

# Leisure Constraints and Acculturation among Korean Immigrants

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**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:** An important challenge facing recreation and park managers is the change in the ethnic and racial profile of constituents. Past research has tended to ignore the fact that ethnic and racial minorities are heterogeneous. It is likely that immigrants from any one country vary markedly in how they experience leisure constraints. Past studies have also not determined the full range of factors that are likely to impact how different immigrants experience constraints. In this study, we sought to better understand what constraints limit participation in desired leisure activities among Korean immigrants in the United States and how these constraints vary by level of acculturation. Questionnaires were sent to Koreans living in six major U.S. cities.

Results showed that lack of time was the most frequently reported constraint to participation in desired activities and experienced equally by all respondents. Lack of English proficiency and fear of discrimination were regarded as far less important by respondents as a whole. Nevertheless, these two constraints varied by level of acculturation. Korean immigrants who ate English food, watched American movies, and listened to American music were less constrained by poor English skills compared to immigrants who were more loyal to Korean culture. Two dimensions of acculturation were significantly related to fear of discrimination: perceived prejudice and cultural heritage. In this case, Koreans who perceived a high degree of prejudice and discrimination but who were devoted to American ways were more likely than others to report that discrimination prevented them from participating in desired leisure activities.

This study provides some guidance for service delivery. Like other Americans, time is a chief constraint to participation in leisure activities among Korean immigrants. Leisure service organizations can build into their marketing and programming efforts specific strategies that help mitigate time constraints among immigrants. Leisure service organizations should also target Korean immigrants who feel their English skills impede their participation in desired activities. Managers can effectively address this issue by developing a website and promotional literature that contain information about leisure opportunities in Korean. Managers may also develop programs that specifically target Koreans who have poor English skills. Finally, managers should be particularly mindful of Korean immigrants who lack strong ethnic group ties and who are not fully accepted by other Americans. These immigrants are highly constrained and may be the most likely to be at risk from stress that accompanies acculturation.

**KEYWORDS:** Leisure constraints, ethnicity, immigration, acculturation, Korean Americans

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## Introduction

An important challenge facing recreation and park managers is the change in the ethnic and racial profile of constituents. Much of this change stems from the Immigration Act of 1965, which allowed more individuals from third world countries to enter the United States. Immigration policies previously favored people of European background. The Immigration Act of 1965 abolished national-origins quotas, thereby resulting in the influx of large numbers of immigrants from Asia and Latin America. During the 1980s, approximately 50% of the 6 million immigrants to the United States came from Asian countries (Vega & Rumbaut, 1991). One such group includes Korean Americans. In 1970, there were only 70,000 people of Korean background in the United States. By 1990, the number grew tenfold to over 800,000 (Yamamoto, Rhee, & Chang, 1994). Today, there are over one million people living in the United States who have either emigrated from Korea or are of Korean descent (U.S. Census, 2000).

Immigrants encounter a variety of leisure constraints, including language problems, lack of time, money, and opportunities, and lack of knowledge about leisure amenities (Stodolska, 1998; Yu & Berryman, 1996). They also may encounter leisure constraints in the form of prejudice and discrimination from Anglos and other cultural groups (Asante & Min, 2000). To date, no large scale study has investigated the constraints that Korean immigrants encounter in the United States. Koreans, like other Asian immigrants, are often thought to be homogenous and intra-ethnic variability is often ignored. Our goal in this paper was to understand better what constraints limit leisure participation among Korean immigrants in the United States and how leisure constraints vary by level of acculturation.

## Literature Review

Stodolska and Yi-Kook (2005) stated, "Any study of minorities' and immigrants' leisure would be incomplete without acknowledging the effects of the constraints they face" (p. 54). Leisure constraints can be defined as "factors that are... perceived or experienced by individuals to limit the formation of leisure preferences and to inhibit or prohibit participation and enjoyment in leisure" (Jackson, 1997, p. 461). Researchers have examined a variety of criterion variables against which to measure the influence of constraints, including non-use of public parks, ceasing participation, non-participation in specific types of activities, and inability

to increase participation (Jackson & Scott, 1999). Results from various studies indicate that the intensity of constraints varies across different dimensions of leisure (Nadirova & Jackson, 2000).

Early studies on constraints tended to examine factors that inhibited people's participation in desired activities (Jackson & Scott, 1999). The focus was primarily on barriers that were physical and external to the individual (e.g., lack of facilities). Crawford and Godbey (1987) argued persuasively that constraints impact both participation *and* leisure preferences. They identified three categories of constraints—intrapersonal, interpersonal, and structural—that help us better comprehend these relationships. *Intrapersonal* constraints are those psychological states (e.g., religiosity) that inhibit the acquisition of leisure preferences and lead people to define leisure activities, services, and locales as inappropriate, uninteresting, or unavailable. *Interpersonal* constraints arise out of social interaction with friends, family, and strangers. In a family context, interpersonal constraints may occur when spouses differ in terms of their respective leisure preferences. Finally, *structural* constraints are those factors that *intervene* between leisure preferences and participation. Crawford and Godbey noted these constraints include a variety of factors that are outside the control of the individual, including family life stage, family financial resources, and available opportunities.

Our focus on this study is on structural constraints. More specifically, we examine why Korean immigrants do not participate in leisure activities *as often as they desire*. Jackson and Scott (1999) noted there is a stable range of structural constraints that impact the general population: (a) costs, (b) time constraints, (c) availability and quality of facilities, (d) social and geographical isolation, and (e) lack of skills and abilities. These constraints, particularly lack of time, also constrain other immigrants living in North America. In a study of first generation Polish immigrants, Stodolska (1998) found that structural constraints (lack of time, lack of money, and being too tired after hard work) were the most frequently cited barriers to leisure. Similarly, Juniu (2000) reported that lack of time and increased work responsibilities impacted all social classes of South American immigrants. Similar results have been reported in studies of Chinese and Mexican immigrants (Stodolska & Yi, 2003; Tsai & Coleman, 1999; Yu & Berryman, 1996). These findings are partly explained by the cost it takes to establish a new household and the tendency for many immigrants to send money home to family members who continue to live in their countries of origin (Stodolska & Yi-Kook, 2005).

