



Cultural Tension in Immigrant Households: Acculturative Conflict, Parental Criticism, and Depressive Symptoms Among Korean Adolescents



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Background

- ❖ Among immigrant adolescents, the emergence of depressive symptoms may be influenced by difficulties and stressors they experience as immigrants (Cleary et al., 2018; Lo et al., 2017), such as parent-adolescent acculturative conflict and parental criticism (Huang et al., 2012).
- ❖ Conflicts regarding matters of acculturation between immigrant Asian parents and their adolescents have been linked to depressive symptoms (Juang et al., 2018).
- ❖ Additionally, parental criticism has been linked to depressive symptoms throughout adolescence across racial groups (Castro & Rice, 2003; Huang et al., 2012)

Current Study

- ❖ Although studies have linked parent-adolescent acculturative conflict and parental criticism with depression (Castro & Rice, 2003; Juang et al., 2018), no studies have examined the relationships among these three variables in this developmental stage.
- ❖ Therefore, the current study examined the potential mediating role of parental criticism on the association between parent-adolescent acculturative conflict and depressive symptoms in a sample of Korean immigrant adolescents in New Zealand, where Koreans are on of the fastest-growing and most psychologically vulnerable immigrant communities (Ho et al., 2002).
- ❖ **Hypothesis:** Parental criticism in both parents will mediate the relationship between parent-adolescent acculturative conflict and depressive symptoms in Korean-New Zealander adolescents.

Method

Participants

- ❖ One hundred and twenty-six Korean immigrant adolescents ($M_{Age} = 15.30$, $SD_{Age} = 1.68$; Female = 48.1%; $M_{years\ in\ NZ} = 7.95$, $SD_{years} = 4.50$) were recruited through local Korean organizations and churches

Materials

- ❖ Acculturation Intergenerational Conflict Scale (Lee, 2004; $\alpha_{mothers} = .95$, $\alpha_{fathers} = .94$)
- ❖ Network of Relationships-Relationship Quality Version (Furman & Buhrmester, 2008; criticism subscale, $\alpha_{mothers} = .81$, $\alpha_{fathers} = .87$)
- ❖ Center for Epidemiological Studies Depression Scale (Radloff, 1977; $\alpha = .87$).

Results

- ❖ Correlations demonstrated significant relationships among the key variables
- ❖ Maternal acculturative conflict significantly predicted maternal criticism ($B = .82$, $SE = .10$, $t = 7.78$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [.61, 1.02]). , and maternal criticism significantly predicted adolescent depression ($B = 4.41$, $SE = 1.42$, $t = 3.10$, $p < .01$, 95% CI [1.59, 7.24]).
- ❖ An ANOVA revealed no sex differences.
- ❖ Mediation analyses using PROCESS (Hayes, 2012), were used to assess the potential mediating role of parental criticism between parent-adolescent acculturative conflict and depressive symptoms.
- ❖ Results indicated that maternal criticism was a significant mediator between mother-adolescent acculturative conflict and depressive symptoms ($\beta = 3.60$, $SE = 1.36$, 95% CI [.62, 6.00]), but this was not found for fathers.

Discussion

- ❖ The results support previous findings that parent-adolescent acculturative conflict and criticism are associated with adolescent depression across diverse racial groups (Castro & Rice, 2003; Juang et al., 2018).
- ❖ Additionally, the results suggest that parent-adolescent acculturative conflict and adolescent depression may be mediated by parental criticism, suggesting that parent-adolescent acculturative conflict may influence parental criticism, which then impacts depressive symptoms in Korean immigrant adolescents.

Why Moms and not Dads?

- ❖ A plausible mechanism behind this outcome might come from the traits of an archetypal Asian father—stoic, stern, and inexpressive (Chao & Tseng, 2002). These traits and related parenting styles—such as using nonverbal expression of care (Li, 2020)—may have influenced both the amount and/or type of criticism a father displayed, as well as their child's perception of it.

Fig. 1. Structural Models of The Mediation Analysis

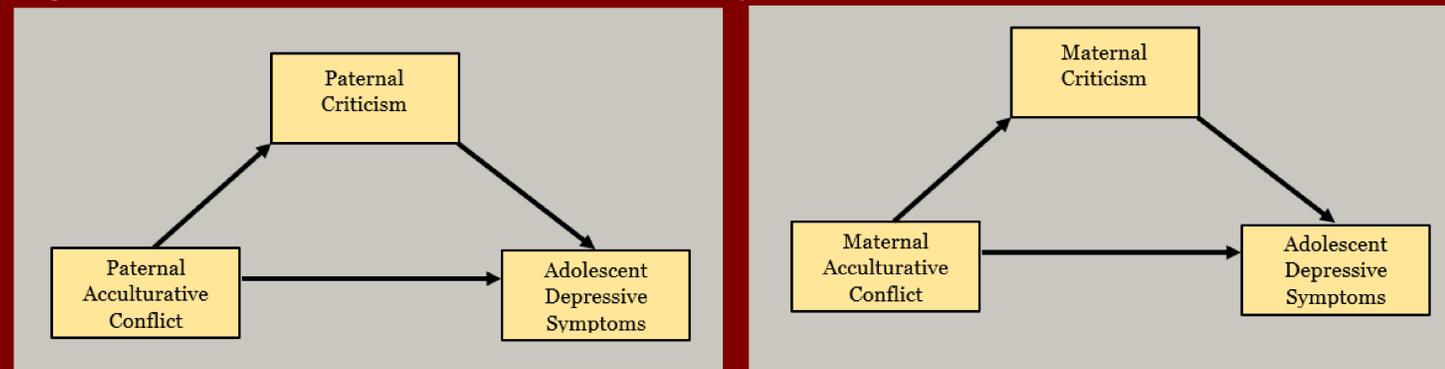


Table 1. Correlations Among Parental and Adolescent Variables

Means, Standard Deviations, and Bivariate Correlations Among Study Variables

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3	4
1. Maternal Acculturative Conflict	2.11	0.74	—			
2. Paternal Acculturative Conflict	2.11	0.77	0.83**	—		
3. Maternal Criticism	2.45	1.09	0.55**	0.58**	—	
4. Paternal Criticism	2.08	1.00	0.56**	0.70**	0.55*	—
5. Adolescent Depressive Symptoms	23.10	13.24	.30**	.33**	.43**	.11

Note. Depressive symptoms is calculated as a sum score.
* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

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Limitations & Future Directions

- ❖ This study employed a **small sample size** ($N = 126$), which may raise concerns regarding statistical power (Schönbrodt & Perugini, 2013). Furthermore, the study used mediation analysis—a causal process—on cross-sectional data, which can misrepresent the mediation of longitudinal processes (O'Laughlin et al., 2018). **Future studies should aim to employ larger sample sizes and longitudinal designs.**
- ❖ Future research should be directed towards exploring whether these findings are unique to this population or exist cross-culturally among other immigrant youths.
- ❖ This study examined findings among Korean-New Zealanders who were relatively established in the country and who lived in an urban area.
- ❖ Future studies should consider expanding and re-examining the findings among Korean-New Zealanders from non-urban areas or those who have immigrated more recently.

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