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ECOLOGICAL FACTORS INFLUENCING THE MARITAL
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ECOLOGICAL FACTORS INFLUENCING THE MARITAL RELATIONSHIPS OF
CHINESE INTERNATIONAL GRADUATE STUDENTS

By

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ABSTRACT

ECOLOGICAL FACTORS AFFECTING THE MARITAL RELATIONSHIPS OF CHINESE INTERNATIONAL GRADUATE STUDENTS

By

Jaime D. Goff

A grounded-theory qualitative study based on ecological and feminist theory was conducted to determine the influence of ecological factors on the marital relationships of Chinese international graduate students. Ten Chinese couples from a university in the southern United States participated in both conjoint and individual interviews. Participants were asked questions about the influences of the natural physical-biological environment, the social cultural environment, and the human built environment. To triangulate the qualitative data, participants also completed a Demographic Questionnaire, the Marital Satisfaction Inventory-Revised, the Suinn-Lew Asian Self Identity Acculturation Scale, and the Outcome Questionnaire 45.2. The social cultural environment was found to be the most influential in the lives of participants. In the microsystem, problem-solving, affection, spousal support, and spousal separation were found to be most influential. In the mesosystem, the most influential factors were family, friends, and the presence of children. Influential factors in the exosystem included time together because of graduate school and relationships with professors and advisors. Influential macrosystem factors were found to be language, relationship expectations, Western influence, gender, and Communism. A theoretical model of adjustment was developed based on these results.

This dissertation is dedicated to my husband, Eric, whose love, patience, and flexibility have sustained our marriage throughout the experience of graduate school.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

The primary focus of this dissertation was to understand how ecological factors influence the marital relationships of Asian international graduate students and their spouses. While research with American couples has verified the influence of these factors on the marital relationship, research examining these factors among international populations is lacking. Research examining the marital relationship of international graduate students does not exist, and research on other groups of international sojourner couples is scant. The central goal of this study was to investigate the experience of the marital relationships of East Asian international graduate students. It was necessary to fulfill this goal because the knowledge gained from such an investigation will assist marriage and family therapists to be more competent providers of therapeutic services for Asian-born couples.

Chapter One offers an introduction to the study, including a statement of the problem and the importance of the research. In addition, conceptual and theoretical foundations are discussed. Ecological theory and feminist theory, which serve as the primary theories guiding this study, are discussed with regard to their relevance for this study. In Chapter Two, a review of the literature is offered with a focus on previous research regarding influences on the marital relationship, marital structure in Asian culture, and the effects of graduate school on both couples and individuals. Chapter Three reviews the qualitative methodology used in addition to important issues in qualitative research. Chapter Four presents the results of the study, while Chapter Five provides a discussion and theoretical and clinical implications.

While approximately half of all marriages in the United States end in divorce, it is a relatively new phenomenon in Asian countries. Divorce rates are, however, on the rise. For example, while the divorce rate in China in 1981 was only 5%, it had increased to 12% by 1996 (Cowley, Laris, & Hager, 1996), and the divorce rate in Japan is 20% (Steinberg, Kruckman, & Steinberg, 2000). While the acceptance of divorce has had benefits, especially for women, it has also brought about social consequences in Western countries where it is more prevalent. For the spouses, such consequences include increased risk for mental illness (Bloom, Asher, & White, 1978), increased incidence of physical illness and suicide (Bloom et al., 1978), and decreased life-span (Berkman & Breslow, 1983). Children also suffer consequences from the marital distress of their parents including depression, withdrawal, poor social competence, health problems, poor academic performance, and behavior problems (Gottman, 1999). In the United States, the incidence of divorce has been associated with decreased marital satisfaction (Gottman, 1999), which often occurs in conjunction with an increase of stressors in the life of the married couple. Graduate school may be one of those stressors, and the addition of a new cultural environment may bring substantial stress to international students and their families.

Little attention in marital research has been paid to the unique experiences of international graduate students and their spouses. Foreign-born students between the ages of 19 and 24 who are attending American universities are 30% more likely than native students to be married (U.S. Census Bureau, 2003). In addition, international students make up 16% of all students enrolled in American graduate schools (U.S. Census Bureau,

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2003). While research has been conducted on psychosocial factors influencing graduate student marriages, the international student population has been neglected. Despite the extensive research on marriage in the United States, these findings do not provide accurate information about the marriages of foreign-born people living in the United States while remaining citizens of another country. International graduate students may experience double jeopardy regarding the marital relationship. Not only do they experience the normal stressors of graduate school, but they must also deal with living in a cultural environment that is different than their culture of origin. In order to better understand and serve international graduate students and their families, the next logical step was to investigate ecological factors influencing the marital relationships of this population.

<center>Importance of the Research</center>

Asian-born students, who account for 260 thousand of the international students in the United States (U.S. Census Bureau, 2003), were the targeted participants for this study. There were three important reasons to examine the marital relationships of this population. First, research has shown that those from Asian cultures often express mental or relational distress as physical ailments (Lim, 2000), and those who are less acculturated are less likely to seek professional psychological or relational help (Atkinson & Gim, 1989). In order to reduce the costs of unnecessary medical care and to address these problems more appropriately through mental health services, research must be conducted that increases knowledge in this area. Second, in an increasingly diverse social environment, marriage and family therapists must be competent in serving diverse populations. Third, despite the inevitable stress international graduate students

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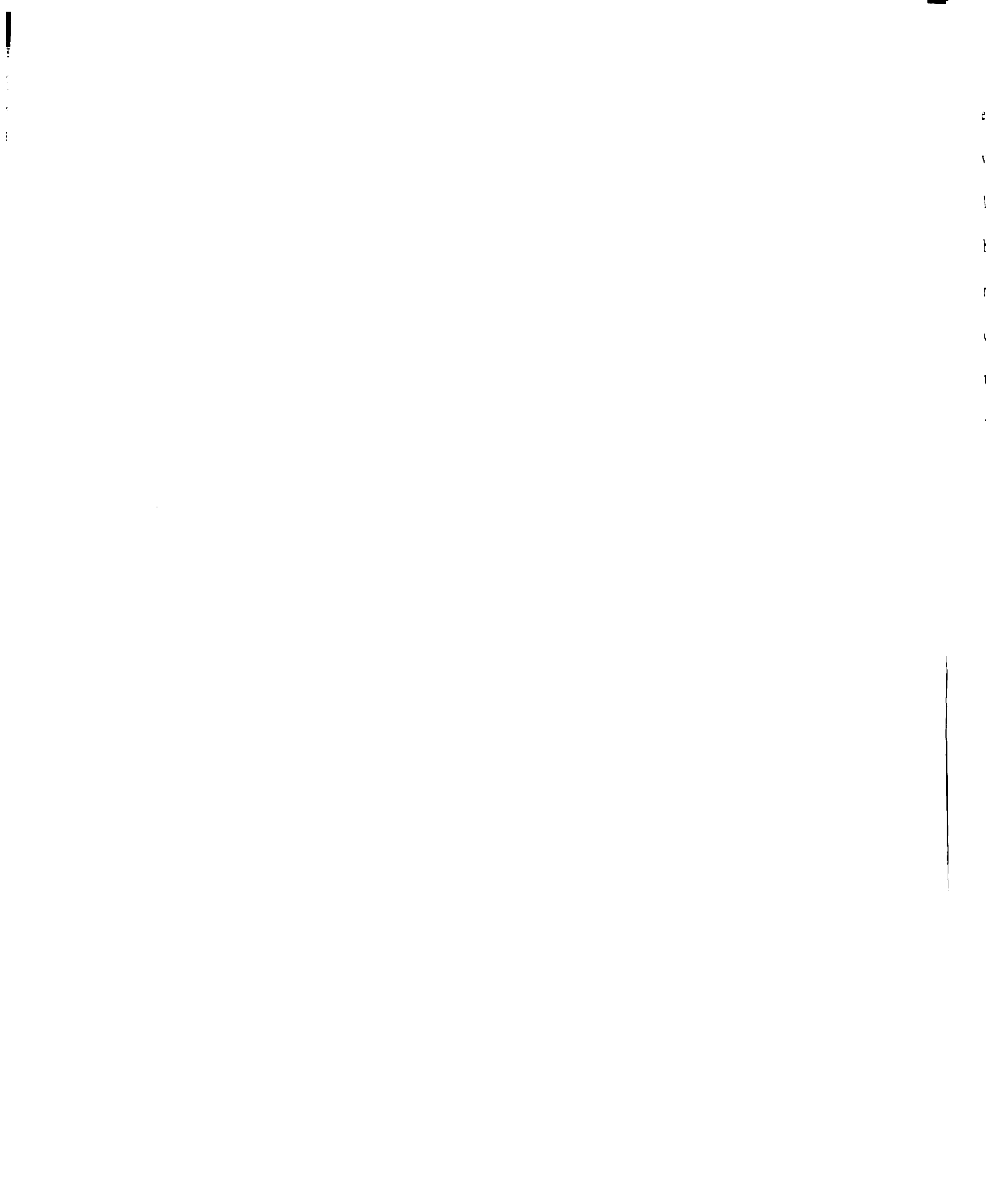
experience, more of them complete their doctoral studies (54% of international students vs. 50% of American students) in less time (6.1 vs. 7.2 years) (Espenshade & Rodriguez, 1997). Studying this population may provide important information regarding how to buffer all graduate students against stress. This study is innovative in that studies on the marital relationships of international graduate students have not previously been conducted. It is expected that the findings of this study will assist marriage and family therapists in their clinical practice with Asian-born clients. In addition, the findings of this study will help to reduce the costs of unnecessary medical treatment. The knowledge gained in this study may also be valuable to universities as they strive to provide services to international students and their families.

Conceptual Map

Included in this chapter is a conceptual map (Figure 1.1) that shows the hypothesized reciprocal influence of the ecological environment and the marital relationships of international graduate students. While the focus of the study is the influence of ecological factors on the marriage, it is important to note that the married couple may also have a profound influence on the environments in which they exist. The map displays the marital relationship embedded within the three primary environments affecting families: (1) the natural physical-biological environment; (2) the social-cultural environment; and (3) the human built environment (Bubolz & Sontag, 1993). There are several levels to the social-cultural environment as displayed in the Conceptual Map. Those layers consist of the individual, the microsystem, the mesosystem, the exosystem, and the macrosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1997). It is hypothesized that the natural physical-biological and human-built environments may

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have less of an influence on the marital relationship than the social-cultural environment. As a result, the influence of these two environments is indicated with a white arrow. It is expected that the subsystems of the social-cultural environment will be more influential. Within the social cultural environment, the individual, the microsystem, and the mesosytem are expected to be moderately influential, so they are indicated with gray arrows. The most salient influences are expected to be graduate school in the exosystem and culture and gender in the macrosystem. These subsystems are shown with black arrows to emphasize their influence.

Figure 1.1: Conceptual Map

Natural Physical-Biological Environment

Social Cultural Environment

Human Built Environment

Marital Relationship

Microsystem

Individual

Mesosystem

Exosystem
Grad
School

Macrosystem
Gender
Culture
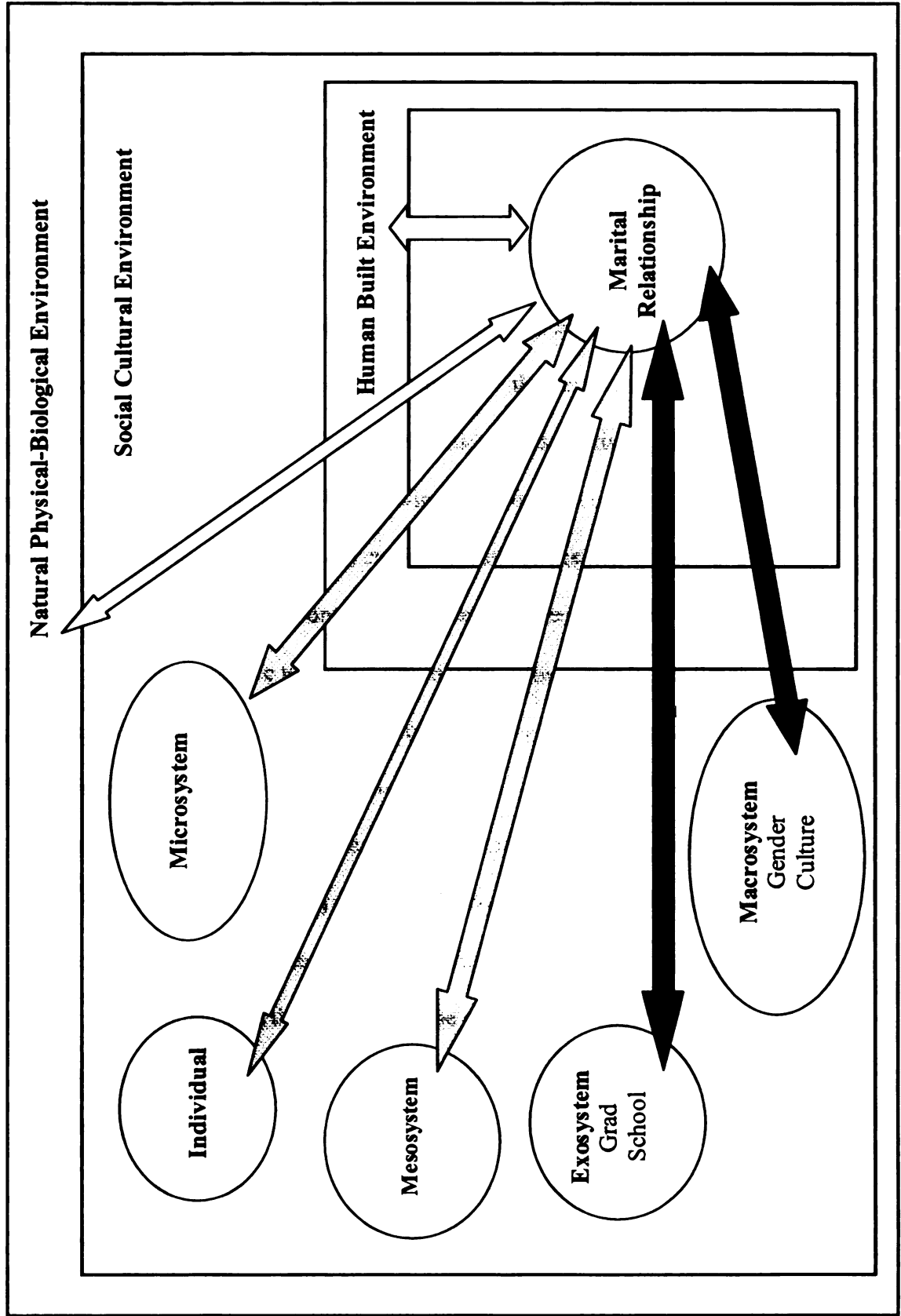
Theoretical Foundations

Ecological Theory

The primary theory guiding this study was human ecological theory (Bubolz &

Sontag, 1993; Bronfenbrenner, 1979). According to Bubolz and Sontag (1993), there are

three primary environments that affect the family. These environments are the natural

physical-biological environment, the social-cultural environment, and the human built

environment. The natural physical-biological environment consists of components such

as the atmosphere, climate, soil, plants, and animals as they exist unaltered in nature.

Components of the human built environment include roads, cultivated land, buildings,

and material artifacts. The social-cultural environment has three primary components: (1)

the presence of other human beings; (2) cultural constructions; and (3) social and

economic institutions (Bubolz & Sontag, 1993). Each of these three environments may

serve as a stressor or a resource to families. While the influence between the family and

these three environments is ultimately reciprocal, this study will focus on the influence

that the environment has on the marital relationship.

Within the social-cultural environment, this author has found it useful to

incorporate Bronfenbrenner's (1979) model of the social-cultural environment as existing

of six distinct system levels. These six levels consist of individual factors, the

microsystem, the mesosystem, the exosystem, the macrosystem, and the chronosystem.

Each of these concepts is discussed in more detail below.

Individual Characteristics Affecting Development

There are three classes of individual characteristics that influence developmental

processes: (1) force characteristics, (2) resource characteristics, and (3) demand

characteristics. Force characteristics are defined as "active behavioral dispositions that can set proximal processes in motion and sustain their operations or interfere with their occurrence" (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1997, p. 1009). There are two types of force characteristics, those that are developmentally generative and those that are developmentally disruptive. Developmentally generative characteristics include responsiveness, engagement, and belief systems. Developmentally disruptive characteristics, on the other hand, include impulsiveness, distractibility, apathy, lack of interest in one's surroundings, and a tendency to withdraw from activity. In other words, force characteristics are those that make up an individual's personality.

Resource characteristics are another category of individual characteristics that affect development (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1997). Resource characteristics consist of biopsychological liabilities and assets which influence the capacity of the developing person to engage effectively in proximal processes. The biopsychological liabilities in this category include genetic defects, physical handicaps, severe or persistent illness, or damage to brain function through accident or degenerative processes. Developmental assets include knowledge, skill, and experience that extend the domains in which proximal processes can do constructive work.

Demand characteristics, the third type of individual characteristics influencing development, consist of the capacity of the developing human to invite or discourage reactions from the social environment which can disrupt or foster processes of growth. These include characteristics such as physical attractiveness and the ability to give cues.

The Microsystem

Bronfenbrenner's (1979) definition of a microsystem reads as follows: "a pattern

of activities, roles, and interpersonal relations experienced by the developing person in a

given setting with particular physical and material characteristics" (p. 22). A microsystem

consists of a dyad that must be involved in face-to-face interaction with one another

(Bronfenbrenner, 1989). There are three primary elements to the microsystem

(Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The first element is proximal processes, which are defined as

"progressively more complex reciprocal interactions between an active, evolving

biopsychological human organism and the persons, objects, and symbols in its immediate

external environment" (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1997, p. 996). For married couples,

proximal processes may consist of the shared activities that take place between the dyad,

such as problem-solving and decision-making, which contribute to the couple's

development. The second element is that of role. Roles consist of sets of behaviors and

expectations associated with one's position in society. The third element, interpersonal

relations, occurs whenever one person in a setting is paying attention to or participating

in the activities of another person.

The Mesosystem

The mesosystem consists of the interrelations between two or more settings of

which the developing person is a part (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). In other words, the

mesosystem is a system of two or more microsystems (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1997).

Mesosystems are formed whenever individuals move into new settings. The processes

which operate in these different settings are not independent of each other, but each

setting affects and is affected by the others (Bronfenbrenner, 1986).

The Exosystem

According to Bronfenbrenner (1979), an exosystem consists of "one or more settings that do not involve the developing person as an active participant, but in which events occur that affect, or are affected by, what happens in the setting containing the developing person" (p. 25). For a couple, an exosystem may include the spouse's place of work or social network of friends. Bronfenbrenner and Morris (1997) later expanded the definition to include not only the settings but also the linkages and processes taking place between the settings.

The Macrosystem

Macrosystems are the "consistencies, in the form and content of lower-order systems...that exist, or could exist, at the level of the subculture or culture as a whole, along with any belief systems or ideology underlying such consistencies" (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 26). The definition was later expanded to include the impact of developmentally instigative belief systems, resources, hazards, life styles, opportunity structures, life course options, and patterns of social interchange (Bronfenbrenner, 1989). The macrosystem is characterized by the sharing in common of these characteristics. Whenever this condition is met, social classes, ethnic or religious groups, communities, neighborhoods, and geographical regions may all constitute a macrosystem. The social construction of gender may also be included as a part of the macrosystem.

Feminist Theory

Feminist theoretical concepts and assumptions form part of the foundation of this study because of its interest in the influence of gender and culture. Feminist theory posits that gender is a fundamental aspect of social relations and generally involves domination

and power differentials (Myers Avis & Turner, 1996). Feminist theory has four primary

themes (Goodrich, Rampage, Ellman, & Halstead, 1988; Osmond & Thorn, 1993). The

first theme is an emphasis on women (Goodrich et al, 1988). Feminist theorists are

primarily concerned with promoting the centrality, normality, and value of women's

experiences (Osmond & Thorne, 1993). The second theme is that of recognizing that

women occupy a subordinate position in society (Goodrich et al., 1988). Third, feminist

theorists are committed to ending unjust subordination of women (Goodrich et al., 1988).

Finally, feminist theorists give attention to gender and gender relations in their research

and clinical practice (Goodrich et al., 1988). They uphold that gender is a concept that is

socially constructed (Osmond & Thorne, 1993). In addition, the differences between men

and women are exaggerated in society. This exaggeration of differences and distinctions

perpetuates the power differentials that exist between men and women (Osmond &

Thorne, 1993).

Feminist theory is particularly relevant to this study because of its emphasis on

hearing the voices of those who are powerless and marginalized by society. Because

those of Asian origin in the United States are often considered to be the model minority,

their voices become difficult to hear amidst the more vocal minority groups. Their

experiences of discrimination and their feelings of powerlessness are therefore left

unheard. This study aims to give voice to the experiences of a model minority that is

often ignored. In addition, women from Asian countries are especially silenced. While

traditional gender roles in Western countries such as the United States are often

characterized by themes of domination and power on the part of males in relationships,

recent changes in expectations for intimate relationships have initiated a change in

traditional roles. In some Asian countries, however, such as China, Japan, and Korea, the traditional views regarding the roles of men and women still remain dominant. While this study focuses on the married couple, special attention will be given to themes of domination and power.

<div align="center">Research Questions</div>

Because this was an exploratory qualitative study, the research questions guiding the study were broad and inclusive in nature. The primary research question guiding the study was: *How do ecological factors influence the marital relationship of East Asian international graduate students?* Within this primary question, however, were several layers of questions that this study strove to answer. Those questions were as follows:

1. *How does the natural physical-biological environment influence the marital relationship of East Asian students?* It was expected that this environment would be perceived as having less of an influence on the marital relationship than the social-cultural and human built environments. For international students, however, the natural environment may be influential because of the difference between the present environment and the natural environment to which they are accustomed in their home country. As a result, this environment was included to allow for the emergence of this environment as important in the reports of the participants.

2. *How does the social-cultural environment influence the marital relationship of East Asian students?*

   a. *How do macrosystem factors influence the marital relationship of East Asian students?* While this system level is often portrayed as being the

most removed from the dyad of focus, it was anticipated that macrosystem factors would be influential in shaping the experiences of East Asian married couples. It was expected that the couples' religious and cultural heritage would have an important role in shaping the marital relationship.

    i. *Gender:* The social construction of gender, both in the culture of origin and in the current culture in which they exist, was expected to be influential. The qualitative data gained regarding gender roles was triangulated with the Role Orientation Scale of the Marital Satisfaction Inventory – Revised (Snyder, 1997).

    ii. *Culture:* It was expected that the cultural customs and beliefs of international graduate students would have a strong influence on the marital relationship. Also, for international students, their designation as a cultural minority may actually serve as a buffer against marital stress. For example, many international graduate students and their families live in university housing complexes populated primarily by international students. Because of the collective nature of Asian culture, the couples may form supportive communities among themselves. These supportive communities may not be developed by American graduate student couples because of the culture's individualistic style. In order to determine couples' adherence to their own cultural groups versus acceptance of the dominant culture, the Suinn-Lew Asian Self-Identity

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Acculturation Scale (Suinn, Rickard-Figueroa, Lew, & Vigil, 1987) will be given to participants.

b. *How do exosystem factors influence the marital relationship of East Asian students?* As stated previously, the exosystem includes those systemic influences of which only one of the spouses is a part. For this study, it was anticipated that the most influential exosystem would be the graduate program of which at least one of the spouses is a part. Graduate school is often a time of stress for couples and families. International graduate students, however, may experience double jeopardy because not only do they have to deal with the normal stressors of graduate school, but they must also adjust to living in a new culture. It was expected that the lack of time graduate student couples are able to spend with one another would be influential. To triangulate this data, the Time Together subscale of the Marital Satisfaction Inventory – Revised (Snyder, 1997) was completed by participants. The work exosystem may also be influential if one or both spouses are employed.

c. *How do mesosystem factors influence the marital relationship of East Asian students?* The mesosystem, consisting of systems with which both marital partners interact, includes influences such as the couples' social support network, their relationships with extended family, and the neighborhood or community in which they live. Because Eastern cultures are generally more collective than Western cultures, it was anticipated that this system will be very influential on the marital relationship.

Quantitatively, the Family History of Distress, Dissatisfaction with

Children, and Conflict Over Child-Rearing subscales of the Marital

Satisfaction Inventory – Revised (Snyder, 1997) were used to triangulate

qualitative data regarding familial influences on one's marital relationship.

d. *How do microsystem factors influence the marital relationship of East*

Asian students? Each marital dyad has unique characteristics that

influence the overall positive or negative nature of the relationship. It was

expected that dyadic characteristics such as conflict management skills,

interpersonal communication, the role structure of the marital relationship,

perceptions of spousal support, positive affect, and decision-making would

be influential in determining the spouses' perceptions of their marital

relationship. Once again, several subscales from the Marital Satisfaction

Inventory – Revised (Snyder, 1997) were utilized to triangulate this data.

Specifically, the Affective Communication, Problem-Solving

Communication, Aggression, Disagreement about Finances, and Sexual

Dissatisfaction subscales were analyzed.

e. *How do individual factors influence the marital relationship of East Asian*

students? Individual characteristics such as personality, emotional

stability, and physical and/or mental health were expected to contribute to

the quality of the marital relationship. In order to triangulate for individual

factors influencing the relationship, participants completed the Outcome

Questionnaire-45.2 (Lambert, Hansen, Umpress, Lunnen, Okiishi,

Burlingame, & Reisinger, 1996).

3. *How does the human built environment influence the marital relationship of East Asian students?* In regards to the human built environment, it was again expected that this environment would have less of an influence than the social-cultural environment. However, environmental components such as the couples' living space and the surrounding buildings and structures would have a minor influence on the marital relationship.

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CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

In order to aid in the conceptualization of this study, a review of preliminary research was conducted. The research literature in four areas was reviewed. Those four areas included ecological factors affecting marital relationships; marriage in Chinese, Japanese, and Korean cultures; research on Asian marriages; and the impact of graduate school on mental and relational health.

Ecological Factors Affecting Marital Relationships

Research focusing on marriage is prolific in the professional literature. Most of these studies focus on factors affecting the quality of the marital relationship. While these studies do not usually identify the variables as ecological, most of the variables studied can be classified into an ecological category.

The previous review of Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory in Chapter 1 has provided a framework from which to discuss research findings regarding marital relationships. In the following paragraphs, these research findings will be applied to the theoretical constructs discussed above. Specifically, findings will be categorized according to whether they consist of individual factors, microsystem factors, mesosystem factors, exosystem factors, or macrosystem factors affecting the marital relationship. It is important to note that while categorizing research findings is a practical approach to drawing conclusions, these categorizations are by no means stationery. Many of the findings may fit into multiple system levels. It is hoped that as a result of this study, a clearer picture of the marital relationships of Chinese, Japanese, and Korean couples will emerge.