Immigrant and ethnic groups also encounter constraints that differ from those experienced by the general population. Yu and Berryman (1993) found that lack of English proficiency was the most frequently reported leisure constraint among Chinese youth who had recently immigrated to New York City. Qualitative studies focusing on the experiences of Latin American immigrants (Juniu, 2000; Rublee & Shaw, 1991) and Polish immigrants (Stodolska, 1998) confirm that difficulty with English

constrains leisure. Another constraint unique to immigrants is discrimination. Many minority group members have been victimized by acts of ethnic or racial discrimination while visiting recreation areas (Chavez, 1993; Gobster, 2002; Tirone, 2000). The expectation of discrimination also constrains leisure and results in immigrants modifying how they pursue leisure activities (Livengood & Stodolska, 2004).

The marginality and ethnicity hypotheses have been used extensively to study leisure constraints and behavior among minority group populations. These perspectives were originally developed by Washburne (1978) to explain “under-participation” of African Americans in wildland recreation activities. The marginality hypothesis holds that inequality in resource allocation (including level of income and education) accounts for leisure constraints among minorities. In contrast, the ethnicity hypothesis explains leisure constraints among minority groups in terms of cultural norms and values.

Research supports the idea that leisure constraints among immigrant groups stem, at least to some degree, from their marginal social position (Shinew & Floyd, 2005). A low income restricts where minorities live, which can limit their access to quality leisure and recreation opportunities (Gobster, 2002; Stodolska & Yi-Kook, 2005). Many immigrants are also clustered in low paying manual labor jobs and work long hours. Accordingly, allocating time and resources to leisure activities, particularly ones that require money and a high degree of energy expenditure, can be highly problematic (Crespo, 2000; Stodolska & Santos, 2006). In contrast, immigrants who arrive with higher levels of education and financial capital are more likely than their counterparts to be able to access leisure activities, interact with people from other cultures, and avoid being socially isolated (Juniu, 2000; Stodolska, 1998).

Research also confirms that leisure constraints among minorities may stem from cultural values and norms. Gobster (1998) reported that lack of interest was an important constraint to playing golf among Hispanic and African American youth. They felt the game was boring and uninteresting, and “was not ‘up-to-date’ compared with the sports most teens currently enjoyed” (p. 55). Likewise, in response to oppression, many immigrant youth from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds have become insular and rejected majority group values and activities (Zhou, 1997). Strong family ties and strict gender roles may constrain leisure for females because they do not feel entitled to leisure (Tirone & Shaw, 1997) or feel compelled to take care of small children while their male counterparts recreate (Hutchison, 1987). Muslims living in the United States experience constraints related to their inability to spend time in mixed-gender company, attend parties, eat certain foods, and drink alcohol (Stodolska & Livengood, 2006). These norms constrain their ability to interact and participate in leisure activities with other Americans.

Because the marginality and ethnicity hypotheses were developed to explain differences in leisure patterns between minority and majority

groups, they have had limited value in explaining intra-ethnic variation in constraints and other leisure phenomena (Floyd, 1999). Social class variables (level of income and level of education) can be used to explore within-group variability in a given population. Korean immigrants have varying levels of income and formal education, which may partially account for differences in reported leisure constraints. Theories of acculturation may provide a mechanism for directly assessing the impacts of ethnicity and culture on leisure constraints (Floyd & Gramann, 1993). These theories aid in understanding differences in reported constraints among Korean immigrants because immigration is conceived as a dynamic process (Stodolska, 1998), involving changes in culture, values, and behavior. Korean immigrants are, thus, diverse in terms of both their social class and their adherence to traditional Korean culture and adaptation to American ways.

### **Theoretical Framework**

Koreans face many challenges as they adjust to American life. Many feel their jobs in the United States are not commensurate with their skills or status in Korea (Yu, 1982). Many Korean immigrants also confront generational conflicts (Drachman, Kwon-Ahn, & Paulino, 1996), changes in gender roles and definitions (Park, 2000), and confront a history of racial exclusion, stereotyping, and invisibility against Asians in general (Zhou & Lee, 2004). Many Koreans feel they are “perpetual guests” and are treated rather formally by their American “hosts” (Jo, 1999)

Theories of assimilation and acculturation have been used to understand how immigrants adjust to and adapt to their host country. Assimilation is a process that involves long term contact between two or more groups that leads to boundary reduction (Yinger, 1994). Zhou (1997) observed that assimilation assumes “a natural process by which diverse ethnic groups come to share a common culture and to gain equal access to the opportunity structure of society” (p. 70). For many years, the leading theory for understanding acculturation was a seven-stage model proposed by Gordon (1964). Two of these sub-processes—cultural assimilation and structural assimilation—were of particular interest to Gordon because he believed all other forms of assimilation would inevitably follow from these two. Cultural assimilation, or *acculturation*, refers to acquisition of cultural characteristics of the dominant group, including language, cultural attitudes, and celebration of holidays. Structural assimilation refers to the degree of contact and interaction within personal and impersonal contexts. Gordon argued that groups progressively assimilate into a society to the point where there is an absence of value and power conflict. Assimilation, thus, entails a group abandoning its ethnic identity in favor of the host culture. Gordon believed that doing so was functional and was requisite for long-term acceptance.

Acculturation, which is the focus of this study, is typically defined more narrowly than is assimilation and is regarded as a *component* (and precondition) of assimilation. Redfield, Linton, and Herskovits (1936) provided

an oft-used definition: “Acculturation comprehends those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact, with subsequent changes in the original culture” (p. 149). More recently, Berry (2001) defined acculturation as “contact between two cultural groups, which results in numerous cultural changes in both parties” (p. 616). Berry added that acculturation is typically greater for minority groups than it is for those in power. Both assimilation and acculturation have been treated as group and individual phenomena. Individual acculturation is sometimes called “psychological acculturation,” and focuses on *individual adaptation* to immigration and ethnic group contact (Berry, 1980).

