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A Qualitative Examination of the Experiences of Taiwanese Transnational Youth in Vancouver

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Abstract

This thesis consists of two manuscripts. The first manuscript reviews empirical studies on Asian transnational families in English-speaking countries in the last two decades, provides critical analysis of the content and methodologies employed in the studies and makes recommendations for future research. The second manuscript reports the results of a qualitative study that aimed to explore the core essence of Taiwanese transnational youth's experiences adapting to the dual household arrangement in Vancouver. More specifically, the study seeks to answer the following questions: (1) How did Taiwanese transnational youth understand their family's decision to enter a transnational arrangement?; (2) How did Taiwanese transnational youth's family dynamics and individual familial relationships change over time?; and (3) How has the experience of transnational migration affected Taiwanese transnational youth's sense of identity and their plans for the future? Implications for future research and practice are also discussed.

Résumé

Cette thèse contient deux parties: La première est une analyse documentaire des immigrants transnationaux Asiatique en Amérique du Nord. La deuxième étude porte sur l'expérience de jeunes Taïwanais transnationaux vivant à Vancouver. L'analyse documentaire examine les études publiés pendant les décennies 1989-2009, porte une analyse critique du contenu et méthodologie des études, et fourni des recommandations pour la recherche sur les familles Asiatique transnationaux dans l'avenir. Dans le cadre de la méthode phénoménologique, cette étude a pour but de cerner la structure transcendante ou l'essence des jeunes Taïwanais transnationaux qui doivent s'adapter à vivre dans deux foyers. Notamment, les questions suivantes sont posées : (1) comment les jeunes Taïwanais transnationaux ont-ils interprété la décision prise par la famille de vivre à deux endroits?, (2) comment la dynamique familiale et les rapports au sein de la famille des jeunes Taïwanais transnationaux ont-ils évolué?, (3) comment la migration transnationale a-t-elle changé leur image d'eux-mêmes et les projets d'avenir des jeunes Taïwanais transnationaux? Tout d'abord, un recensement des écrits sur les familles asiatiques transnationales dans les pays anglophones sert à situer ce mouvement migratoire unique en son genre. Les réponses aux questions formulées ci-dessus fourniront les orientations à donner à des études ultérieures sur les jeunes Asiatiques transnationaux et aux recommandations dont pourront bénéficier les travailleurs les côtoyant.

Introduction

In the last few decades, globalization has contributed to growing economic disparities between developed and developing nations around the world, propelling an increase in international migration (Skeldon, 1994). This increase in migration has led to significant changes in family structures worldwide (Schiller, 1992; Suãrez-Orozco, Todorova, & Louie, 2002). One of the most interesting trends in international migration that emerged in the 1980s is transnational migration—a form of migration that has been perceived as a family strategy to maximize economic and social benefits in the destination country while escaping political and economic instability in the departure country (Tsang, Irving, Alaggia, Chau, & Benjamin, 2003). More and more, families are going through long periods of separation and reunification in order to collectively achieve social and economic success (Suãrez-Orozco et al., 2002; Parreñas, 2005).

Among the subgroups of transnational families worldwide are Asian transmigrants that have come to be known as “astronaut” families because the father shuttles back and forth between the home country and the host country to work (Aye & Guerin, 2001; Pe-Pua, Mitchell, Castles, & Iredale, 1998; Waters, 2002). What is unique about the Asian transnational living arrangement is that the mother and children are left in the host country to settle and adapt to the unfamiliar culture, language, and surroundings, while the father works in the home country to support the family. The first wave of Asian transnational migrants came from Hong Kong and Taiwan in the early 1990s and the second wave from Korea in the 2000s. One of the main reasons for transnational

migration was political instability in the area (Johnson & Lary, 1994). Another important factor behind the Asian transnational living arrangement was an overall growing dissatisfaction with the educational system in the home country and families' hopes for better opportunities for their children in the destination countries (Lee & Koo, 2006; Waters, 2002).

Although many families plan to enter into a transnational arrangement prior to migration, this is not the case for all Asian transnational families. Many Asian immigrants leave their home country with the expectation of finding work in the host country that will match their skill level, training, and salary expectations. However, they are often disappointed by the employment barriers they encounter upon arrival (Pe-Pua et al., 1998). Many families, thus, resolve to a dual household arrangement in order for the father to work and earn a higher living back in the home country.

The lack of preparedness for transnational living that many Asian families confront post-migration can be very taxing emotionally and financially. The geographical separation of family members is challenging enough as it is, but oftentimes this challenge is heightened by the unanticipated change of plans. The distress experienced by individual family members, and families as a whole cannot be underestimated. Study findings reveal that mothers and children struggle with loneliness and depression (Creese, Dyck, & McLaren, 1999; Tsang et al., 2003; Waters, 2002), in addition to dealing with language and cultural barriers (Pe-Pua et al., 1998) for the first few years in the host country. In addition to the distress experienced by individuals within the family, familial relationships

are also strained, especially spousal relationships. Due to the physical separation of the couple and women's increase in responsibility and decision-making power, many couples encounter a great deal of strife, and even get divorced (Lam, 1994). In addition to shifts in the spousal relationship, the parent-child dynamic undergoes significant changes as well. For example, the absence of the father results in children assuming more responsibility in the household to provide support to their mothers. Often referred to as "cultural brokering", children will find themselves playing adult-like roles in the family and helping out with things like translation of documents, bill payment, and serving as an interpreter when interacting with individuals from the mainstream culture (Pe-Pua et al., 1998; Tsang et al., 2003).

One of the greatest risk factors for Asian families entering a transnational arrangement is the impact of this living arrangement on children, especially adolescent children. It is well documented that transnational youth encounter multiple challenges upon entering a dual household arrangement (Creese et al., 1999; Lam, 1994; Tsang et al., 2003). There are several layers of challenges presented to transnational youth—For one, they are faced with the physical and emotional 'growing pains' typical of adolescence. Secondly, they deal with challenges common to all immigrants which include ethnic discrimination in the host country (Wu, Ip, Inglis, Kawakami & Duivenvoorden, 1998), a fragmented sense of identity (Tsang et al., 2003), a decrease in familial and peer support, and the unfamiliar culture and language (Pe-Pua et al., 1998). Unlike children of intact immigrant families, transnational youth have to cope with unique challenges that

are associated with the transnational living arrangement of their family. Lastly, transnational youth encounter a great deal of family pressure to succeed academically because the family sacrificed so much for their education.

Although transnational youth are high-risk in terms of facing emotional and psychological problems, the current status of the literature on transnational living arrangements does not fully reflect this population's vulnerability. In fact, very few studies on transnational families include the perspectives of youth; in most cases, the studies relied on parents' reports on their perception of their children's experiences. Also, little is known about the long-term effects of transnational living on the experiences of transnational youth.

Against this backdrop, this thesis aims to identify and explore the current gaps in the literature on Asian transnational families in the following two manuscripts: the first manuscript, a literature review on Asian transnational families in English-speaking countries, will identify the research contributions made to date, the content and methodologies employed, and the areas that require further exploration. The second manuscript, a qualitative study on Taiwanese transnational youth in Vancouver, addresses a significant gap in the literature by focusing on the long-term effects of transnational family arrangements based on the perspectives of transnational youth. In order to explore the long-term effects of the transnational living arrangement, retrospective interviews were conducted with individuals who moved to Canada as transnational youth at least 10 years ago. Considering the current status of literature, the qualitative method was used to conduct an exploratory study. This study focuses exclusively on the

experiences of Taiwanese transnational youth to minimize variations in participants' experiences affected by differences in participant's country of origin. More specifically, this study seeks to explore the following research questions: (1) How did Taiwanese transnational youth understand their family's decision to enter a transnational arrangement?; (2) How did Taiwanese transnational youth's family dynamics and individual familial relationships change over time?; and (3) How has the experience of transnational migration affected Taiwanese transnational youth's sense of identity and their plans for the future? The phenomenological approach was chosen for this study in order to capture the "essence" of participant experiences (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994).

Manuscript links

The two manuscripts submitted for this thesis are strongly interconnected content-wise. The first manuscript is a literature review on Asian transnational families which serves as a backdrop for the second manuscript that reports a qualitative study on transnational Taiwanese youth. The literature review progresses seamlessly into the qualitative study because it examines the current status of literature on the phenomenon of Asian transnational migration and the implications of this arrangement for family members, providing the context for the qualitative study. The literature review helped to identify the missing gaps in the literature; the methodological and conceptual gaps in the existing body of literature enumerated in the first manuscript were addressed in the qualitative study reported in the second manuscript.

Contribution of Authors

For both manuscripts, the student was the first author and her supervisor served as the second author. For the first manuscript, the first author conducted the database search and compiled an annotated bibliography of each study. The two authors met on a regular basis to (a) make decisions about inclusion and exclusion criteria for studies that would be included for the content analysis; (b) identify the common themes emerging from existing studies; and (c) critically analyze methodological and conceptual gaps in the literature. The first author did 75% of writing and the second author did 25% of writing and editing.