Individual Factors Affecting the Marital Relationship

As stated above, individual factors that affect development include force characteristics, resource characteristics, and demand characteristics. Force characteristics may include specific personality traits that contribute to a person's ability to form and maintain intimate relationships, in this case marriage. Resource characteristics that may contribute to the marital satisfaction include physical disabilities, illness, or degenerative diseases. This may also include mental illnesses such as depression. Demand characteristics, such as physical attractiveness, may play a part in an individual spouse's ability to maintain the partner's interest.

Personality

The quality of the marital relationship has been found to be correlated with personality variables of the individual spouses. On measures of personality characteristics such as pleasantness, arousability, and dominance, individuals who had a greater emotional disposition towards pleasantness were more likely to be happy with their marriages (Blum & Mehrabian, 1999). In addition, those individuals who felt they had control in their relationships and life circumstances reported higher levels of marital quality than those who felt controlled and guided by others.

Using selected MMPI items, Dymond (1954) found that couples who were maritally satisfied were more sociable, more capable, and less tense, worried, and shy. In a study of engaged couples, Udry (1967) discovered that engagements were less likely to be broken if men perceived their fiancés as being more emotionally stable and imaginative and less unconventional. Lower neuroticism has also been found to be positively related to marital quality (Terman & Buttenwieser, 1935; Kelly & Conley, 1987).

Physical and Mental Health

The research on health and marital quality is numerous but determining the path by which they occur is difficult to pinpoint. It is widely known that married men are typically healthier than single men. The health of married men has not been found to be related to marital quality. Wives, however, derive health benefits only when the marriage is satisfactory (Hess & Soldo, 1985; Levenson, Carstensen, & Gottman, 1993). In a study examining predictors of marital quality and subjective health perceptions, empathic understanding of their wives and cohesion was predictive of health for men, while communication and social support were predictive of health for wives (Helvey, 1987).

Having to cope with chronic illness or degenerative disease has become a more likely occurrence with increased life expectancy. Many older couples find their roles in later life changing from spouse to caregiver. In addition to the physical difficulties experienced by the spouse who is ill, the caregiving spouse is sometimes left feeling isolated and in need of support. In a study of caregiving wives, Wright and Aquilino (1998) found that the key factor associated with lower levels of caregiving burden and higher levels of marital happiness was reciprocity of emotional support between the caregiver and her husband. Coping with illness is most commonly associated with older couples, but younger couples may also be dealing with chronic illness or disease. When investigating couples coping with chronic Hepatitis C, Bergman (2001) found that for patients, fatigue and uncertainty were negatively related to marital quality. For spouses, the most important variable influencing the marital relationship was illness demand. For both partners, feelings of uncertainty and transmission fears predicted levels of marital quality. Declining health brings about many changes in the marital relationship, often

having an adverse effect on marital quality. These adverse effects have been attributed to changes in financial circumstances, shifts in division of household labor, declines in marital activities, and problematic behavior of the ill spouse (Booth & Johnson, 1994).

Depression has been the most commonly investigated mental health issue as it relates to the marital relationship. While much of the research on depression and marriage has focused on wives, Whisman, Weinstock, and Uebelacker (2002) found that marital dissatisfaction was associated with depressed mood in both husbands and wives. In a study comparing a group of depressed individuals and a group of chronically depressed individuals, Riso, Blandino, Hendricks, Grant, and Duin (2002) discovered that while the two groups were similar in terms of history of divorce and marriage, those in the chronically depressed group reported significantly lower levels of marital quality.

Perceived Physical Attractiveness

Perceived physical attractiveness, and the resulting desirability of spouses, may be a demand characteristic that affects the marital relationship. In a study of 1053 British couples, Weisfeld, Russell, Weisfeld, and Wells (1992) discovered that physical attractiveness of wives was an important factor in the marital satisfaction of husbands. More specifically, husbands were more satisfied if their wives were moderately more attractive than they were. Spouses' ratings of their own physical attractiveness may also be an important variable in the marital relationship. Ritts and Stein (1995) discovered that spouses who held negative views of their own physical attractiveness also had partners who evaluated them negatively. The opposite was also true.

Microsystem Influences on the Marital Relationship

In the context of marriage, microsystems include the proximal processes, roles, and interpersonal relations that take place between spouses. The proximal processes that take place between a husband and a wife may include any interchange between them that influences the development of their relationship. Proximal processes include the activities that a couple engages in together. For husbands and wives, the construct of role may play an important part in the determination of marital satisfaction. This particular concept may be particularly significant today when the boundaries around role expectations for men and women are becoming blurry. Interpersonal relations in marriage include variables such as emotional expression, conflict resolution, and social support.

Gender-Role Expectations

In a study of two cohorts of couples, one cohort married between 1964 and 1980 and the other cohort married between 1981 and 1997, the reports of the more recent cohort reflected the changing milieu (Rogers & Amato, 2000). The younger cohort reported more marital discord, but they also reported increased economic and decision-making power for wives, less traditional gender role attitudes, and increased involvement for husbands in the home. While retirement is often viewed as a time of increased marital quality, Myers and Booth (1996) discovered that for husbands, leaving a high-stress job improved marital quality, but gender role reversals were linked to lower marital quality.

Family professionals sometimes make the assumption that increased equity between men and women is positive for marriages. Despite this assumption, Baker, Kiger, and Riley (1996) discovered that women who are full-time homemakers had the

highest economic satisfaction, the highest satisfaction with time arrangements in the

relationship, and the highest level of satisfaction with household-task arrangements.

Emotional Expression and Conflict Resolution

Expression of negative affect, especially in the context of conflict resolution, has

been found to be linked to marital dissatisfaction. Cutrona (1996) discovered that when

compared to nondistressed couples, distressed couples displayed more negative affect and

negative behaviors and less positive affect and positive behaviors. Because marital

conflict occurs in relation to another person, each person must be able to handle one's

own negative emotions in addition to the negative emotions of one's spouse (Markman,

1991). In a longitudinal study of couples over a 3-year period, Levenson and Gottman

(1985) found that the greatest improvement in the marital relationship occurred when

husbands' negative affect was not reciprocated by their wives, and wives' negative affect

was reciprocated by their husbands. Despite the difference between husbands and wives,

a style of conflict resolution in which both partners achieve satisfactory resolution must

be created to maintain marital quality (Carstensen, Graff, Levenson, & Gottman, 1996).

According to Greeff and deBruyne (2000) collaborative conflict management styles had

the highest correlation with marital quality, while competitive conflict management styles

had the highest correlation with marital dissatisfaction. In addition, the tendency of one

spouse to distance during episodes of conflict resolution has been associated with lower

assessments of the quality of marriage by both spouses (Ridley, Wilhelm, & Surra, 2001).

Social Support

The relationship between marital quality and perceived social support provided by

the spouse appears to differ among men and women. In a longitudinal study of 778

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couples, McGonagle, Kessler, and Schilling (1992) found that wives' perceptions of their husbands' support behaviors predicted marital quality three years later. For husbands, however, this relationship was not significant. Despite these findings, when comparing support received from friends, relatives, and spouses, the support of one's spouse was the most predictive of marital disagreement frequency.

Julien and Markman (1991) discovered that the relationship between wives' perceptions of supportive behaviors by their husbands and marital quality was stronger than it was for husbands. In addition, Acitelli (1992) found that young wives were more satisfied with their marriages and their lives when their husbands attended more to the marriage. Barbee and colleagues (1993) verified these findings. In their study, wives rated supportive behaviors as more satisfying than husbands did. They point out that these gender differences may exist because wives may match husbands' expectations of marriage so well that it has no effect on husbands' perceptions of marital quality.

The relationship between marital quality and support for individual and relationship goals has been investigated by Brunstein, Dangelmayer, and Schultheiss (1996). When studying 72 couples, they discovered that while the relationship between marital quality and goal support was significant for relationship goal support for women, men's marital quality was significantly correlated with goal support for both relationship and individual goals.

Mesosystem Influences on the Marital Relationship

It is important to note here that variables included in the meso- and exosystems vary depending on the unit of analysis. For example, the mesosystem consists of multiple dyads of which one of the spouses is a part. If the wife is the unit of analysis, the

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mesosystem would consist of her relationships with her friends, family, and career. The wife's mesosystem would not, however, include the influence of her husband's relationships with his friends, family, or career. Because spouses often share friends and family, the influence of social networks will be discussed as a mesosystem influence with the awareness that they may also be included as an exosystem influence. The presence of children in the family is also considered within this system level.

Social Networks

Social networks have been found to have a significant impact on the marital relationship. Social networks consist of family, friends, neighbors, and any other individuals who are perceived to provide support to one or both spouses. Not only may couples share social networks, but they also increase the size of one another's networks by introducing their own friends and families, thereby contributing social partners who may not otherwise be available (Lang & Carstensen, 1994). In a sample of both clinical and volunteer couples, Allgood, Crance, and Agee (1997) found that discussing family problems with friends was positively correlated with both marital satisfaction and stability. Despite this general finding, however, it was also discovered that while clinical wives continued to talk with their friends about family problems, clinical husbands were less likely to do so. Marital quality has also been found to be related to the number of friends men and women have. According to Simpson (1990) and Engelkes (1990), men and women who are satisfied with the number of friends they have also reported higher marital quality. In addition, men and women who reported sharing friend networks with each other also reported higher levels of marital quality.

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Family is also an important source of support. In a study of 451 rural, White families, Bryant, Conger, and Meehan (2001) found that the quality of couples' relationships with their in-laws predicted the stability, satisfaction, and commitment of wives, while discord with fathers-in-law predicted husbands' marital success. Simpson (1990) found that family relationships were more important to women than to men. Women in his study reported higher marital quality when they were very close to their in-laws and when they were able to rely on many family members for advice and help.

The influence of social networks on marital satisfaction may vary by ethnicity. While a sample of Puerto Rican men and women enjoyed equally strong social networks, the women were more strongly connected to family members, while the men were strongly connected to both family members and people outside of the family (Rogler & Procidano, 1986). For the wives, there was a significant relationship between the strength of the network and the number of relatives included in the network. In a study of Black and White newlywed couples, close family ties significantly predicted the satisfaction of Black couples but not of White couples (Timmer, Veroff, & Hatchett, 1996). In addition, Black couples were less likely to have conflict over matters pertaining to family, and they visited their families more often. Despite these findings, Black couples perceived fewer family members who would be able to help if needed.

Presence of Children

Some researchers have determined that marital quality is highest during the newlywed years and then experiences a drop-off throughout the course of the marriage (Pineo,1969; White & Booth, 1985). Other research, however, has found that while marital quality decreases during the early years and after the birth of children (Tucker &

Aaron, 1993), it increases again in the later years (Burr, 1970; Guilford & Bengston, 1979; Rollins & Cannon, 1974; Rollins & Feldman, 1970). According to Cowan and Pape-Cowan (1988), the decrease in marital quality at childbirth is correlated not with the demands of child rearing but with the return to traditional gender roles during the transition to parenthood. When children reach adolescence, marital quality has been found to be related to parental self-esteem and attitudes toward aging and the degree of closeness between parents and children (Steinberg & Silverberg, 1987). According to Troll (1985), marital quality does not improve until after the children leave home.

Exosystem Influences on the Marital Relationship

As stated above, the composition of the exosystem depends on the unit of analysis, whether the husband or the wife. Following the example used to describe the mesosystem, if the wife is the unit of analysis, the exosystem would consist of her husbands' relationships with friends, family, and career of which she is not a part. For spouses the primary realm of influence that does not include both of them is their individual careers and goals.

Work

Numerous studies on dual-earner couples have examined the influence of work on marital satisfaction. Scheduling is one important way in which the work exosystem influences the marital relationship. In a study of 961 dual-earner couples, Roehling and Bultman (2002) discovered that gender role attitudes and parental status were moderators of the relationship between work-related travel and marital quality. For spouses who held traditional gender role attitudes, marital quality was stable or enhanced when the husband traveled but lower when the wife traveled. For those couples who perceived themselves

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as having nontraditional gender role attitudes, marital quality was lower if either spouse traveled. Presser (2000) discovered that working evening, night, and weekend shifts was a significant predictor of divorce, moderated by the presence of children, type of schedule, gender of the working spouse, and the length of the marriage. For men with children, married less than five years, working fixed nights increased the likelihood of divorce or separation by six times. For women, on the other hand, having children, being married more than five years, and working fixed nights made divorce or separation three times as likely.

Another way in which work influences the marital relationship is through salary comparisons. In a longitudinal study of dual-earner couples, the marital role quality of males was significantly related to changes in salary. For females, however, marital role quality was not related to relative earning changes (Brennan, Barnett, & Gareis, 2001).

The way in which men and women perceive work stress to affect their marital relationships may also be different. When investigating the stress experienced by 244 male and female doctors in dual-career partnerships, Swanson and Power (1999) found that males perceived their work as more stressful and less satisfying than their female counterparts. In addition, while work stress had a greater impact on home life than the reverse, home-to-work stress predicted marital conflict only for females.

Graduate School

As more and more people attend college and graduate school, often at nontraditional times in the life cycle, the influence of schooling has come to have a significant effect on marriages and families. In a study of marital adjustment among graduate students, McRoy and Fisher (1982) discovered that marital adjustment was

affected by student status in one or both spouses. Marital adjustment was found to be lower when only the husband was a student compared to the wife only or both spouses being students. Marital adjustment was also better if the husband was the source of economic support or when both spouses were students. In addition, the presence of young children in the family contributed significantly to marital dissatisfaction.

Despite the difficulties often experienced by graduate students and their spouses, the field of study may be an important moderating factor. In a study of medical student marriages conducted by Katz, Monnier, Libet, Shaw, and Beach (2000), the stress experienced by the graduate student was significantly correlated with depression experienced by his/her spouse. In addition, the stress of the graduate student was increased as a result of lack of support. While the spouse is traditionally the primary source of support for most married couples, spouses of graduate students may experience barriers to providing the necessary support such as employment, domestic tasks, and child rearing. The results of this study also indicated, however, that investing in marital support may buffer against the effects of stress for medical student marriages.

The results of a study of marriage and family therapy graduate students indicated that marital partners believed the experience of graduate school was more enhancing than stressful for their relationship (Sori, Wetchler, Ray, & Niedner, 1996). Despite these positive results, however, there was a significant difference among the sexes. Male spouses of marriage and family therapy trainees reported significantly more stressors than their female counterparts. This may be because it is more difficult for males to put the professional development of their wives prior to their own needs.

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Macrosystem Influences on the Marital Relationship

The macrosystem includes influences that exist at the level of the subculture or culture of which the couple is a part. The values and beliefs that are based in social class, race/ethnicity, religion, and societal gender role beliefs may all have a significant impact on marital satisfaction.

Religion

Research regarding the influence of religion on marriage focuses primarily on marital stability. Using data from the National Survey of Families and Households, Call and Heaton (1997) found that the frequency of religious attendance had the greatest positive impact on marital stability. Couples who attended religious services regularly had the lowest risk of divorce. When spouses were members of different religious groups, however, the risk of divorce was increased. In addition, the religious beliefs of wives concerning marital commitment and non-marital sex were more important to marital stability than the husbands' beliefs.

Ethnicity

Most would agree that those from different races and/or ethnic groups have different expectations for marital and family life. Because of these different values and beliefs regarding marriage, race and/or ethnicity may be an important influence on the marital relationship. Among a sample of non-disadvantaged, married African American men and women and White men and women, race was the single most important predictor of overall well-being, defined as general contentment, marital satisfaction, and family cohesion (Woody & Green, 2001). In studies of Mexican American couples, acculturation seems to be a moderating factor between ethnicity and marital satisfaction.

Mexican American women who reported being more acculturated also reported less marital satisfaction (Medina, 2000; Negy & Snyder, 1997). For couples from China, marital satisfaction did not play as significant a role in overall life satisfaction as did inter-role conflict and job satisfaction (Chiu, Man, & Thayer, 1998).

Gender-Role Beliefs

Over the past 50 years, the familial landscape of America has changed considerably. Women continue to be the beneficiaries of increased opportunity for career success, and men are reaping the rewards of being more involved with their families. Despite the positive effects these changes have brought about, especially in the lives of women, the social milieu of increased gender equity and equal opportunity has also had some negative consequences for marital relationships. According to Amato, Johnson, Booth, and Rogers (2003) marital quality and the likelihood of divorce have changed little between the years of 1980 and 2000, while marital interaction has decreased over the last 20 years. Declines in marital quality were associated with increases in marital heterogamy, premarital cohabitation, wives' extended hours of employment, and wives' job demands. Increases in marital quality, on the other hand, have been associated with increases in economic resources, decision-making equality, nontraditional attitudes toward gender, and support for lifelong marriage (Amato et al., 2003).

Marriage in Chinese, Japanese, and Korean Culture

Chinese, Japanese, and Korean graduate students and their spouses have been chosen as the targeted participants for two primary reasons. First, students from these three nations make up a large percentage of the international graduate students on college campuses. Second, while each having unique characteristics, the Chinese, Japanese, and

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Korean cultures share several fundamental values and beliefs. For example, all three cultures value education, collectivism, loyalty, harmony, family, and saving face (Altamirano, Abe, Pak, & Zheng, 2002). In addition, all three societies value a hierarchical social structure that determines interaction in political, educational, occupational, and familial spheres (Altamirano et al., 2002). These similar values and beliefs result from a common Confucian ideology as well as Buddhist religious practices.

The Traditional View of Marriage

The traditional view of marriage in Eastern cultures has been highly influenced by Confucian philosophy (Higgins, Zheng, Liu, & Hui Sun, 2002). Confucianism has at its center four primary principles: (1) order in society; (2) filial piety; (3) hierarchical yet reciprocal interpersonal relationships; and (4) a high regard for truth, virtue, education, and social status (Wenhao, Salomon, & Chay, 1993). According to Confucian philosophy, all passionate love should be suppressed, and only sex within marriage for reproductive reasons is sanctioned.

This philosophy has influenced the role of the woman in the Asian marriage. According to Confucian philosophy, women who are obedient and lack talent are valuable. Women in more traditional Asian cultures do not have the ability to choose their marital partner. Rather, marriage is a business transaction that is arranged by the parents in accordance with the social hierarchy (Higgins et al., 2002). In traditional Chinese culture, women were seen as housebound, submissive, second-class citizens. Women were able to bought and sold by their husbands and fathers.

In the traditional view, marriage is seen as the pathway to personal self-worth and achievement (Higgins et al., 2002). When children do not marry at an appropriate age,

parents and grandparents become concerned. For men, a social stigma identifies single males over 30 as implying that no woman wanted him. For women, on the other hand, they risk being regarded as an old virgin (Higgins et al., 2002).

In a recent study comparing Japanese and American couples, families were instructed to draw a picture of their family (Bell & Bell, 2000). Compared with the American families, the pictures drawn by Japanese families depicted more traditional marital and family relationships. Fathers and husbands were more isolated, while mothers and wives were depicted as more connected with children (Bell & Bell, 2000). As cited in Katsurada and Sugihara (2002), Inoue stated that in an international comparison, Japanese women were ranked second only to Philippine women in their approval of traditional gender roles. The Japanese word for wife, *kanai*, literally means "inside the house" (Walsh & Taylor, 1982).

The Modern View of Marriage

In 1949, a new marriage law was instituted in China that outlawed arranged marriages and recognized monogamy based on free choice as the only legal form of marriage (Higgins et al., 2002). The Open Door policy, instituted in the 1980s, brought about a new liberal attitude to sexual behavior and marriage. Most urban young people now expect to choose their own marriage partners and to marry for love. These new liberal attitudes in China have also led to an increase in divorce rates (Higgins et al., 2002). In 1979, there were 319,252 divorces while in 1998, there were 1,190,214 divorces in China.

Despite these more liberal attitudes, however, aspects of the old traditionalism are still alive and well in China. For example, Chinese husbands still want their wives to be

beautiful, healthy, gentle, and good at housekeeping (Higgins et al., 2002). In general, they do not want wives who are better educated, more intelligent, or have higher career status than themselves (Higgins et al., 2002).

In a study comparing American and Chinese college students, both male and female students in the more traditional Chinese culture held more male-dominant attitudes (Chia, Chong, Cheng, Castellow, Moore, & Hayes, 1986). Despite this finding, however, women in both cultures held more egalitarian perspectives. While this was expected for American women, it was somewhat surprising that the Chinese women held these views because they have traditionally been more submissive and oppressed. Another interesting finding was that there was no difference between the Chinese men in 1984 and the American men in 1962 regarding gender roles in marriage. This indicates that the more modern Chinese men have views comparable to those of American men in the sixties (Chia et al., 1986).

In a qualitative study of thirty-two Korean working-class couples, many of the traditional norms regarding marriage were found to be upheld (Choi & Keith, 1991). The majority of the couples interviewed (60%) met one another through matchmakers and were married in a relatively short period of time. Despite this modern type of arranged marriage, however, many of them described their marriage as growing in love despite earlier difficulties in adjusting to one another. While many of the couples interviewed were dual-earner, mostly from necessity rather than choice, the wives continued to take primary responsibility for the household tasks. In regards to finances and decision-making, many of the wives handled the finances but did not have decision-making power in how their money was spent.

Despite suggested adherence to traditional values regarding marriage, up to 20% of Japanese get divorced, while 62% of women and 73% of men get remarried after a divorce (Steinberg et al., 2000). In addition, more Japanese women are remaining single. The proportion of unmarried women in Japan has been drastically increasing. Between 1970 and 1995, it increased by 21% for women ages 20-24, by 166% for women ages 25-29, and by 173% for women ages 30-34 (Raymo, 1998). According to Steinberg et al. (2000), sixty-seven percent of Japanese women now oppose gender-based role division.

In many Asian cultures, the dual-earner household is becoming more common because of necessity. The resulting dual roles, especially for wives, may bring about additional stress to the marriage. In a study conducted by Chiu, Man, and Thayer (1998), role conflict and role satisfaction were assessed with regard to their relationships to overall stress. There were 497 total participants from Hong Kong including 144 social workers, 196 nurses, and 157 managers. Results indicated that work conflict and family conflict were significantly related to inter-role conflict. In addition, family role conflict negatively affected marital satisfaction, but marital satisfaction was not affected by inter-role conflict as expected. Both job satisfaction and marital satisfaction were positively related to overall life satisfaction. Among inter-role conflict, job satisfaction, marital satisfaction, and life satisfaction, only marital satisfaction did not have a significant relationship with overall stress (Chiu et al., 1998).

As mentioned previously, those from Asian cultures often express mental or relational distress through somatic means. While research with American couples has verified the beneficial health consequences of being in a healthy, satisfied marriage, less research on this subject exists for Asian couples. Shek (1995) investigated marital quality

and psychological well-being of married adults in China. The sample in this study consisted of 1501 married adults between the ages of 30 and 60 years old. The participants were selected from public housing estates in Hong Kong by multiple stage cluster sampling. Measures of marital satisfaction, including the Chinese version of the Dyadic Adjustment Scale and the Chinese version of the Kansas Marital Satisfaction Scale, were significantly correlated with all measures of psychological well-being and perceived health status. Those who were maritally adjusted or satisfied reported better psychological and physical health than those who were less adjusted or satisfied.

Romantic Love in Marriage

One of the stereotypical differences between Western and Eastern marriages is the Western ideal of the existence of romantic love in marriage. In order to investigate the phenomena of romantic love in marriage, Levine, Sato, Hashimoto, and Verma (1995) conducted a study comparing eleven different cultures and nations concerning their belifs about the importance of love for marriage. This study was conducted with college students from 11 countries including India, Pakistan, Thailand, Mexico, Brazil, Japan, Hong Kong, Republic of the Philippines, Australia, England, and the United States. The authors hypothesized that people in more collectivist cultures would place less value on romantic love in marriage. Among the Japanese respondents, only 2% stated they would marry someone for his/her desirable qualities, despite not being in love with him/her. Forty-two percent of Japanese respondents believed that the disappearance of love from a marriage would indicate that the couple should separate from one another.

Korean working-class couples reported that they did not communicate with one another on a regular basis regarding their feelings, and they did not show affection to one

another (Choi & Keith, 1991). In addition, the majority of wives reported that sex was their duty rather than being something that they enjoyed. Several barriers to companionship in these marriages were identified (Choi & Keith, 1991). First, because many of them worked overtime at their jobs, they reported not having the time to spend with one another. Second, it was more common for husbands to spend leisure time with same-sex friends rather than with his wife. Third, the couples did not have the economic resources to make leisure activities a priority. Fourth, couples felt restrained in their time together due to the presence of children. Finally, many of these working-class Korean couples lived with the husbands' parents. As a result, they did not feel they had the privacy to be able to enjoy one another's company.

Preferences in Marital Partners

In a sample of 505 Chinese college students, research was conducted to determine preferences for mate selection (Higgins et al., 2002). In terms of age, 71.8% of Chinese women preferred an older husband, while, 45% of men preferred a younger wife. In addition, 38% of Chinese women preferred a better-educated husband, and 24% of Chinese men preferred a less well-educated partner. This study also investigated traits that were desired of spouses by Chinese men and women. The traits desired by men included personality, morality, health, and appearance. For women, morality, intelligence, personality, and health were important in a future spouse.

Hofstede (1996) investigated partner preferences as they related to masculinity or femininity of the culture. According to Hofstede (1996), masculine cultures are those in which social gender roles are clearly distinct, while feminine societies are characterized by overlapping gender roles. The sample for this study consisted of 50 women between

the ages of 20 and 30 from each of eight Asian capital cities: Bangkok, Beijing, Hong Kong, Jakarta, Seoul, Singapore, Taipei, and Tokyo. The women were asked to identify from a list of 15 traits those that they looked for in a steady boyfriend and in a husband. Personality and sense of humor were most important in a steady boyfriend, while health, wealth, and understanding were most important in a husband. Those women who were from cultures identified as masculine differentiated more between the traits they desired in a steady boyfriend and a husband. If the boyfriend is seen as the symbol of love, while the husband is seen as the symbol of family life, it may be postulated that in more masculine countries, love and family life are separated (Hofstede, 1996).

In a study of 223 Korean college students, romantic love and desired traits in spouses were investigated (Brown, 1994). Results from this study suggest that Korean men are more romantic than Korean women regarding their conceptualization of marriage. More men than women agreed that (1) common interests are not important in love; (2) short acquaintanceships are sufficient for marriage; (3) religious differences do not matter for people in love; (4) love at first sight is often the deepest and most enduring; (5) there are usually only one or two potential love partners in the world; (6) regardless of other factors, love is sufficient for marriage; (7) love is exciting rather than calming; (8) differences in social class and religion are unimportant when selecting a marriage partner; and (9) when you are in love you will know it. Brown (1994) explained these results as being related to women's marriage decision being based on practical grounds rather than emotional grounds because they are more dependent than men for their status and support.