Most researchers today acknowledge that immigrants may acculturate without necessarily assimilating. Berry (2001) argued acculturation may result in assimilation, separation, integration (also referred to as selective acculturation), and marginalization. On the one hand, majority group members may erect barriers that limit assimilation (Gordon, 1964). Many ethnic and racial minorities are acutely aware of their subordinate position in society (Porter & Washington, 1993; Zhou, 1997). On the other hand, immigrants themselves may assign different importance to maintaining their ethnic identity *and* establishing contact and social relationships with people outside of their cultural group. Many U.S. immigrants who are from Asia and Latin America, have actively engaged in selective acculturation—the tendency to retain key facets of one’s cultural heritage (e.g., family organization, food preferences) while adopting aspects of the dominant group that are likely to contribute to economic advancement (e.g., language acquisition) (Shaull & Gramann, 1998). Importantly, Berry (2003) noted that selective acculturation “can only be freely chosen and successfully pursued... by members of a minority group when the dominant society has an open and inclusive orientation toward cultural diversity” (p. 24).

Although researchers agree that acculturation is multi-faceted, there is little agreement about how it should be measured. It has been variously measured in terms of changes in language and behavior, cultural knowledge, beliefs, and values, daily living habits, cultural identification, cultural heritage, inter-ethnic interaction, perceived prejudice and discrimination, communication style, and generational status (Zane & Mak, 2003). We settled on four dimensions of acculturation to guide this study: language use, cultural heritage, perceived prejudice and discrimination, and inter-ethnic interactions. We chose these four because they are inclusive of the major dimensions of acculturation as identified by sociologists (e.g., Gordon, 1964) and cross-cultural psychologists (Padilla, 1980). Below we describe the meaning of these dimensions and hypothesize how they are related to leisure constraints.

Before going on, it is important to note that easing of constraints is related to longevity in a new country. Researchers have observed that the longer a person lives in a new country, the more likely s/he is to develop a facility with the host language and acquire knowledge of leisure oppor-

tunities (Stodolska, 2000). Acculturation researchers, however, have argued that generation and longevity are “independent variables that influence acculturation” (Padilla, 1980, p. 49). Immigrants may use leisure for purposes of boundary maintenance. Stodolska and Livengood (2006) reported that Muslims living in the U.S. use leisure to maintain strong ethnic and cultural ties. This means that the relationship between acculturation and leisure constraints may not be completely explained by longevity in a new country.

### *Language Use*

Acculturation, as noted, entails acquiring the culture of the host country. Language use is among the most frequently employed measures of acculturation, and includes immigrants’ use, proficiency, and preference for English and their native language (Zane & Mak, 2003). Language acculturation has been found to be a good predictor of acculturative stress and adjustment to one’s new environs (Nicholson, 1997). Immigrants often feel their limited language skills negatively impact their leisure and ability to develop friendships outside their ethnic communities (Ruble & Shaw, 1991; Stodolska, 1998). This appears to be particularly true among immigrants who are newly arrived (Yu & Berryman, 1996) and who have lower levels of formal education (Juniu, 2000). Findings from these studies led us to hypothesize the following:

H<sub>1</sub>: Immigrants who report a Korean language preference will be more constrained in their leisure than individuals who favor English.

### *Cultural Heritage*

Acculturation is not limited to changes in an individual’s use of language. It also includes changes in a variety of cultural artifacts, materials, and practices. Following Padilla (1980), we refer to this facet of acculturation as cultural heritage. It includes religious practices, adherence to holidays, food, music and movie preferences, and core cultural values. Adherence to one’s ethnic heritage indicates low acculturation and high ethnic identity (Berry, 1980). Studies, to date, are inconclusive about whether or not loyalty to one’s cultural heritage constrains leisure.

A few studies have reported that devotion to one’s cultural heritage can constrict leisure. Tirone and Shaw (1997) reported that an emphasis on family togetherness resulted in Indo Canadian women placing “little or no emphasis on their own personal interests” (p. 234). Similarly, strong cultural and religious beliefs among Muslims can make it problematic for women to mix with non-Muslims, participate in leisure activities, and travel without a male escort (Stodolska & Livengood, 2006; Tirone, 2000). These results suggest that ethnic loyalty can negatively impact immigrants’ desire to participate in leisure activities and visit particular leisure environments.

Other studies suggest that loyalty to one's cultural heritage may actually facilitate leisure participation. Stodolska and Alexandris (2004) reported that first generation Polish and Korean immigrants living in the Chicago area participated in sports that were commonly pursued by their respective ethnic communities. They concluded that sport reinforced their ethnic identity and strengthened ties with people in their ethnic community. Elsewhere, Stodolska (2000) reported many first-generation Polish immigrants living in Alberta continued participating in leisure activities they learned in Poland. These activities provided immigrants "an opportunity to recapture certain elements of their way of life back in the home country" (p. 53). Allison and Geiger (1993), likewise, reported that elderly Chinese immigrants living in southeastern United States made deliberate decisions about their leisure habits that "allowed them to remain grounded in their own cultural traditions and habits" (p. 317). Collectively, the findings reported here indicate that the relationship between loyalty to one's cultural heritage and leisure constraints is both positive and negative. This led us to hypothesize the following:

H<sub>2</sub>: There is no relationship between devotion to cultural heritage and leisure constraints.