The research reported in the second manuscript is an original study designed by the first author under the supervision of the second author. The first author took charge of the development of the interview protocol, participant recruitment, and training of research assistants for the study under the guidance of the second author. The first author conducted half of the interviews and a research assistant conducted the other half of the interviews, which is described in more detail in the second manuscript. The first author conducted the initial round of open coding of transcripts, part of which was audited by the second author. The results of cross analysis conducted by the first author were audited by the second author. The two authors met on a regular basis to discuss the core essence of participants' experiences and conceptual mapping of interrelations between the core phenomenon and other themes that emerged from data. The first author did approximately 70% of writing and the second author did 30% of writing and editing.

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Transnational Families from Asia: Content Analysis

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Abstract

The purpose of this review is to examine the existing body of literature on transnational families from Asia. The particular focus of this study is on: (a) examining the trends of research on transnational families in the past two decades; (b) exploring how the existing body of research advanced our knowledge in the topic area; and (c) critically analyzing the content and methodology of the empirical studies to identify gaps in the literature. Three main themes of the literature were identified; namely, primary reasons for migration, motivations for the transnational arrangement, and outcomes of the dual household arrangement. Recommendations for future studies are also discussed.

Transnational Families from Asia: Content Analysis

Introduction

An increase in international migration during the past decades brought forth substantial changes in family structures worldwide (Schiller, 1992; Suãrez-Orozco, Todorova, & Louie, 2002). Rising numbers of families live in different countries, often going through a long period of separation and reunification (Hong & Ham, 2001; Suãrez-Orozco et al., 2002; Parreñas, 2005). More and more people work in one country, while keeping residence in or sending their children to another country, maintaining what Ong (1999) coins as “flexible citizenship” in multiple countries. The transnational living arrangement of families has been conceptualized as a family strategy to maximize the sustainability of families in the advent of economic and political instability accompanied by globalization (Skeldon, 1994) and to respond to differences in economic (Basch, Schiller, & Szanton-Blanc, 1994) and educational opportunities (Tsang, Irving, Alaggia, Chau, & Benjamin, 2003; Zhou, 1998) between developed and developing countries.

Among various types of transnational families, family separation caused by a stepwise migration was commonly observed among immigrants from South America or the Caribbean countries in the 1980s and 1990s. A stepwise migration refers to a type of migration in which one or both parents leave children behind in the home country to secure a job in a new country and call in the rest of the family once they settle in the new country. This stepwise migration typically took place

in the form of labor migration through which individuals and families migrated to a more developed country to find a better job (Lee & Koo, 2006). It has been well documented that such a prolonged process of immigration has a negative impact on children (Glasgow & Goose-Shees, 1995; Sciarra, 1999; Suãrez-Orozco et al., 2002; Wilkes, 1992) and dynamics of the family (Arnold, 1991; Boti & Bautisa, 1999).

Another type of transnational family is from Asian countries, a subgroup of transnational families that is the focus of this paper. A typical pattern of the transnational living arrangement among Asian families is in which the head of the household keeps his job in the home country, while the rest of the family maintains another household in the host country. Unlike in the former group of transnational families where children are left behind in the home country in a familiar setting, in Asian transnational families, children migrate to a new country to live in an unfamiliar setting. Also, Asian transnational families tend to view the transnational living arrangement as a family strategy that will increase the likelihood of social and financial success for the family (e.g., Lee & Koo, 2006; Waters, 2002). In the 1990s, a large number of families from Hong Kong and Taiwan migrated to English speaking countries, after which the father went back to the home country to keep his job. These families were often called “astronaut families” as the father usually shuttled back and forth between the home country and the host country (e.g., Aye & Guerin, 2001; Pe-Pua, Mitchell, Castles, & Iredale, 1998; Waters, 2002). In the late 1990s, South Korean families started to send their children abroad, often accompanied by their mother, while their father

stayed behind in the home country to support the family (Lee & Koo, 2006). In some cases, these Asian families send their children alone to English speaking countries for their studies (Kuo & Roysircar, 2006).

The transnational living arrangement entails many other risk factors such as emotional tolls on individual members of the family and financial expenses for maintaining two households and traveling internationally for family visits (Lee & Koo, 2006; Waters, 2002). Furthermore, the transnational living arrangement makes it challenging to maintain relationships with extended family members and friends, significantly reducing the size of families' social support network (Ho, 1992; Waters, 2002). In light of these unique challenges faced by transnational families, there is a need to conduct more research to increase our understanding of the impact of transnational migration on these families.

Against this backdrop, the purpose of this study is to review articles that have been published in the past two decades to examine the impact of transnational migration on Asian transnational families. Our particular focus is on: (a) examining the trends of research on transnational families in the past two decades; (b) exploring how the existing body of research advanced our knowledge in the topic area; (c) critically analyzing the content and methodology of the empirical studies to identify gaps in the literature; and (d) providing recommendations for future research and discussing implications for practice.

Methods

We carried out a literature review using three online databases (Psycinfo Ovid, Eric CSA and Sociology CSA), and searched for publications that

contained different combinations of the following truncated keywords using "and": astronaut families, diaspora, satellite children, immigrant adolescents, ethnic identity, development, and transnationalism. Publications were selected if they met the following criteria: (a) the study looked at the experiences of transnational families from Asia (China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Japan, and Korea); (b) the study examined the experiences of transnational families as a whole or individual members of the family (e.g., fathers, mothers, children); and (c) the study was published in English in peer-reviewed journals and book chapters from 1990 to 2009.[1] To ensure the rigor of studies that were reviewed, dissertations were excluded. Studies were also excluded from this review if they focused on the experiences of "parachute kids", or if both parents returned to the country of origin after immigration. The literature search yielded four articles meeting the inclusion criteria. Additional studies that met the inclusion criteria were found from the references of these four articles. In total, we reviewed ten publications of studies pertaining to transnational families from Asia. Among them, nine were qualitative and one was quantitative.

Results

Study Design and Methods

Seven out of ten studies reviewed in this paper were carried out in Canada and the remaining three were carried out in other English speaking countries- one in Australia and two in the United States (see Table 1). Although two of the studies included participants from other countries in the Asia Pacific for

[1] Studies that were published in Asian journals were not included because of language limitations.

comparative analysis, the primary participants in the studies were from Hong Kong, Korea, and Taiwan. The time span of the studies reviewed in this paper coincided with the emergence of transnational families in English speaking countries in the Western hemisphere. This transnational phenomenon was closely tied to the introduction of business immigration programs (BIPs) in Canada, the United States and Australia in the late 1980s that were designed to bring capital investment and new business ventures into their countries (Wong, 2004).

The most common method of data collection of the qualitative studies was in-depth interviewing with semi-structured interviews, and focus groups were used in a small number of studies. The quantitative study collected data through phone and face-to-face interviews. In terms of the selected language of interviews, in Chee's (2003) and Wong's (1997) studies, participants were interviewed in Mandarin and Cantonese. Tsang et al. (2003) gave their participants the choice of having their interviews conducted in English, Cantonese, or Mandarin. The remainder of studies did not indicate the language(s) used for interviews.

Most of the studies recruited parents and key informant service providers for their interviews such as immigrant service providers and members of the host community (Creese, Dyck & McLaren, 1999). However, parents' perspectives were mostly from mothers; the perspectives of fathers were rarely discussed in the studies. Furthermore, children's perspectives were also seldom reported in the studies, with the exception of the study by Tsang et al. (2003).

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The Focus of Studies and Main Findings

In this section, we will examine three main themes that we identified in the results of the studies reviewed in this paper: (1) primary reasons for migration, (2) motivations for the transnational arrangement, and (3) outcomes of the dual household arrangement.

Primary reasons for migration. Overall, studies indicated that one of the most significant factors influencing families to immigrate to a new country was for better educational opportunities for their children (Chee, 2003; Creese, et al., 1999; Lee & Koo, 2006; Pe-Pua et al., 1998; Waters, 2002; Wong, 1997). For example, in Wong's (1997) study on transnational families from Taiwan and Hong Kong in Canada, almost all of the participants interviewed (89%) indicated that they chose to come to Canada for better opportunities for their children. Similarly, Taiwanese who participated in Creese et al.'s (1999) study reported that educational opportunities were central to their sense of hope and purpose in Canada.

The political threat in the home country was another important factor that motivated families to emigrate (Chee, 2003; Lam, 1994; Pe-Pua et al., 1998). In Chee's (2003) study on Taiwanese American transnational women, respondents cited that the political situation in Taiwan was the second most influential factor contributing to their decision to emigrate. The political situation in Hong Kong had an even larger impact on resident families in their decision to leave their country. In Lam's (1994) study on transnational families from Hong Kong in Toronto, all respondents cited the political change anticipated after the impending

Chinese sovereignty in 1997 as the primary reason for leaving the country. Families disclosed that they did not trust the promises made by British and Chinese governments that the transition to Chinese rule would happen smoothly. Pe-Pua et al. (1998) reported the same results in their study on transnational families from Hong Kong in Australia.

