

Davis Research Project

A MESSAGE FROM SU YEONG KIM, CHIEF RESEACHER



We are very pleased to have you continue with the Davis Research project. In this issue we highlight information on balancing cultures.

Please note that the project is house at the University of Texas at Austin. We look forward to your continued support and participation in the project. We can be reached by e-mail at projectfamily@gmail.com, by phone at (415)271-0390, and on the internet at <http://webspace.utexas.edu/syk343/>. When you move or when your contact information changes, please update your contact information.

BALANCING CULTURES

In a country filled with a surplus of many different cultures, it is not uncommon to encounter difficulties when visiting an area where one's culture is different from where one comes from. For example, Californians who travel to New York City may find it difficult at first keeping up with the speed of daily routines and the constant hustle and bustle of New York streets. These individuals may all be living in the United States, but they are used to very different lifestyles. It will take some time before these individuals are comfortable with incorporating the practices of the new city while still maintaining their native Californian tendencies.

The idea that as we enter new territories we learn to incorporate new practices while still carrying our old identities, can also apply to immigrants. As immigrants enter a new country they encounter a multitude of new cultures, and they may not immediately encounter a large group of people who practice their same cultural beliefs or practices. For some families, they may easily blend their practices with the dominate culture in the area they live,

whereas other families find it challenging to do so as they strive to keep their core cultural values.

We surveyed both teen participants and their parents to determine if they felt it was difficult to balance two cultures, Chinese and American cultures. We surveyed participants at three different time periods relevant to the school age of the teen participants: middle school or time 1, high school or time 2, and early adulthood or time 3. We focused on the differences between time periods in terms of difficulty balancing both Chinese and American cultures to test whether fluctuations occurred across time periods. The participants answered questions such as "It's difficult to balance two cultures (Chinese and American cultures)," and "It's difficult to know when I need to be more Chinese or American in a certain situation." We asked participants questions on difficulty balancing two cultures and measured their reports using a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is "never" and 5 is "always." We then reviewed and compared how the participants reported their difficulty balancing both American and Chinese



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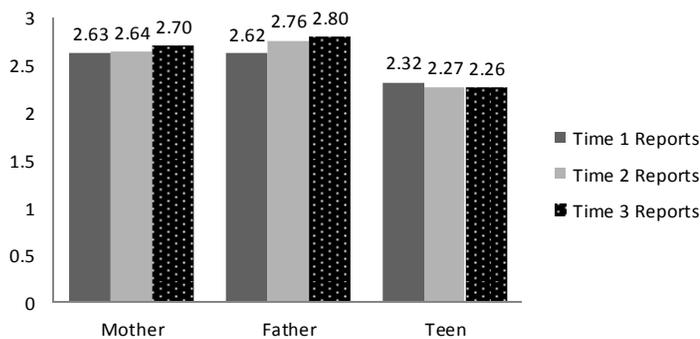
cultures at different time periods.

There was variance in reports based on who was answering the questions. Across all three periods we found no significant differences in teen reports, which means that the level of difficulty balancing cultures was similar across all three time periods. Mother participant reports showed significant differences in difficulty balancing cultures between time 1 and time 3, whereas father reports showed significant differences in difficulty balancing cultures between both time 1 and time 2 and between time 1 and time 3. For both parent reports, there were no sig-

nificant differences in the reports from time 2 to time 3. Reports show that over time, parents reported more difficulty balancing cultures, particularly from time 1 to time 3, although many would assume the opposite. This may be due to their slow adaption to American culture, and feeling torn about their heritage cultural practices.

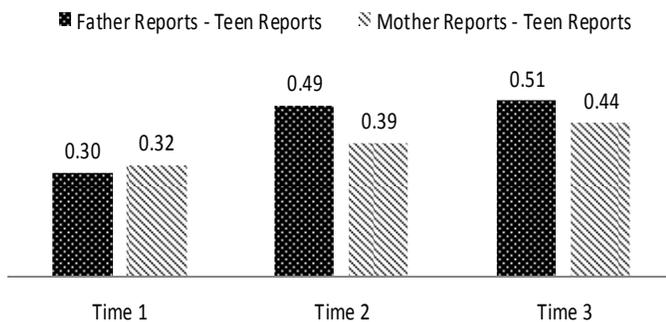
That is, they may feel forced to use American cultural practices since they have been in the country for a long time, but still consistently use their heritage cultural practices within the home.

Difficulty in Balancing Cultures Between Time Periods



When looking at parent reports in comparison to teen reports, we found that at all three time periods, both mother and father reports of difficulty balancing cultures were significantly higher than teen reports. We also subtracted teen reports from parent reports at all three time periods. All the differences were positive, which means that parents have more difficulty than teens balancing the two cultures.

Difficulty Balancing Cultures Between Parents and Teens



Based on the reports, we can conclude that overall, teen participants found it less difficult balancing American and Chinese cultures, whereas both parent participant reports show that they found it more difficult to balance the two cultures. For teens that are raised in the United States, incorporating American cultural practices into their lifestyles occurs more easily than for their parents. Parents may be more motivated to not lose touch with their heritage cultural practices, which makes it more difficult for them to balance the two cultures over time.