In a similar study, comparing preferences for marital partners in American, Russian, and Japanese culture, Hatfield and Sprecher (1995) surveyed 222 Japanese college students. The Japanese students were the least choosy in their mate selection as compared to the American and Russian students. In addition, men in all three cultures rated physical attractiveness as more important than women did, while women were more interested in intelligence, ambition, and potential for success. For Japanese students, the traits measured were ranked in the following order: (1) kindness and understanding; (2) intelligent; (3) sense of humor; (4) good conversationalist; (5) expressive and open; (6) outgoing and sociable; (7) ambitious; (8) physically attractive; (9) athletic; (10) shows potential for success; (11) skill as a lover; and (12) money, status, and position.

The Impact of Graduate School on Mental and Relational Health

Graduate school is a time of stress for graduate students as they try to fulfill the demands that are placed on them by their classes, their assistantships, their professional development and their friends and families. As a result of this stress, graduate students may experience mental distress in the form of anxiety, depression, or strain on interpersonal relationships. Because of the multiple roles that many graduate students fill, inter-role conflict typically arises. There are two primary types of inter-role conflicts in the management of family and academic roles (Dyk, 1987). First, graduate students may experience time-based conflicts when it becomes physically impossible for them to meet all of the demands of all occupied roles (Dyk, 1987). These time demands may be particularly problematic for female students whose husbands hold relatively traditional sex-role attitudes. Second, strain-based conflicts are attributed to strain in one role affecting one's participation in the other (Dyk, 1987).

The demands of graduate school have potential negative consequences for marital relationships. Pederson and Daniels (2001) found that out of 64 couples in which at least one partner had completed a doctoral degree, 23 of them were no longer with the partner they had during the training program, while 41 couples survived graduate school intact. Participants in this study identified several specific stressors on their relationships including relocation, competing interests (academic demands and couple time), dissatisfying sexual interactions, and financial stress. In addition, an increasing educational gap between the student and his/her partner decreased the commonality shared by the partners. Finally, because of the extended educational period, graduate student couples may delay developmental milestones such as gaining independence from parents, beginning a family, and developing social ties with the community (Pederson & Daniels, 2001).

In a study of medical student marriages conducted by Katz, Monnier, Libet, Shaw, and Beach (2000), the stress experienced by the graduate student was significantly correlated with depression experienced by his/her spouse. In addition, the stress of the graduate student is increased as a result of lack of support. While the spouse is traditionally the primary source of support for most married couples, spouses of graduate students may experience barriers to providing the necessary support such as employment, domestic tasks, and child rearing (Katz, et al., 2000). The results of this study also indicated, however, that investing in marital support may buffer against the effects of stress for medical student marriages. In addition, a study of the amount of support in

marriage found that the amount of support received by the spouse was negatively related to emotional symptoms (DeLongis, Folkman, & Lazarus, 1998).

According to Sori, Wetchler, Ray, and Niedner (1996), graduate school has a generally negative effect on students' marriages, putting them at especially high risk for divorce. There are several reasons for this negative effect (Sori et al., 1996). First, if the wife is the graduate student, and the marriage was traditional prior to her beginning graduate school, her husband may become angry with his wife for gaining independence and for leaving him with many of the stereotypically feminine responsibilities. Second, regardless of the gender of the graduate student, their spouse may be forced to delay their own personal goals in order to provide support for the family. Finally, the changing values, interests, and opinions that may develop during graduate school may serve to create a chasm between the spouses.

Despite the difficulties often experienced by graduate students and their spouses, the field of study may be an important factor. The results of a study of marriage and family therapy graduate students indicated that marital partners believed the experience of graduate school was more enhancing than stressful for their relationship (Sori et al., 1996). Despite these positive results, however, there was a significant difference among the genders. Male spouses of marriage and family therapy graduate students reported significantly more stressors than their female counterparts. This may be because it is more difficult for males to put the professional development of their wives prior to their own needs.

In a study of marital adjustment among graduate students, McRoy and Fisher (1982) discovered that marital adjustment was affected by student status in one or both

spouses. Marital adjustment was found to be lower when only the husband was a student as compared to the wife only or both spouses being students. Marital adjustment was also better if the husband was the source of economic support or when both spouses were students. In addition, the presence of young children in the family contributed significantly to marital dissatisfaction (McRoy & Fisher, 1982).

Graduate School and Mental Health

According to Saunders and Balinsky (1993), approximately 78% of graduate students feel stressed. In fact, many doctoral students describe their first-year doctoral program experience as a major life crisis (Valdez, 1982). Significant positive correlations have been found between the stress experienced as a result of graduate studies and physical and emotional problems, and women seem to experience these difficulties more profoundly (Goplerud, 1980; Mallinckrodt, Leong, & Kralj, 1989; Cahir & Morris, 1991; Hodgson & Simoni, 1995; Kreger, 1995). Social support may serve as a buffer for the stress that is experienced by graduate students. In a study of international graduate students living in on-campus graduate housing facilities, there was a significant negative correlation between social support and stress, physical complaints, and psychological distress (Mallinckrodt & Leong, 1992).

According to Altbach (1970), there are five conditions of graduate student life that bring about stress and general unhappiness. First, while graduate students are adults, they may feel as though they are treated like children by their universities. Second, graduate students are often exploited by being underpaid and overworked. In addition, they must deal with occasional plagiarism of their original work by faculty members. Third, graduate students are subject to arbitrary treatment with little means to resist such

treatment. Fourth, graduate students must depend on their professors and their department for a livelihood, a degree, and possible future academic positions. Finally, the graduate student's role as a teaching or research assistant for a faculty member is often ambivalent in nature.

Another major source of stress for graduate students is the lack of intimacy that they often experience while in school. According to Halleck (1976), the primary cause of emotional disorders among graduate students is due to dissolution of relationships. In a more recent study, Jacks et al. (1983) discovered that 24% of graduate students leave doctoral programs because of family demands, while 20% leave doctoral programs because they lack peer support.

As stated by Whitman, Spendlove, and Clark (1984),

the picture of graduate students that has emerged thus far is of adults who *may* feel: powerless because of their dependence on faculty members' judgments; ambiguity about their role as teachers of undergraduate students; thwarted in their need for meaningful activity because of the impersonal nature of their departments and the narrow focus of their studies; frustrated in their need for social intimacy because of the difficulty of attracting and/or maintaining personal relationships; and overwhelmed from the many changes in their lives, especially in the first year of graduate school (p. 37-38).

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CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Qualitative Methodology

East Asian graduate students are members of a minority group whose experiences are often overlooked. As a result, qualitative research methods are the best way in which to allow the voices of these students and their spouses to be heard (Rosenblatt & Fischer, 1993). In previous research on East Asian married couples, standardized instruments that have been developed based on Western ideals have been translated into the appropriate language and used to draw inferences regarding these couples (e.g., Shek, 1995). This practice, however, may not be culturally or ecologically valid for East Asian couples. This particular study relied on grounded theory methodology. Grounded theory is primarily concerned with developing theoretical themes and patterns as they relate to a specific phenomenon (Rafuls & Moon, 1996). It is important to note that this research developed substantive grounded theory, which entails developing concepts that are based on data focusing on one area of study (Gilgun, 1992).

Researcher as Instrument and Researcher Reflexivity

Although they may be used as a way of triangulating the data, standardized measurement tools are not the primary way in which to gather data in grounded theory research. Rather, the researcher is the instrument as she interacts with the participants through open-ended interviews. The researcher's theoretical sensitivity is a key component of developing a theory that is grounded in the data (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). According to Glaser and Strauss (1967), theoretical sensitivity involves asking the following questions of an emerging theory: (1) What does the theory do? (2) How is it conceived? (3) What is its general position? (4) What kinds of models does it use? In

addition, theoretical sensitivity involves the researcher's personality and temperament as well as her ability to have theoretical insight into her area of research (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Theoretical sensitivity is lost, however, when the researcher commits herself exclusively to one specific preconceived theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). In contrast to positivistic research methods, qualitative researchers acknowledge that all research is subjective and that researchers are a part of the research process (Rosenblatt & Fischer, 1993). As such, it is important to study the subjective experiences of others and to give an account of the researcher's subjectivity.

Like any standardized instrument, the primary instrument in this study, the researcher has her own limitations and biases. As a Caucasian American woman, the researcher's life experiences were very different from those of her subjects, East Asian international graduate students. Despite the differences brought about by race and gender, the researcher and her subjects shared the common experience of graduate school. Both the differences and the commonalities had advantages and disadvantages. The differences were helpful in creating an atmosphere of curiosity and not-knowing with the participants and in communicating the importance of their insight. These same differences, however, may have blinded the researcher to significant insights. The common experience of graduate school may have assisted the researcher in joining with the participants, but it may have also influenced the researcher to make assumptions regarding the participants' experiences in graduate school based on her own experiences. In addition, the researcher is a clinician who values marital therapy and satisfactory marital relationships. As a result, her values may have influenced the data that was gathered from participants, and she may have unduly influenced them to view their marriage as either healthy or

unhealthy. Awareness of the above issues was a key to maintaining the trustworthiness of the qualitative data.

In order to address the above issues and to ensure cultural and theoretical sensitivity, the researcher consulted with cultural insiders to verify the ecological and cultural validity of her interview questions. In addition, a pilot interview was conducted with a volunteer couple in order to make any necessary changes to the interview schedule.

Sampling Procedures

Grounded theory methodology calls for the use of theoretical sampling procedures. Theoretical sampling is "the process of data collection for generating theory whereby the analyst jointly collects, codes, and analyzes his data and decides what data to collect next and where to find them, in order to develop his theory as it emerges" (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 45). Therefore, initial decisions regarding the sample were based on the general subject area, which is in this case, the marriages of East Asian (China, Japan, Korea) international graduate students. In addition, the researcher was unable to identify at the outset of the research exactly how many participants would be included (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) but could only make an estimation regarding how many participants would be required before reaching theoretical saturation. The grounded theory researcher ceases her investigation when she has reached theoretical saturation, meaning that no additional data are being found (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

In order to select the initial participants for analysis, the researcher relied on purposive sampling methods, in which participants were selected based on their

adherence to a set of traits or conditions (Luborsky & Rubinstein, 1995). In order to participate in this study, individuals had to meet the following criteria:

1. Participants must be married couples in which both partners are from China, Japan, or Korea.

2. At least one member of the couple must be a graduate student from China, Japan, or Korea with international student status.

3. Both spouses must be available to be interviewed.

4. Both spouses must be able to participate in an interview in English.

Participants were recruited from a major state university in the South. The researcher identified several contact persons in the university's office of international student affairs and in related student organizations. These contact persons offered their assistance in identifying and recruiting participants for the study. In addition, the researcher advertised the study with flyers and through relevant student organizations and newsletters. Despite the researcher's expectations that using these key informants would yield the research participants that she needed, the researcher was surprised that she got no responses through the above mentioned recruitment efforts. Because she was a cultural outsider, the researcher expected that students would be more willing to participate if they heard about the study from someone they knew or from an organization with which they were familiar. These recruitment efforts, however, yielded no participants. As a result, the researcher made the decision to distribute flyers at university graduate student housing complexes. All of the participants except for one couple were students with whom the researcher had spoken face to face when handing out flyers. Potential participants were instructed to contact the researcher to communicate their

interest in the research. Couples who chose to participate were given a non-monetary gift to express appreciation for their participation.

In accordance with the Institutional Review Board established to monitor research involving human subjects, measures were taken by the researcher to protect the study's participants. Confidentiality of all research participants was maintained through obtaining informed consent. All participants' names have been changed, and any identifying information will be disguised when the results of the study are published or presented. All audio recordings, transcriptions, and other study materials were kept in a locked cabinet to which only the researcher had access. The informed consent form can be found in Appendix A.

<div align="center">Data Collection</div>

Data was collected through open-ended interviews conducted by the researcher. These interviews took place at a location that was convenient for the participants, which included the researcher's office or a group study room in the university library. The spouses were interviewed both conjointly and separately. All interviews were audio recorded to allow for transcription. Grounded theory relies on the constant comparative method in which there is a constant interplay between data collection and data analysis (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). This means that each interview was analyzed prior to conducting the next interview. In the tradition of grounded theory methodology, changes were made to the interview questions to aid in theoretical sampling. Data collection continued until theoretical saturation was reached (Glaser, 1978). The first draft of the interview schedule is located in Appendix B.

Triangulation

In qualitative research, validity cannot be tested in the same way that it is in quantitative research. Validity, however, is a salient issue in qualitative research. One way in which to enhance the validity of qualitative research is to triangulate the qualitative data through other means of data collection. In addition to the open-ended interviews that were transcribed and coded, the researcher also kept memos regarding her thoughts and ideas throughout the research process. These memos served as an additional source of data. In addition, the research participants completed several standardized measures and a demographic information questionnaire in order to enhance the validity of the findings. Each of these instruments is discussed in more detail below. Table 3.1 displays each of the quantitative instruments with the research question they are meant to triangulate

Table 3.1: Triangulation of Research Questions with Quantitative Instruments

Research Question	Quantitative Instrument
How do macrosystem factors influence the marital relationship of East Asian students?	Role Orientation – MSI-R SL-ASIA
How do exosystem factors influence the marital relationship of East Asian students?	Time Together – MSI-R
How do mesosystem factors influence the marital relationship of East Asian students?	Family History of Distress – MSI-R Dissatisfaction with Children – MSI-R Conflict Over Child Rearing – MSI-R
How do microsystem factors influence the marital relationship of East Asian students?	Affective Communication – MSI-R Problem-Solving Communication – MSI-R Aggression – MSI-R Disagreement about Finances – MSI-R Sexual Dissatisfaction – MSI-R
How do individual factors influence the marital relationship of East Asian students?	OQ-45.2

Demographic Questionnaire

The demographic questionnaire (see Appendix C) was used to gather demographic information from the participants. This demographic questionnaire asked questions regarding the participants' education, employment, ethnicity, family composition, and family income.

Marital Satisfaction Inventory-Revised (MSI-R)

Although based on Western ideals of marriages, the MSI-R was used in this study to triangulate data regarding the quality of participants' marriages (see Appendix D). The MSI-R was standardized using an ethnically representative United States sample. The United States census reported 3.5% of the population being Asian American, and 1.4% of the standard sample for the MSI-R was Asian American (Snyder, 1997). Participants were not classified according to the quality of their marriages, but participants' scores on the instrument may provide valuable information regarding their perceptions of influences on the marital relationship.

The subscales of the MSI-R, like the interview questions, address different levels of the ecological environment. The eleven subscales include: (1) Global Distress; (2) Affective Communication; (3) Problem-Solving Communication; (4) Aggression; (5) Time Together; (6) Disagreement about Finances; (7) Sexual Dissatisfaction; (8) Role Orientation; (9) Family History of Distress; (10) Dissatisfaction with Children; and (11) Conflict over Child Rearing. The subscale scores on the MSI-R are divided into three categories: (1) not problematic (below $50T$); (2) possibly problematic ($50T$ to $60T$); and (3) problematic (above $60T$) (Snyder, 1997). The only subscale that differs from this categorical division is the Family History of Distress subscale. Individuals scoring below

45T are in the non-problematic range; those scoring between 45T and 55T are in the possibly problematic range; and those scoring above 55T are considered to have problematic relationships with their family of origin (Snyder, 1997). In addition, the Role Orientation scale is not divided into problem ranges. Rather, scores below 50T indicate a traditional gender role orientation; scores between 50T and 60T represent a belief in more flexible gender roles; and scores above 60T indicate an equal sharing of responsibilities between partners (Snyder, 1997).

In addition to the subscales described above, the MSI-R also contains two validity subscales. The Inconsistency Scale is used to identify random responding (Snyder, 1997). Scores above 65T indicate random, nonreflective responses, while scores between 55T and 65T may indicate that an individual has mixed sentiments within a specific relationship domain (Snyder, 1997).The Conventionalization Scale indicates an individual's tendency to distort their relationship in a socially desirable direction (Snyder, 1997). While very low scores on this scale may be expected of couples entering therapy, very low scores (below 40T) indicate that responses are overly negative. On the other hand, high scores (above 55T) may reflect idealistic distortion (Snyder, 1997).

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

The SL-ASIA is the most commonly used measure of acculturation for Asian research participants (see Appendix E). Developed by Suinn, Rickard-Figueroa, Lew, and Vigil (1987), the mean values of the scale have reflected predicted increases in acculturation for each subsequent generation. Higher scores on the SL-ASIA have been associated with a greater number of years in the United States (Suinn et al., 1987). Factorial validation indicated five factors for the SL-ASIA including

reading/writing/cultural preference, ethnic interaction, affinity for ethnic identity and pride, generational identity, and food preference (Suinn, Ahuna, & Khoo, 1992). The SL-ASIA yields a score from one to five, with one representing low acculturation, three representing someone who is bicultural, and five representing high acculturation (Ponterotto, Baluch, & Carielli, 1998). This instrument was used in this study to identify the level of acculturation each participant was experiencing. As such, it helped to identify whether participants were remaining loyal to their cultures of origin or if they were accepting the new culture in which they were residing and completing their graduate studies.

Outcome Questionnaire-45.2 (OQ-45.2)

The OQ 45.2, developed by Lambert, Hansen, Umpress, Lunnen, Okiishi, Burlingame, and Reisinger (1996), was designed "to access common symptoms across a wide range of adult mental disorders and syndromes, including stress related illness and v-codes" (p. 1) (see Appendix F). The OQ 45.2 contains three subscales, symptom distress (SD), interpersonal relations (IR), and social role (SR).

The items on the SD subscale of the OQ 45.2 measure symptoms of depression and anxiety (Lambert et al., 1996). Individuals who score a 36 or higher on the SD subscale are considered to be experiencing clinically relevant levels of these symptoms. The IR subscale includes items intended to measure friction, conflict, isolation, inadequacy, and withdrawal in interpersonal relationships (Lambert et al., 1996). The cut-off score distinguishing between clinical and non-clinical samples for the IR subscale is 15. One's level of dissatisfaction, conflict, distress, and inadequacy in tasks related to

roles in work, family, and leisure is measured by the SR subscale (Lambert et al., 1996). The cut-off score for the SR subscale is 12.

Normative data in the development of the OQ 45.2 was gathered from undergraduate students in three states, from a community sample, from EAP clinical services, from university counseling centers, and from outpatient clinics (Lambert et al., 1996). For the total OQ 45.2 score, test-retest reliability was .84 for the student sample, and internal consistency yielded a value of .93 for both the student and patient samples (Lambert et al., 1996). The OQ 45.2 was used in this study to identify individual psychological, relational, and social role factors that were influential in the participants' lives. In addition, because those from Asian cultures often express mental distress in the form of physical symptoms, the mean score on items 2, 9, 27, 29, 34, 41, and 45 was calculated to develop an index of somatization.

Research Questions and Interview Questions

Tables 3.2-3.4 list the primary research questions guiding this study juxtaposed against their corresponding interview questions. The tables also indicate whether the questions were asked during the conjoint or individual interviews.

Table 3.2: Research Question #1 and Interview Questions

Primary Research Question	Secondary Research Questions	Interview Questions
How does the natural physical-biological environment influence the marital relationships of East Asian students?		What changes have you noticed between the natural environment at home and the natural environment in the US? *Conjoint*
		How has the natural environment in the US changed the way in which you and your husband/wife interact with one another? Are there things you used to do together at home that you are unable to do together here because of the natural environment? *Conjoint*

Table 3.3: Research Question #2 and Interview Questions

Primary Research Question	Secondary Research Questions	Interview Questions
How does the social-cultural environment influence the marital relationships of East Asian students?	How do macrosystem factors influence the marital relationships of East Asian students?	What does a marriage look like in your culture? *Conjoint*
		What are some of the values of your culture regarding marriage? *Conjoint*
		Is there such a thing as "good" and "bad" marriages in your culture? If so, what does a "good" marriage look like? What does a "bad" marriage look like? *Conjoint*
		How has your cultural background helped you in the US? *Individual*
		How has your cultural background hindered you in the US? *Individual*
		What are some of the values of your culture regarding the roles of men and women in marriage? Have these values changed since coming to the US? If so, how? *Individual*
		How has one/both spouses being in graduate school changed the gender roles in your marriage? *Individual*

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Table 3.3: Research Question #2 and Interview Questions, cont.

Primary Research Question	Secondary Research Question	Interview Questions
How does the social-cultural environment influence the marital relationships of East Asian students?	How do exosystem factors influence the marital relationships of East Asian students?	*For spouses who are employed:* Tell me about your job. *Individual*
		Would you be working if your spouse were not in graduate school? What would you do instead? *Individual*
		How has your job affected your relationship with your spouse? *Individual*
		Student: Describe your overall experience of graduate school. *Spouse:* Describe your overall experience of your spouse being in graduate school. *Individual*
		How has the marital relationship changed since one/both spouses started graduate school? *Individual*
		What has been the economic impact of one/both spouses being in graduate school? *Individual*
		What is particularly stressful about one/both spouses being in graduate school? *Individual*
		What support do you receive from the university? Your department? Your advisor? *Individual*
		What types of support do you find most helpful while you/your spouse are in graduate school? *Individual*

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Table 3.3: Research Question #2 and Interview Questions, cont.

Research Question	Secondary Research Questions	Interview Questions
How does the social-cultural environment influence the marital relationships of East Asian students?	How do mesosystem factors influence the marital relationships of East Asian students?	Tell me about your extended family. Did any of your extended family members accompany you to the US? If so, what are your living arrangements? Describe your relationship with your extended family when you were at home. Describe your relationship with your extended family now that you are in the US. *Individual*
		Tell me about the friends you have made here in the US. How has having friends helped you and your spouse adjust to being in the US? How do your friends provide you with support? *Individual*
		Tell me about the neighborhood or community in which you live. Describe your relationships with your neighbors. *Individual*
		If you have children, how has your marital relationship changed since your children were born? *Individual*

Table 3.3: Research Question #2 and Interview Questions, cont.

Primary Research Question	Secondary Research Questions	Interview Questions
How does the social-cultural environment influence the marital relationships of East Asian students?	How do microsystem factors influence the marital relationships of East Asian students?	Tell me about your relationship with one another. *Conjoint*
		How do the two of you solve problems? *Conjoint*
		How do the two of you make decisions? *Conjoint*
		How do the two of you communicate with one another? Do you talk about your feelings with one another? *Conjoint*
		How do the two of you show affection to one another? *Conjoint*
		For the graduate student: How does your spouse support you in your role as a graduate student? *Conjoint*
		What is the role that each of you play in the marriage? *Conjoint*
	How do individual factors influence the marital relationships of East Asian students?	Describe your personality. What characteristics describe who you are? *Individual*
		Tell me about your health. Are you currently experiencing any health problems? If so, what are they? *Individual*

Table 3.4: Research Question #3 and Interview Questions

Primary Research Question	Secondary Research Questions	Interview Questions
How does the human built environment influence the marital relationship of East Asian students?		Describe the neighborhood in which you live. *Conjoint*
		Describe the home in which you and your family live. *Conjoint*

Data Analysis

As stated previously, data analysis in grounded theory research takes place through a recursive process. As such, as data is collected, it is analyzed, and necessary changes are then made to the interview schedule prior to conducting the next interview (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). There are three steps to data analysis in grounded theory: (1) open coding; (2) axial coding; and (3) selective coding. Each of these three steps is discussed in more detail below.

The researcher used a combination of manual and computer-assisted coding to analyze the qualitative data collected in this study. The researcher manually coded transcripts for the process of open coding. NUD*IST qualitative data analysis software (Qualitative Solutions and Research, 1997) was used to assist the researcher in organizing the large amount of data obtained in the study. The transcripts from all of the interviews were loaded into NUD*IST, and the researcher flagged the transcripts for the open codes. To aid in the process of axial coding, reports were created for each code identified in the open coding process. Open codes that appeared in 60% of the documents were retained while the rest were discarded. This enabled the researcher to get a clearer picture of more relevant codes and to begin the process of categorization. Once the open codes were categorized through the process of axial coding, new reports were created using the

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NUD*IST software for each coding category. The reports created by NUD*IST enable a researcher to have in one document all of the data related to a specific coding category. These reports assisted the researcher in composing the results chapter of this dissertation.

Coding Procedures

Open Coding

According to Strauss and Corbin (1998), open coding is the "analytic process through which concepts are identified and their properties and dimensions are discovered in the data" (p. 101). The primary goal in this first step of data analysis is conceptualization of events, objects, or actions/interactions that are significant in the data (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Data are broken down and given a conceptual name. These concepts may come from three sources: (1) the pool of concepts already identified in the data; (2) the research literature; or (3) catchy phrases used by the research participants (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Open coding may be conducted through line-by-line analysis, analysis of sentences or paragraphs, or analysis of the document as a whole (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

According to Glaser (1978), there are several rules which govern open coding. First, the researcher must identify a set of questions to be asked of the data. These questions include, "What is this data a study of?" (p. 57); "What category does this incident indicate?" (p. 57); and "What is actually happening in the data?" (p. 57). The second rule is that the data should be coded painstakingly in order to achieve full theoretical coverage. Third, the analyst must do her own coding rather than using hired coders. The fourth rule is to interrupt coding to memo ideas. Fifth, the researcher should remain within her substantive area. The final rule is that the researcher should not assume

that face variables such as age, sex, social class, or race, are analytically relevant until they emerge as relevant (Glaser, 1978).

In addition to the above rules for open coding identified by Glaser (1978), he also identifies several families in which open codes can generally be classified. These coding families serve as a guide for the qualitative researcher to determine what types of concepts may be useful during theory development. One of the coding families that was particularly useful for this researcher was "the six c's" (Glaser, 1978, p. 74). The six c's referred to include causes, contexts, contingencies, consequences, covariances, and conditions. As the researcher engaged in the process of open coding, these general codes were kept in mind. The process of open coding in this study yielded a total of 66 codes.

Axial Coding

According to Strauss and Corbin (1998), axial coding consists of "relating categories to their subcategories" (p. 123). The purpose of axial coding is to reassemble the data that were broken down during open coding. There are four basic tasks involved in axial coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). First, the researcher lays out the properties of a category and their dimensions. Second, the variety of conditions, actions/interactions, and consequences are identified. Third, a category is related to its subcategory through statements about how they are related. Finally, the researcher looks for clues in the data that indicate how major categories might be related to one another. Upon completing the process of axial coding, the original 66 codes were reduced to 21 categories of codes. These categories were then reduced further by determining to which environment, natural, human-built, or social-cultural, they were related. Table 3.5 displays the categories and sub-categories identified in the process of axial coding.

Table 3.5: Axial Coding Categories and Subcategories

Natural Environment	Human-Built Environment
• State of natural environment • Outdoor activities	• Population • Transportation • Size of city

Social-Cultural Environment				
Individual	Micro	Meso	Exo	Macro
• Personality • Health	• Problem-solving • Affection • Spousal support • Spousal separation	• Family • Friends • Children	• Time together • Advisors/ professors	• Language • Relationship expectations • Western influence • Gender • Communism

Selective Coding

Selective coding is defined as "the process of integrating and refining the theory" (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 143). An important point of selective coding is to present the findings as interrelated concepts rather than as a list of themes. The goal of selective coding is to select a central category that represents the main theme of the research (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The six criteria for choosing a central category are as follows: (1) it must be central; (2) it must appear frequently in the data; (3) it must be logical and consistent; (4) the name should be abstract enough to allow for the development of a more general theory; (5) the concept should allow the theory to grow in depth and explanatory power; and (6) the concept is able to explain variation as well as the main point of the data (Strauss, 1987). The core category that emerged from the qualitative data collected in this study was adjustment of the international graduate student couple.