In addition to educational and political situations in their home countries, other psychosocial factors influenced transnational families' decision to pursue immigration. Some families were able to visit the destination country prior to making a decision, or they were informed by family or friends who had studied there (Wong, 1997). In some cases, previous visits to the destination country and relatives and friends living in the host country served as deciding factors (Pe-Pua et al., 1998). Some families reported that the presence of ethnic communities in the home country made the prospect of adapting to a new life abroad far less daunting (Tsang et al., 2003; Wong, 1997).

Motivations for transnational living arrangement. Two different themes were noted in the results of studies in regards to transnational families' motivation to maintain dual-households in two countries. For some families, the transnational living arrangement was a planned strategy they chose to secure a better future. Other families, however, had to resort to the transnational living arrangement due to difficulties they encountered while settling in the host country.

In the former case, some variations in the families' motivation for a transnational living arrangement were observed depending on the country of origin. Korean participants in Lee and Koo's (2006) study, for example,

anticipated the need for the father to return to or stay in the home country for business reasons. This living arrangement was viewed as a necessary sacrifice to achieve the long-term collective familial goals of providing better educational opportunities for the children (Lee & Koo). On the other hand, most participants in Pe-Pua et al.'s (1998) study reported that they emigrated from Hong Kong with the hopes of being able to return one day if the economy recovered from the Chinese takeover. In other words, they maintained dual household arrangements in order to keep their options open.

For cases in which families did not plan or anticipate living in a dual-household arrangement, unemployment or underemployment in the host country provided the greatest impetus for entering this type of arrangement. Studies revealed that Asian immigrants face multiple barriers to employment in the host country making it difficult for them to adjust and settle there (Chee, 2003; Lam, 1994; Pe-Pua et al., 1998). These barriers include limited command of the English language, limited transferability of training or education obtained in the home country, work-culture barriers, and ethnic discrimination (Chee, 2003). As a result, many parents of immigrant families experience unemployment or underemployment. With both parents struggling to find suitable occupations, many families resort to the transnational arrangement, in which the mother can stay home with the children and reduce childcare and housekeeping costs while the father returns to the home country to continue his previous employment or start a new business.

A few studies reported work-related challenges faced by Asian families who immigrated to either Canada or Australia under the business immigration programmes (BIPs) that were established in 1978 and 1976 respectively in these countries. Asian families who migrated under the auspices of the Canadian or Australian BIPs as entrepreneurs faced significant challenges establishing their businesses because they were unprepared for the host country's taxation system, salary, and pollution regulations (Lam, 1994; Pe-Pua et al., 1998; Smart, 1994). An additional challenge faced by immigrants of the BIP is that they lacked contacts and industry connections (Smart, 1994). For example, some participants in Smart's study who had immigrated to Calgary faced substantial losses in the garment industry because of their lack of local connections, their limited understanding of the Canadian market, and government regulations that significantly raised the cost of business operations.

Another factor influencing families to enter into a transnational living arrangement was the shift of the mother's employment status (Chee, 2003; Lam, 1994; Pe-Pua et al., 1998; Waters, 2002). Professional women from Taiwan and Hong Kong often abandoned their careers in the host country due to difficulty finding employment that matched their skills, training and experience, and loss of support from domestic helpers, friends, and family. Families who migrated with the intention of maintaining dual-income households in the host country were often unprepared for the challenges and forced into a transnational arrangement (Pe-Pua et al., 1998; Waters, 2002).

Lastly, ability to form a transnational business kinship group was identified as another motivating factor for entering a transnational family arrangement. According to Wong (2004), family members often form business teams, wherein children or spouses are based in North America while the father pursues business networks in Asia. In face of barriers that immigrant families experience in the host country, the head of the household would travel back to the home country to seek information and maintain business relations there. This often led families to live in a dual-household arrangement, especially if transnational business prospects were more lucrative than the pursuit of local opportunities.

Outcomes of the dual household arrangement. There were several notable themes that emerged from studies regarding the outcomes of the transnational arrangement, all of which were related to shifts in family relationships and individual roles within the family. In regards to marital relationships, findings were inconclusive. Some studies reported that marital relationships improved with the dual household arrangement (Chee, 2003; Lee & Koo, 2006), whereas others reported marriages failing with the long-distance, often resulting in infidelity or divorce (Lam, 1994; Waters, 2002). The results of Chee's study in the United States, for example, exemplified the inconclusive outcomes of spousal relationships in transnational arrangements in its findings; in some cases, marital relationships improved because the distance created a renewed sense of love and increased appreciation. In other cases, however, couples reported feelings of loneliness, increased conflict and divorce. Similarly, participants in Lam's study

reported that they had serious arguments when they were together in Canada, and many marriages ended in divorce. Other studies reported yet different findings. Respondents in Lee and Koo's study on Korean transnational families in the United States, for example, unanimously reported that their marriages remained unchanged throughout the years of geographical separation. While Chee reported that there was a relationship between the length of the couple's marriage pre-migration and marital stability post-migration, more studies need to be conducted to further examine the relationship between these two variables.

Several studies also noted changes in parent-child relationships. For example, two studies revealed that children developed resentment towards their parents for putting too much emphasis on their academic achievement (Creese et al.,1999; Lam, 1994). Changes in the parent-child dynamics were also reported by parents in several studies. Many parents disclosed feeling disconnected from their children's educational experiences because of language and cultural barriers, and also felt less capable of disciplining them (Lam, 1994; Lee & Koo, 2006; Pe-Pua et al., 1998). The challenges in parent-child communication were lessened by the presence of large Chinese communities in the form of "ethnospecific economies" (Tsang et al., 2003, p.373) such as shopping malls, restaurants, and television in host countries (Creese et al., 1999; Tsang et al., 2003). Also, advanced information technology helped the children to stay in touch with families in their country of origin (Tsang et al., 2003). In addition, notable shifts take place in the relationship between mothers and children. In light of their limited command of English, mothers tend to rely on their children as "cultural brokers" and ask them

to manage certain household tasks such as bill payment (Pe-Pua et al., 1998; Tsang et al., 2003). In many cases, the eldest children were expected to share parental responsibilities with their mothers in Canada.

In addition to the shifts in spousal relationships and parent-child relationships, studies also reported a significant redistribution of gender roles within the family. In several studies, women reported having abandoned their careers after migration to assume more traditional roles of full-time mothers and wives bearing all of the household and childcare responsibilities, while their husbands lived in the home country (Chee, 2003; Pe-Pua et al., 1998; Waters, 2002). Although this change was challenging for most respondents at the beginning, with time many women reported a newfound sense of independence because of laws supporting women's rights in the host country, and from learning to manage their household without their husbands (Chee, 2003; Creese, 1999; Waters, 2002).

Discussion

Implications for Research

Studies reviewed in this paper raise some important questions in terms of the chosen design and methods. For one, the vast majority of studies were qualitative and cross-sectional in nature, which reflects the current status of the literature. The field is at the beginning stages of information-gathering and is relatively new. Studies only began to emerge throughout the 1990s and the early 2000s, dates that coincided with major political and economic changes in Asia and a wave of migration to English-speaking countries. For future developments

in the field, the use of quantitative measures would be beneficial to examine relationships between different variables identified in the qualitative studies. In doing so, our understanding of the consequences of the transnational arrangement for families themselves, their surrounding communities, and government policies will deepen. In addition, it would be advisable for researchers to conduct studies that look at the long-term implications of transnational families. An alternative to a long-term follow-up study would be a retrospective cross-sectional study in which participants are asked to reflect on their experiences at a certain time point.

In terms of data collection, the majority of studies emphasized the perspectives of parents in the transnational arrangement, especially mothers. Considering the primary motivation behind migration is to enhance the educational and professional opportunities for the children, including children's perspectives in the literature is essential to gain a full understanding of the long-term implications for the family. Another important consideration for researchers is to expand information gathering to multiple sources (i.e. teachers, counsellors). Although two studies in this review held focus groups with service providers (Creese et al., 1999; Pe-Pua et al., 1998), it would be beneficial to include home and host country community members to broaden our understanding of the impact of the transnational phenomenon beyond family units.

Surprisingly, most of the literature does not look at the implications of the transnational family arrangement for the fathers, except for Lee & Koo's (2006) study on lone fathers in Korea. Lee & Koo's study revealed that fathers experienced a great deal of loneliness and hardship being away from their

families. However, the high level of devotion and commitment to the long-term family goals made the situation bearable for them. The minimal representation of fathers in the literature creates an incomplete picture of the phenomenon.

In addition to the individual experiences of mothers and fathers in the transnational arrangement, studies also reported changes in parent-child relationships. Challenges in parent-child communication were reported as being related to differences in their levels of acculturation in the host country. The generational gap reported by some of the studies reviewed here was consistent with what is documented on intact immigrant families (e.g., Bacallao & Smokowski, 2007). The presence of dense Chinese communities (Creese et al., 1999), however, served to lessen this gap.

There are still many questions that remain unanswered in terms of transnational children's experiences. Children's perspectives are lacking in most of the literature on Asian transnational families. Furthermore, no research to date has looked at the implications of the dual household arrangement for children's identity development and familial relationships in the long run. It would be important to explore whether or not this arrangement has positive long-term outcomes for children, both professionally and personally. This information could have important implications for Asian family premigratory decision-making. Considering that one of the main 'push' and 'pull' factors that influence families' decision to migrate is for the children's education and future, one may ask whether children's futures are improved from the significant sacrifices made by parents from the dual household arrangement. Based upon study findings in this

review alone, the social costs of entering the transnational arrangement are quite high.