### *Prejudice and Discrimination*

Gordon (1964) argued that ethnic and racial groups were assimilated when they no longer encountered either prejudice or discrimination.<sup>1</sup> Cross-cultural psychologists also have included prejudice and discrimination as a dimension of acculturation. Padilla (1980) noted that perceived discrimination makes it difficult for ethnic groups to have meaningful interaction with majority group members. Prejudice and discrimination for many cultural groups is linked to racial exclusion (Zhou, 1997). Minorities encounter prejudice or discrimination (e.g., verbal abuse) even when they visit public parks and recreation areas (Harris, 1997; Rideout & Legg, 2000; West, 1989). In a study of discrimination in public places, Feagin (1991) reported many middle-class African Americans said they had received poor service at restaurants or experienced excessive surveillance when shopping. Discriminatory acts are pervasive enough to be viewed in group terms and as evidence of institutionalized racism. Blatant and subtle acts of discrimination account, at least partly, for the "retention of an ethnic identity despite long years of settlement in the United States" (Porter & Washington, 1993, p. 141). Discrimination also results in group members feeling unwelcome and avoiding "unfriendly" places. This displacement may lead to a collective definition among minority group members that specific recreation and public areas are "off limits" to them (Johnson, Bowker, English, & Worthen, 1998). These ideas led us to hypothesize the following:

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<sup>1</sup>Gordon used the terms attitude receptional assimilation and behavior receptional assimilation to refer to the absence of prejudice and discrimination respectively.

H<sub>3</sub>: Perceived prejudice and discrimination will be associated with leisure constraints.

### *Inter-ethnic Interaction*

An important sub-process of acculturation is *inter-ethnic interaction* (Padilla, 1980). Recall Gordon (1964) used the term *structural assimilation* to describe inter-ethnic interaction: “large-scale entrance into cliques, clubs, and institutions of [the] host society” (p. 70). According to Gordon, these networks may be relatively impersonal, and exist within work or political locations, or they may be more personal, and form around friendship ties, clubs, or neighborhood associations. He felt assimilation would occur most rapidly within personal relationships because they are more intimate and intense (Gordon, 1964). The relationship between inter-ethnic interactions and leisure constraints is not straightforward. Most leisure activities and outings are pursued within the context of primary groups (Kelly, 1983), and these groups, regardless of their ethnic and cultural makeup, are usually nurturing. Research does indicate that immigration may disrupt existing social networks, which may severely limit leisure participation and contribute to a feeling of isolation (Juniu, 2000; Stodolska, 2000; Tirone and Shaw, 1997). According to Stodolska, this may be particularly true for immigrants who come from cultures that “attach substantial weight to frequent contacts with extended family members” (p. 51). Research also indicates that minority group members who have extensive inter-ethnic friendships may acquire knowledge about new leisure activities and locales (Floyd & Gramann, 1993). Collectively, these findings suggest that degree of inter-ethnic interactions is less important in constraining leisure than is the absence of meaningful friendships. Thus, our final study hypothesis is,

H<sub>4</sub>: Degree of inter-ethnic interaction will be unrelated to the leisure constraints immigrants report.

### **Purpose**

No studies to date have examined leisure constraints among a cross-sample of Korean immigrants in the United States. The purpose of this study was two-fold. First, we sought to determine the range of factors that prevent Korean immigrants from participating in leisure activities as often as they desired. Second, we examined the relationship between leisure constraints and level of acculturation among Korean immigrants. We believe this paper will extend our knowledge about the different factors that constrain leisure among ethnic and racial minorities. Results may also inform service delivery by highlighting how constraints vary by level of acculturation among Korean Americans.

## Methods

### *Study Population and Data Collection*

The study population was comprised of Korean adults (18 years of age and over) living primarily in Los Angeles, San Jose, Chicago, Houston, Washington D.C., and New York. We sampled these cities because approximately 700,000 Korean immigrants live there. Two separate samples were drawn from these geographical areas. One was a random sample drawn from the Korean American Directory, which includes names, addresses, and phone numbers of thousands of Korean immigrants living in the United States. We sent 700 questionnaires to individuals listed in the Directory. We stratified the Directory on the basis of the six geographical areas and gender (identified by first name) to ensure a representative sample of Korean immigrants. Respondents were also contacted from a non-probability sample. Americanized Koreans and second generation Koreans may not want their names to appear in the Directory so we sought to contact individuals through organizations (Korean American churches and Korean American Student Associations) in which they were likely to be involved in the six metropolitan areas. Altogether, names and addresses for 110 Koreans immigrants were obtained using non-probability sampling and all 110 individuals were sent questionnaires.

We used a modified Dillman (1978) approach for data collection which comprised of (a) preliminary notification, (b) mail out of the questionnaire, (c) mail out of a postcard reminder, (d) telephone calls, and (e) mail out of a replacement questionnaire. Preliminary notification consisted of a postcard which notified potential respondents of the purpose of this study, the survey schedule, and the need for their assistance. One week after preliminary notification, a first mailing was distributed that included the questionnaire, a self-addressed, postage-paid envelope, and a cover letter describing the purpose of the study. Two weeks later, postcard reminders were mailed to those individuals who had not returned a completed questionnaire. One week after sending postcard reminders, telephone calls were made to individuals who had not returned a completed questionnaire. Two weeks after telephone calls were made, new questionnaires, postage-paid return envelopes, and cover letters were mailed to those who still had not returned completed questionnaires. The data were collected from the end of July, 1998 to the end of September, 1998.

Of the 810 questionnaires mailed out, 211 were returned by the postmaster as undeliverable. Of the 599 questionnaires that were delivered, 317 were returned. Twelve were unusable because they were from sojourners (e.g., students). This yielded a 52.9% response rate. Of the completed questionnaires, 265 came from immigrants contacted using probability sampling.

To examine the possibility of non-response bias, a comparative analysis of early respondents (235) versus late respondents (70) was performed. This method, which has been widely used, was defended by Armstrong and

Overton (1977), who stated, “Persons who respond in later waves are assumed to have responded because of the increased stimulus and are expected to be similar to nonrespondents” (p. 397). They recommended comparing early and late respondents by performing *t*-tests on a variety of demographic variables. Accordingly, we used education, age, income, and household composition to test for possible non-response bias. Based on *t*-tests at an alpha level of .05, it was determined that early respondents and late respondents did not differ significantly from another across these four measures. Also a chi-square test was performed on the early and late respondents based on nominal data for generational level, gender, and marital status. The chi-square results indicated no significant differences between early and late respondents on these measures. These results indicated non-response bias was not a serious problem in this study.