This core category and the theoretical map which emerged from it will be discussed

further in Chapter 5.

Analysis of Quantitative Data

The quantitative data collected on the MSI-R (Snyder, 1997), the SL-ASIA

(Suinn et al., 1987), and the OQ 45.2 (Lambert et al., 1996) was used to triangulate the

qualitative data. As such, it was analyzed primarily for descriptive purposes rather than

for predictive or inferential purposes. Specifically, the MSI-R was used to confirm

participants' verbal reports concerning their marriages. The researcher cross-referenced

participants' reports of particularly influential factors on their marital relationship with

the appropriate subscales of the MSI-R. For example, participants were asked questions

regarding the marital processes that occur between them, specifically in regards to

conflict resolution, and the MSI-R contains a problem-solving communication subscale

which was compared against their verbal reports. It is important to note, however, that the

MSI-R was developed based on Western cultural standards. As a result, scores on this

measure must be analyzed with an eye toward cultural differences.

The SL-ASIA was used to determine the level of identification the participants

have with their culture of origin versus the dominant culture in which they live.

Participants were asked interview questions specifically focusing on the influence their

cultural values and/or beliefs have on their marital relationships, and their scores on the

SL-ASIA will provide an additional indicator of their cultural/ethnic identity.

The OQ 45.2 was used to measure mental distress as well as the presence of

somatization. During the qualitative interviews, participants were asked to describe their

personalities as well as to address any health problems they were experiencing. While the

OQ 45.2 does not have a subscale that measures the presence of somatization specifically, it does contain several individual questions that address physical symptoms (questions #2, 9, 27, 29, 34, 41, 45). Participants' mean score on these questions was used to create an index of somatization. Participants whose mean score was less than or equal to 2.5 were identified as not having significant somatic symptoms, while those whose mean score was greater than 2.5 were considered to have significant somatic symptoms. The OQ 45.2 provided an additional indicator of participants' mental and physical health.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

This chapter presents the primary findings of this study. First, an overview of sample demographics will be presented. Second, the findings corresponding with each research question will be demonstrated. Finally, an overview of descriptive statistics from the quantitative measures will be provided.

Sample Demographics

Despite the researcher's efforts to recruit participants from China, Japan, and Korea, all of those who volunteered to participate were international students from China. This may have been a strength of the results, however, because of increased homogeneity among the participants. Ten couples participated in the research, all of whom had been married in China. Because married couples were recruited to be participants, 50% of the sample was female and 50% of the sample was male. Participants ranged in age from 27 to 37, with a mean age of 31. Four of the couples had children. Twenty-five percent of the participants reported incomes in the range of $15,000 or less, while 35% reported an income of $15,001 to $35,000. Eight of the participants chose not to answer this question. The mean number of years participants had spent in the United States was 2.7. For the majority of couples, the husbands had come to the United States first to begin graduate studies with the wives and children joining them at a later date. More than likely, this occurred due to the difficulty in obtaining visas for family members of international students.

Twenty individuals completed a Demographic Questionnaire. All but one of the participating husbands were graduate students, and 70% of the wives were also students. The husband who was not a student had recently graduated with his Ph.D. and was

working part-time at a local automotive plant. Participants were asked to identify their graduate student status (60% Ph.D. students; 20% master's students; 20% non-students) as well as the number of credit hours they were taking at the time of the study (10% 1-3 credits; 0% 4-7 credits; 70% 8-11 credits; 0% 12-15 credits). Sixty-nine percent of the student participants identified the physical and biological sciences as their field of study, with 31% in business. All of the student participants except one were working part-time in teaching or research assistantships provided by their departments. The one student who did not have an assistantship was supported by a scholarship that paid for her tuition. Table 4.1 presents a summary of the individual demographic variables.

Table 4.1: Summary of Demographic Variables Reported by Individual Participants

Demographic Variables	N (%)
Gender	
Male	10 (50%)
Female	10 (50%)
Educational Status	
Ph.D.	12 (60%)
Master's	4 (20%)
Non-student	4 (20%)
Field of Study[1]	
Physical/biological sciences	11 (69%)
Social sciences	0 (0%)
Arts/humanities	0 (0%)
Business	5 (31%)
Number of Credit Hours[1]	
1-3 credits	2 (13%)
4-7 credits	0 (0%)
8-11 credits	14 (88%)
12-15 credits	0 (0%)
Employment[2]	
Unemployed, not looking for work	2 (10%)
Unemployed, looking for work	0 (0%)
Employed part time	7 (35%)
Employed full time	6 (30%)
Other	2 (10%)
Children in Home	
Yes	8 (40%)
No	12 (60%)
Income[3]	
$15,000 or less	5 (25%)
$15,001-$35,000	7 (35%)
$35,001-$50,000	0 (0%)
$50,001-$75,000	0 (0%)
$75,001 or above	0 (0%)

[1]N = 16 student participants
[2]Three participants chose not to answer this question.
[3]Eight participants chose not to answer this question.

Because some of the readers of this dissertation may not be familiar with distinguishing between male and female Chinese names, Table 4.2 displays the

pseudonyms given to each participant. This table may serve as a reference to identify the

gender of the speaker in future portions of this dissertation.

Table 4.2: Participant Pseudonyms and Gender

Couple #	Husband/Wife	Pseudonym
1	Husband	Chan
	Wife	Jia Li
2	Husband	Yuan
	Wife	Shuang
3	Husband	Shen
	Wife	Jing
4	Husband	Wang
	Wife	Xiang
5	Husband	Chung
	Wife	Lin Yao
6	Husband	Wen
	Wife	Yu Ying
7	Husband	Chen
	Wife	Chan Juan
8	Husband	Hsin
	Wife	Fang Yin
9	Husband	Jin
	Wife	Huan Yue
10	Husband	Shing
	Wife	Lei

Research Question #1: Influence of Natural Environment

As indicated by the original conceptual map, the natural environment was not

expected to have as much of an influence on the marital relationship as the social cultural

environment, and this expectation was held to be true. Although most of the participants

reported engaging in outdoor activities on an occasional basis, their graduate studies and

assistantship responsibilities kept them from enjoying the natural environment as much as

they would have liked. For example, Chan stated, "...we try to manage to have some

time, a decent amount of time to spend outside, okay, in the natural environment. To not

confine ourselves behind, under the roof...we are kind of really busy in the academic

year." Before beginning graduate school, however, participants described outdoor activities that they enjoyed together, such as taking walks, fishing, hiking, going to the park, playing soccer, and traveling to see natural landmarks.

Despite its lack of influence on the marital relationship, however, the majority of participants were struck by the perceived difference between the natural environment in China and the natural environment in the American town in which they lived. They described the natural environment in America as being more protected, while that in China is being destroyed. Yuan stated, "The natural environment in (US city) is much better than the environment in our country, simply because I think the natural environment has been destroyed a lot in our home country." In describing the contrast between her home city and the city in which she was currently living, Lin Yao said, "But here, we can see a lot of trees, flowers, and yards, and I think it's mostly because it's not a big city."

Even in rural areas, however, Chen identified a primary difference in the natural environment. He described how, because of the large number of people to feed in China, all of the available fields were planted with rice and corn. He was very surprised when he arrived as an agriculture student in America to find that there were open fields with no crops planted in them. According to the participants, the destruction of the natural environment was directly linked to the state of the human-built environment. This link is discussed further with the results of research question #3.

Research Question #2: Influence of Social-Cultural Environment

Influence of Macrosystem

It was expected that participants' religious and cultural heritage and the social construction of gender would be particularly influential on their marital relationships. This expectation was verified through qualitative analysis. Within the macrosystem, language, relationship expectations, Western cultural influence, and the influence of communism were found to be significant for participants.

Language

All of the participants mentioned the influence of language on their ability to adjust to life in the United States. Although most Chinese students have had English classes in their public education in China, the classroom training does not adequately prepare them to be immersed in a world of English. Before they are permitted to study in the United States, international students must complete the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL). Although these students generally devote enormous amounts of time to studying for this exam, they do not believe the exam is adequate preparation. As Wang said,

> When you first come here, you don't speak English. In order to study here,
>
> we have to take the test, the TOEFL. What do we learn? For the test, we
>
> call the English we learn dumb...Because even if you cram for the test,
>
> what we learn is to understand. We can understand what you are saying.
>
> The speaking is what we cannot do.

Lin Yao agreed, stating, "...we have English classes in middle school, high school, and university. But it's like reading and writing; it's not like speaking." According to Chan,

the most stressful thing about graduate school was writing papers because of the language difference.

The language barrier also serves as a deterrent to adaptation to the new culture. Jia Li said, "…because my English is not good and I'm not familiar with the culture here, I spend most of time at home." Yuan agreed, stating that the language barrier prevented him from adapting to American culture and becoming friends with American students:

> I think the problem, because we are not from a country where the native
>
> language is English, is we refrain from talking to the Americans in very
>
> deep ways…You may not be able to break the barrier very quickly or very
>
> precisely the way you would in Chinese. So, this may hinder us from
>
> adapting to American culture because we cannot talk to Americans in the
>
> way you would use when you are in China.

Relationship Expectations

Cultural expectations regarding familial relationships were very influential in the lives of the participants. Lei spoke of these relationship expectations as "unspoken rules." When asked to further clarify what those unspoken rules were, she said, "…maybe to follow your husband. We need to obey our parents…We just have to be very careful with what we do." These expectations, however, are quickly changing as the West becomes more influential in Eastern cultures. According to Wang,

> …in old China, generally the marriage was determined by the parents.
>
> And if one of the parents don't agree, it's very possible that the marriage
>
> won't happen…nowadays,…it's up to the young man and young

woman...Marriage is up to the couple...the parents listen to their children, what they want.

Despite some changes, however, the participants continued to speak of traditional Chinese values regarding family relationships. Fang Yin spoke of her difficulty in accepting Western ways, especially in regard to romantic relationships and dating. In observing American culture, she stated, "I think some person seem to have many different, you know, sex partner. For me, I cannot accept that. For our cultural background I cannot accept a girl or a man have different girlfriends at the same time." Fang Yin also recognized the influence of Western culture on marital relationships, but again, she chose not to accept those influences in her personal life. For example, she said, "I think the man should be responsible for the whole family...Almost everything is half and half here, but I cannot accept that. I'm not comfortable with that." Lin Yao discussed the differences regarding parent-child relationships in China and in the United States:

I think most of Chinese students worry about if they have children born in America, they will be like American-style...They will be of a different culture...one of my friends, she says, 'I want to stay with my sons. I love my sons, and when they are older, I would like to take care of my grandchildren.' But I said, 'No. That's not like American-style. They will grow up and just be gone...You have no obligation to take provide for your grandchildren. They will put them in daycare.'

Western Cultural Influence

The participants varied on their view of Western culture as a positive or negative influence in Chinese culture. Some, such as Chung, attributed rising divorce rates in

China to the influence of Western culture. He stated, "...the younger people, they live by themselves and not with their family. And I think it is easier to get a divorce. I think that these are the reasons the Western culture is bad influence." Hsin identified Western culture as influential in the rising divorce rate, primarily because of increasing acceptance of prostitution. He stated, "...some other things is prostitutes, the prostitute industry. In China, before it's unimaginable for women to walk in the streets, but now it's open." Jin also negatively viewed the influence of Western culture. He said, "...now more husbands are following wife. That's why we say the next generation may take the wife's name. This will be a dishonor for the husband."

On the other hand, Wang and Xiang discussed the positive influences of Western culture. Although they also expressed concern about the rising divorce rates in China, they appreciated the sense of freedom and independence that has come along with Western influence. Divorce once carried a stigma in China, but that stigma is beginning to fade. Wang stated, "...if you are married and you get divorced, you can still live a good life." According to Xiang, Western culture is a positive influence because couples are happier in their lives with one another. Her husband agreed, stating, "Maybe people become excited by the lifestyle of the West...so because Americans seem very happy, so they want to learn something from them." Shen spoke about the positive influence of Western culture, especially regarding how he interacts with his wife:

> I think living here, uh, I pay more attention to my wife...because you know, in (Chinese city), it is up to the husband to make some decisions...maybe American culture, you know, they want females to be really respected is much better.

Wen and Yu Ying also discussed the positive aspects of Western culture. They spoke of being constrained by societal expectations in China. Now that they have moved to the United States, they described a sense of freedom because people are no longer watching what they do to make sure their lifestyle is congruent with cultural expectations.

Gender

Traditional roles. As expected, the social construction of gender role expectations was very influential in the marital relationships of the participants. According to participants, it is generally expected that Chinese couples will follow traditional gender roles. One couple, Jin and Huan Yue, agreed to have a traditional family form. Jin described the traditional Chinese family:

> The standard is a serious father and a loving mother. We teach our sons and our daughters that fathers should be serious and teach the young kids...But for mothers, it is their job to love them and maybe teach you the warmth and care...the tradition in China is that the wife is for the husband, and the husband must make many rules for the family...he should make more money. If the wife makes rules in the family for the husband, then we say that it's not stabilized

This expectation of traditional roles was further described by Yuan and Shuang:

> Yuan: The girls usually expect the boys to be more interested in their career and earn more money for their family and earn a higher social status for their family. The girls expect it. For the men, they expect the girls to be focused on the family work, on the house work...This is what the man and the woman in marriage will expect.

Shuang: ...husbands want to make more money to support the family. They have the responsibility to earn money for the family, and the wife can make no money. This is one dimension. But the other dimension, the husband still wants the wife to be socialized, to have a job. The purpose is not to make money because he already makes enough money for the family.

It is interesting to note in the above conversation that although Shuang speaks of women having the opportunity to work, she attributes the decision to the husband's desire that his wife be socialized rather than to the woman's desire to work.

Flexible roles. Despite the expectation of traditional gender roles, however, this expectation is changing quickly due to the influence of the Communist Party, which is discussed below, and the influence of Western culture discussed above. Participants described their own relationships as being characterized by role flexibility. Their ability to be flexible in gender roles was a primary influence in their successful adjustment to life in graduate school and in another country. During one semester, Jia Li took five courses as an engineering major. When asked how her husband, who was also a student, supported her during that time, she stated, "...the most important part is he spends some time with (son's name)...He devote a whole lot of time to do that so I can have time to study." Speaking further of their role flexibility, Jia Li said, "I cook the dinner...and he cleans the room...we take turns to take care of (son's name)." Her husband, Chan, agreed, stating, "Sometimes, I just play the stay-at-home daddy." When Chung and Lin Yao were still in China, Chung was working on his master's degree while Lin Yao had a job. In describing their role flexibility, Lin Yao stated,

In China, I buy everything for my husband because he's doing research and he's a student. He has only worked for a month. He has always been in school. But I have a job, so actually, I support him. I bought clothes and everything for him.

Lin Yao also described how Chung supported her while she was studying for graduate school entrance exams.

...if I want to go to graduate school...I have to finish two tests, one the GRE test and the other one the TOEFL test...and during the time I was preparing for the tests, he like cooked every meal for me for four months....Four months! I didn't cook a single meal.

Wang and Xiang discussed the role flexibility that is present in good marriages. When Wang was in school in China, Xiang kept her job and supported them financially. Now that they are in the United States, however, Wang's stipend from his assistantship provides their income. He said, "Sometimes she support me. Sometimes I support her." Xiang agreed that in good marriages, the spouses are willing to be flexible. She said,

...a lot of women have to work and they also have to do housework. So, if a husband like his wife, he will take some part of the housework. That is a good husband. In (Chinese city) a lot of men take care of their children.

Sacrificial wife. Another prevalent gender theme was that of the sacrificial wife. In all but one couple, it had been the husband's desire to come to the United States to study. Although most of the husbands had gone directly to graduate school after college, most of the women had graduated from college and had financially lucrative jobs in China. Many of these women gave up their careers to be with their husbands in America

while the men finished their studies. Most of the women eventually enrolled in graduate school in America, but it was not necessarily their original plan to do so. For some of them, being in graduate school was a way to overcome the boredom that besets those with F2 visa status. As Lei stated, "It was very difficult to go back to school…Most women had very good jobs in China, but here, they have to stay home and have a very lonely life. So I am lucky." Fang Yin agreed, stating, "Before I was a career lady, and at first I thought it would be very difficult for me to be a housewife, you know." Xiang described how she had turned down a promotion in her company to be with her husband in America:

> I have a good job…the director had retired, and I was the only candidate for the position. But I turned it down…When I come here, I not work for half a year, and my company, they tried to get me to come back. So I would have had a career in (Chinese city), but after one year, my husband come here. The most important thing for us was to stay together.

Shuang was another participant who had had a good job in China that she gave up to join her husband in America. She said,

> …not working will not last very long, only as long as it takes my husband to finish his program either we will go back to China or stay here. Then my visa status would change, so I will be able to get a job in the future. But right now, I already accepted that I would not be able to work if I came here.

Lin Yao talked about the distress of financial dependence she felt when she first arrived in America:

...when I was in China, I had my own job and I could spend my money. Actually, I am an MBA in China...I work in a company and I have a high position. So my income is high. But here, I have no money, and I don't have income. So it has been hard for me...I used to hang out with my friends, you know, and I would pay for dinner. It's not a problem for me. But now, it's very different...I have to watch what I spend very carefully.

As stated above, there was one couple in which the wife sacrificing a career in China was not the case. In fact, for this couple, it was the husband who made a sacrifice in order to be with his wife. Chan Juan was accepted into a graduate program in the United States before her husband, Chen. When she decided to go to the United States for graduate school, Chen was enrolled in a Ph.D. program in China that he enjoyed. Upon being accepted into graduate school at the same American university as Chan Juan, however, he dropped out of his Ph.D. program so he could join her in the states. They both spoke of his sacrifice. Chan Juan stated, "Sacrifice is sometimes necessary. My husband does not like his major very much, but he stays here at (school name) to be with me." Chen said,

I hate my major here. I am doing it for my wife. I was in a plant biology Ph.D. program in China. I dropped out so I could come to America to be with my wife. I am happy because I am with her.

Communism

In 1949, the Chinese Communist Party took control of China. Although Westerners often view Communism as an oppressive form of government, the

participants in this study saw Communism as somewhat of a liberating force for Chinese women. According to Jin,

> Mostly in China when a couple gets married, the wife is for the husband, go to the husband's family. And also, the children of the wife belong to the husband. But right now, we do not follow this anymore because of the Communist Party ruling in China. They do not allow this.

Shen also noted the influence of the Chinese Communist Party in bringing changes to the relationships between men and women. He said,

> In 1949, the Communist Party came into power, so I think because of the influence of Marxist, women could be equal. So, also I think, you know, because traditionally women were regarded as lower importance to men so you know women now want to do other things besides working in the home. So this idea is different, you know, that man and woman are equal.

> The Chinese Communist Party was also seen as being responsible for the lack of religious influence in the lives of participants. Xiang stated, "…both of us are part of the Communist Party in college, so we are taught that there is no God or nothing to believe in." Lin Yao agreed, stating, "In China, most people do not have a religion, you know. We are Communist Party, but it's kind of a religion…."

Influence of Exosystem

Time Together

As stated previously, graduate school is often a time of stress for couples and families due to the time constraints placed on the graduate student. Participants described a lack of time to spend with their spouses and children due to class projects as well as

assistantship responsibilities. Although they wish they could spend more time together, spouses expressed an acceptance of this arrangement with the understanding that the primary purpose for being in the United States was to complete their education and to do so successfully. As Wang stated,

> Because I want to get my degree, I'm not afraid of work. I understand it.
> As long as I can support myself and my family, that's fine. I don't care
> how much I work. Now, do I always want to work that hard? (laughter)

Fang Yin spoke about how her responsibilities as a graduate student sometimes made her feel inadequate as a wife. She said, "We don't have lots of time to spend together...Sometimes I think maybe I'm not a good wife...." Chung and Lin Yao, who are both students, talked about their acceptance of the current situation, but also their desire to spend more time together.

> Chung: ...it might bring some problems, but not often to my wife and
> me...I know some other couples who have a problem because the wife is
> not a student, but the husband has no time to spend time together...Really,
> when we come we know that education is our priority and that it will take
> a lot of time.

> Lin Yao: ...I stay in (US city) every Thursday night because I have class
> in the evening from 6:00 to 9:00, so I don't come back. And sometimes
> when I get home on Friday, I want to talk to him, but he says, 'I'm busy
> now.' And sometimes I get angry because I want to talk to him. It's not
> like I'm not used to it, but for some reason I still do it. I think that in this
> way it sometimes affects our relationship. Because we are all busy.

The issue of time together because of school and assistantship responsibilities was more prevalent among couples in which only one of the spouses was a student. For example, Shen stated, "...when I came here I'm very busy. I didn't have much time as before to accompany my wife...sometimes I can't go with her places, but I will always call her when I was in office." Jin also identified his busy schedule as a problem in the marital relationship, stating,

> ...I think I work hard to make the family stable and to provide food and money for them. But sometimes my wife complains that I ignore her, because I work at the lab and sometimes I don't come back until midnight.

> Because of their visa status, non-student spouses of international students are not permitted to work. Those who do not have children for whom to care described the boredom they experienced. Xiang stated,

> ...because in (Chinese city), I have a job and I was a student in a design department. So, I'm very bored when I come here. I cannot work or do anything, so I'm very depressed for almost a half year.

Lin Yao agreed, stating, "It was very difficult, yeah. You know, at first, when I arrived here at first, I was sort of lonely because I just stayed at home." After being able to get their visa status changed, both Xiang and Lin Yao enrolled in graduate school.

Relationships with Advisors/Professors

For the student participants, their relationships with their advisors and professors were influential in their ability to adjust to their new academic environment. For example, Chen stated that he hates his doctoral program because he has problems with his advisor. His wife, Chan Juan, however, has a good relationship with her advisor. As a

result, she enjoys her program. Shing also reported how a positive relationship with his

advisor has made his time here more enjoyable. He stated, "I think I met a good

supervisor. He has lots of ideas that I can do...my supervisor also provided me with some

financial support."

Wen talked about the differences in graduate school in China and in the United

States. He has felt that his professors in America have been more encouraging and

supportive of him. At the same time, however, he believes he is under more pressure here

because he meets with his professor on a weekly basis rather than monthly as he did in

China. Fang Yin has had a different experience with her primary advisor. She felt

relieved that he understood her unique position as an international student and her need to

do well in her studies. She said, "...I think my advisor is very nice. He knows my studies

very busy...he tells me, 'Focus on your studies.'...He didn't push me for a lot of

research. He said, 'Don't worry about that. You can do that later.'" According to Shen,

his professors provide the most important type of support to him as a student: "You

know, the most important type (of support)...is really I think from the professors...they

can help answer questions about starting my career is the most important thing...our

communication with professors and faculty are more important."

Influence of Mesosystem

This particular subset of the social-cultural environment was predicted to be

influential in the lives of international graduate students. Particularly related to marital

relationships, the most influential mesosystem factors were the roles of family and

friends and the presence of children in the family.

Family

In China, children are expected to care for their parents as they get older. This obligation is especially important for the eldest son in the family. Shen described his responsibility to his family as follows: "You are supposed to take responsibility, especially if you are the older son. You are then obligated to take care of your parents...sons of the family are supposed to give money to their parents."

Because of the participants' current location in the United States, they described the flexibility among their siblings in caring for the parents in their absence. In Xiang's family, there are four sisters and no brothers. She described how her other sisters are caring for her mother in her absence. Shing described how his two younger sisters are caring for his parents while he is completing his studies:

It is supposed to be that I take more responsibility for caring for them. But because right now, we are here, and I have two younger sisters there, they can take care of my parents...there will come a point when I should take responsibility, but right now, I am not there in my hometown.

In 1977, China instituted a law that prohibited families from having more than one child. As a result of this policy, younger couples must fulfill the obligation to take care of both sets of parents as they age. Lin Yao described the stress associated with this situation:

...I think most of my friends...they are younger than me, you know. And most of them have only one child in the family, so during the weekend...it's not like you just don't take care of your parents...so maybe

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on Saturday, they are traveling to one parent's house to look after the parents and then on Sunday, they go to the other side's house.

Unlike Western culture where the primary family unit has historically included the spouses or partners and their children, the primary family unit in China has historically consisted of the married couple, their children, and the husband's parents. Not only do adult children have an obligation to care for their aging parents, but parents also take responsibility for raising their grandchildren. Xiang stated, "...in China, if you have parents, they can take care of their grandsons and their granddaughters for you. They believe that is their responsibility." Huan Yue agreed, saying, "The grandparents bring up their grandchildren is normal. Because we are both working in China, so we have excuse not to bring up our children."

According to the participants, the relationship with in-laws sometimes determines the quality of a couple's marriage. Lin Yao said, "You know sometimes, maybe if the daughter-in-law or son-in-law doesn't like their father-in-law or mother-in-law, they will have trouble. It will influence your marriage." Yuan agreed, stating

> ...another phenomenon is whether the husband goes to the parents-in-law
> to have dinner with them or whether the wife will go to her parents-in-law
> to have dinner with them is very important. This can help you see whether
> a marriage is good or not.

Lei spoke at length about how her relationship with her mother-in-law negatively affected her marital relationship. While Lei and her husband are completing their studies in the United States, their two children are being raised by her mother-in-law in China. Her parents-in-law brought the children to the United States and lived with Lei and Shing

for a year and a half in their efficiency apartment in graduate student housing. She reported not enjoying their visit because of having to live with them and feeling nervous around them. She also expressed some resentment at the expectation that her husband's parents would take the place of her own parents. She stated:

> I don't know how to handle them. And I cannot. In China, I supposed to call my husband's parents the same as my parents, mom and dad. I can't call them that! I have my own mom. And I don't think I can accept that...I can't stand my husband's mother...I think maybe she don't like me because I didn't call her mom...I cannot handle so many relatives in his family.

Wang and Xiang also acknowledged how the parents-in-law can negatively affect a marriage.

> Xiang: I think in China, a lot of young couples never live together.
>
> Wang: They cannot afford it.
>
> Xiang: They live with their parents. So this can affect their happiness.

While most of the participants spoke of missing their other family members who remained in China, they were accustomed to living far away from their parents. Many of the participants had left home at an early age in order to go to better schools than were available in their hometowns. For example, Jia Li left home when she was just 13 years old. As a result, she reported not missing her family very much. Shen reported a similar experience, stating,

> It's not hard, you know. My home was in North China, but I went to (Chinese city) to study for my degree...and then I bought a house in

(Chinese city) and lived there, so I was away from my parents for about 11 years before I came here.

It was common for husbands to report missing their families and keeping in touch with their families more often than it was for wives. This may be due to the fact that, according to Chinese cultural traditions, sons are expected to care for their parents as they grow older. Wen described his close relationship with his mother, saying that he sometimes calls her too much, and she gets upset with him for spending so much money on long distance calls. When he told her that the phone cards were already paid for, she encouraged him to call more often. Chen expressed concern about the well-being of his parents. He said, "I miss my family very much. My mother has heart disease. My father is retired, so I send them some money...I call my parents every week. We are very close."