Another important question to ask in regards to the effects of the dual household arrangement on children relates to gender differences in the outcomes. Gender-biased parenting is commonly observed among cultures all over the world, and can serve to enlarge acculturation gaps and parent-child conflicts among immigrant families (Elizur, Spivak, Ofran & Jacobs, 2007). Accordingly, parental expectations of male versus female children, and the types of constraints placed upon them may differ in transnational families. As a result, long term outcomes for children may vary depending on their gender.

An interesting topic worth further exploration in the literature is the impact of information technology (IT) on transnational families. Tsang et al. (2003) touched upon this in their study on transmigrant youth. Participants in their study reported that they had regular contact with their absent parent (usually the father) through email and phone. The emergence of more sophisticated means of communicating via online programs such as Skype, Facebook, Twitter, Meetup, and LinkedIn has dramatically increased long-distance contact between transmigrant family members. Innovations in IT have two important implications for Asian transnational families: For one, it may increase the likelihood of future transnational family arrangements, and, secondly, it may contribute to a growing phenomenon of what Vertovec (1999) refers to as “dispora consciousness” (p. 450) in which transnational family members are able to maintain dual or multiple

identities simultaneously. Membership to their communities would not be bound strictly by a physical locality or national boundaries.

The "diaspora consciousness" that has been made possible by the rapid emergence of cyber programs has the most significant impact on youth: they are now exposed to many cultural beliefs and value systems simultaneously through their online networks, and they are in a position to create "hybrid" (Vertovec, 1999, p. 451) cultural identities by self-consciously selecting and elaborating on the values from several cultures. It would be worthwhile to explore the long term implications of transmigrant adolescent "hybrid" cultural identities for Asian transnational families in future studies.

Implications for Practice

In this section, we will make several recommendations for practitioners based on our review of the literature.

Examine your assumptions and biases about transnational families. A key component in the provision of culturally-sensitive counselling services to transmigrants is practitioners' awareness of (a) their own cultural values, and (b) their client's culture and its impact on the client and client systems (Arthur & Collins, 2007). As a first step in providing culturally-sensitive services, it is important for practitioners to be aware of their own cultural values and how these values influence their interpretations or understandings of their clients (Arthur & Collins). To do so, practitioners need to engage in self-reflection to examine how their cultural background shaped their values, worldviews, and belief systems (Hays, 2008). Furthermore, clinicians need to examine any assumptions or

stereotypes that they may have about the members of a specific client population and how such assumptions or stereotypes may influence their judgment when working with clients from that population.

In the cases of Asian transmigrants, the dual-household living arrangement may be a family decision that cannot be easily understood outside of their cultural contexts, in their home and host countries. Some may question whether it is worthwhile for transnational families to endure emotional and financial sacrifice of family separation for an untested promise of a better life in the future. Anecdotal evidence also shows that transnational families are often viewed as upper-class families with a great deal of financial resources who could easily afford material goods and services they need, which may lead others to assume that they do not need help. Practitioners may not be immune from such assumptions and biases. In addition, as previous research has indicated, Asian immigrant students are especially vulnerable to "model minority" stereotypes for having such high levels of academic achievement (i.e., Yeh, 2003). The assumption that their academic success is interchangeable with psychological, social and work realms of their lives is unfounded by research. Instead, studies in this review reveal parental reports of concern about their children's mental health and socialization (Creese et al., 1999).

Explore pre-migratory experiences of transnational families. In order to work effectively with Asian transmigrants, clinicians need to be aware of unique issues that contextualize their experiences. As indicated in the results section, one of the important aspects of Asian transmigrant experiences that needs to be

explored is what led them to decide to seek transnational living arrangements. Examinations of “push” factors in the home country and “pull factors” in the host country (Pe-Pau et al., 1998) will help practitioners to contextualize these families’ expectations of and level of satisfaction about the transnational living arrangement later on. For example, for those families who were drawn to opportunities in English-speaking countries because they were dissatisfied with the educational systems in their home countries, their level of satisfaction regarding the transnational living arrangement would be heavily influenced by the quality of education their children receive in the host country. On the other hand, for transnational families who were drawn to economic and political stability in the host country, the quality of education may not be of utmost importance as it would be for transnational families in the other group.

Another important aspect of pre-migratory experiences of transnational families that needs to be explored is whether these families planned such living arrangements or not. According to study findings, a key predictor in the outcome of the transnational arrangement for the family as a unit was the degree to which they anticipated dual household living circumstances. While some transnational families enter into dual household living arrangements with clear future plans, other families had to fall back on this living arrangement because of failure in securing professional or business opportunities in the host country after immigration (Lam, 1994; Pe-Pua et al., 1998; Smart, 1994). Even though no empirical study has directly examined the differences between these two groups explicitly, it is not hard to imagine that the subjective experiences of these two

groups would be significantly different. Thus, inquiring about the types of familial migration undertaken by clients will demonstrate practitioners' sensitivity toward intra-group differences that may exist within the transnational family population.

Attend to changes experienced by the family as a whole as well as individual family members. Working with transnational families will require vigilant attention to both experiences of families as a whole as well as adjustment underwent by individual family members. This would be an important issue to consider whether the practitioner works with the family as a unit or individual members of the family. As Waters (2002) pointed out, different family members experienced transnationalism in very different ways. According to family systems theory, the whole family unit comprises more than the sum of its parts (Kaslow, Dausch & Celano, 2005). The family unit's delicate homeostasis is supported and maintained by the communication and interaction between subsystems (i.e., parent-child, spousal, sibling). According to Kaslow and colleagues, healthy family functioning involves a balance between change and stability in which family members know their roles and yet are flexible to adapt their roles to changing living circumstances. In the cases of transnational families, role redistribution was inevitable with the geographical separation of family units, and the family's ability to adapt to such changes contributed to its overall functioning. In fact, this was a common theme that emerged across the literature. Many women, for example, experienced an unusual paradox in the process of their role changes from career women to full time mothers: on the one hand, they felt a

significant loss of independence from giving up their careers, a fuller social life, and childcare support from family in their former home. On the other hand, women expressed a newfound sense of independence in the host country because of laws that protect women's rights and more equality within the family, and a cultural expectation to share decision-making with husbands. According to Waters, this shift in women's familial roles caused a great deal of strain on their marriages.

It was also well documented in the literature that children often experienced role confusion in the transnational arrangement because they found themselves playing the role of "cultural brokers" for their parents. The increased sense of responsibility among transnational children may have contributed to the corrosion of parental disciplinary roles. As reported by Pe-Pua et al. (1998), parents in their study felt they could no longer discipline their children in the host country.

In their study on Korean fathers in transnational arrangements, Lee & Koo (2006) reported that fathers felt less capable of disciplining their children because they lived away from the family home. Considering that in most Asian families, fathers traditionally take on the role of the disciplinarian in the family (Hong & Ham, 2000), the physical absence of fathers in the transnational arrangement would have significant implications for the functioning of the family as a unit.

In sum, the transnational living arrangement brings unique challenges to each member of the transnational family. Yet, even with the physical separation, experiences of individual members of the family are heavily influenced by the

changes that other family members go through. Thus, it is especially important for practitioners to pay special attention to the dynamic of the entire family even when working with individual members of transnational families and vice versa.

Explore transnational families' plans for the future. In light of research findings that indicate the negative impact of transnational families' inability to set long-term plans and goals for their futures on their emotional well-being (Lam, 1994), it would be important for practitioners to explore the future plans of transnational families. The literature on Asian transnational families certainly presented a high level of individual and familial uncertainty or ambivalence about the future. As reflected in the term that Skeldon (1994) coined as "reluctant exiles" in reference to emigrants from Hong Kong, for many of these families, migration was considered a temporary solution to secure their finances and obtain citizenship in a foreign country in the event that the political economy in their home country collapsed under Chinese rule. For example, in Lam's study on transnational families from Hong Kong living in Toronto, participants were unprepared for the day-to-day hardship of the dual household arrangement because they anticipated one day returning to Hong Kong. In other words, Asian families who perceived their migration as temporary were less committed to building their careers and their lives in the receiving country, resulting in more psychological and emotional hardship.

This has significant implications for goal setting in clinical practice. While practitioners may view integration into the host communities as a desirable outcome of clinical work, clients who view their stay in Canada as a temporary

arrangement may not be interested in investing their time to settle into the host country. Considering that mutual agreement on goals in clinical work is considered a crucial element of alliance building, and that the therapeutic alliance itself is deemed the most important factor in producing positive outcomes in therapy (Bordin, 1994; Luborsky, 1994; Vasquez, 2007), such a discrepancy between the practitioner's and the client's goals may pose challenges in establishing a constructive therapeutic relationship.