### *Instrumentation*

The questionnaire was administered in English or Korean, depending on the respondent’s preference. The process of translation was done using the method of “back translation.” A total of three bilingual judges rated the closeness of the English and Korean versions for each item, ranging from 0 to 100%. Most items received a closeness rating between 90 to 100%. The remaining items had closeness ratings that fell between 79% and 89%. Corrections were made with judges’ suggestions until closeness ratings of 90% or higher were achieved. Closeness ratings at this level were judged to be acceptable (Geisinger, 1994).

The questionnaire included 17 items designed to measure leisure constraints. Constraints were defined as factors that prevented respondents from participating in leisure activities as much as they desired. Items covered a broad range of factors used in general population studies and immigrant populations (Yu & Berryman, 1996). Most of the items we used clearly reflect structural constraints (e.g., lack of time) but others may be suggestive of intrapersonal (e.g., fear of making a mistake) or interpersonal (e.g., fear of discrimination) constraints. However, respondents were asked whether or not various factors limited their participation in *desired activities*. Thus, they constitute structural constraints in our study in so far as our focus was on “intervening factors between leisure preferences and participation” (Crawford & Godbey, 1987, p. 124). Response categories were coded as follows: not at all important (1), somewhat important (2), and very important (3). These response categories have been used and defended in other studies of leisure constraints (e.g., McGuire, 1984; Scott & Jackson, 1996).

Acculturation was measured using items that were derived primarily from the American-International Relations Scale (AIRS) (Sodowsky & Plake, 1991). AIRS was designed “to measure acculturation of international students, scholars, and academicians to the white-dominant society” (p. 207). This scale was chosen for its multifaceted conception of acculturation. The full scale has 20 items, 9 having 5 multiple choice responses, and the remainder having a 7-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree

(1) to strongly agree (7). The scale includes items covering the four dimensions discussed in the theoretical framework: *Language Use* (respondents' facility and use of Korean and English languages), *Cultural Heritage* (respondents' preferences for customs), *Prejudice and Discrimination* (e.g., perception of prejudice and discrimination in various contexts), and *Inter-Ethnic Interaction* (extent of interactions with Americans and Koreans). Items were coded so that low scores reflected *low* levels of acculturation. Factor analysis was also used to determine the appropriateness of these subscales.

We included control variables in this study to isolate the impact of acculturation on leisure constraints. These included gender (0=females, 1=males), age (measured in years), level of education (1=did not complete high school to 6=a graduate degree or higher), and household income (1=under \$20,000 to 6=\$60,000 or more). Level of education and income are common indicators of social class. We also used longevity in the United States as a control variable (measured in years). Controlling for longevity sharpens our understanding of how level of acculturation is related to leisure constraints.

### *Analysis*

Simple descriptive statistics were used to summarize respondents' assessment of what factors constrain their participation in desired leisure activities. We then employed ordinary least squares regression to test whether or not acculturation factors and control variables were related to leisure constraints. Analysis was conducted in two stages. First, for each regression equation, a multivariate F-test was calculated to test the null hypothesis that none of the control variables or acculturation variables was related to the constraint item. If this multivariate test was not statistically significant (.05 level), no further analyses were done or reported. Second, if a multivariate F was statistically significant, tests for the independent variables were calculated. For summary purposes, R-square coefficients and standardized Beta coefficients were reported for those variables that were significantly related (.05 level) to a dependent variable. Total R-square coefficients measured the total amount of variation explained in a dependent variable by all the independent variables. Standardized Beta coefficients were used to assess the relative contribution of specific variables on different dimensions of leisure constraints.

## **Results**

### *Sample Characteristics*

Males comprised 54% of respondents. Nearly 60% of respondents were between 25 to 44 years of age. Less than four percent of respondents were 65 years of age or older. Respondents reported high levels of education. Approximately 40% of respondents had graduated from college and more than 27% had graduate training. More than 40% of respondents reported annual household incomes of \$50,000 or higher. About one out of four

respondents reported annual household incomes of less than \$30,000. Only 7% of respondents reported they had immigrated to the United States when they were 10 years of age or younger. About one out of five respondents said they had immigrated when they between 11 to 20 years of age. Nearly half (47%) of all respondents reported they immigrated between 21 to 30 years of age. The rest (27%) said they immigrated after their 30th birthday.

### *Scale Development*

We used principal component factor analysis (with Varimax rotation) to refine sub-scales of acculturation. Because the acculturation items had different numbers of response categories, all items were standardized for subsequent analysis (mean = zero; standard deviation = 1). Factor analysis produced five acculturation factors (Table 1). The first factor was labeled *Language Use*. A sample item included, "When you speak with people from Korea you speak (only English)." The second factor included items which related to perceptions of *Prejudice and Discrimination* (e.g., "I find that when I am with a group of Americans, the Americans almost always talk to each other and ignore me"). The third factor included items that reflected degree of *Inter-Ethnic Interaction* (e.g., "I have more American friends than Korean ones"). The last two factors included items that broadly measure attachment to different facets of *cultural heritage*. The first of these factors we called *Popular Culture* and reflected respondents' taste for movies, music, and food. We retained the term *Cultural Heritage* to describe the final factor (e.g., "I celebrate American religious or social festivals more than I celebrate Korean ones"). The five acculturation factors accounted for 59% of the explained variance. In order to verify the internal reliability of the scale, Cronbach's alpha coefficients were checked. Coefficients for all factors were generally satisfactory although the Cultural Heritage subscale was only .52. Despite its low level of reliability, the subscale was retained because the items and factor made theoretical sense. Simultaneously, Schmitt (1996) proposed alpha coefficients of .50 or higher are adequate for research purposes. Factor scores were used to create multi-item scales for the five dimensions of acculturation. High scores indicate a high degree of acculturation.