Friends

Having friendships with other Chinese students as well as Americans was a vital part of the participants' ability to adjust to their new surroundings. Friends were reported to be a source of information, social support, and companionship. All of the participants spoke of the importance of making friends when they first arrived in the United States. It was during this transition that friends were primarily a source of information and social support. In describing the importance of friends during this time, Yuan stated

> They help a lot, especially when you come here and you do not have a car
>
> and do not know where to go to get the clothes, to get the food. You don't
>
> know where to go to handle those kinds of things. So your friends try to
>
> help you. They tell you how to get there. They give you suggestions, very
>
> good opinions...I think it is very important for foreigners who come here

to study to make friends so they have someone to help them through those difficult times.

When Jin first came to the United States, his wife did not join him because she was pregnant at the time. He described how his roommate helped him: "I missed my wife a lot because she was pregnant...And also because I was just starting graduate school. And I needed someone to talk about it with." Chinese students who came to the United States prior to the participants served as vital links between Chinese and American culture. Jin said, "I had a roommate. He was a good guy. He came from (US university) so he helped me to adjust here and also tell me about the culture."

American friends, most of whom the participants met at church-related activities, were also seen as a source of support. When she was applying for graduate school, Lin Yao had several American friends who helped her:

My American friends they also give me a lot of help from like language and how to talk to people and like when I was applying for graduate school, they help me to revise my paperwork, like writing the application form...They helped me to look it over and make sure it was okay.

Friends also served as a source of companionship for the participants. Chan and Jia Li described their friends as being their family while they are here in the United States. Wang described his friends as providing relief from the stresses of studying and conducting research:

...we try to make friends with other Chinese families because really when you are here, you need to make friends because there is no one else. In China, you have a circle of friends. Here the Chinese students make their

own circle of friends...you would be really alone without friends...We cannot work all the time.

Shen talked about how he and his wife have made friends with other Chinese couples. He stated, "Sometimes we will hang around with some other Chinese couples and go to some restaurant for some dinner..." Chen said that he and his wife celebrate the Chinese holidays with their friends since their families are not here. Friends are also an important source of help in other areas such as moving apartments, teaching one another how to drive, studying for exams together, and listening when one is feeling depressed or angry.

Presence of Children

Four of the participating couples had children at the time of the interviews: (1) Chan and Jia Li had a three-year-old son; (2) Yuan and Shuang had a five-year-old daughter; (3) Jin and Huan Yue had a two-year-old son; and (4) Shing and Lei had two children, a five-year-old son and a two-year-old daughter. Upon being asked to describe how having children had changed their marital relationship, most of them identified the presence of children as a positive influence. Chan spoke about how the birth of their son had led to an increased appreciation and understanding between him and his wife. Jia Li agreed that their relationship had improved since their son was born. Jin and Huan Yue talked about how their relationship has improved since the birth of their son:

> Jin: It's changed a lot (the marital relationship). First, I think we were alone and before then my wife complained a lot. But right now, because both of us, we like to spend a lot of time with my son. We are most focused on him. We think our relationship is more smooth.

Huan Yue: I agree that our relationship is more strong with him. We are more happy in our roles as parents because as parents we can take care of our son and communicate more.

The participants recognized, however, that having children led to a decrease in freedom. Chan recognized this aspect of having a child, stating, "It's not a two people world anymore." He discussed the decreased freedom he and Jia Li had experienced since the birth of their son and the necessity to put his needs first. Yuan also spoke about this loss of freedom and spontaneity upon having children. She said, "…the difference is that when deciding what we will do tomorrow or what we will do on the weekend, we need to have arrangements for her."

Several of the participants had spent some time away from their children. Yuan's wife and daughter had joined him in America just two weeks prior to the interview. He had been separated from them for four years. Huan Yue had given birth to her son in China while her husband, Jin, was in the United States. Huan Yue joined Jin shortly after the birth of their son, but Jin's parents raised their son for the first 2 years of his life. At the time of the interview, Huan Yue had just returned from China a week earlier because she had gone to get her son and bring him to the United States.

Lei also gave birth to her son while her husband, Shing, was studying in the United States. She joined Shing shortly after their son's birth, leaving him with Shing's parents. Once in America, she unexpectedly became pregnant again and gave birth to a daughter. Shing's parents came to the States for a year and a half, during which time Lei was able to see her son again. They returned to China, taking both of the children with them. Unlike the other participants, however, Lei expressed great distress in being

separated from her children. In discussing the decision to send the children to China, Lei stated, "…it was his decision to send them back. He think it is difficult to support a family right now. I don't know. Sometimes I just hate him." When asked if the marital relationship had changed since the birth of their children, she said, "…my husband did not change. No, nothing. One thing is that before we have kids, maybe it's easier for me to just divorce. Sometimes I don't like him, but for my kids…." Shing expressed his confidence in the well being of his children but was also somewhat dismayed at being separated from them. He said, "I call them every week…now they don't care that much. If they have a toy, they do not want to talk to me…but I know they are comfortable."

Influence of Microsystem

The microsystem, as described previously, consists of those processes that take place between the marital couple. Those microsystem influences that were found to be influential included problem-solving communication, expression of affection, spousal support, and spousal separation.

Problem-Solving Communication

When asked how they go about solving problems together, all of the participants stressed the importance of good communication. Most of them identified compromise as the primary means by which they solved problems. When asked how he and his wife solve problems, Chen humorously said, "I apologize to her." More seriously, he stated, "We make decisions together because we need each other's advice." Jin emphasized the importance of agreement between him and his wife when solving a problem or making a decision. He said, "…before the decision is made, I think we should both agree. We

cannot choose one if we disagree." Yuan described how he and his wife go about solving problems:

> If we have different opinions about one thing, and I think one way and she thinks another way, then we try to solve the problem by communicating. We communicate with each other and try to solve the problems, sometimes one side or the other side. If both sides have a common theme, then we will try to convert the different opinions into one opinion. This is the way we will try to solve the problem.

> Some couples were open with the fact that an effort to problem-solve sometimes turns into an argument. For example, Shen said, "Sometimes we just argue. But also the other thing is that we just forget about it and go on." Chan and Jia Li discussed how they go about solving problems, and Jia Li admitted her tendency to get angry:

> Chan: I think we talk about that and get it solved…in the first minute. That's just my style, but not yours.

> Jia Li: Usually when we have problems, I'm very angry. I will keep silent and just be. Usually he's the first one to get us…

> Chan: Let's talk.

> Jia Li: …to talk.

Hsin and Fang Yin discussed the changes in their relationship regarding problem-solving. When they were first married, they would often quarrel, but now they are able to sit down and talk with one another. When asked how they had been able to achieve this, Hsin stated, "Sometimes I hold my fire. She also do that. I think that's best in every situation."

Despite the effort to compromise, several couples identified the husband as the primary decision-maker. For example, Jia Li said, "…he need to discuss it with me, but finally, he will be the person who make that final decision…but he need to consult me." When asked how they go about making decisions, Lei and Shing had the following discussion:

Lei: He makes all of them…He doesn't ask me.

Shing: Sometimes I will listen to her opinion.

Lei: You never listen to my opinion.

Shing: That's because most of the time, it is not reasonable.

Lei: …he always thinks he is right.

Shing: I just make the decisions because I know they are good. But it depends on if you have a good opinion or not. If you have a good opinion, of course I will listen to you.

From the preceding conversation, it is obvious that Lei is resentful toward her husband for not valuing her opinion. Despite his claim that her opinion is important to him, he has the power to decide when her opinions are valid and reasonable, leaving Lei with little decision-making power. As discussed in the previous section on children, Lei was particularly angry about Shing's decision to send their children to China to be raised by his parents. Despite Lei's desire that the children remain with them, Shing was the one to make the final decision.

Expression of Affection

The participants seemed somewhat reluctant to share regarding this area of their relationship, which may reflect the privacy with which they approach personal

relationships. They did, however, stress the importance of showing love to one another through daily activities rather than through romantic gestures. For example, Yuan said, "We show love both inside and outside. Outside through language and also through body actions. Through what we do in daily life." Wang agreed, stating, "Every once in a while I will buy her a gift or some flowers or something like this. We do not do this very often. We try our best to help each other, to be very nice." The researcher was somewhat surprised to hear Chan's and Jia Li's description of showing love for one another because of the apparent reversal of gendered behavior expectations.

> Jia Li: …I will do something for him. Make him feel like I care about him, but I guess I don't like to express. I don't like to say it, but I can do something like cook dinner for him. Do something for him. He likes to say it.

> Chan: …I get excited…it's a really exciting moment, then I will say, 'Yeah, give me a hug.'…I like to say it, to express it.

Despite the belief, however, that marriages in Asian cultures are not characterized by passionate feelings, some of the participants expressed very strong feelings for their spouses. Yuan and Shuang were separated for several years before Shuang came to the United States. Yuan expressed his distress while Shuang was separated from him:

> …it's like when you are very thirsty, you want to get some water, but okay, you can't have water. Right now, you are in (US city). There is no water here. I need to go to China to get the water. It helped that I get to come back to live there once a year in the summer, so I was very happy then…After I came here and I was separated from my wife and daughter

and then I realize the most painful thing is to be separated from your wife

or husband.

Spousal Support

Participants described their spouses as being a primary support system for them as

they completed their graduate studies. Wen and Yu Ying are both graduate students in the

same department. As a result, they are able to more directly support one another as

students. Wen said, "…it helps because I know that professor and how he teaches, and I

let her know what he will do and how to do better in the class." Jin attributed his ability

to attend graduate school in the United States to the support provided to him by his wife,

Huan Yue. She agreed with his decision to come to America, and she maintained her job

in China to financially support the family. She also helped him to study for entrance

exams. While they were separated, Yuan described how Shuang supported him. He said,

> …she supported me by communication. We talked a lot on the weekends
>
> through long distance calls. And by not letting me worry about the family
>
> in China. She allowed me to focus on my studies and not worry about
>
> anything in China. She took care of it.

Despite the support she provided him from China, however, Yuan was very pleased when

Shuang decided to join him in the United States. In describing his feelings about her

arrival two weeks before the interview, he stated, "…I'm very happy about that.

Otherwise, I could not hold up. I may have quit. You never know. It was very hard. So,

I'm glad she will be staying. Too much time apart. Too much time."

Many participants identified flexibility in gender roles as being a primary way in

which they supported one another while in graduate school. When Jia Li carried a

particularly heavy load one semester, Chan took on more of the childcare responsibilities so she could concentrate on her studies. He saw this behavior, however, as somewhat selfish. In describing his supportive role during that time, he stated,

> ...I would not say that I made the most contribution cause I took care of (child's name) for double of her time. I wouldn't say that because I would feel that I should do that because I should be in a very good supportive role under that circumstances in any condition. Because if I play the supportive role the best I can, she will be able to focus everything on her study. And that's also very crucial to the whole family...I do that because I'm selfish because I want her to be good. I want the whole family to be good.

Chan also described how Jia Li supports him in his studies:

> ...the best thing that Jia Li does in supporting my role as a graduate student or as a husband or as a dad is she takes full care of herself...She is very independent. She is very capable. She is very confident in her major, and I'm really proud of that. It's not like she can only talk the talk but not walk the walk. She can talk the talk and walk the walk very brilliantly. And I feel very proud of that.

Spousal Separation

All of the participating couples had spent an extended time apart from their spouses at some point during their marriage. Wang and Xiang spent time apart in China as well as when Wang first arrived in the United States. In describing their time apart while in China, Xiang stated,

...we were apart for a long time because he worked in a different city. And I worked while he got his master's degree in China. So even when we were both in (Chinese city) far apart, we lived apart. So we got together every Friday night, and we were alone Monday through Thursday.

Several of the participants' children were born in China while they were studying in the United States. Shing said, "...at that time, she was pregnant, and she had our son during that year, so it was very difficult. To me, that was not very good because I did not get to see my son for a year." Table 4.3 displays how long each couple had been married and the length of time each spouse had been in the United States at the time of the interview. As the table shows, most of the couples had been separated for at least six months.

Table 4.3: Length of Time in United States & Length of Marriage

Couple #	Length of Time in US	Length of Marriage
Couple #1 Chan (H) Jia Li (W)	3 years 2 years	4 years
Couple #2 Yuan (H) Shuang (W)	4 years 2 weeks	10 years
Couple #3 Shen (H) Jing (W)	2 years 1.5 years	4 years
Couple #4 Wang (H) Xiang (W)	2 years 1.5 years	5 years
Couple #5 Chung (H) Lin Yao (W)	7 years 3 years	3 years
Couple #6 Wen (H) Yu Ying (W)	2.5 years 2 years	3 years
Couple #7 Chen (H) Chan Juan (W)	Missing data Missing data	3 years
Couple #8 Hsin (H) Fang Yin (W)	3 years 2.5 years	3 years
Couple #9 Jin (H) Huan Yue (W)	2.5 years 1 year	7 years
Couple #10 Shing (H) Lei (W)	5 years 4 years	6 years

H = Husband; W = Wife

Influence of Individual Factors

Individual factors were not found to be particularly influential in participants'

marital relationships through qualitative analysis. Participants were, however, asked to

describe their personalities to the researcher. These descriptions can be found in Table

4.4.

Table 4.4: Participants' Descriptions of Personality

Participant	Personality Description
Chan (H1)	Outgoing & reserved; analytical & passionate; not dominated by feelings; optimistic & confident; loves sports & competition
Jia Li (W1)	Nice; easygoing; quiet; very emotional
Yuan (H2)	Perseverance; sometimes not very pleasant; not proactive to communicate; independent
Shuang (W2)	In the middle of open and closed; likes to make friends; independent
Shen (H3)	Responsible & conscientious; like to make friends with other cultures
Jing (W3)	Quiet; get along with others; nice
Wang (H4)	Love to help others; responsible; understanding
Xiang (W4)	Positive, optimistic & pessimistic
Chung (H5)	Likes to solve own problems
Lin Yao (W5)	Helpful; like to make friends; like to talk to people; straightforward
Wen (H6)	Humble; modest
Yu Ying (W6)	Determined
Chen (H7)	Likes to be free; doesn't like to be controlled by others; honest
Chan Juan (W7)	Not very outgoing; feels more comfortable with old friends rather than making new ones
Hsin (H8)	Hardworking; persistent
Fang Yin (W8)	Hardworking; diligent; honest; helpful; fast temper
Jin (H9)	Quiet; likes small group of friends; likes to spend time with wife and son
Huan Yue (W9)	Missing data
Shing (H10)	Adaptive; hardworking; not outspoken
Lei (W10)	Nice; intolerable of others' weaknesses

H = Husband; W = Wife; the number in parentheses represents the couple number

Participants were also asked to describe their physical health. All of them reported that they are in good health, except for one participant who had been surprised to discover upon having her medical exams for admission to graduate school that she tested positive for tuberculosis. Despite this serious diagnosis, however, the participant reported never having experienced any symptoms of the disease. The rest of the participants reported only minor health problems such as colds and allergies.

Research Question #3: Influence of Human-Built Environment

The researcher was surprised to find that this environment was discussed frequently by participants. Although it was originally expected that this environment would not be a significant factor in the lives of participants, it was much more influential than predicted. The participants did not speak of this environment as being influential in their marital relationship, but it was described as being very influential in their ability to adjust to life in the United States.

Size of City/Population

Most of the participants came to the United States from large Chinese cities. As a result, they were struck by the population difference as well as the difference in the size of the city from which they came and the city in which they were currently studying. Chan and Jia Li talked about this disparity in population:

Jia Li: In China, we can never find a place without people...

Chan: Like this kind (referring to the empty lobby of the dorm in which
the interview was being conducted)

Jia Li: Everywhere is filled with people. (both laughing and agreeing)

Chan described how the smaller population helped him to feel at ease. He stated, "...population-wise, it's not like that populated here. Sharp comparison...sometimes maybe feel more peace of mind in a sense." Yu Ying disagreed. She felt less secure because of the lack of people. "Sometimes you walk around and there are no people around, and you say 'Oh.'...Sometimes I feel safer when there are more people around though."

Referring to the size of the city in which she was studying, Jia Li also spoke about her expectation that all of the United States would look like Manhattan in New York City. When she arrived in the city in which her husband was enrolled in graduate school, she was surprised to find that she would be living in a relatively rural area. She stated that she immediately missed her home and felt alone. Yuan and Shuang, despite coming from a large city in China, reported enjoying life in the smaller town in which Yuan was studying. Yuan stated, "…maybe I will choose this kind of life. It's a lot easier than the life in the big city." Lei also enjoyed life in the small city as opposed to the big city. Although she missed the city life when she first arrived in the United States, now that she has gotten used to it, she reported that she would like to stay here if she had the choice.

Transportation

Another significant concern of the participants, especially when they first arrived in the United States, was transportation. Of course, none of the participants arrived in America with their own vehicle, and they had been accustomed to using public transportation or riding a bicycle in China. All of the participants spoke about the sense of isolation they had because they were initially confined to graduate student housing and the campus. Chan said, "…when we arrived here, we didn't have the car yet, so you know it's really limited where we can go…." Because of the arrangement of the cities in which they had studied, they were unable to walk or bike to the grocery store or the mall. Lin Yao stated,

> …it was a very difficult adjustment. Yes, in (US city) the public
>
> transportation, the buses, you know, they run on hours. You have to wait

one hour for another bus to come. But in China, maybe 10 minutes, 5 minutes. We have a lot of buses....

For some of the wives who were not students, the lack of public transportation contributed to their isolation. Even if they did own a car, most of them were unable to drive. Xiang said, "...I did not feel very comfortable here because you have to drive constantly, and I do not drive." Huan Yue agreed, stating, "I don't know how to drive a car, so it's bad for me."

On the other hand, some participants described not having to use public transportation as a positive aspect to their new city. For example, Wang stated,

Actually, we have a vehicle. We have a car, so we don't need the transportation, the public transportation. On the contrary, we think the transportation here in America is quite all right. We can get where we want easily. In (Chinese city), we spend a lot of time in transportation.

Yuan agreed, stating, "When you have to take the public transportation, you need to spend two hours on the road...taking public transportation is more tiring than the work and takes more energy from me." Shing and Lei discussed how having their own car has given them freedom that they did not have in China.

Link Between Natural and Human Built Environments

The participants drew a direct link between the state of the natural environment and the human-built environment. All of the participants stated that the natural environment in the United States was better than that in their home country. This was attributed to the population in China as well as rapid economic development. For example, Huan Yue stated, "...the environment is better here because in our city that we

are from, you cannot see a lot of trees because there are always high buildings and a whole bunch of people." Wang described his home city as "concrete." Yuan pointed out that while the United States has not experienced a war on its soil since the Civil War, China has been plagued with wars throughout the 20th century:

> We have many civil wars and wars against foreigners that destroyed it (the natural environment) all...For the USA, America, there are no wars. You do not have such a problem as my people, the war, because you do not enter into this kind of operation, so the natural environment is very natural, protected.

Analysis of Quantitative Data

As stated previously, in addition to qualitative interviews, participants were also asked to complete the MSI-R, the SL-ASIA and the OQ 45.2. The data from these instruments were used to triangulate the qualitative data and were used for descriptive purposes only. More specifically, the quantitative data were used to provide a measure of consistency between participants' verbal reports and their answers on standardized measures.

Analysis of MSI-R Data

The MSI-R is a measure of marital satisfaction that contains eleven subscales: (1) Global Distress; (2) Affective Communication; (3) Problem-Solving Communication; (4) Aggression; (5) Time Together; (6) Disagreement about Finances; (7) Sexual Dissatisfaction; (8) Role Orientation; (9) Family History of Distress; (10) Dissatisfaction with Children; and (11) Conflict over Child Rearing. Participants were also asked qualitative questions concerning each of these general areas. Participants' answers to the

qualitative questions were cross-referenced with their responses on the MSI-R. In

addition to the eleven subscales described above, the MSI-R also contains two validity

subscales, the Inconsistency Scale and the Conventionalization Scale. Table 4.5 contains

the mean and standard deviation for each subscale of the MSI-R.

Table 4.5: Means and Standard Deviations of MSI-R Subscales

Subscale	Mean	SD
Inconsistency	55.25	8.91
Conventionalization	52.40	9.12
Global Distress	51.35	7.80
Affective Communication	51.50	7.49
Problem-Solving Communication	50.05	7.78
Aggression	53.25	9.66
Time Together	48.20	6.11
Disagreement about Finances	48.90	6.07
Sexual Dissatisfaction	49.10	8.73
Role Orientation	52.40	5.64
Family History of Distress	45.45	7.04
Dissatisfaction with Children	49.75	8.53
Conflict over Child Rearing	51.25	6.43

As seen in the above table, the mean score for the Inconsistency subscale is 55.25.

Overall, this score indicates that the participants may have mixed sentiments regarding

their marital relationships (Snyder, 1997). This seems to be consistent with verbal reports

provided by the participants. Although few of them overtly complained about their

marriages, it seemed that the majority of participants were aware of problems within the

relationship. The mean score of the Conventionalization subscale indicates that

participants acknowledged general relationship distress but may have been reluctant to

specify the sources of their dissatisfaction (Snyder, 1997).

The mean score of the Global Distress subscale was 51.35, which falls in the

possible problem area. According to Snyder (1997), individuals who fall in this range

experience significant levels of relationship distress but still describe their marital

relationships as primarily positive. These results seem to be consistent with the

qualitative data. As stated above, while the majority of the participants presented

themselves as happily married, they did not pretend as if their relationships were perfect.

The Affective Communication subscale provides an indication of one's satisfaction with

the amount of affection that is expressed in a relationship. The mean for this subscale was

51.50, indicating that the participants may feel emotionally distant from their spouses

(Snyder, 1997). Participants' verbal reports indicated that they do not go to special

lengths to express their affection for one another but do so through the small acts of daily

life. The participants admitted that they do not tend to be romantic in the same ways that

American couples are, and this may be a factor in the moderate score obtained on this

subscale.

The mean score on the Problem-Solving Communication subscale was 50.05.

This score indicates that participants argue frequently and that they deal poorly with

problems (Snyder, 1997). When asked specifically about problem-solving, multiple

participants admitted that they often get into arguments, but compromise and

communication were also emphasized. No specific questions were asked that could be

triangulated with the Aggression subscale. The mean score of 53.25 indicates that

nonphysical intimidation and low levels of aggression were present among the

participants (Snyder, 1997).

The Time Together subscale indicates the participants' satisfaction with the

amount of time they spend together as well as the level of similarity in their interests. The

mean score of 48.20 indicates that the participants regarded their spouses as good friends

and were satisfied with the amount of time they had to spend together. While participants expressed a desire to spend more time together, however, they also seemed to accept the fact that the first priority for being in the United States was to complete their education.

The mean score on the Disagreements about Finances subscale indicates that this particular area did not pose a problem for participants. While most of the participants were making less money than they had in China, they were grateful for the financial support they were receiving from the graduate school. Although several of them expressed a desire to spend money more frivolously, they again seemed to have an understanding that the first priority was graduate school rather than living lavishly while in the United States. Most of the participants reported having a strict budget that was followed by the entire family. Participants were not asked any direct interview questions about their sexual life together, but the mean score on the Sexual Dissatisfaction subscale indicates that sexuality was not a problem area for the participants.

The Role Orientation subscale provides an indication of each individual's ideals about gender roles. The mean score of this sample indicates flexibility in the sharing of stereotypical gender role responsibilities (Snyder, 1997). Based on the results of qualitative analysis, it was expected that participants would fall into this range. The participants repeatedly discussed how they had been flexible in their gender roles in order to accommodate one another's and the family's needs. The mean score of 45.45 on the Family History of Distress subscale indicates that there are significant tensions in their families of origin. As described by Snyder (1997), individuals scoring in this range may have had parents who had "difficulties in expressing affection or resolving differences" (p. 25). Despite these quantitative findings, participants' verbal reports did not

necessarily indicate a great deal of distress with their families of origin. These results

may again indicate a cultural difference between Chinese and Western ideals.

The participants who had children answered questions for the Dissatisfaction with

Children and Conflict over Childrearing subscales. The mean score for Dissatisfaction

with Children indicates that participants had generally satisfying relationships with their

children. The mean score for Conflict over Childrearing, on the other hand, indicates that

this area may be a problem for participants. For these families, conflicts regarding

division of childcare are most likely common occurrences (Snyder, 1997).

As stated previously, participants' verbal reports describing their marriages were

compared to their responses on the MSI-R. Tables 4.7-4.16 present a brief comparison for

each couple for the subscales about which participants were asked specific interview

questions. Table 4.6 displays the subscale and the interview question from which verbal

response were gathered.

Table 4.6: MSI-R Subscales and Interview Questions

MSI-R Subscale	Interview Question
Affective Communication	How do the two of you go about showing one another that you love each other?
Problem-Solving Communication	How do the two of you solve problems together?
Time Together	How has your marital relationship changed since one/both spouses started graduate school?
Role Orientation	What role does each of you play in your marriage?
Family History of Distress	Tell me about your family back in China.
Conflict Over Childrearing	How has your marital relationship changed since you had chidren?

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Table 4.7: Comparison of Couple #1 Verbal Reports and MSI-R Scores

Subscale	MSI-R Category	Verbal Report
Affective Communication Husband Wife	Good Possible problem	"I like to say it, to express it." "I don't like to say it, but I can do something like cook dinner for him."
Problem-Solving Communication Husband Wife	Good Possible problem	"I think we talk about that and get it solved." "Usually, when I'm angry...I just don't want to speak."
Time Together Husband Wife	Good Possible problem	Not much free time to focus on each other Missing data
Role Orientation Husband Wife	Moderate (flexible) Moderate (flexible)	"The bad image is if someone is superior over the other party." "...he need to discuss it with me, but finally, he will be the person who make that final decision."
Family History of Distress Husband Wife	Good Problem	The job of the family is to "create closeness." Left her family when she was 13
Conflict over Childrearing Husband Wife	Good Good	Appreciation and understanding of each other have increased since child was born Birth of child made relationship better

Couple #1's MSI-R results were not surprising based on the verbal data they provided. It is important to note that Chan's scores on the Conventionalization subscale indicated that he responded to questions in a socially desirable direction. This is verified by his scores falling in the good range. Throughout the interview, Jia Li was more pessimistic about the relationship than her husband, and this is evident by her scores falling primarily in the possible problem or problem range. Based on their discussion of how having a child had changed their marriage, it was not at all surprising that they both

scored in the good range for Conflict Over Childrearing. Both of them verbally reported

that the birth of their son had improved their marital relationship.