Conclusion

Research conducted to date on Asian transnational migrants primarily to Australia, Canada, and the United States has reflected the complexity of individual and family relationships within this population. The main factors influencing Asian transnational families to enter into a dual household arrangement are similar across departure countries—dissatisfaction with the educational and political systems in their home countries, and the hopes of better opportunities for their children in the host country. The level of family pre-departure preparedness was an important predictor in the outcomes of the transnational living arrangement for individual family members and the family unit as a whole. Families who immigrated with the expectation of geographical separation experienced less emotional and psychological difficulties after migration. In turn, these families were also more resilient in coping with the unfamiliar language, culture, and surroundings because they had clearer plans for the future. Clear goals and future projections were important contributors to individual and familial resilience throughout the process of adjustment in the host

country. In order to provide culturally-sensitive services, practitioners working with Asian transmigrant families should gain awareness of the effects of the dual household arrangement on their client's emotional well-being and cultural adaptation to the host society. Despite the contributions of the existing body of literature, the literature on Asian transnational families is still at an early stage of development, and more studies need to be conducted to fill the aforementioned gaps in the literature.

A Qualitative Examination of the Experiences of Taiwanese Transnational Youth in Vancouver

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Abstract

This study examines the experiences of Taiwanese transnational youth in Vancouver using a phenomenological approach. More specifically, this study seeks to explore the following research questions: (1) How did Taiwanese transnational youth understand their family's decision to enter a transnational arrangement?; (2) How did Taiwanese transnational youth's family dynamics and individual familial relationships change over time?; and (3) How has the experience of transnational migration affected Taiwanese transnational youth's sense of identity and their plans for the future? To cope with challenges induced by changes in family dynamics and peer relationships, the participants of the study seem to develop a sense of independence which in turn lead them to develop a stance of "ambivalent outsider" in the host country as well as in their home country. Implications for research and counselling practices are explored and practical suggestions are made to increase the effectiveness of service provider outreach and cultural sensitivity with this population.

A Qualitative Examination of the Experiences of Taiwanese Transnational Youth in Vancouver

Introduction

In the last few decades, globalization has set off an unprecedented rise in international migration, fostering a dramatic shift in family structures worldwide (Schiller, 1992; Suãrez-Orozco, Todorova, & Louie, 2002). More and more, families are entering transnational living arrangements in order to secure citizenship in another country (Ong, 1999). The transnational family strategy is viewed as a means for families to safeguard themselves from impending political and economic instability in their home country while also taking advantage of better educational and economic situations in another country (Tsang, Irving, Alaggia, Chau, & Benjamin, 2003).

Among many subgroups of transnational families, families from Asia started to emerge in the past two decades. Unlike in South American and Caribbean transnational families in which one of the parents moves to a new country to secure a job that can support the rest of family in the home country (Suãrez-Orozco et al., 2002), Asian transnational families often send the mother and children to the new country while the father stays behind in the home country to work. These families have become known as “astronaut” or “flying trapeze” families because the father travels back and forth between the home and host countries to visit their families (Ip, Wu & Inglis, 1998; Pe-Pua, Mitchell, Castles, & Iredale, 1998; Waters, 2002).

A noticeable trend among transnational families is that they are motivated to enter into a dual household arrangement as a strategy to increase the likelihood of future financial and social success for the family as a whole (Lee & Koo, 2006; Waters, 2002). The first wave of Asian transnational families came from Hong Kong and Taiwan in the early 1990s. The threat of Chinese takeover in Hong Kong and the political and economic instability in Taiwan at the time (Johnson & Lary, 1994) stimulated a large migration of families from these respective countries to English-speaking countries. Primarily motivated by the lack of employment opportunities in the host countries that matched immigrants' skills, training, and salary expectations, many families chose to enter a transnational arrangement in which the father could earn a much higher salary in the home country to support the family in the host country. There has been a substantial migration of Korean families to English-speaking countries as well, seeking better educational opportunities for their children (Lee & Koo, 2006). Often called "kirogi" families, which is Korean for migratory birds, wild geese (Lee & Koo), these families enter transnational arrangements in which the father stays behind to work while the mother and children begin a new life in the host country.

Despite transnational families' hopes for better lives, research indicates that transnational living arrangements also engender negative emotional, financial, and social consequences for individual members of families and families as a whole (e.g., Chee, 2003; Pe-Pua et al., 1998; Tsang et al., 2003). Several studies reported that physical distance between spouses and the wives' new found sense of independence often created a shift in marital relationships

(Chee, 2003; Creese, Dyck, & McLaren, 1999; Lam, 1994; Waters, 2002). It is also reported that parents feel cultural gaps with their children due to language barriers and different levels of acculturation (Lam, 1994; Lee & Koo, 2006; Pe-Pau et al., 1998). All of these strains in Asian transnational families seem to result in individual family members experiencing feelings of isolation and depression (Lam, 1994; Waters, 2002).

The family member most affected by the transnational arrangement is the adolescent child. Research shows that transnational youth encounter discrimination, verbal abuse (Wu, Ip, Inglis, Kawakami & Duivenvoorden, 1998) and a fragmented sense of identity (Creese et al., 1999; Tsang et al., 2003); experiences common to all immigrant youth. What sets transnational youth apart from immigrant youth, however, are the unique challenges they experience as a result of family separation. For example, children of transnational families are reported to feel a heightened level of parental pressure to succeed academically because of the family sacrifice in transnational living (Creese et al.; Tsang et al.). Furthermore, research indicates that due to the absence of the father, transnational children are likely to take on far more responsibility in the household and act as cultural brokers for their mother (Pe-Pau et al., 1998; Tsang et al.). The increase in responsibility combined with a drastically reduced network of peer and extended family support from their home country renders this population especially vulnerable to mental health issues (Aye & Guerin, 2001).

As adolescents, transnational youth are a population deemed vulnerable to psychosocial adjustment difficulties to begin with, and the added strains of

immigration and family separation through the transnational arrangement create living circumstances that are exceptionally challenging for youth. Despite significant psychological and emotional difficulties that transnational youth face, the vast majority of research conducted on transnational families focuses on the experiences of the parents. While some studies have included the experiences of youth, they mostly relied on parents' reports on their children's experiences. Also, the long-term impact of the dual household living arrangement on transnational youth remains unexamined.

Purpose of the Study

To fill these gaps in the literature, this study aims to explore children's perspectives of entering a transnational living arrangement and the psychosocial consequences of such an arrangement using the qualitative method. It is believed that giving voice to transnational youth is key in providing transnational family members and helping professionals with a clearer picture of the consequences of entering a dual household arrangement, and ways in which communities can better support transnational youth. Retrospective interviews are used to capture the long-term impact of dual household living on Taiwanese transnational youth. Although several Asian ethnic groups are entering into transnational living arrangements in Canada, this study seeks to explore one ethnic group, Taiwanese youth, in order to minimize the influence of differences in pre-migratory circumstances on the results of the study. We believe that focusing on one specific ethnic group is appropriate given that this study examines the impact of transnational living on family dynamics rather than the broader socioeconomic

and political consequences of this type of family migration on host and home countries. We reasoned that drawing participants from one ethnic group would limit variations of the themes that may emerge from variability in participants' country of origin.

More specifically, this study seeks to explore the following research questions: (1) How did Taiwanese transnational youth understand their family's decision to enter a transnational arrangement?; (2) How did Taiwanese transnational youth's family dynamics and individual familial relationships change over time?; and (3) How has the experience of transnational migration affected Taiwanese transnational youth's sense of identity and their plans for the future? The qualitative method was chosen because it is considered a better tool for answering "how" or "what" questions and it allows the researcher to obtain rich information on the subjective experiences of participants that cannot be captured in the analyses of statistical significance of results in the quantitative method (Morrow, 2007). Among many qualitative approaches, the phenomenological approach was chosen because it focuses on the "description of universal essence" (Creswell, 2007, p. 58) of participants' experiences and was deemed fitting for the exploratory nature of this study.

Methods

Participants

Participants were recruited using a purposeful sampling approach (Patton, 2002) to select cases that would provide rich information. In order to be eligible for the study, participants had to be in their 20s and had to have immigrated to

Canada in their adolescent years between the ages of 12 and 19, thus having received secondary education in Canada. We targeted individuals in their 20s because we reasoned that Taiwanese transnational youth who moved to Canada during their adolescent years in the 1990s would be in their 20s now. Also, participants had to have one parent living in Taiwan and another parent moving back and forth between Canada and Taiwan. We excluded so called "parachute kids" who were sent alone to a foreign country without their parents to pursue education.

Participants were 6 in total (4 male and 2 female) from the metropolitan Vancouver area. They ranged in age from 23 to 27 years at the time of the interview, with a mean age of 26. Participants immigrated to Canada between the ages of 12 and 16 years. All participants had one parent living in Taiwan after immigrating to Canada; five of whom had fathers working in Taiwan while only one had a mother working in Taiwan.

Among participants, 4 were full-time university students (two in graduate school and two in undergraduate school) and 2 had full-time jobs. All participants had at least one sibling. In terms of religious affiliation, 4 participants identified themselves as Christian, one participant as Buddhist, and one participant as non-religious.