### *Constraints to Leisure*

Table 2 provides a rank ordering of the 17 constraints items in terms of perceived intensity. Mean scores and standard deviations are provided along with the percentage of respondents who reported that factors were "very important" in limiting their participation in desired activities. Time constraints were regarded as the most important factors that limited Korean immigrants' participation in desired leisure activities. Over half (54%) of all respondents said lack of time was very important in keeping them from taking part in leisure activities. Thirty-eight percent of respondents agreed that being too busy with other activities was a very important constraint to leisure involvement. More than 3 out of 10 respondents said that lack of

**Table 1**  
**Dimensions of Acculturation (Principle Component Analysis)**

	Factor Loading	Eigen-value	% of Variance
<i>Factor 1: Language Use (alpha = .84)</i>			
When you are with people from Korea you speak (English only)	.78	3.0	15.1
The language(s) you speak well (English only)	.77		
When you think, your ideas and images best operate (English only)	.75		
The language(s) you prefer to speak (English only)	.74		
<i>Factor 2: Prejudice and Discrimination (alpha = .76)</i>			
I find that when I am with a group of Americans, the Americans almost always talk to each other and ignore me (R)	.75	3.0	14.9
I believe Americans are only interested in me on the surface level (R)	.75		
Americans don't care to know about my religion, culture, values, or lifestyles (R)	.73		
I resent that I am often overlooked for recognition, hiring, or promotion (R)	.67		
I feel I am not fully accepted in organizations which have a majority of American members (R)	.57		
Americans try to fit me into the stereotypes that they have about Koreans (R)	.54		
<i>Factor 3: Inter-ethnic Interaction (alpha = .64)</i>			
Friends with whom you are close are American only	.73	2.3	11.6
People you trust and turn to when you need help are Americans only	.73		
I have more American friends than Korean ones	.69		
I am rarely invited to the homes or parties of my American colleagues or neighbors (R)	.57		
<i>Factor 4: Popular Culture (alpha = .62)</i>			
Movie preference (English only)	.78	1.8	9.1
Music preference (English only)	.65		
Food preference at home (American only)	.50		
<i>Factor 5: Cultural Heritage (alpha = .52)</i>			
I celebrate American religious or social festivals more than I celebrate Korean ones	.74	1.7	8.2
In my work environment (or in public), I follow American ways and standards, but at home I follow many Korean customs (R)	.64		
You believe yourself to be an individual with many similarities to Americans	.51		
Total variance explained			59.0

information and not having enough money were very important constraints to leisure. Over one-quarter (28%) of respondents reported health factors were very important in limiting their participation in desired leisure activities.

Other factors were far less important in limiting Koreans' participation in desired leisure activities. Some of these were constraints believed to be unique to immigrants. Only 11% of respondents reported lack of facility with English was very important in keeping them from taking part in desired leisure activities. Even less (less than 6%) said fear of discrimination was an important constraint to leisure participation. Likewise, less than 1 out of 10 respondents reported that various personal factors (e.g., "a feeling that family or friends wouldn't approve" and "fear of making a mistake") prevented them from participating in desired leisure activities.

**Table 2**  
**Rank Order of Intensity of Leisure Constraints**

Leisure Constraints Items	% Reporting Very Important	Mean	SD
Not having enough time	54.3%	2.44	.674
Being too busy with other activities	38.1%	2.23	.694
Lack of information	34.5%	2.13	.735
Not having enough money	31.9%	2.14	.690
Health reasons	28.2%	1.79	.854
Too many family responsibilities	16.5%	1.71	.734
Not having anyone with whom to do them	16.5%	1.68	.740
Fear of crime	13.2%	1.51	.718
Lack of transportation	11.9%	1.44	.698
Lack of English proficiency	10.9%	1.50	.686
Not getting a feeling of accomplishment	9.1%	1.52	.657
A feeling that family or friends wouldn't approve	8.0%	1.47	.641
Not having skills to participate	7.8%	1.50	.638
Feel guilty about doing them	7.1%	1.41	.621
Fear of making a mistake	6.5%	1.35	.598
Fear of discrimination	5.5%	1.36	.584
Fear that others would make fun of you	4.2%	1.25	.521

### *Predicting Leisure Constraints*

Only 4 of the 17 constraints items had multivariate F values that were significant at the .05 value (Table 3). Two of these were constraints believed to be unique to immigrants: *lack of English proficiency and fear of discrimination*. The other two significant dependent variables were *lack of transportation and fear of making a mistake*. None of the tests explained a large amount of overall variation. The largest R-square value was for the regression equation pertaining to importance of *English proficiency*. In this case, the independent variables explained 26.6% of variation in the results.

None of the acculturation variables were significantly related to *lack of transportation*. The two social class variables—level of education ( $\beta = -.151$ ) and level of income ( $\beta = -.163$ )—were both negatively related to the perception that lack of transportation limited participation in desired leisure activities.

Four variables were significantly related to *lack of English proficiency*. Females were more likely than males to report that poor English prevented them from participating in desired leisure activities ( $\beta = -.145$ ). Individuals who reported lower levels of education ( $\beta = -.331$ ) and who had immigrated when they were older ( $\beta = .251$ ) were more likely to indicate poor English skills constrained their leisure. One of the acculturation indicators—*Popular Culture*—was significantly related to lack of English proficiency. In this case, individuals who remained loyal to Korean food, music,

and movies were significantly more likely than acculturated immigrants to state poor English skills constrained their participation in desired leisure activities ( $\beta = -.144$ ).