Table 4.8: Comparison of Couple #2 Verbal Reports and MSI-R Scores

Subscale	MSI-R Category	Verbal Report
Affective Communication Husband Wife	Good Good	Missing data "We show love both inside and outside...through what we do in daily life."
Problem-Solving Communication Husband Wife	Good Good	"...we try to solve problems by communicating." "If both sides have a common theme, then we will try to convert the different opinions into one opinion."
Time Together Husband Wife	Good Good	"I think I may not have enough time with my family." Missing data
Role Orientation Husband Wife	Moderate (flexible) Moderate (flexible)	"I think the man and the woman in the marriage...are becoming more independent. They want to support their family, but at the same time, they want to support themselves." "...people are kind of independent, even though they are married."
Family History of Distress Husband Wife	Possible problem Possible problem	Missing data "Being separated from my parents makes me very sad."
Conflict over Childrearing Husband Wife	Good Possible problem	"I think that your life is bigger because you have more things to consider" (when you have a child). "...the difference is that when deciding what we will do tomorrow or what we will do on the weekend, we need to have arrangements for her."

Couple #2's results on the MSI-R were not surprising, given the fact that Shuang

and her daughter had just joined Yuan in the United States two weeks prior to the

interview. Both of them scored primarily in the good range for all of the MSI-R

subscales, and this may be due to a honeymoon effect. They had been apart for four

years, and it was evident to the researcher that they were happy to be with one another

again. The only subscale that was problematic was Conflict over Childrearing. This may

have been because of their adjustment to being parents together. Since their daughter had

been in China with Shuang, Yuan had not been involved in parenting in several years,

and they were most likely trying to establish a co-parenting relationship now that they

were all together in the United States.

Table 4.9: Comparison of Couple #3 Verbal Reports and MSI-R Scores

Subscale	MSI-R Category	Verbal Report
Affective Communication		
Husband	Possible problem	"I talk to her and tell her that I love her."
Wife	Possible problem	"When he's upset, I let him calm down."
Problem-Solving Communication		
Husband	Good	"Sometimes we just argue…we just forget and move on."
Wife	Possible problem	"…we also talk to each other if it's a big problem."
Time Together		
Husband	Possible problem	"I didn't have much time to accompany my wife."
Wife	Possible problem	"…I do not mind being alone."
Role Orientation		
Husband	Low (traditional)	"I know males need to be the provider, and the females do some hard work at home."
Wife	Low (traditional)	"American women do not work. They just use their husbands' money."
Family History of Distress		
Husband	Good	"…I was away from my parents for about 11 years before I came here."
Wife	Possible problem	Missing data
Conflict over Childrearing		
Husband	N/A	N/A
Wife	N/A	N/A

Couple #3 fell into the possible problem range for the majority of the subscales. This particular couple stood out to the researcher because of the clear gender role division that existed between them. The researcher was generally surprised to find the gender flexibility that existed among the majority of the couples, but for Shen and Jing, their roles seemed to be sharply divided. Some of their verbal reports did not exactly match their MSI-R scores. For example, Jing reported that she did not mind being alone while her husband was in classes or working on his research. Her MSI-R Time Together subscale, however, indicates that this was a possible problem for both her and her husband.

Table 4.10: Comparison of Couple #4 Verbal Reports and MSI-R Scores

Subscale	MSI-R Category	Verbal Report
Affective Communication Husband Wife	 Possible problem Possible problem	 "We try our best to help each other, to be very nice." "No particular form."
Problem-Solving Communication Husband Wife	 Good Good	 "I think we try to find one thing we have in common." Missing data
Time Together Husband Wife	 Good Good	 Missing data Missing data
Role Orientation Husband Wife	 Moderate (flexible) Moderate (flexible)	 "Sometimes she support me. Sometimes I support her." "A lot of people are more independent...they can support themselves."
Family History of Distress Husband Wife	 Good Good	 "I have very good memories about my family, especially in those days when my mother was alive." "...I talk to them on the phone or talk to them on the internet...we can see each other."
Conflict over Childrearing Husband Wife	 N/A N/A	 N/A N/A

Couple #4's MSI-R scores indicate that they are relatively satisfied with their

marital relationship. This fact seemed to be apparent when the researcher conducted the

conjoint interview with them. They smiled, laughed, and joked with one another

frequently during the interview. The only area in which a possible problem was present

was Affective Communication. As stated above, however, the lower scores obtained on

this scale may be an indication of cultural differences.

Table 4.11: Comparison of Couple #5 Verbal Reports and MSI-R Scores

Subscale	MSI-R Category	Verbal Report
Affective Communication Husband Wife	 Possible problem Good	 Missing data "...sometimes, he buy me something."
Problem-Solving Communication Husband Wife	 Possible problem Good	 Missing data "I think most of the time we really discuss the problem. But most of the time we agree together."
Time Together Husband Wife	 Good Possible problem	 "It (lack of time together) might bring some problems, but not often to my wife and me." "...sometimes when I get home on Friday, I want to talk to him, but he says, 'I'm busy now.'"
Role Orientation Husband Wife	 Low (traditional) Moderate (flexible)	 "Sometimes she, because I need to do research, she takes care of the laundry and does the shopping. I don't do this." "...during the time I was preparing for the tests, he cooked every meal for 4 months."
Family History of Distress Husband Wife	 Good Good	 "...my mom said, 'You must call here.' So I will call them every time." She said she missed her family, but she said, "I have experience being away from my family."
Conflict over Childrearing Husband Wife	 N/A N/A	 N/A N/A

Couple #5 was the one couple in which the husband, Chung, seemed to be somewhat uncomfortable with the female researcher. As a result, it was somewhat difficult to compare his verbal reports with his MSI-R scores. The researcher was not surprised, however, to find that for this particular couple, Chung's MSI-R scores were lower than those of his wife, Lin Yao. This was the only couple in which the wife seemed to have a dominant position. As a result, Chung's low scores may be reflective of his wish to have a more traditional Chinese wife.

Table 4.12: Comparison of Couple #6 Verbal Reports and MSI-R Scores

Subscale	MSI-R Category	Verbal Report

Affective Communication
   Husband
 	
   Wife
	Good
	
	Good
		"Sometimes she has a problem, and I just try to solve her problem."
		"I think I will tell him, say 'I love you' or 'I care about you.'"

Problem-Solving Communication
   Husband
 	
   Wife
	Possible problem
	
	Good
		"If we cannot solve it, then sometimes we solve it alone."
		"Sometimes he decide. Sometimes I do."

Time Together
   Husband
 	
   Wife
	Possible problem
	
	Good
		"...most of the time...I have enough time for her."
		"We have more time when we don't have classes."

Role Orientation
   Husband
 	
   Wife
	Moderate (flexible)
	
	Low (traditional)
		"...they have a traditional role to follow."
		"I think some wives have to do like housework."

Family History of Distress
   Husband
 	
   Wife
	Good
	
	Problem
		"Sometimes I call her (his mother) too much..."
		Speaks to parents and sister once a month

Conflict over Childrearing
   Husband
   Wife
	N/A
	N/A
		N/A
		N/A

For most of the couples, the wives had a more negative view of their marriage than did husbands. For Couple #6, however, the opposite was true. While Yu Ying's

MSI-R results indicate that she views the relationship as being primarily positive, Wen's

scores indicate that he may see more possible problems in the relationship. It is also

interesting to note for this couple that Yu Ying had more traditional views regarding men

and women than did her husband. This was also somewhat unusual. Wen and Yu Ying

were one of three couples who were somewhat younger than the others, and this may

explain Wen's more flexible views of gender.

Table 4.13: Comparison of Couple #7 Verbal Reports and MSI-R Scores

Subscale	MSI-R Category	Verbal Report
Affective Communication Husband Wife	Possible problem Good	"She just knows I love her." "Through everyday life...he's not romantic."
Problem-Solving Communication Husband Wife	Possible problem Good	"I apologize to her...We make decisions together because we need each other's advice." "I agree."
Time Together Husband Wife	Good Good	"We just spend evenings and weekends together." Missing data
Role Orientation Husband Wife	Moderate (flexible) High (non-traditional)	"In the past, women took care of the home. Now, I think more men cook." "Wives don't depend on their husbands anymore, and they contribute equally."
Family History of Distress Husband Wife	Good Possible problem	"I miss my family very much...I call my parents every week. We are very close." "I am very close to my parents. I talk to them every week."
Conflict over Childrearing Husband Wife	N/A N/A	N/A N/A

Couple #7 was also one of the three couples who were somewhat younger than

the others. This may explain Chan Juan's non-traditional view of gender and Chen's

flexible view. This is also the one couple in which the wife came to the United States

before her husband. Chan Juan scored higher for most of the MSI-R subscales than her husband. This may be due to the fact that Chen was generally unhappy with his graduate program and with being in the United States. Chan Juan expressed feeling fortunate that her husband was willing to give up a program he enjoyed in China to be with her in the United States.

Table 4.14: Comparison of Couple #8 Verbal Reports and MSI-R Scores

Subscale	MSI-R Category	Verbal Report
Affective Communication Husband Wife	Problem Possible problem	"I do say that 'I love you' or 'I care about you.'" Missing data
Problem-Solving Communication Husband Wife	Possible problem Problem	"…before we often quarrel…now we can sit down." "If there's a problem, you need to sit down…"
Time Together Husband Wife	Possible problem Possible problem	Missing data "We don't have a lot of time to spend together."
Role Orientation Husband Wife	Low (traditional) Moderate (flexible)	Women take care of children and the home and men earn money "Generally, women are supposed to cook all the food
Family History of Distress Husband Wife	Possible problem Possible problem	"I have been far away from my family for 10 years." "…the most supportive, from brothers and sisters…if I have any kind of problem, I can talk with them."
Conflict over Childrearing Husband Wife	N/A N/A	N/A N/A

Hsin and Fang Yin (Couple #8) were the third of the younger couples included in the study. Although it was not apparent during the interview, their MSI-R scores indicate that they have a somewhat unsatisfactory relationship. They did speak about how they used to argue with one another but reported being better able to communicate now. The

researcher was struck by how driven both Hsin and Fang Yin were in their chosen field.

It is also interesting to note that they are in the same graduate program, which could

create competition between them.

Table 4.15: Comparison of Couple #9 Verbal Reports and MSI-R Scores

Subscale	MSI-R Category	Verbal Report
Affective Communication Husband	Possible problem	"I think my wife loves me because she does a lot of home jobs..."
Wife	Possible problem	Missing data
Problem-Solving Communication Husband	Good	"...before a decision is made, I think we should both agree. We cannot choose one if we disagree."
Wife	Good	"We negotiate, or we talk about it."
Time Together Husband	Good	"...I want to spend more time with my family."
Wife	Possible problem	She is sometimes angry when he works at the lab until very late at night.
Role Orientation Husband	Low (traditional)	"...in China, the wife is for the husband, and the husband must make many rules for the family...he should make more money."
Wife	Low (traditional)	"...the wife should take care of the children and the home...the husband should take more responsibility for the money and the problems."
Family History of Distress Husband	Possible problem	"...my parents and her parents live in the same town...after my graduation, I will give them money."
Wife	Good	Missing data
Conflict over Childrearing Husband	Possible problem	"We are more focused on him. We think our relationship is more smooth."
Wife	Possible problem	"...our relationship is more strong with him."

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Couple #9 was one of three couples in which only the husband was a graduate student. Jin, like most of the other husbands, had come to the United States first, and Huan Yue and their son joined him later. It is interesting to note that, according to the MSI-R results, Jin did not see Time Together as a problem, but Huan Yue viewed it as a possible problem. This may be because she is not a student and does not have other things to occupy her time. Both Jin and Huan Yue verbally reported that they preferred to have a traditional marriage, and their MSI-R scores supported this claim. Their two-year-old son had been in China being raised by Jin's parents and had joined them in the United States two weeks prior to the interview. As a result, it is not surprising that Conflict over Childrearing was a possible problem for them as they adjusted to their new roles as parents together.

During the interview process, Couple #10 struck the researcher as the most dissatisfied couple who participated in the research. Their MSI-R results supported this observation. For both Shing and Lei, almost every subscale score was in the possible problem or problem area. Although Shing was not as open regarding their problems, Lei verbally reported multiple problems that she has had with her husband, including a poor relationship with his mother and his decision to leave their two children in China with his mother.

Table 4.16: Comparison of Couple #10 Verbal Reports and MSI-R Scores

Subscale	MSI-R Category	Verbal Report

Affective Communication
    Husband
 	
    Wife
	Problem
	
	Possible problem
		"Sometimes we buy a gift for each other. Not very much."
		"I cook delicious food."

Problem-Solving Communication
    Husband
 	
    Wife
	Possible problem
	
	Problem
		"Sometimes I will listen to her opinion...most of the time, it is not reasonable."
		"He makes all of them (decisions)."

Time Together
    Husband
    Wife
	Possible problem
	Good
		Missing data
		Missing data

Role Orientation
    Husband
 	
    Wife
	Moderate (flexible)
	
	Low (traditional)
		"She cooks and I wash the dishes."
		"...I will do more of the housework than you."

Family History of Distress
    Husband
 	
    Wife
	Possible problem
	
	Possible problem
		His parents visited them for a 1.5 years in the US and just returned to China
		"I have not seen them (her parents) in a long time."

Conflict over Childrearing
    Husband
 	
    Wife
	Possible problem
	
	Problem
		"Most of the time it would (change the marriage), but since I don't take the father role, I don't think so."
		"For most of Chinese, if they don't have kids and they are angry with each other, maybe they will just divorce, but if you have kids, it will be much more harder."

Analysis of SL-ASIA Data

The SL-ASIA was given to participants to determine their acculturation level.

Scores on the SL-ASIA range from 1 to 5, with 1 representing someone who is not

acculturated to Western culture; 2.5 representing someone who is bicultural; and 5

representing someone who is acculturated to Western culture. Table 4.17 displays the

means and standard deviations of the SL-ASIA by gender and student status. The mean

for the total sample was 2.10.

Table 4.17: Means and SDs for SL-AISA by Gender and Student Status

Demographic Variable	Mean	SD
Gender		
Male	2.15	.17
Female	2.07	.21
Student Status		
Student	2.12	.15
Non-Student	2.02	.29
Total Sample	2.10	.19

Viewing the above table, there are several interesting items to discuss further.

First, it is interesting to note that male participants, on average, were more acculturated

than their female counterparts. This was to be expected, especially considering that most

of the men had been in the United States at least six months longer than their wives.

Second, as one might expect, those participants who were students were more

acculturated than those who were not. This is most likely due to the fact that students are

quickly immersed into Western culture through their interactions with peers and

professors, while non-students spend the majority of their time inside their apartments

with little to no contact with Western culture. The overall mean score on the SL-ASIA

was 2.10, indicating that the participants of this study were not acculturated to Western

culture. This was not surprising in light of the fact that most of the participants reported

that they were in the United States temporarily and planned to return to China upon

completion of their studies and a few years of work experience.

Analysis of OQ 45.2 Data

The OQ 45.2 was used in this study to provide a measure of individual

psychological functioning. The OQ 45.2 has three subscales, including Symptom Distress

(SD), Interpersonal Relationships (IR), and Social Role (SR). As stated previously, a total

score above 63 indicates that an individual is similar to a patient population (Lambert et

al., 1996). The cut-off score for SD is 36, the cut-off score for IR is 15, and the cut-off

score for SR is 12 (Lambert et al., 1996). In addition to these subscales, an index of

somatization was created by calculating the mean of seven questions that address

physical symptoms. Table 4.18 displays the means and standard deviations of each of the

subscales, the somatization index, and the total score by gender and student status.

Table 4.18: Means and Standard Deviations for OQ 45.2 by Gender and Student Status

Subscale	Mean				Standard Deviation			
	M	F	S	NS	M	F	S	NS
Total	43.60	52.50	47.04	55.50	9.73	9.92	12.36	8.58
SD	22.70	28.80	25.96	30.00	6.55	7.45	8.00	8.29
IR	10.00	11.20	10.17	11.50	7.45	3.08	4.02	2.38
SR	10.90	12.50	10.92	14.00	1.91	2.80	2.94	.82
Somatization	1.00	1.26	1.16	1.43	.43	.45	.46	.26

SD = Symptom Distress; IR = Interpersonal Relationships; SR = Social Role; M = Male;
F = Female; S = Student; NS = Non-Student

Results on the OQ 45.2 indicate that female participants had a total score average

that was higher than male participants. Although the mean score for females does not

indicate a level of symptomatology that would classify them in the patient population, it

was not surprising that their scores were higher. As stated previously, most of the women

had been in the United States for a shorter period of time than their husbands, and not all

of them were students. The combination of these two factors may have influenced the

increased presence of symptoms. Also, as expected, non-students had a higher mean

score on the OQ 45.2 than did students. This is not surprising because non-student participants reported feeling lonely and depressed. While none of the mean scores for the somatization index can be categorized as problematic, it is again interesting to note that females had a higher mean somatization score than males, and non-students had a higher mean score than students.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

This chapter provides a discussion of the research findings and their implications. First, theoretical implications of ecological and feminist theory will be addressed. More specifically, the conceptual map introduced in the first chapter will be discussed in light of the findings, and a new conceptual map will be introduced. Second, a theoretical map regarding adjustment in international student couples will be proposed. Third, clinical implications of the research findings will be addressed. Fourth, suggestions for further research will be proposed. Finally, the limitations of the study will be discussed.

Theoretical Implications: Ecological Theory

According to the original conceptual map, found in Chapter 1, the most influential factors in the participants' marital relationships were expected to be graduate school, gender, and culture. Other sociocultural factors were also expected to be influential but not to the degree of the preceding three factors. The natural and human-built environments were expected to have little influence on the marital relationship. A new conceptual map, presented in Figure 5.1, represents the results that emerged through qualitative analysis. In the new conceptual map, the natural physical-biological environment is still displayed as having little influence on the marital relationship. The human built environment, however, was found to be more influential than originally expected. As a result, it has a gray arrow on the new conceptual map. The new conceptual map displays the social cultural environment with each of its subsystems broken down to display the significant findings. The individual level of the social cultural environment was found to have little influence through the findings of this study. As a result, its influence is indicated with a white arrow. Although originally expected to be

Figure 5.1: Revised Conceptual Map

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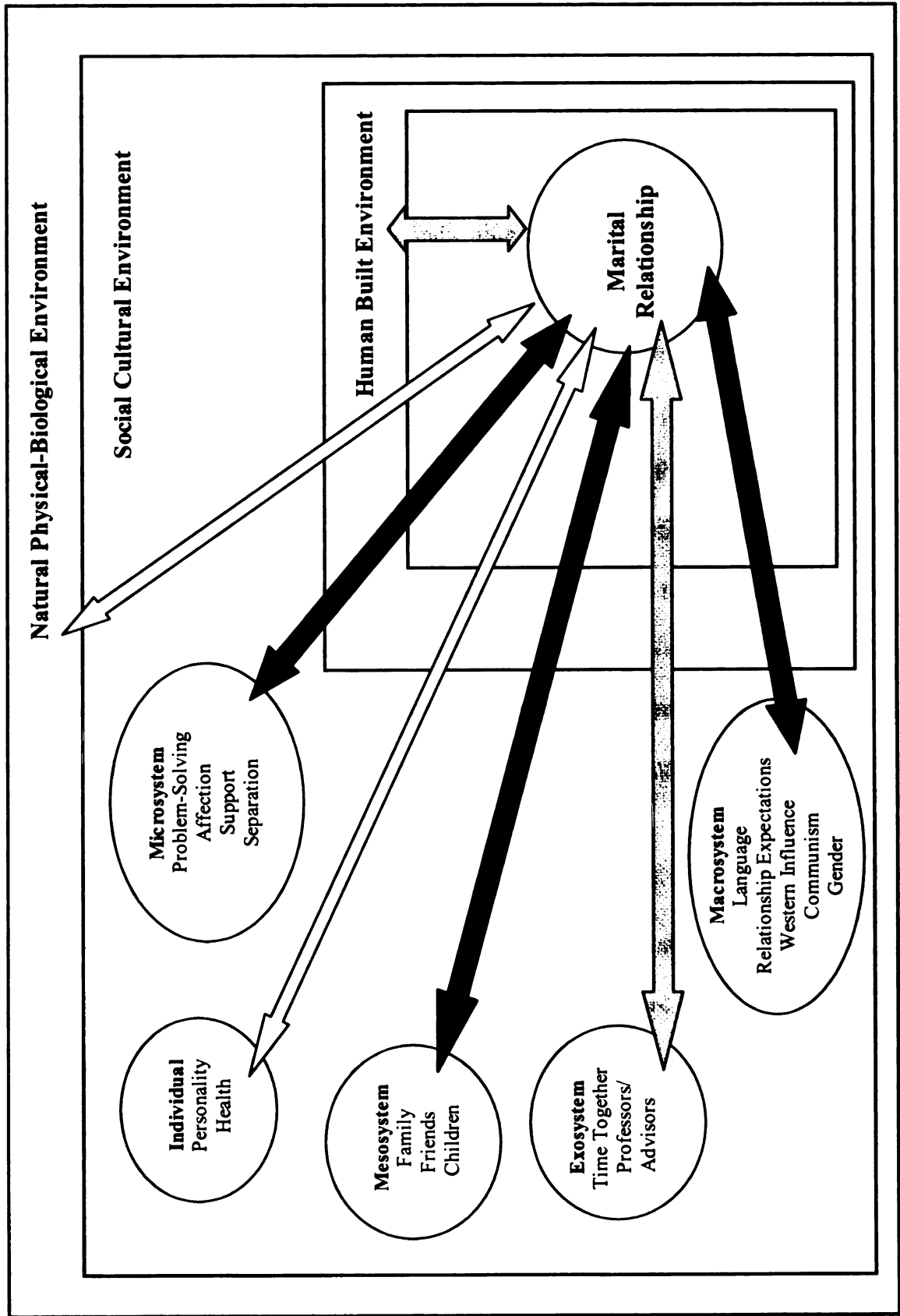
one of the most influential factors, the exosystem, consisting of lack of time together due to graduate school and relationships with professors and advisors, was found to be only moderately influential. This seemed to be because of the participants' acceptance that their education was the first priority while they were here in the United States. The relationship between the marital relationship and the microsystem, mesosystem, and macrosystem are shown with a black arrow, indicating that the factors in these three system levels were the most influential on participants' marital relationships. A discussion regarding these factors is presented below.

Natural Environment

As expected, the natural environment had little influence on the participants' marital relationships. Previous research on marital stability and satisfaction has not addressed the influence of this environment, and the findings of this research do not suggest that such investigations be conducted. Although participants noted differences in the natural environments between their home country and their current residence, connections to their marital relationships or to their own ability to adjust to the new culture were not specified.

Social-Cultural Environment

As expected, factors in this environment were most influential in the lives of participants and had the greatest effects on their marital relationships. Influential factors were found at each level of the social-cultural environment.

Macrosystem: Language, Relationship Expectations, Western Influence, Gender, and

Communism.

The factors that were found to be particularly influential at this level of the social-cultural environment were language, relationship expectations, Western cultural influence, gender, and communism. Despite research on the influence of religion on marital stability in the United States, it was discovered in this study that religion had little influence in the lives of participants. Although Call and Heaton (1977) found that attendance at religious services increased marital stability for American couples, no such conclusions can be reached in this study. In fact, the majority of the participants in this study reported having no religious beliefs, but it could be argued that their marriages are more stable than American marriages, considering the disparity in divorce rates (50% in America vs. 20% in China).

Language. Language was found to be very influential for individual participants, and it may also have an indirect influence on the marital relationship. Participants reported that the language barrier made it difficult for them to communicate with non-Chinese students as well as making it difficult for them to complete their class assignments. Because of the necessity for international students to write their papers and assignments in English as opposed to their native language, it takes them much longer than it would an American student. In addition, the participants of this study communicated a desire to do well in their coursework, with many of them maintaining an A average in their classes. This desire to do well in addition to having to complete assignments in a different language increases the amount of time and effort that international students put into their studies. For example, one participant described the

tedious nature of writing papers, stating that it was necessary for her to write line by line and paragraph by paragraph. This increased amount of time spent on class assignments may lead to less time spent with one's spouse or family.

Relationship expectations. Relationship expectations were also influential macrosystem factors in the lives of the participants. Despite increasing role flexibility, which will be discussed further below, it was still generally expected that wives would follow their husbands and that husbands would have the overt power in family decision-making. In addition to the husband-wife relationship, expectations for parent-child relationships were also influential. Among the participants of this study, it was generally accepted that upon marriage, the wives would become closer to their husbands' families than to their own. Although most of the wives seemed accepting of this arrangement, there were a few who had difficulty in making this transition. There was also some expectation that grandparents would be involved in the raising of their grandchildren. In some of the participants' families, this was carried out in a very direct way because the grandparents had been or were currently the sole guardians and providers for the grandchildren.

Western culture. Another influential macrosystem factor was the increasing influence of Western culture. Although traditional Chinese culture and Confucianism would say that women are more valuable if they are obedient and lack talent (Higgins et al., 2002), all of the female participants in the current study had at least a bachelor's degree, and the majority of them also had graduate degrees. In addition, men and women who were unmarried at the age of 30 were traditionally regarded as unwanted (Higgins et al., 2002). Many of the participants in this study, however, were well into their thirties

and had only been married for a few years. As a result, it appears that higher educational attainment for women is seen as desirable, and a later age at marriage has become more accepted. As reported by Higgins et al. (2002), the participants verified that most Chinese young people are now choosing their own spouses rather than participating in arranged marriages. Despite the influence of Western culture, however, several participants reported that they prefer the more traditional way of structuring relationships.

Gender. As expected, gender was found to be a primary organizing factor in the marital relationships of the participants. In the United States, increased gender equality has brought about both positive and negative consequences in marital relationships. According to Amato et al. (2003), declines in marital quality have been associated with increases in marital heterogamy, premarital cohabitation, wives' extended hours of employment, and wives' job demands. This also seems to be somewhat true among Chinese couples. The participants of this study made a direct link between women's increased independence and the increasing divorce rates in China. They also identified positive consequences of increased gender equality, such as more freedom to pursue "the happy life" if one was dissatisfied in their current situation. Amato et al. (2003) also discovered increases in marital quality due to increased gender equity including increased economic resources, decision-making equality, nontraditional attitudes toward gender, and support for lifelong marriage. Just as American families have experienced role conflict, Chiu et al. (1998) discovered that inter-role conflict was significantly related to work conflict and family conflict. The results of this study indicated that female Chinese international students especially experience role conflict. For example, one female

participant questioned her adequacy as a wife because of the time she spent on her studies and research.

Communism. An unexpected finding of the research was the influence of communism on the marital relationships of the participants. As stated previously, the participants identified communism as a liberating force for women. It was in 1949 that the Chinese Communist Party came into power and instituted a new marriage law that outlawed arranged marriages (Higgins et al., 2002). Another change identified by the participants was that the Chinese Communist Party changed the traditional custom that children belong to their fathers, giving mothers more equal rights to their children.

Exosystem: Time Together and Relationships with Professors/Advisors.