Insert table here

Procedures

Participant recruitment started in December 2008 through flyers posted at a university campus, recruitment emails sent to a Taiwanese student association, and advertisement at non-profit multicultural organizations, immigrant services, and Taiwanese religious organizations. A snowball sampling was also used. Six individuals expressed interest in participating in the study. Interviews were conducted from February to March of 2009 by the first author and her bilingual research assistant. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews. An interview protocol and predetermined prompts were used to ensure consistency across interviews. Consistency across interviews was particularly important because interviews were conducted in two languages – English or their native language, Mandarin. Prior to conducting interviews, participants were asked if they had a language preference. We reasoned that it would be important for the participant to have their interview conducted in the language by which they felt most comfortable in expressing their inner experiences in order to obtain rich data of participants' experiences. Three participants chose to be interviewed in English and the other 3 participants preferred to be interviewed in Mandarin. The first author conducted the English interviews, and her bilingual research assistant conducted the Mandarin interviews. Under the supervision of the first author, the research assistant conducted a pilot interview in English to see if any modifications to the interview protocol were necessary, and for the research assistant to gain practice conducting semi-structured interviews.

Prior to commencing the interviews, participants gave their written consent and were asked to fill out a one-page demographic questionnaire. Interviews were conducted at a location that was convenient for participants as long as the privacy could be ensured. At participants' requests, most interviews were conducted in their homes or in a reserved room at the library. Interviews were audio-recorded, and they lasted 30 to 60 minutes in duration. Upon obtaining interviews, they were safely stored on two USB keys belonging to the primary researcher. Three research assistants, the auditor, and the primary researcher were the only people that had access to the interview data. When a member of the research team reviewed or analyzed interview data on their computer, they were instructed to promptly delete it from their computers in order to protect the confidentiality of study participants. Interviews were transcribed and translated by two additional bilingual research assistants. The research assistants who translated the Mandarin interviews were instructed to translate the interviews word for word as much as possible. If the diction became unclear as a result of the direct translation, the Mandarin sentences were paraphrased into English to achieve conceptual equivalency between the Mandarin text and the English text. Translation of Mandarin interviews was verified by the research assistant who conducted the interviews, and who also studied translation for her undergraduate degree.

Data Analysis

Among two approaches to phenomenology (i.e., hermeneutic phenomenology and transcendental phenomenology), the transcendental approach

was chosen for this study. Unlike hermeneutic phenomenology that focuses on the researcher's interpretation of data (van Manen, 1990), transcendental phenomenology focuses on a description of the core essence that runs through participants' experiences (Moustakas, 1994). Expanding upon Husserl's concept of "bracketing", transcendental phenomenology encourages researchers to examine their preconceived assumptions and experiences and set them aside to the best of their ability prior to data analysis (Creswell, 2007; Moustakas, 1994). The authors used a constant comparative method of data analysis (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994) to ensure rigorous analysis. Following an inductive approach to analysis, authors created categories based on the themes that emerged from the data itself and cross-checked the transcripts against the code words to ensure that each theme could be found in the transcripts. This step was followed by the development of a textural description (i.e., description of participants' experiences) as well as a structural description (i.e., conditions, situations, or context of participants' experiences) of participant's experiences, as recommended by Moustakas.

Trustworthiness of Data

Several steps were taken by the authors to ensure the trustworthiness of the data. Both authors reflected upon their past experiences and how these experiences contributed to their assumptions or biases going into the study. Each author bracketed their subjective stance prior to commencing data collection (Creswell, 2007; Moustakas, 1994). Also, peer review and auditing were used to increase rigor of the study.

Researchers' subjective stance. Prior to beginning data collection, researchers engaged in self-reflection to examine their biases on the topic and held a discussion in order to bring awareness to their assumptions and expectations of data outcomes. Also, the primary researcher kept notes in order to document her reflections on the interviews and the data collection process.

The first author, a Dutch Canadian female, has been developing expertise in international migration and its effects on family dynamics through her research experiences in cross-cultural adjustment of immigrants, and work experience in a non-profit multilingual employment assistant center for immigrants. Her educational backgrounds in international relations, anthropology, and counseling psychology enable her to analyze the subject matter from various angles. Furthermore, her work experience in Taiwan not only enabled her to familiarize herself with Taiwanese cultural values and political and social systems, but also deepened her understanding of challenges associated with cross-cultural adjustment. In terms of her assumptions about the topic, she understands the process of cultural adaptation as one that is psychologically and emotionally challenging for people, especially youth. She also expected that strong traditional family values in Asian cultures would allow Asian transnational families to cope with external stressors in a resilient manner.

The second author, a Korean female, has developed expertise in cultural adjustment of immigrants and international students through her research, clinical work, and outreach experiences. Her background in counseling psychology heightened her awareness on the psychological impact of the transnational

arrangement on transnational youth and their families. In addition, her first-hand experiences of bicultural navigation between Korean and Canadian cultures deepened her understanding of the intricate challenges associated with transnational migration. She expected that the transnational living arrangement would engender both positive and negative outcomes for transnational youth and their families.

Peer review and auditing. The peer reviewer was a Taiwanese graduate student studying her Master's in Theology. The peer reviewer reviewed the transcripts and the codes. Then, the first author and the peer reviewer engaged in several discussions about the coding of data to ensure that any preconceived notions on behalf of the first author were not brought into the coding. The coding scheme was further refined through this process. The peer reviewer also checked the translation of interviews to review their accuracy. The second author audited the coding of data and cross-analysis.

Results

Sixteen themes emerged from cross-analysis and were grouped into four categories. The four categories were pre-migratory experiences, post-migratory experiences, family dynamics, and social support. The common thread that seemed to run through these categories, capturing the essence of participants' experiences, was their heightened sense of independence as a result of their transnational lives. By a 'heightened sense of independence', we are referring to the tendencies of transnational youth to make conscious efforts to negotiate their cultural identities, engage in careful decision-making to ensure that their intrinsic

values are reflected in their choices, and maintain their own emotional homeostasis by either relying on themselves or calling upon another aspect of their social support networks. These coping mechanisms were developed by participants as a means to deal with the dramatic changes in their lives as a result of the transnational arrangement. Arriving at this place, however, was not an easy process for most participants. In fact, they lived through intense periods of loneliness, isolation, identity confusion and dislocation from their cultures, friends and family in the home country. They also struggled to connect with the people and the culture in the host country. Being "stuck" between two places, two identities, and essentially two lives, was a challenging experience for participants. In this section, variations of themes of the aforementioned four categories will be illustrated with quotes. These four categories represent the sequential process of transnational adjustment as well as contextual changes that take place as a result of transnational migration.

Pre-Migratory Experiences

Participants shared various aspects of their experiences and circumstances in Taiwan prior to immigrating to Canada. One of the most salient themes that emerged from data was the motivation to leave Taiwan. Half of participants identified dissatisfaction with the Taiwanese educational system as their primary motivation to leave Taiwan. For example, Participant 1's parents were concerned with the intensity and competitiveness of the educational environment.

> …when I was younger, the university only took about 30 percent of all the grads, of all the people of my age, so the entrance exam is very strict …

and my parents didn't want me to go through all the stress… people usually go to tutoring school, studying from 7 am 'till like 9,10 pm.

Participants also reported that the education in Taiwan did not balance academic learning and extra curricular activities. In addition to the educational situation, one participant reported that the political threat of China was also one of the main reasons for leaving Taiwan.

All but one participant discussed how their family reached a decision to leave Taiwan. Four participants reported that their parents reached a decision together and informed the children afterwards. Among these four participants, two participants had neutral reactions to the decision, whereas the other two had strong reactions to the decision. For example, Participant 5 pleaded with her mother to stay in Taiwan because she did not want to leave her friends. Participant 6, on the other hand, felt that moving to a new country was exciting and looked forward to the change. Unlike the participants who were not included in the decision-making process, Participant 3 reported that his parents held a family meeting to reach an agreement on the decision to leave Taiwan.

The majority of participants discussed their family's reasons for choosing Canada as a destination country. Reflecting their dissatisfaction with the Taiwanese educational system, half of participants reported that better education was the main reason for choosing Canada. A few participants also identified family connections in Canada and positive impressions of the country from prior visits as influential factors in their family's decision to move to Canada.

Another theme that emerged under this category was the participants' expectations of Canada. While all participants discussed this theme, their expectations were rather superficial in nature such as having to speak English, the size of the country and the food. For example, Participant 1 only had the expectation that she would see McDonald's and Pizza Hut fast food restaurants in Canada.

Post-Migratory Experiences

Four major themes emerged in the data representing participants' experiences adapting to Canada: post-migration adjustment, individual values and attitudes, cultural identity and plans for the future. In terms of participants' post-migration experiences, the overwhelming majority reported they felt lonely and lost, especially at the beginning. For example, Participant 3 explained that he did not have any friends when his family first immigrated and he felt very alone and detached. Similarly, Participant 5 expressed that she felt like an outsider, and that loneliness was always somewhere within her. Participant 2 reported feeling lost when she first arrived in Canada as well. Her psychosocial well-being continued to decline for years while she attended high school.

