								
Vietnamese American	4	42	27	357	4	0	21	21
Filipino American	3	60	48	298	1	2	37	25
Chinese American	10	28	37	377	8	2	25	5
Generation Status								
Immigrant 35+	2	33	21	256	1	1	20	13
Immigrant 18-34	3	44	37	530	2	1	29	15
Immigrant 13-17	0	5	3	63	0	0	2	3
Immigrant 0-12	3	20	17	71	3	0	12	8
First Generation	6	15	23	67	6	0	11	4
Second Generation +	3	13	11	42	1	2	9	4
Age								
18-30 years old	5	22	22	112	5	0	13	9
31-40 years old	8	36	34	299	6	2	25	11
41-50 years old	1	29	21	307	0	1	17	12
51+ years old	3	43	35	314	2	1	28	15
Gender								
Male	7	50	47	506	4	3	36	14
Female	10	80	65	526	9	1	47	33
SES								
$0 to 10,999	2	15	13	108	2	0	8	7

$11,000 to 39,999	3	22	20	221	3	0	14	8
$40,000 to 75,000	4	27	25	232	4	0	17	10
Above $75,000	8	66	54	471	4	4	44	22

Unmarried

Relationship Quality								
Positive Quality Relatives	21	99	101	380	15	6	68	31
Positive Quality Friends	21	99	100	380	15	6	68	31
Asian Ethnic Sub-group								
Vietnamese American	2	16	17	119	2	0	11	5
Filipino American	9	37	40	122	6	3	26	11
Chinese American	10	46	44	142	7	3	31	15
Generation Status								
Immigrant 35+	2	14	11	55	2	0	7	7
Immigrant 18-34	1	14	14	95	0	1	9	5
Immigrant 13-17	1	5	9	39	1	0	4	1
Immigrant 0-12	6	22	22	80	3	3	18	4
First Generation	11	26	32	84	9	2	19	7
Second Generation +	0	18	13	30	0	0	11	7
Age								
18-30 years old	12	44	50	216	9	3	32	12
31-40 years old	6	13	15	46	3	3	10	3
41-50 years old	0	21	14	47	0	0	10	11
51+ years old	3	21	22	74	3	0	19	5
Gender								
Male	6	36	33	176	3	3	22	14
Female	15	63	68	207	12	3	46	17
SES								
$0 to 10,999	3	23	25	105	2	1	17	6
$11,000 to 39,999	6	24	27	112	4	2	16	8
$40,000 to 75,000	2	19	17	78	1	1	12	7
Above $75,000	10	33	32	88	8	2	23	10

Table 9
Study 3 Results Summary Table

	Level of Relationship Quality	Likelihood of Receiving Encouragement to Seek Help	Level of Relationship Quality	Likelihood of Engaging in Help Seeking Behavior
Married				
Positive Quality Spouse	Men: High	High		
Negative Quality Spouse			Ages 41+ years old: High	High
Positive Quality Relatives	Low	High	High	High
Positive Quality Friend	High	High	Filipino Americans: High Women: High Immigrant 18-34: High Immigrant: High Immigrant 35+: High	Low High High High High
Unmarried				
Positive Quality Relatives	Vietnamese Americans: High Men: High Women: High	Low High Low	Chinese Americans: High Women: High	High High
Positive Quality Friend	Immigrants: High	Low		

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