Time together. The issue of time together was directly influential in the particpants' marital relationships. Dyk (1987) identified two types of inter-role conflict that may influence graduate students, time-based conflicts and strain-based conflicts. Both of these seemed to be a factor in the quality of participants' marital relationships. Many of the participants expressed a desire to spend more time with their families, believing that because of their roles as students and researchers, they were unable to devote adequate time to their roles as husbands and wives or mothers and fathers. In addition, during times of extra strain and stress, such as finals week or around professional conferences, the participants reported more strain in their marital relationships.

Pederson and Daniels (2001) discovered that particular stressors on graduate student couples included relocation, competing interests, and financial stress. All of the participants in the current study also experienced these stressors. Some of these factors,

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such as relocation and financial stress, may be even more extreme for international students. In terms of relocation, they have relocated to another country rather than another city or another state. In terms of financial stress, if only one spouse is a student, the family must be able to survive on the stipend that the student receives from his or her assistantship because non-student spouses are not permitted to work. Pederson and Daniels (2001) also identified the delay of developmental milestones as significant in the lives of graduate student couples. Wang and Xiang specifically talked about this issue. Xiang expressed some jealousy because her peers and classmates in China had already secured good jobs, had children, and bought houses. Both she and Wang expressed some doubt regarding their ability to catch up with their peers upon returning to China.

Sori et al. (1996) discovered that graduate school was particularly detrimental to the marital relationship if the couple had traditional roles prior to graduate school, and the wife was the graduate student. In the current study, all but one of the husbands were graduate students. In the one couple in which the husband was not currently a student, he had recently graduated from his Ph.D. program and was working while his wife finished her master's degree. In this particular couple, there did appear to be more marital distress than in the other couples, but it did not seem to be due to the husband's frustration in fulfilling stereotypically feminine responsibilities. Rather, their distress seemed to be more linked to his wife's frustration that she was being expected to be successful in her coursework, to fulfill her assistantship responsibilities, and to take responsibility for most of the household tasks. At the time of the interview, the husband was working part-time at a local automobile assembly plant.

Sori et al. (1996) also discovered that marital distress in graduate student couples was linked to the non-student spouse being forced to delay his or her own personal goals. This finding was strongly supported by the results of the current study. One of the primary themes was that of the sacrifice of one spouse who gave up career or educational opportunities in China in order to be with the other spouse who was studying in the United States. While most of the spouses who made this type of sacrifice were wives, one husband did drop out of a Ph.D. program in China to join his wife who was studying in the United States.

Relationships with advisors/professors. The second exosystem factor that was found to be influential was the students' relationships with their advisors and professors. While this factor did not directly influence participants' marital relationships, it was a significant factor in the students' ability to adjust and to be successful in their graduate studies. Students who had good relationships with advisors and professors reported a more positive experience of graduate school, while those who did not have good relationships with their mentors reported more negative experiences. These relationships may have an indirect influence on the marital relationship because problems with one's advisor or professors may lead to increased pressure and stress in graduate school which, in turn, could lead to more distress in the marital relationship.

Mesosystem: Family, Friends, and the Presence of Children

While it was not predicted to be a primary factor in the participants' marital relationships, results have indicated that the mesosystem may be one of the more influential levels of the sociocultural environment. Within the mesosystem, factors that

were found to be influential included relationships with family and friends and the presence of children.

Family. Because of the collective nature of Chinese culture, family relationships may be more influential for the participants of the current study than it would be for American students. Bryant et al. (2001) found that among rural American families, the quality of couples' relationships with their in-laws predicted the stability, satisfaction, and commitment of wives. This was also found to be true in the current study. Multiple participants reported that one factor in good Chinese marriages is whether or not the spouses are able to have good relationships with their in-laws. While more and more Chinese couples are living in urban areas and are living in their own residences, it is still common for them to live with the husband's parents. In addition, because it is often the son's responsibility to take care of his parents as they age, Chinese couples are often closer to the husband's family than they are to the wife's family. Most of the participants in this study were accepting of this arrangement. At least one participant, however, expressed great distress regarding her relationship with her husband's family. She spoke about her difficulty in considering them as her parents when she has her own parents. The strained relationship between them was exacerbated by the fact that her mother-in-law was raising her children in China.

Friends. Another significant factor in the participants' ability to adjust to life in the United States and to make the necessary adaptations in their marital relationships was their ability to make friends. In all but one of the participating couples, the husband had come to the United States prior to his wife. As a result, he had often established friendships before her arrival and was able to introduce her to people in his established

social circle. Lang and Carstensen (1994) commented on the importance of this phenomenon, pointing out that spouses increase the size of one another's social networks. The presence of friends was vitally important to participants when they first arrived in the United States. They reported how the Chinese community would pull together to help the new students by taking them shopping, giving them rides, and providing them with vital information. In a qualitative study of 25 Japanese women whose husbands were working in the United States, a similar phenomenon was discovered (Saint Arnault, 2002). The participants identified both informational support and functional support, such as cooking, shopping, and providing transportation as important in their relationships with one another (Saint Arnault, 2002).

Friends may serve as an influential factor in the marital relationship because of the outside support they provide to each spouse. Allgood et al. (1997) discovered that discussing family problems with friends was positively correlated with marital satisfaction and stability. Many of the participants spoke of discussing their concerns with their Chinese friends which helped them to get through particularly stressful times.

Presence of children. The presence of children was another influential mesosystem factor. Four of the couples who participated in this study had children. Research on American couples has shown that marital satisfaction decreases upon the birth of the first child (Tucker & Aaron, 1993; Cowan & Pape-Cowan, 1988; Steingberg & Silverberg, 1987; Troll, 1985). This, however, did not seem to be the case for the couples in this study. Rather, all but one of the couples reported that having a child increased their marital satisfaction and stability. The one couple who reported a decrease in marital satisfaction since the birth of their children were in a unique situation because

their children were being raised by the husband's parents in China while he and his wife were studying in the United States. As Higgins et al. (2002) pointed out, marriage in Chinese culture has traditionally been seen as the pathway to self-worth and achievement, and this may be primarily through giving birth to children.

Microsystem: Problem-Solving, Affection, Spousal Support, and Spousal Separation

The microsystem refers to those processes that take place between the spouses. The results of this study indicate that influential microsystem factors include problem-solving communication, the expression of affection, spousal support, and spousal separation.

Problem-solving. Greeff and deBruyne (2000) discovered that collaborative conflict management styles had the highest correlation with marital satisfaction, while competitive conflict management styles had the highest correlation with marital dissatisfaction. According to the results of the current study, this finding seems to be true for Chinese couples as well. The majority of the participating couples reported that they make an effort to reach a compromise when they are confronted with a problem or decision. While a few couples did report that decisions are ultimately up to the husband, it appeared that this was done in such a way that the wife was made to feel as though her opinion was valuable. One couple, however, reported a more competitive style to conflict management, and they also appeared to be the least satisfied with their marital relationship.

Expression of affection. The participants in this study reported that small, daily acts of kindness and helpfulness were the most important way in which they expressed love and affection for one another. They seemed to take comfort in knowing that they did

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not have to give elaborate gifts or be particularly romantic to prove their love for one

another. A stereotype of Asian cultures is that they are cold and unfeeling. This, however,

did not seem to be the case for these participants. One husband in particular talked

passionately about how much he missed his wife during their four-year separation.

Spousal support. Social support provided by one's spouse has been found to

predict marital quality, especially for wives (McGonagle et al., 1992). The results of this

study verified previous findings. All of the students expressed how much they

appreciated their spouses' support as they focused on their studies. For those couples in

which both spouses were students, this support came primarily in the form of role

flexibility. For couples in which only the husband was a student, the most important type

of support came in the wife's willingness to come to the United States so they could be

together. All of these men expressed appreciation to their wives for supporting their

individual goals. Brunstein et al. (1996) studied the relationship between goal support and

marital quality, and they found that men's marital quality was significantly correlated

with individual goal support.

Spousal separation. One factor that was significant for these couples but may not

be significant for domestic graduate student couples was the separation of the spouses.

All of the couples who participated in this study had spent at least 6 months apart, and the

longest length of time spent separated from one another was 4 years. There seemed to be

two circumstances in which this occurred. The first was when the husband was accepted

into graduate school in the United States first, and the wife had to wait to join him after

she was able to get her visa. The second situation was when the wife was pregnant at the

time the husband first came to the United States. The wife stayed in China to give birth to

her child and then joined her husband in the United States at a later date.

Individual: Personality and Health

Particular personality characteristics were not found to be directly linked to the

marital relationship through qualitative analysis. Most of the participants described

themselves as having positive personality characteristics. One of the common

characteristics identified by many of the participants was diligence and commitment to

working hard in their graduate program. Many of them also reported being driven to

succeed. These particular personality characteristics may be indirectly related to the

participants' marital relationships. For example, graduate students who are more driven

and hard-working may spend more time on their studies and their research and less time

with their wives or families. In terms of their health, the majority of the participants

reported being physically healthy. In addition, the somatization index calculated from the

OQ 45.2 indicated that participants did not experience a significant level of somatic

symptoms. Although these students were under a great deal of stress, they did not

experience a large number of physical symptoms, as suggested by Lim (2000).

Human-Built Environment

It was surprising to the researcher that this factor was so influential in the lives of

participants. No direct links between the human-built environment and their marital

relationships were identified, but indirect links may exist. It was discovered through

qualitative analysis that public transportation was an important factor in the participants'

ability to adjust to the new culture, especially for non-student spouses. As stated

previously, non-student spouses experienced a great deal of boredom because of their

inability to work or drive. This boredom and dissatisfaction could potentially contribute to marital distress. No current research exists on this particular factor, so it would be beneficial to explore the influence of this factor in greater detail.

Theoretical Implications: Feminist Theory

Although the importance of feminist theory is implied through the prevalence of the gender theme throughout the results of this study, it is necessary to more directly discuss how these findings relate to feminist theory. As originally expected, gender was one of the primary organizing concepts for the results of this study. More specifically, the importance of role flexibility was emphasized by the participants. Despite the emphasis on flexibility in gender roles, however, it was clear that the women who participated in this study still occupied a subordinate position in their society and in their families (Goodrich et al., 1988). This was clear through the wives' reports of their sacrificing successful careers in China to be with their husbands in America, where they took on more traditional roles. Despite reports of compromise between the couples, the husbands in the families held more decision-making authority, creating a power differential between the spouses (Osmond & Thorne, 1993).

The subordination of women in Chinese society does seem to be lessening, however. All of the women reported their desire to work, as well as the necessity to work outside of the home. None of them expressed a desire or an expectation that they should be housewives. Despite more traditional expectations that women be obedient and lack talent (Higgins et al., 2002), the majority of the women in this study had advanced degrees or were currently working on advanced degrees. In addition, the researcher expected that the wives would be suppressed in conjoint interviews but was surprised to

find that they were able to hold their own in the presence of their husbands. A surprising source of female liberation, according to the participants, was the Chinese Communist Party. Increased gender equality was attributed to the influence of China's current political system.

<center>Emergent Theoretical Map</center>

The purpose of grounded theory methodology, which guided this study, is to develop substantive theory. This is done through a three-step coding process which has previously been discussed in detail. The third step of this process is selective coding, the purpose of which is to identify one central theme that encompasses the entirety of the research findings. The central theme that emerged from this research was that of the adjustment of the international student couple.

The original purpose of the study was to discover how ecological factors such as those described above are influential in the lives of international graduate students. As the researcher and the participants had dialogue in the interviews, the theme of adjustment emerged repeatedly in each interview. The participants were not directly asked to describe how they had gone about adjusting to the new culture, but it was a theme that was important to them. Throughout the interviews, the participants addressed how each of the ecological factors discussed above influenced their ability to adjust as a couple to their new surroundings. For these couples, their primary marital concern surrounded how they, as a couple, went about adjusting to the new culture in which they lived. While living in a culture that was different from their own, the focus of their relationships became adjustment to their new surroundings. If the same couples participated in a

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similar study while still living in China, this theme may not have been their central focus. Figure 5.2 is a pictorial rendering of this emergent theoretical model of adjustment.

This model was developed with the assistance of the six C's coding family outlined by Glaser (1978). In Glaser's coding family, the six C's consist of context, conditions, causes, consequences, covariances, and contingencies. The C's that were discovered in this analysis were context, conditions, causes, consequences, and contingencies. The links between each of these categories and the central theme, adjustment of the international student couple, are discussed below.

Context

The context in which this model is relevant is the Western cultural environment. This theoretical model is proposed only for this context. The adjustment of these couples would not necessarily be influenced by the same factors if they were in another cultural environment.

Conditions

Glaser (1978) defines conditions as qualifiers. There were three conditions that were found to be influential on the adjustment of the international couple in this study. The first was the presence of children. While having or not having children did not directly affect whether or not the couple was able to adjust, the presence of children, especially when the wife was not a student, seemed to assist the couple in achieving better adjustment. All of the participants who had children reported that even if they had been previously separated from their children, they were much happier when their children joined them in the United States. For the one couple whose children did not live with them at the time of the study, the absence of their children brought about significant

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Figure 5.2: Theoretical Model of Adjustment for International Student Couples

Context
Western
Cultural

Conditions
Children
Student Status
Relationships with Extended Family

Consequences
Contentment in US
Success in Grad School
Marital Stability

Adjustment of
International Couple

Contingencies
Individual Characteristics
Physical Health

Causes
Social Support
Gender Role
Flexibility

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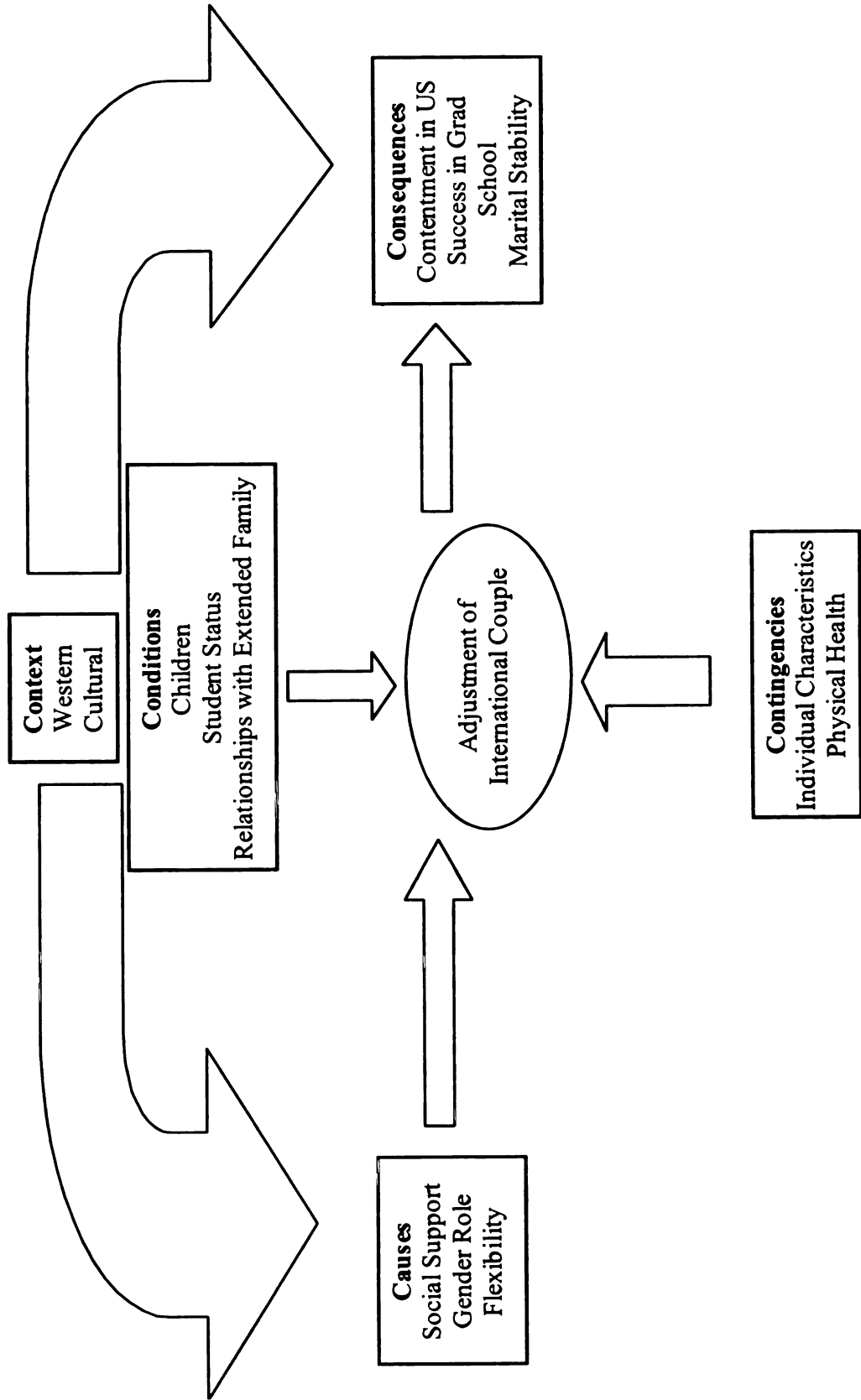
distress both in their marital relationship and their contentment with life in the United States.

The second influential condition was the student status of the spouses. Previous research has found that graduate student couples are better adjusted if only the husband is a student or if both spouses are students (Sori et al., 1996). In the current study, however, it was found that couples in which both spouses were students seemed to be better adjusted than those in which only the husband was a student. When both spouses were students, there was more role flexibility and each spouse had their own interests to pursue. On the other hand, when only the husband was a student, he may have been well-adjusted to the new culture, but as a couple there was more difficulty in managing the stressors of being in the new environment. This was primarily because of the boredom of the non-student spouse. As mentioned previously, non-student spouses have F2 visa status which does not allow them to work. In addition, non-student spouses are often not comfortable with their skills in speaking English. As a result of these two factors, they often feel isolated.

The third condition that seemed to be influential in the participants' ability to adjust was their relationships with their extended family members. This factor seemed to be more influential for the men. Men in Chinese culture are expected to care for their parents as they age. Flexible relationships in the family seemed to be important in helping the students to adjust to life in the United States. Many of the male participants spoke of how their siblings were taking on more responsibility while they were away. Upon their return to China, they talked about resuming their responsibilities as sons. There was one couple in which the relationship between the wife and the mother-in-law was particularly

strained, and this had a detrimental effect on the wife's contentment with her marriage and with her life in general.

Causes

Glaser (1978) defines causes as "sources, reasons, explanations, accountings or anticipated consequences" (p. 74). Although causal factors are identified in this theoretical model, it is not necessarily assumed that this model is entirely linear. There were two causes that seemed to be directly linked to the couples' ability to adjust to life in the Western cultural context.

The first causal factor to consider is that of social support. Social support in this model is a generic term that refers to support received from one's spouse, family, friends, church community, university, or any other group or individual that is perceived as being supportive. The results of this study revealed that social support is necessary in order for international student couples to be able to adjust to their new environment. Spouses provided support to one another by being flexible in their gender roles and by providing a listening ear. Friends provided support by providing the couple with important information and transportation when they first arrived in the United States. As mentioned above, other family members provided the couple with support by taking care of the parents who still lived in China. Churches were often cited as supportive entities because many of the churches provided English classes as well as programs specifically geared to the wives and children of international students. The university was most often cited for providing the necessary financial support enabling students to provide for their families.

The second causal factor that seemed to play a key role in the couples' abilities to adjust was that of role flexibility. Despite stereotypical expectations that Asian families

are highly traditional regarding gender roles, the researcher was surprised to find how central flexible roles were to their ability to adjust and to be successful. Although one might expect that this flexibility in gender roles was due to Western cultural influence, many of the couples reported being flexible in this way while they were still in China. For example, several of the wives had worked to support their husbands while they were in graduate school in China. After coming to the United States, participants discussed the importance of flexibility in sharing household and childrearing responsibilities. This flexibility was especially important in couples in which both spouses were graduate students. During times of high stress for one spouse (e.g., preparing for comprehensive exams), the other spouse would pick up more of the household or childcare responsibilities. It became clear to the researcher that without this role flexibility, participants' ability to adjust to the new culture and to be successful in graduate school would have been severely impaired.

Consequences

If the couple was able to adjust as a result of their social support and role flexibility, they were able to achieve contentment, to be successful in graduate school, and to have marital stability in the United States. Of course, as stated above, these consequences were also influenced by favorable conditions which included the presence of children when only one spouse was a student, both spouses being students, and good relationships with other family members. The couples who had these favorable conditions along with social support from one another, from friends, and from other sources in the community as well as flexibility in their gender roles were able to adjust successfully to life in the United States.

Contingencies

Other contingencies that may have contributed to the couples' ability to adjust included individual personality characteristics as well as health. Although direct links were not identified, it can be speculated that if individual spouses had personality impairments or severe mental or physical health problems, these factors would influence the couple's ability to adjust to life in another culture.

Clinical Implications

The results of this study provide some valuable implications for clinicians who work with Chinese internationals as well as any group of international residents of the United States. The first, and most obvious, implication is the necessity of taking a systemic point of view when working with individuals who are experiencing mental or relational distress in relation to living in a culture that is different from their own. Often international students who do seek therapeutic services do so because they are experiencing difficulty in their coursework. To concentrate solely on study and time management skills, however, would be an error on the part of the clinician. Even for therapists who already take a systemic perspective, the tendency would be to focus on factors from the social cultural environment without considering the natural and human built environments. Although the natural environment was not found to be particularly influential, factors in the human built environment, such as transportation, were. As a result, the clinician working with these types of clients may also have to take on the role of case manager or refer clients to an appropriate source for help in these areas. The results of this study have shown that factors on multiple systems levels contribute to the well-being of international students.

The second clinical implication is the importance of gender related themes, such as role, power, and domination in working with this population. The clinician who is sensitive to these often subtle intricacies of relationships will be better able to assist clients. The results of this study have shown that role flexibility is a necessity in order for Chinese couples to successfully adjust to their lives in the United States. As a result, clinicians working with Chinese couples, while communicating respect for their traditional values, should encourage them to be more flexible in their gender role responsibilities.

Another implication is found in the emergent theoretical model, displayed in Figure 5.2. International students who seek therapeutic help will often be struggling to adjust to their new culture. The model that has emerged as a result of this study can provide clinicians with a map for assisting these students in their struggle to adjust. Although the clinician may not be able to intervene in whether or not the couple has children or whether or not both of them are students, s/he may be able to assist the client in developing better relationships with his or her family of origin. In addition, the clinician can help these clients to identify and cultivate sources of social support and to be more flexible in their roles, both of which are more direct influences on their ability to adjust.

Implications for University Communities

A common statement made by the participants of this study was that the orientation offered by their university upon their arrival in the United States was not adequate preparation for what they would be facing in their struggle to adjust to life in a new culture. The theory of adjustment that emerged from the results of this study may

serve as a helpful tool for university offices specifically tailored to meet the needs of international students. International student offices could use the proposed theoretical model to plan their orientations.

Another way in which the results of this study could help universities better serve international students is through their emphasis on the students' families. For couples in which one spouse is not a student, adjustment is more difficult because of the lack of resources and activities provided for students' families. Based on the results of this study, it is important to provide social support to students' families as well as students. Several non-student participants talked about the difficulty they encountered in getting support from the international student office because they themselves were not students. Most of those who were non-students received social support from surrounding churches or community organizations, and it would be beneficial for university communities to partner with these groups to assist students and their families in their struggle to adjust.

The importance of multiple ecological subsystems in the participants' ability to adjust was verified through the results of this study. While international student offices at universities often form liaisons with university counseling centers, they may be unaware of on-campus services that are available to assist students and their families. For example, at universities that have graduate programs in marriage and family therapy, student services offices are often unaware that low-cost clinics exist on their campuses to specifically serve couples and families. This particular group of clinicians may be more suitable to assist international students and their families because of their training in family systems theory. While university counseling centers are often operated by counseling psychology departments, which often take an individual approach to

problems, marriage and family therapists are trained to intervene at multiple levels of the system in which a student, couple, or family is embedded. It would be beneficial for university departments and offices that serve international students to provide a complete referral network for students that includes specific family-related services that are available on their campuses.

Limitations of Study

As with any study, this research had limitations, some that cannot be controlled and some that are inherent to the methodology. First, the participants in this study were self-selected. Those who participated in this study did so because they chose to participate. There may have been inherent differences between the students who chose to participate in such a study and those who did not. In addition, although participants were recruited from Japan, Korea, and China, all of the students who chose to participate were from China. Although it was never assumed that these three cultures were the same, there may have been differences between these cultures that were not taken into account when designing the study.

The second limitation of the study had to do with issues of language. Perhaps one of the differences mentioned above Chinese, Japanese, and Korean students was related to comfort in speaking about such topics in English. It may be that Chinese students are more comfortable than Japanese or Korean students conversing in English with outsiders. In addition, more Chinese women may have been students, and therefore, their English may have been better than the wives of Japanese or Korean students. As mentioned previously, all participants had to be able to participate in the interview in English, and this may have excluded more Japanese and Korean couples. Conducting the interviews in

participants' native language and using a translator may have allowed a greater diversity

of participants. As previously mentioned, however, having a more homogenous sample

may have been beneficial as well.

Another limitation of this study, and of all qualitative research, is the lack of

generalization that can be made to the larger population. Despite this limitation, however,

it is important to remember that this is a qualitative study, the goal of which is to gain a

rich, deep understanding of the experiences of a few people rather than generalization to

a larger population. Although large quantitative studies, if conducted appropriately,

provide the researcher with the ability to generalize findings to the larger population, they

lack the richness afforded by qualitative methodologies. In addition, qualitative

methodologies are particularly appropriate when a research topic, such as the one in this

study, has not been previously studied.

Fourth, it was assumed that the participants in this study were honest and

forthcoming about their marriages. While the MSI-R contains a subscale to control for

social desirability, there was no way in which the researcher could absolutely verify the

participants' verbal reports regarding their marriages. In selecting participants, the

researcher had to rely on their claims of identification. Because of privacy standards, the

researcher was not able to verify that the students were actually East Asian international

graduate students.

The issue of how to go about appropriately triangulating the data is an evolving

concept in the field of qualitative research. This ambiguity regarding triangulation may

have been a limitation of the study. In this study, the qualitative data provided the

primary leg of triangulation, while the quantitative data provided descriptive

triangulation, and the literature provided another leg of the triangle. Although it is outside

the scope of this dissertation, in future research regarding this topic, it would be

beneficial to further triangulate the quantitative data with the theoretical map that

emerged from the qualitative data by conducting correlations and Chi-squares to further

validate the model.

Finally, as in all research, researcher bias was a limitation. Because the researcher

is the instrument in qualitative research, however, this limitation was especially relevant.

In order to counteract the inherent bias held by the researcher, these biases were made

clear throughout the research process. Researcher reflexivity is an important aspect of

qualitative research, as the researcher must identify how her biases may impact data

collection and analysis. These particular biases were discussed previously in Chapter 3.