> I cried every day, like every day after school, I would come home and cry. Cause I was so lost, and I was really freaked out, like the day before the first day of school…I think I was struggling like the first 4 years, I would say…it was really painful, but you become, you begin to adjust, you become numb, I just thought it became like a routine, I would go there, sitting in front of teachers, not understanding a word, and come home.

In addition to feeling isolated and emotionally insecure, Participant 2 experienced more hardship when she was applying for university entrance and she failed to meet her parents' expectations of her:

> Yeah, but, and then, ah, so, I knew I was going to College Z, and I knew that I was disappointing my parents greatly, but, I got accepted by the college, so I didn't really have to go to the class anymore, didn't care. So, everyday I would go there, and she asked me about suicide, and I said yes, and she started the suicide…suicide watch. So I had to, I had ah, a counsellor, a school counsellor, and I had this lady, and then one of my best friends at the time. So, every morning, I would have to go and see three of, three of them, and my best friend would call me every night to make sure that I was okay. That's what I dealt with.

For Participant 4, feelings of isolation that she felt in the beginning were juxtaposed with a sense of powerlessness that resulted from not being able to express herself or her needs in her new environment.

The second theme that emerged in this category was changes in individual values and attitudes, which was reported by half of participants. Two participants shared that they grew up faster from taking on more family responsibility after migration, and they felt that this growth was positive. For example, Participant 1 explained that she had become more independent and opinionated as a person and would not "blindly follow" her friends. Contrary to these positive growing experiences, Participant 2 reported having low self-esteem and serious bouts of depression after migrating. As reported earlier, she even had suicidal thoughts

toward the end of her high school years. Because of the limited emotional support she received from her parents in her adolescence, she struggled to trust people as a young adult. More recently, however, Participant 2 reported that she has learned to accept herself and find solace in God.

The majority of participants discussed the shifts in their cultural identity and their values as a result of migration. A few participants reported that their perspectives broadened, and they became more open to other cultures and ways of thinking. Although they felt they had adopted some Western values from living in Canada, some participants reported that they still felt Taiwanese culture and family values deeply rooted within them. On the other hand, Participant 4 expressed that she felt much more comfortable with Canadian values:

> …in fact in Taiwan sometimes I felt stressed, because in Taiwan even though our financial condition was okay, but in home especially my parents sent me to private school, therefore, other people had better financial condition than me, they had name brand purses, something like these, that is Taiwan's values, that's to say girls should have a better purse. But for me, I prefer the values here, because I think you don't need a brand name purse to create your own identity, it should be you use whatever purse you like, even if it is handmade, just whatever, everything can be accepted.

Plans for the future (i.e., intention to stay in Canada) was another theme that emerged in this category. Two participants reported they felt torn about returning back to Taiwan. Participant 1, for example, reported she would like to

move back to Taiwan to take care of her parents in their old age. She felt ambivalent about returning to Taiwan, however, because her training in medicine would not be recognized there and it would be very difficult for her to find work.

> Well, I have to do my residency, and probably like training afterwards; and yeah, it is a bit of a dilemma for me right now, umm, job-wise it's hard for me to move back to Taiwan cause I have to get certificates and stuff, they don't just take, not just because I graduated from Canada, I can't employ myself in Taiwan easily, and then my parents are getting older now, and my father he just had a stroke, just two months ago, so, now, I am more think they don't have any, they only have me and my sister, right? And my sister also she studies at Western, kind of university in West Canada, so, she just cannot move immediately. And so, it's a little bit of a dilemma.

Participant 6 was challenged in making a decision about whether or not to return to Taiwan but for different reasons. He reported that he would rather live there, except he does not want to do the mandatory military service, nor does he want to live in such a polluted environment. Unlike these examples, two other participants reported they wished to stay in Canada to settle down and pursue further education.

Family Dynamics

Participants identified the shift in family dynamics as the most significant change that occurred as a result of the transnational living arrangement. Not only did the change affect the family as a whole, but also the individual relationships

among its members including the parent-child relationship, spousal relationship, sibling relationship, and relationships with the extended family.

As for the impact of the transnational living arrangement on the family as a unit, participants reported a wide range of changes. For half of the participants, the transnational living arrangement brought some positive elements to the family dynamics. For example, Participant 2 reported that the tension in her family would dramatically decrease when her father was in Taiwan.

> …when my dad was still living with us, it was the best thing if my dad went away. I would be so happy and so, seriously, we would be so happy when my dad was away.

In addition, Participant 6 shared that living apart from each other made his family treasure their time together more. Similarly, for Participant 5's family, the transnational living arrangement solidified the closeness among the family members living in Canada. However, the transnational living arrangement posed challenges to other families. For example, Participant 1 reported that her family members no longer turn to each other for emotional support because of the distance and make decisions on their own as a result. For Participant 4's family, living apart from each other was emotionally difficult.

> I feel I, fortunately, because my dad is always busy with the business, the feeling of distance is not that obvious, but more or less there are still some differences, because there is no subject to talk about, or there are some difficulties of communication because he doesn't really understand the life here.

Participants also reported several notable changes in the parent-child dynamic. The majority of participants reported that their mothers came to rely on them more for practical support because of their limited command of the English language. For example, mothers consulted with children for help with bill payment, banking, house purchasing, or translating documents.

> So, I am taking on more of a leadership role in terms of, you know, my mom doesn't speak a lot English, because when she came here she was 40, so it was hard for her to learn a new language, and my sister was in elementary school, so I was the person who was going out there, you know, and bringing home information, and when, you know, Telus calls, my mum gives me the phone, and things like that.

For Participant 2, the role reversal extended to an emotional level. Her mother confided in her and her siblings about her marital problems, and the possibility of divorce.

> …there was a funny thing like it was pretty bad, like the word divorce, but then when my dad was being unbearable, like my mom would talk about like, you know, she was like one day, I am going to have enough, I am going to, about to explode, like that. And I might divorce your dad. She was preparing us for it. But it never happened, we were ready. We were emotionally ready, like yeah, maybe that would be a good thing, you know.

Interestingly, Participant 2 did not reciprocate by seeking support from her mother. She reported that she did not feel that her mother could help her.

On the other hand, two participants reported that their relationships with their fathers improved as a result of the transnational living arrangement. For example, Participant 2 disclosed that since her father moved back to Taiwan, they actually miss each other and they have learned to communicate their feelings to one another. Similarly, Participant 1 reported that her relationship with her father was positive as they adopted a more friendship-based dynamic. Her father, however, did not feel the same way:

> I think that's a good idea, but umm, I don't know what my father feels, he feels sometimes we are a little too umm, you know, not polite enough by Chinese standards, and things like that. But it's a good idea, you know.

Unlike the unique mother-child and father-child dynamics previously discussed in this category, a few participants reported a shift in the dynamic with their parents as a unit. A few participants expressed feeling pressure because of their parents' high expectations of them. For example, Participant 6 reported having more respect for his parents because of the sacrifices they made immigrating to Canada. At the same time, he felt afraid that he might disappoint his parents or fail to meet their expectations. Participant 2 echoed similar feelings, reporting that she was under a lot of pressure to meet her parents' expectations of her, especially academically. She also questioned whether her parents' desire for her to be successful was the best for her.

All participants discussed changes in their parents' marital relationship as a result of geographical separation. Half of the participants reported that the transnational arrangement was challenging for their parents. Participant 1, for

example, reported that although her parents were still married, the distance was difficult for them and the passion in their relationship had faded over time. Similarly, Participant 3 recognized that the family separation was most difficult for his parents because they were unable to support each other through all of their hard work. The long distance arrangement was also challenging for Participant 6's parents because they felt lonely without each other.

Although half of participants reported the challenges experienced by their parents with the transnational arrangement, one participant reported that her parents' relationship improved once her father moved back to Taiwan:

> But like now, they talk on the phone all the time, but the disgusting thing is that they're like flirting with each other on the phone, and that would never, you know, we are not used to that. Like "I miss you", this and that, like take care of yourself, and like, you know, just flirting (Participant 2).

Participant 4 reported a very different perspective on her parents' relationship—she explained that they held a traditional Taiwanese concept of marriage and prioritized their roles as parents and role models to their children first rather than focusing on their own relationship as a couple.

Changes in sibling dynamics were also reported by most of the participants. Four participants noted that their relationships with their siblings grew closer after immigrating to Canada. For example, Participants 1 and 2 reported increased closeness with their siblings after migration. Interestingly, they qualified the closeness as an increase in dependency that helped them better cope with acculturative challenges. For example, Participant 4 reported that her siblings

relied on her more at the beginning because their English was not very good. However, their dependence waned over time as their command of the language improved. While Participant 5 shared that she became closer to her sister once they moved to Canada, she attributed this change to their age and maturity rather than immigration.

Another shift in family relationships raised by participants was their relationships with extended family members in Taiwan. Two salient patterns emerged in the data: for one, participants reported that most of their extended family was also abroad, thus they no longer reconnect in Taiwan. Secondly, a few participants reported that when they returned to Taiwan, their extended family felt they had changed as a result of living in Canada.