**Table 3**  
**Regression Analysis for Predicting Leisure Constraints**

Independent Variables	Lack of Transportation $\beta$	Lack of English Proficiency $\beta$	Fear of Making a Mistake $\beta$	Fear of Discrimination $\beta$
Sex (1 = males)	---	-.145*	---	---
Age	---	---	---	---
Level of education	-.151*	-.331***	---	-.202**
Level of income	-.163*	---	---	---
Age at immigration	---	.251**	---	---
Language use	---	---	---	---
Prejudice and discrimination	---	---	-.197**	-.176**
Inter-ethnic interaction	---	---	---	---
Popular culture	---	-.144*	---	---
Ethnic heritage	---	---	.136*	.143*
<b>R-Square</b>	<b>.103**</b>	<b>.266***</b>	<b>.111***</b>	<b>.146***</b>

\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$

Only two variables were related significantly to *fear of making a mistake*. Both of these variables were indicators of acculturation. On the one hand, *Prejudice and Discrimination* was negatively related to the feeling that fear of making a mistake constrained participation in desired leisure activities ( $\beta = -.197$ ). This means that individuals who perceived prejudice and discrimination were the most likely to be constrained by fear of making a mistake. On the other hand, *Cultural Heritage* was positively related to fear of making a mistake ( $\beta = .136$ ). In this case, individuals who were more loyal to American ways of doing things were *more* constrained by fear of making a mistake than respondents who remained loyal to Korean ways.

The acculturation indicators *Prejudice and Discrimination* and *Cultural Heritage* were both related to *fear of discrimination* in the same way they were related to *fear of making a mistake*. Individuals who perceived a high degree of prejudice and discrimination ( $\beta = -.176$ ) but who were devoted to American ways ( $\beta = .143$ ) were more likely than their counterparts to report that discrimination prevented them from participating in desired leisure activities. Level of education was also negatively related to the feeling that fear of discrimination was a constraint to leisure participation ( $\beta = -.202$ ).

## Discussion

The purpose of this study was twofold. First, we wanted to determine the range of factors that prevented Korean immigrants from participating in desired leisure activities. Second, we sought to explain variability in constraints by level of acculturation. Scholars have noted that there is a tendency to ignore inter-ethnic variability in leisure constraints (Stodolska & Yi-Kook, 2005). Level of acculturation is thought to provide a direct assessment of the impacts of ethnicity and culture on leisure constraints and other leisure phenomena (Floyd & Gramann, 1993). Acculturation helps explain differences in reported constraints among immigrants because immigration is conceived as a dynamic process that involves changes in cultural values and behavior (Stodolska, 1998).

A key finding from this study is that Korean immigrants reported leisure constraints that are commonly reported within the general population (Jackson & Scott, 1999). These included lack of time, lack of money, and lack of information. Importantly, these did not vary by socioeconomic status or level of acculturation. These findings are consistent with studies which show that time and money are among the most important constraints to leisure among immigrant populations, and these constraints are experienced universally (Juniu, 2000; Stodolska, 1998).

Our results also showed that constraints typically thought of as unique to immigrants (e.g., lack of English proficiency and fear of discrimination) were regarded as important to only a small proportion of Korean immigrants. Only 11% of respondents reported that poor English was a very important constraint to participation in desired leisure activities. An even smaller proportion of respondents reported fear of discrimination as very important in limiting their involvement in desired leisure activities. It could be that time constraints overwhelmed all other leisure constraints. This makes sense given the amount of time and effort it takes to establish a new household and career in a new country (Stodolska & Yi-Kook, 2005). These results could also stem from our choice of criterion variables. We operationalized leisure constraints in terms of factors that limited *participation in desired activities*. It could be that language problems and perceived discrimination do not impact this facet of leisure acutely. Had we defined leisure constraints in terms of non-use of parks or museums, language problems and perceived discrimination may have been more frequently reported since these locales are likely to attract non-Koreans.

We hypothesized that leisure constraints would be related to language use. Other studies have found that difficulty with English constrains leisure (Juniu, 2000; Rublee & Shaw, 1991; Stodolska, 1998; Yu and Berryman, 1993). In this study, language use was not significantly related to any of the constraints items, including *lack of English proficiency*. Our choice of criterion variable (non-participation in desired leisure activities) may partly account for this result. Immigrants with poor English skills may choose activities which can be engaged in alone or with other Koreans. This means Korean immigrants may be able to participate in preferred leisure activities

irrespective of how acculturated they were with regard to language skill and preference. Future studies should focus on how language use is related to other facets of leisure constraints.

We also hypothesized that leisure constraints would be related to perceived prejudice and discrimination. Past studies have shown that prejudice and discrimination constrain leisure among minority group members (Harris, 1997; Rideout & Legg, 2000; West, 1989). In our study, perceived prejudice was significantly related to two constraints items: *fear of making a mistake* and *fear of discrimination*. In each case, Korean immigrants who perceived more prejudice and discrimination were the most likely to report being constrained by these factors. As with ethnic and racial minorities in general (Johnson et al., 1998), perceived prejudice and discrimination may constrict the range of leisure activities and settings that Korean immigrants define as available. Future research is necessary to further our understanding of how immigrants insulate themselves from the deleterious impacts of discrimination in leisure contexts.

We noted in the theoretical framework that the relationship between loyalty to one's cultural heritage and leisure constraints was inconclusive. We therefore hypothesized there would not be a relationship between the two constructs. Two measures of cultural heritage were used in this study. The first we called popular culture and it measured respondents consumption of food, movies, and music. This dimension of acculturation was negatively related to only one constraint item: *lack of English proficiency*. In this case, individuals who maintained loyalty to Korean food, music, and movies were more likely to report being constrained by poor English skills. Allison and Geiger (1993) reported that some elderly Chinese living in the southwestern United States deliberately watched television to improve their English skills. It could be that consumption of American popular culture provided a similar function for some Korean immigrants in our study. Simultaneously, it is also possible that knowledge and consumption of the dominant culture breaks down language barriers by fostering a sense of commonality with other Americans. More research is needed to understand how facility with the English language is related to negotiation of leisure constraints.