Suggestions for Further Research

There are several ways in which the findings of this research may serve as a

springboard for future research regarding international student families. First, because of

the language issues discussed in the limitations section, it would be beneficial to conduct

this research in the participants' native language and to use a translator. This would

enable more international students' spouses to participate in addition to allowing for more

of a range in acculturation among participants. Second, in order to further develop the

theoretical model that emerged from qualitative analysis of this data, it will be necessary

to conduct more qualitative inquiries with students of other nationalities. It would be

most beneficial to begin with other Asian groups and to perhaps focus recruitment efforts

more specifically on international student families from Japan and Korea. Third,

quantitative research using multivariate methods could be conducted to investigate the validity of the proposed theoretical model.

Fourth, based on participants' reports that graduate school is a stressful time for them, just as it has been found to be for domestic students, it may be helpful to conduct research on Asian couples' use or lack of use of available clinical services. Despite the researcher's concern that participants would be reluctant to share their lives with her, she was surprised to find that they were very open in talking about their marital relationships. As a result, it may not be that these Chinese couples would not like to talk with someone about their struggles, but it may need to be framed as something other than therapy. In addition, international students may not be aware of the marital and family clinical services that are available to them on campuses. For example, in talking with employees in the international offices of several universities, there are often counselors that work with international students at university counseling centers. These same international office employees, however, were unaware that marital and family services were even available on their campuses. The international office employees typically serve as the first contact for international students who are seeking support. As a result, it would be beneficial for university marriage and family clinics to develop relationships with these offices.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the results of this study verified the importance of multiple ecological subsystems in the live of Chinese international graduate students. Based on the factors identified by participants as most important to their ability to adjust to life in a new culture, a theoretical model of adjustment was proposed. It is hoped that the results

of this study will assist clinicians and universities to better serve the international student population.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Subject Consent to Participate in a Study on Ecological Factors Influencing the Marital Relationship of East Asian International Graduate Students

Michigan State University

You have been asked to participate in a research study conducted by me, Jaime Goff, a graduate student in the Department of Family and Child Ecology of Michigan State University (MSU). You were selected as a possible participant in this study because you are a married international graduate student from China, Japan, or Korea. The purpose of this study is to explore factors influencing your marital relationship.

If you volunteer to participate in this research study, I would ask you to agree to participate in both a couple and individual face-to-face interviews, lasting approximately 90-120 minutes for both interviews. The interviews will be conducted at a location that is convenient for you. The interviews will include questions about your marriage and your experiences in graduate school. The interviews will be audio-recorded. You will also be asked to complete four additional questionnaires: a demographic information questionnaire, the Marital Satisfaction Inventory-Revised, the Suinn-Lew Asian Self-Identity Acculturation Scale, and the Outcome Questionnaire 45.

No known physical, emotional, social, legal, or other risk is expected from participating in this research. The interview is not expected to directly or indirectly cause physical or emotional harm. Your decision to take part in the study is voluntary, and you are under no obligation to answer any question that makes you uncomfortable. You are free to choose not to take part in the study or to interrupt or terminate participation in the interview at any time. Your decision whether or not to participate will in no way affect your relationship with Michigan State University. There are no direct benefits from your participation in the research, although you may find that participating provides a useful opportunity to explore and share your thoughts and experiences about your life.

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study that can be identified with you will remain confidential to the maximum extent allowable by law. Everything I learn about you in this study will be confidential. Once the audio-tape has been transcribed, all tapes will be destroyed and the transcripts will be coded and kept under lock and key, as will consent forms. If any portions of this study are published, you will not be identified in any way.

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact me at (859) 263-5146 or jdgoff2@uky.edu. You may also contact Dr. Marsha Carolan at (517) 432-3327.

You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims or rights because of your participation in this research study. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject,

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contact Peter Vasilenko, Ph.D., Chair of the University Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects (UCRIHS), Michigan State University, at (517) 355-2180, ucrihs@msu.edu, or write him at UCRIHS, 202 Olds Hall, MSU, East Lansing, MI 48824. I will give you a signed copy of this form to keep. Your signature indicates that you have decided to take part in this study and that you have read the above information.

_____   _____
Signature of Participant   Date/Time

_____   _____
Signature of Researcher   Date/Time

APPENDIX B: ORIGINAL INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

I. Signing of Consent Form and Completing Demographic Information

When the researcher arrives at the participants' home or the participant arrives at the clinic, the researcher will provide them with a clipboard containing the consent form and a demographic information questionnaire.

Before we begin our discussion, I have some paperwork that I would like for you to fill out. The first paper is a consent form. This form describes the study that I am conducting and tells you about your rights as a research participant. It is very important that you read the entire consent form before signing it. I want you to be informed about what I am doing here. After you have read the consent form, if you decide that you would like to participate in the study, please sign and date the form. If you decide that you do not want to participate, please inform me, and we will not continue with the interview. The second page is a demographic questionnaire. The purpose of this form is to provide me with some basic information about you. If you have any questions about either of these forms, please feel free to ask.

The conjoint interview will be conducted first.
II. Introduction

I want to start by thanking you for agreeing to participate in this interview. I have asked you to participate because you are experts on your culture. I am especially interested in hearing your story about your marital relationship. I want to learn from you so that I can help others understand your experiences.

I will be asking you some questions about your marriage and about other relationships in your life. Your participation in this interview is totally voluntary. You are not obligated to answer any questions. If you become distressed by the interview, you are permitted to leave or to ask me to leave at any time. Before we begin with the interview, I want to make sure that you have read and understand the consent form. Do you have any questions about what you read on the consent form or about the research?

Before we move on, I want to give you an overview of what we will be talking about today. First, we will introduce ourselves to one another. Next, I will ask you some questions about your marriage. Finally, I will ask you to fill out three more forms after we have finished talking.

III. Interview Questions

1. I'd like to start by asking you some questions about the natural environment in which you live. When I say natural environment, I am talking about the weather, the foliage, the animal life, and anything else that exists in nature.
    a. What differences have you noticed between the natural environment at home and the natural environment in the US?
    b. How has the natural environment in the US changed the way in which the two of you interact with one another?
    c. Are there things you used to do together at home that you are unable to do together here because of the natural environment? If so, what are they, and why has that changed?

2. Now, I'd like to ask you some questions about marriage in your culture and your marriage in particular.
    a. Macrosystem
        1. What does a marriage look like in your culture?
        2. What are some of the values in your culture regarding marriage?
        3. Is there such a thing as "good" and "bad" marriages in your culture? If so, what does a "good" marriage look like? What does a "bad" marriage look like?
    b. Microsystem
        1. Tell me about your relationship with one another.
        2. How do the two of you solve problems?
        3. How do the two of you make decisions?
        4. How do the two of you communicate with one another?
        5. How do the two of you show affection to one another?
        6. *For the graduate student:* How does your spouse support you in your role as a graduate student?
        7. What is the role that each of you plays in the marriage?

3. Now, I'd like to ask you about the human-built environment that you live in. When I say human built environment, I mean the buildings, roads, neighborhoods that have been built by humans.
    a. Describe the neighborhood in which you live.
    b. Describe the home in which you and your family live.

After the conjoint interview has been concluded the researcher will interview the wife and the husband separately for the following questions.

4. I'd like to ask you some questions about your own experience living here in the United States while one/both of you is/are in graduate school. First, I'd like to ask you some questions about the social-cultural environment in which you live. When I say social-cultural environment, I am talking about your cultural values and beliefs, your friends, your neighborhood, and your family.
    a. Macrosystem
        1. How has your cultural background helped you in the US?

2. How has your cultural background hindered you in the US?
3. What are some of the values of your culture regarding the roles of men and women in marriage? Have these values changed since coming to the US? If so, how?
4. How has one/both spouses being in graduate school changed the gender roles in your marriage?

  b. Exosystem
1. *For spouses who are employed:* Tell me about your job.
2. Would you be working if your spouse were not in graduate school? What would you do instead?
3. How has your job affected your relationship with your spouse?

  c. Mesosystem
1. Tell me about your extended family. Did any of your extended family members accompany you to the US? If so, what are your living arrangements? Describe your relationship with your extended family when you were at home. Describe your relationship with your extended family now that you are in the US.
2. Tell me about the friends you have made here in the US. How has having friends helped you and your spouse adjust to being in the US? How do your friends provide you with support?
3. Tell me about the neighborhood or community in which you live. Describe your relationships with your neighbors.
4. If you have children, how has your marital relationship changed since your children were born?

  d. Individual
1. Describe your personality. What characteristics describe who you are?
2. Tell me about your health. Are you currently experiencing any health problems? If so, what are they?

5. I'd like to ask you some questions about you/your spouse being in graduate school.
  a. *Student:* Describe your overall experience of graduate school.
  b. *Spouse:* Describe your overall experience of your spouse being in graduate school.
  c. How has the marital relationship changed since one/both spouses started graduate school?
  d. What has been the economic impact of one/both spouses being in graduate school?
  e. What is particularly stressful about one/both spouses being in graduate school?
  f. *Student:* What support do you receive from the university? Your department? Your advisor?
  g. What types of support do you find most helpful while you/your spouse are in graduate school?

IV. Completion of Measures

After the interviews are completed, participants will be asked to complete the RDAS, the OQ-45, and the SL-ASIA. The researcher will provide participants with directions regarding each instrument. The participants will be left with a self-addressed stamped envelope in which the measures can be returned to her.

V. Wrap-Up

That is all I have for you to do today. Now, I'd like to give you a chance to ask any questions you might have for me... I'd also like to give you a chance to add anything that you might think is important to our discussion or to clarify any of your earlier statements...Thank you for participating in this study. If you have any questions that you did not want to ask here, my phone number and email address is on the consent form so that you can contact me. Thank you again for your participation. Your insight was invaluable to me, and I appreciate your expertise in helping me to understand your culture and your experiences better.

APPENDIX C: DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE

Please complete the following demographic questionnaire.

Name: _____   **Age:** _____

Students only complete the next three questions.
Education: At what level are you in graduate school?
    Master's _____   Ph.D. _____

Field of Study: _____

How many credits are you currently taking?
    1-3 credits   _____
    4-7 credits   _____
    8-11 credits   _____
    12-15 credits _____

Employment: Are you currently working?
    Unemployed; not looking for work   _____
    Unemployed; looking for work   _____
    Employed part-time   _____
    Employed full-time   _____
    Other (please specify)   _____

Leisure: What do you do for fun when not taking class, studying, or working?

_____
_____
_____

What has been the biggest *change* for you in coming to the US for college and/or graduate school?

_____
_____
_____

What has been the biggest *challenge* for your marriage with one or both spouses in graduate school?

_____
_____
_____

Household Composition: List below *all* persons who live in your household and indicate their relationship to you.

Name   **Age**   **Sex**   **Relationship to You**

1._____
2._____
3._____
4._____
5._____
6._____
7._____
8._____

Marital Status: Check all of the following that are true.

Married and living together _____
Not married but living together (consensual union) _____
Separated (married, but not living together) _____
Divorced _____
Widowed _____
Never married _____

Household Income: What was your household's income level last year?

$15,000 or less _____
$15,001 - $35,000 _____
$35,001 - $50,000 _____
$50,001 - $75,000 _____
$75,001 or above _____

Ethnicity: What is your country of origin? _____

Please write down any other information you think may be important for the researcher to know.

_____
_____
_____
_____

APPENDIX D: MARITAL SATISFACTION INVENTORY-REVISED QUESTIONS

LISTED BY SUBSCALE

Affective Communication – Full Text of Items

1. My partner almost always responds with understanding to my mood at a given moment.
2. It is sometimes easier to confide in a friend than in my partner.
3. There is a great deal of love and affection expressed in our relationship.
4. My partner doesn't take me seriously enough sometimes.
5. Whenever I'm feeling sad, my partner makes me feel loved and happy again.
6. Sometimes I feel as though my partner doesn't really need me.
7. Sometimes my partner just can't understand the way I feel.
8. Just when I need it the most, my partner makes me feel important.
9. My partner does many different things to show me that he or she loves me.
10. I feel free to express openly strong feelings of sadness to my partner.
11. Sometimes I wonder just how much my partner really does love me.
12. Whenever he or she is feeling down, my partner comes to me for support.
13. My partner keeps most of his or her feelings inside.

Problem Solving Communication – Full Text of Items

1. When my partner and I have differences of opinion, we sit down and discuss them.
2. There are some things my partner and I just can't talk about.
3. During an argument with my partner, each of us airs our feelings completely.
4. Even when angry with me, my partner is able to appreciate my viewpoints.
5. A lot of our arguments seem to end in depressing stalemates.
6. My partner and I need to improve the way we settle our differences.
7. My partner is so touchy on some subjects that I can't even mention them.
8. When we argue, my partner and I often seem to go over and over the same old things.
9. My partner's feelings are too easily hurt.
10. Minor disagreements with my partner often end up in big arguments.
11. When arguing, we manage quite well to restrict our focus to the important issues.
12. My partner has no difficulty accepting criticism.
13. My partner sometimes seems intent upon changing some aspect of my personality.
14. My partner and I seem able to go for days sometimes without settling our differences.
15. Our arguments frequently end up with one of us feeling hurt or crying.
16. When we disagree, my partner helps us to find alternatives acceptable to both of us.
17. My partner and I are often unable to disagree with one another without losing our tempers.

18. My partner often fails to understand my point of view on things.
19. My partner often complains that I don't understand him or her.

Aggression – Full Text of Items

1. My partner has slapped me.
2. I have never worried that my partner might become angry enough to hurt me.
3. My partner has slammed things around or thrown things in anger.
4. I have worried about my partner losing control of his or her anger.
5. My partner has never thrown things at me in anger.
6. My partner sometimes screams or yells at me when he or she is angry.
7. My partner has never pushed me or grabbed me in anger.
8. My partner has left bruises or welts on my body.
9. My partner has never threatened to hurt me.
10. My partner has never injured me physically.

Time Together – Full Text of Items

1. I am fairly satisfied with the way my partner and I spend our available free time.
2. I wish my partner shared a few more of my interests.
3. My partner likes to share his or her leisure time with me.
4. My partner and I spend a good deal of time together in different kinds of play and recreation.
5. My partner and I don't have much in common to talk about.
6. It seems that we used to have more fun than we do now.
7. Our daily life is full of interesting things to do together.
8. My partner doesn't take enough time to do some of the things I'd like to do.
9. I spend at least one hour each day in an activity with my partner.
10. Our recreational and leisure activities appear to be meeting both our needs quite well.

Disagreement about Finances – Full Text of Items

1. I trust my partner with our money completely.
2. My partner and I decide together the manner in which our income is to be spent.
3. Our relationship has never been in difficulty because of financial concerns.
4. Our financial future seems quite secure.
5. It is often hard for us to discuss our finances without getting upset with each other.
6. My partner is forever checking up on how I spend our money.
7. Trying to work out a budget causes more trouble with my partner than it is worth.
8. My partner is a very good manager of finances.
9. My partner and I rarely argue about money.
10. I feel as though we live beyond our financial means.
11. My partner buys too many things without consulting me first.

Sexual Dissatisfaction – Full Text of Items

1. My partner seems to enjoy sex as much as I do.
2. I would prefer to have sexual relations more frequently than we do now.
3. I am sometimes unhappy with our sexual relationship.
4. I am somewhat dissatisfied with how we discuss better ways of pleasing each other sexually.
5. One thing my partner and I don't fully discuss is our sexual relationship.
6. My partner sometimes shows too little enthusiasm for sex.
7. My partner has too little regard for my sexual satisfaction.
8. My partner and I nearly always agree on how frequently to have sexual relations.
9. I have never seriously considered having an affair.
10. My partner and I rarely have sexual relations.
11. I would like my partner to express a little more tenderness during intercourse.
12. There are some things I would like us to do, sexually, that my partner doesn't seem to enjoy.
13. Our sexual relationship is entirely satisfactory.

Role Orientation – Full Text of Items

1. Some equality in marriage is a good thing but, by and large, the man ought to have the main say-so in family matters.
2. There should be more daycare centers and nursery schools so that more mothers of young children could work.
3. Such things as laundry, cleaning, and child care are primarily a woman's responsibility.
4. If a child gets sick, and if both parents work, the father should be just as willing as the mother to stay home from work and take care of the child.
5. Earning the family income is primarily the responsibility of the man.
6. The man should be the head of the family.
7. A woman should take her husband's last name after marriage.
8. The most important thing for a woman is to be a good wife and mother.
9. Where a family lives should depend mostly on the man's job.
10. In a relationship, the woman's career is of equal importance to the man's.
11. In a relationship, a major role of a woman should be that of housekeeper.
12. If a mother of young children works, it should be only while the family needs the money.

Family History of Distress – Full Text of Items

1. My childhood was probably happier than most.
2. I was very anxious as a young person to get away from my family.
3. My parents' marriage was happier than most.
4. All the marriages on my side of the family appear to be quite successful.
5. My parents didn't communicate with each other as well as they should have.
6. My parents never really understood me.

7. I had a very happy home life.
8. The members of my family were always very close to each other.
9. I often wondered whether my parents' marriage would end in divorce.

Dissatisfaction with Children – Full Text of Items

1. For the most part, our children are well behaved.
2. My children's value systems are very much the same as my own.
3. Our relationship might have been happier if we had not had children.
4. I wish my children would show a little more concern for me.
5. My children and I don't have very much in common to talk about.
6. Our children do not show adequate respect for their parents.
7. Our children don't seem as happy and carefree as other children their age.
8. Having children has not brought all of the satisfactions I had hoped it would.
9. Our children rarely fail to meet their responsibilities at home.
10. Rearing children is a nerve-wracking job.
11. I frequently get together with one or more of the children for fun or recreation at home.

Conflict over Child Rearing – Full Text of Items

1. My partner and I rarely argue about the children.
2. My partner doesn't spend enough time with the children.
3. My partner and I rarely disagree on when or how to discipline the children.
4. Our children often manage to drive a wedge between my partner and me.
5. My partner doesn't display enough affection toward the children.
6. My partner and I decide together what rules to set for our children.
7. My partner doesn't assume his or her fair share of taking care of the children.
8. My partner and I nearly always agree on how to respond to our children's requests for money or privileges.
9. Our relationship has never been in difficulty because of the children.
10. My partner and I assume equal responsibility for rearing the children.

APPENDIX E: SUINN-LEW ASIAN SELF-IDENTITY ACCULTURATION SCALE

Circle the one answer that best describes you.

1. What language can you speak?
1. Asian only (for example, Mandarin/Chinese dialects, Malay, etc.)
2. Mostly Asian, some English
3. Asian and English about equally well (bilingual)
4. Mostly English, some Asian
5. Only English

2. What language do you prefer?
1. Asian only (for example, Mandarin or Chinese dialects, Malay, etc.)
2. Mostly Asian, some English
3. Asian and English about equally well (bilingual)
4. Mostly English, some Asian
5. Only English

3. How do you identify yourself?
1. Chinese
2. Asian (for example, Malaysian, Singaporean, Indonesian, Filipino/a, etc.)
3. Chinese American
4. Asian American
5. American

4. Which identification does (did) your mother use?
1. Chinese
2. Asian (for example, Malaysian, Singaporean, Indonesian, Filipino/a, etc.)
3. Chinese American
4. Asian American
5. American

5. Which identification does (did) your father use?
1. Chinese
2. Asian (for example, Malaysian, Singaporean, Indonesian, Filipino/a, etc.)
3. Chinese American
4. Asian American
5. American

6. What was the ethnic origin of the friends and peers you had, as a child up to age 6?
1. Almost exclusively Asians, Asian Americans, Chinese
2. Mostly Asians, Asian Americans, Chinese
3. About equally Asian groups and Anglo groups
4. Mostly Anglos, Blacks, Hispanics, or other non-Asian ethnic groups
5. Almost exclusively Anglos, Blacks, Hispanics, or other non-Asian ethnic groups

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7. What was the ethnic origin of the friends and peers you had, as a child from 6 to 18?
 1. Almost exclusively Asians, Asian Americans, Chinese
 2. Mostly Asians, Asian Americans, Chinese
 3. About equally Asian groups and Anglo groups
 4. Mostly Anglos, Blacks, Hispanics, or other non-Asian ethnic groups
 5. Almost exclusively Anglos, Blacks, Hispanics, or other non-Asian ethnic groups

8. Whom do you now associate with in the community?
 1. Almost exclusively Asians, Asian Americans, Chinese
 2. Mostly Asians, Asian Americans, Chinese
 3. About equally Asian groups and Anglo groups
 4. Mostly Anglos, Blacks, Hispanics, or other non-Asian ethnic groups
 5. Almost exclusively Anglos, Blacks, Hispanics, or other non-Asian ethnic groups

9. If you could choose, whom would you prefer to associate with in the community?
 1. Almost exclusively Asians, Asian Americans, Chinese
 2. Mostly Asians, Asian Americans, Chinese
 3. About equally Asian groups and Anglo groups
 4. Mostly Anglos, Blacks, Hispanics, or other non-Asian ethnic groups
 5. Almost exclusively Anglos, Blacks, Hispanics, or other non-Asian ethnic groups

10. What is your music preference?
 1. Only Asian music (for example, Chinese, Malay, Indonesian, Filipino/a, etc.)
 2. Mostly Asian
 3. Equally Asian and English
 4. Mostly English
 5. English only

11. What is your movie preference?
 1. Only Asian-language movies
 2. Mostly Asian-language movies
 3. Equally Asian/English language movies
 4. Mostly English-language movies
 5. Only English-language movies

12. Where were you born?
 1. China
 2. Asian country other than China
 3. Western country other than US
 4. US
 5. Other – where? _____

13. Where were you raised?
1. In Asia only
2. Mostly in Asia, some in US
3. Equally in Asia and US
4. Mostly in US, some in Asia
5. In US only

14. What contact have you had with Asia?
1. Lived one year or more in Asia
2. Lived for less than a year in Asia
3. Occasional visits to Asia
4. Occasional communications (letters, phone calls, etc.) with people in Asia
5. No exposure or communication with people in Asia

15. What is your food preference at home?
1. Exclusively Asian food
2. Mostly Asian food, some American
3. About equally Asian and American
4. Mostly American food
5. Exclusively American food

16. What is your food preference in restaurants?
1. Exclusively Asian food
2. Mostly Asian food, some American
3. About equally Asian and American
4. Mostly American food
5. Exclusively American food

17. Do you
1. Read only an Asian language
2. Read an Asian language better than English
3. Read both Asian and English equally well
4. Read English better than an Asian language
5. Read only English

18. Do you
1. Write only an Asian language
2. Write an Asian language better than English
3. Write both Asian and English equally well
4. Write English better than an Asian language
5. Write only English

19. If you consider yourself a member of the Asian group (Chinese, Asian, Asian American, Chinese American, etc., whatever term you prefer), how much pride do you have in this group?
1. Extremely proud
2. Moderately proud
3. Little pride
4. No pride but do not feel negative toward group
5. No pride but do feel negative toward group

20. How would you rate yourself?
1. Very Asian
2. Mostly Asian
3. Bicultural
4. Mostly Westernized
5. Very Westernized

21. Do you participate in Asian occasions, holidays, traditions, etc.?
1. Nearly all
2. Most of them
3. Some of them
4. A few of them
5. None at all

22. Rate yourself on how much you believe in Asian values (for example, about marriage, families, education, and work). Circle only one number.

1	2	3	4	5
Do not believe in Asian values				Strongly believe in Asian values

23. Rate yourself on how much you believe in American/Western values (for example, about marriage, families, education, and work). Circle only one number.

1	2	3	4	5
Do not believe in Western values				Strongly believe in Western values

24. Rate yourself on how well you fit in with other Asians of the same ethnicity. Circle only one number.

1	2	3	4	5
Do not fit				Fit very well

25. Rate yourself on how well you fit in with Americans who are non-Asian (Westerners). Circle only one number.

1	2	3	4	5
Do not fit				Fit very well

26. There are many different ways in which people think of themselves. Which ONE of the following most closely describes how you view yourself? Circle only one number.

1. I consider myself basically an Asian person (e.g., Chinese, Indonesian, Filipino, etc). Even though I live and work in America, I still view myself as an Asian person.
2. I consider myself basically as an American. Even though I have an Asian background and characteristics, I still view myself basically as an American.
3. I consider myself as an Asian American, although deep down, I always know I am an Asian.
4. I consider myself as an Asian American, although deep down, I view myself as an American first.
5. I consider myself as an Asian American. I have both Asian and American characteristics, and I view myself as a blend of both.
6. Not applicable

27. Have you ever lived in the United States?   Yes _____   No _____

If YES, how many years have you lived in the United States? _____ years

If YES, how many years has your family lived in the United States? _____ years

If YES, which of the following best describes your family in the United States?

1. For some time, but not now. How many years? _____
2. 1st generation (I'm the first generation to live in the US).
3. 2nd generation (My parents lived in the US before me).
4. 3rd generation (My grandparents lived in the US before me).
5. 4th generation (My great-grandparents lived in the US before me).
6. I don't know.

28. Country of origin? You _____   Your Parents _____

| Name: _____ | Age: _____ |
| ID # _____ | Sex: _____ |

Instructions: Looking back over the last week, including today, help us understand how you have been feeling. Read each item carefully and mark the box under the category which best describes your current situation. For this questionnaire, work is defined as employment, school, housework, volunteer work, and so forth.

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Almost Always
1. I get along well with others.					
2. I tire quickly.					
3. I feel no interest in things.					
4. I feel stressed at work/school.					
5. I blame myself for things.					
6. I feel irritated.					
7. I feel unhappy in my marriage/significant relationship.					
8. I have thoughts of ending my life.					
9. I feel weak.					
10. I feel fearful.					
11. After heavy drinking, I need a drink the next morning to get going (If you do not drink, mark "never.").					
12. I find my work/school satisfying.					
13. I am a happy person.					
14. I work/study too much.					
15. I feel worthless.					
16. I am concerned about family troubles.					
17. I have an unfulfilling sex life.					
18. I feel lonely.					
19. I have frequent arguments.					
20. I feel loved and wanted.					
21. I enjoy my spare time.					
22. I have difficulty concentrating.					
23. I feel hopeless about the future.					
24. I like myself.					
25. Disturbing thoughts come into my mind that I cannot get rid of.					
26. I feel annoyed by people who criticize my drinking (or drug use). If not applicable, mark "never."					
27. I have an upset stomach.					
28. I am not working/studying as well as I used to.					
29. My heart pounds too much.					
30. I have trouble getting along with friends and close acquaintances.					
31. I am satisfied with my life.					

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Almost Always
32. I have trouble at work/school because of drinking or drug use. If not applicable, mark "never."					
33. I feel that something bad is going to happen.					
34. I have sore muscles.					
35. I feel afraid of open spaces, of driving, or being on buses, subways, and so forth.					
36. I feel nervous.					
37. I feel my love relationships are full and complete.					
38. I feel that I am not doing well at work/school.					
39. I have too many disagreements at work/school.					
40. I feel something is wrong with my mind.					
41. I have trouble falling asleep or staying asleep.					
42. I feel blue.					
43. I am satisfied with my relationships with others.					
44. I feel angry enough at work/school to do something I might regret.					
45. I have headaches.					

*Permission to use the OQ 45.2 must be obtained from American Professional Credentialing Services, LLC.

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