The acculturation factor labeled cultural heritage was *positively* related to two constraints items: *fear of making a mistake* and *fear of discrimination*. What this means is that Korean immigrants who were acculturated were more likely to be constrained by these interpersonal factors than individuals who had maintained strong ethnic loyalty. Coupled with the previous finding, these results suggest that level of *acculturation may both facilitate and constrain leisure*. Stodolska and Yi-Kook (2005) recently made the same point. They noted that immigrants who choose to acculturate may encounter social exclusion from people within the dominant culture *and* people in their own culture. Korean immigrants who maintained loyalty toward Korean culture were seemingly able to avoid the above constraints. Thus, for at least some Korean immigrants, using leisure

for boundary maintenance and nurturing strong ethnic and cultural ties may help them avoid interpersonal constraints (Shaull & Gramann, 1998).

We also hypothesized that degree of inter-ethnic contact would not be related to leisure constraints. This hypothesis was supported as none of the constraints items were related significantly to this dimension of acculturation. As we noted in the theoretical framework, degree of inter-ethnic interactions is probably less important in constraining leisure than is the absence of meaningful friendships.

It is important to note that level of education may have moderated the effects of acculturation on leisure constraints. Koreans with higher levels of formal education were less likely than less educated Koreans to report lack of English proficiency and fear of discrimination as constraints to participation in desired activities. Other studies have reported immigrants with higher levels of education are more likely to interact with people from other cultures and avoid being socially isolated (Juniu, 2000; Stodolska, 1998). For some Korean immigrants, a high level of education may have provided the interpersonal skills to avoid conflict while pursuing desired leisure activities. What is not known is whether or not level of education allowed Korean immigrants in this study to participate in leisure activities and within leisure settings with non-Koreans. More research is needed to understand how level of education combines with facets of acculturation to constrain and facilitate leisure participation and inter-ethnic interactions between cultural groups.

### **Conclusions and Practical Implications**

One contribution of this study is that it demonstrates that leisure constraints vary somewhat by level of acculturation. This supports the idea that researchers and practitioners should avoid gross over-generalizations about leisure attitudes and behaviors among members of specific immigrant groups. Simultaneously, some of the results reported here complement findings reported in studies of Americans in general. Koreans are like other Americans in that their involvement in desired leisure activities was constrained primarily by time and costs. Future research should examine the unique constraints that impact immigrants, but be open to the likelihood that constraints are experienced in ways that are similar to how other cultural groups experience them.

Another contribution of this study is it shows that there is complexity in the way acculturation is related to leisure constraints. For example, some facets of acculturation (e.g., cultural heritage, perceived prejudice) appear to be better predictors of leisure constraints than others (e.g., inter-ethnic interaction). In addition, dimensions of acculturation impact leisure constraints in different ways. Perceived prejudice and discrimination, for instance, may create apprehension but probably has little impact on knowledge of leisure amenities and costs associated with participation. Finally, it appears that acculturation may ease constraints and exacerbate them as well.

This study also provides some guidance for managers of park and recreation organizations. As noted above, Korean immigrants are like many other Americans in the sense that time is a chief constraint to participation in leisure activities. Many Korean immigrants are extraordinarily busy with work, setting up households, and taking care of children. Allocating time to desired leisure activities may be a luxury that many Korean immigrants are willing to forgo. As noted by Scott (2005), leisure service organizations can build into their marketing and programming efforts specific strategies that help mitigate time constraints, including providing expanded opportunities to make reservations for facilities and programs, providing opportunities for shorter, more self-directed leisure experiences, and providing complete information about time requirements in promotional literature.

Leisure service organizations would do well to target Korean immigrants who feel their English skills impede their participation in desired activities. Managers can effectively address this issue by developing a website that contains information about leisure opportunities in Korean. Developing multi-language brochures, printed materials, and signs in parks could also be effective in facilitating Koreans' use of leisure services and creating a user-friendly setting. Managers could work with opinion leaders in the Korean American community to facilitate the construction and appropriateness of these materials. Managers may also develop programs that specifically target Koreans (and other immigrant groups) who have poor English skills. One model for this is a successful program provided by the Barbara Bush Parent Center in College Station, Texas. This family-oriented facility, administered by the College Station Independent School District, offers English classes and provides a free lending library for educational books, videos, tapes, and toys for small children. The facility is particularly popular among female spouses of international students at Texas A&M University who are from Asia and Latin America.

Finally, practitioners should be particularly mindful of Korean immigrants who lack strong ethnic group ties and who are not fully accepted by Americans in general. These immigrants were highly constrained by fear of discrimination and making mistakes. These individuals may be highly at risk from stress that accompanies acculturation because they are probably more likely to feel socially and culturally isolated (Zhou, 1997). Managers should develop and arrange ongoing staff training that helps employees understand the prejudice and hostility that these and other immigrants encounter in the United States. Practitioners must ensure that service personnel are welcoming, and encourage existing patrons to be hospitable as well. Managers may also wish to develop programs that may be attractive to people from diverse populations (e.g., sports, the arts, gardening). These leisure activities may provide a context for immigrants who feel socially and culturally isolated to develop meaningful relationships.

This study has several limitations. One limitation is that we failed to explain a large amount of variance in any of the dependent variables. Clearly more research is needed to understand better those factors that contribute

to leisure constraints among Korean immigrants. Second, we relied on cross-sectional data. Since acculturation occurs over time, future studies should try to incorporate longitudinal designs. Third, our criterion variable was limited to participation in desired leisure activities. Future research should expand on the range of criterion variables (e.g., non-use of urban parks) against which to measure the influence of constraints that immigrants encounter. Fourth, we did not address directly the extent to which immigrants desired to assimilate. Future research should examine whether or not leisure constraints vary by whether immigrants wish to assimilate, remain within their ethnic enclaves, or selectively acculturate. Likewise, studies should strive to examine constraints in terms of the culture of the particular group under investigation. This may be particularly important in understanding issues related to entitlement and desire for leisure (Tirone & Shaw, 1997). Finally, our study was limited to adult Korean immigrants and we did not address the challenges facing Korean youth (see Lee & Zhou, 2004). To understand more fully the relationship between acculturation and constraints among immigrants, researchers would do well to collect data from immigrant youth.

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