Social Support

All participants highlighted the importance of family, peers, and community organizations as sources of emotional support after moving to Canada. All but one participant reported that their family was their primary source of support. For example, Participant 4 shared that her family would always come first for her, regardless of circumstances in her life. Participant 1, on the other hand, reported that her family was the most important source of support for her, but only at the beginning. With time, she came to rely on other sources of support such as colleagues, the Church community, and her friends. Unlike the vast majority of participants, Participant 2 did not view her family as a source of support throughout her adjustment to living in Canada.

> I just felt that you can't rely on anybody. I couldn't rely on my family, so I just felt like, you know, you got to be independent. There's no point, if like nobody could help you, that was like people couldn't help you, why waste your time, you know.

Participants also discussed the importance of peer support, especially in the first few years after migration. Interestingly, all participants reported that their closest friendships were *intra-ethnic* (i.e., shared Taiwanese ethnicity). In some cases, these intra-ethnic relationships were forged with new friends they met in Canada, but the existing relationships with Taiwanese friends back home were also mentioned as an important sources of support. It was reported that these transnational peer relationships were maintained mainly through the use of the Internet.

In addition to their close intra-ethnic friendships, half of participants reported having friendships with peers from different ethnic backgrounds (i.e., *inter-ethnic*). A few participants cited benefits of their inter-ethnic relationships such as gaining a broader perspective. Also, a participant who developed friendships with Caucasian Canadians shared that she valued her relationships with her Canadian friends equally to her relationships with other Taiwanese friends because she felt that both groups represented important parts of her identity. These interethnic friendships, however, were not long-term.

Although participants had mostly positive things to say about their peer support networks, a few participants reported negative aspects of peer relationships. For example, Participant 2 disclosed that she was bullied a lot at her

high school when she first arrived in Canada, and her classmates would call her names:

> I had a guy who would follow me and bullied me almost every day, calling me monkey, monkey…but of course, I couldn't defend myself, so that's one reason I would come home and cry every day.

Participant 6 also raised the point that immigrant youth are the most easily influenced by peers at that age, and may turn to the wrong types of peers for friendship and a sense of belonging. In his experience, many of his friends made these choices:

> I think, if they came at this age (adolescence), it would be easy to get lost in the influence of peers, and so, if among their friends, there were some aggressive tendencies, or the background of gangsters, I think many of my friends were influenced as new immigrants, they were attracted by that. So I think for the government…the counseling of new immigrant youth is important as well, especially when it comes to finding out if there are gangster-related problems, they should start with the mental aspect to solve the problem because most of the time they just don't understand, because the only thing they can rely on is friends, at least for that age, it's friend.

All participants reported the importance of community organizations in providing support, especially immediately after moving to Canada. Participants discussed two different kinds of community organizations: the Church and non-profit immigrant services. The majority of participants reported that their Church

was an important source of support, especially in terms of building a network of other Taiwanese immigrant friends. A few participants sought resources from non-profit immigrant services when they first arrived, and reported that they met supportive friends through these channels.

Discussion

The core phenomenon of participants' reported experiences in this study was their heightened sense of independence. By positioning themselves on the fringes of both the host culture and their culture of origin, they were better equipped to cope with incongruence between their family values and the values of the surrounding environment. While participants' heightened sense of independence seems to serve them well in navigating between two cultures, it also seems to foster ambivalence about both cultures and uncertainty about the future. In the following section, we will discuss the contributing factors (i.e., changes in family dynamics and changes in peer relationships) of the core phenomenon (i.e., a heightened sense of independence) that emerged from the data and the implications of the core phenomenon for the participants' self-identity and future planning.

Changes in Family Dynamics

Changes in family dynamics caused by the transnational arrangement appeared to propel transnational youth who participated in the study to mature quickly and become more autonomous. One of the noticeable changes that seemed to be salient to the participants of the study was the physical and emotional unavailability of their parents. The absence of fathers in the home

affected the family balance in important ways—fathers were less able to provide emotional support to mothers and children, which weakened the family system. Consistent with findings of previous research (e.g., Waters, 2002), participants of this study reported that their mothers went through very difficult periods of loneliness and depression due to the lack of adequate support from their husbands, extended family, and housekeepers. Children and youth often do not seek support from parents when they are not perceived to be strong or stable enough to provide it (Lam, 1994). As several participants shared in the interviews, the physical absence of their fathers and the emotional unavailability of their mothers taught them to deal with their problems on their own.

The quality of family dynamics in the home country seems to have some influence on the shaping of the quality of family dynamics after transnational migration. In a foreign cultural environment without the support system from their home country, mothers and children may experience a collective sense of isolation and spend more time together. For mother and children family units that had good relationships, the situation may not be difficult. As illustrated by Participant 5's description of her home as a "cocoon", the safety of their home environment can serve as a refuge from the unfamiliar and large world around them. For mothers and children who did not have healthy dynamics, however, the vast amount of time spent together can be very difficult. The problems in family relations that could go unnoticed in the home country because of the distractions of extended family, friends and the demands of full lives could no longer be ignored. These families had to face their problems at a time when they felt the

least strength to do so. On the other hand, the opposite trend was observed for fathers' relationships with their wives and children. In some cases, for parents of participants who did not have a healthy spousal relationship in Taiwan, the distance created by the transnational arrangement was welcomed, even by the children. For these families, the physical absence of fathers was a better arrangement than living as an intact family that was conflict-ridden.

Another significant change that was reported by the participants of this study was the redistribution of roles in the family. Mothers bore all of the household responsibilities in Canada while fathers were in Taiwan. As a result, participants were given more responsibility because their mothers struggled to accomplish practical goals such as bill payment with their limited English. This outcome supports existing research that reported youth playing the role of 'cultural brokers' (e.g., Pe-Pau et al., 1998; Tsang et al., 2003). By taking on more responsibility in the household and playing the role of mediator between their mother and the English-speaking environment, many youth in this study gained coping skills before their time. Some participants viewed this shift as a role-reversal in which they adopted more of a peer-like relationship with their parents, actively engaging in family decision-making and sometimes providing guidance and advice to their parents. They also reported that the shift in family roles allowed them to be more self-sufficient and independent and gain the ability to take care of their own finances much sooner than their peers.

Changes in Peer Relationships

In addition to shifts in family dynamics, participants in this study faced significant changes in their peer relationships that contribute to their independent stance. For one, they are geographically separated from their peers in their home country. With time, maintaining contact became more difficult because they no longer have shared experiences with their Taiwanese peers. Supporting previous research conducted on Asian immigrant youth (Jou & Fukada, 1996; Yeh, 2003; Yeh & Inose, 2002), most participants in this study also encountered cultural and language barriers in forging relationships with their peers in the host country—this is especially challenging because their peers represent the dominant culture. An inability to connect with peers from the dominant culture served to further marginalize these youth. As a result, they struggled to gain a sense of belonging in the host culture. With the exception of making close friendships with other Taiwanese youth from their Church and social or immigrant community organizations, most participants in the study forged few inter-ethnic relationships and are quite isolated in their new lives in the host country.

There are both advantages and disadvantages to the struggles that transnational youth in this study experienced integrating with their peers in the host country. One of the advantages is that they learned to build their identity outside of the dominant culture and their culture of origin. Doing so was partly a function of adapting to the sensation of not belonging, and also a way of coping with this sensation. As a result, they came to adopt a more critical stance on the behaviors and choices made by their peers in both their home and host cultures.

The benefit of having this perspective is that youth are able to make their own decisions that are consistent with their values without being overly influenced by their peers. As one participant in this study reported, she would never "blindly follow" her friends—she always made careful decisions that suited her needs rather than following what her friends were doing.

One of the greatest disadvantages that participants in the study reported about having an independent stance from any peer group is loneliness. Being on the fringes of peer groups is a difficult and uncomfortable position for transnational youth to adopt. In the long run, however, the loneliness of being on the outskirts of social groups seems to pay off; all participants in this study, for example, reported that they appreciated the confidence they gained from making decisions independently from family and peers. Also, their choices tend to reflect their intrinsic values because external pressures—such as the desires of their parents, friends, and society at large—exert less influence on their life decisions.

"Ambivalent Outsider": Long-term Impact of Transnational Living

The long-term impact of transnational living on youth is a particularly interesting finding because it is unique to this study alone: to the best of our knowledge, this is the only study to date on Asian transnational youth that looks at the long-term implications of transnational living through retropective interviews. Youth reports add an integral piece of information to the literature on transnational families. It is, however, an area that has room for further exploration. As a result of being positioned on the fringes of their peer groups at school as new immigrants, and at a distance from their friends in their home

country, most participants of the study had an “outsider status” for quite some time. This outsider status was something participants experienced not only at school, but also in the broader contexts of their communities. It is clear from participants’ reports of their experiences adapting to living in Canada that being an outsider was extremely difficult at the beginning. Lacking a sense of belonging is challenging especially at the vulnerable age of adolescence, a time of constant growth and change, when support from family and peers is critical.

The outcomes of the transnational living arrangement for the youth in this study produced dualities in their common experiences. The first observed duality was in the temporal dimension of their emotional adaptation. The majority of participants reported that they experienced significant hardships in the first few years after moving to Canada. With time, however, they adapted their coping skills and learned to rely more on themselves, their faith, or their online friendships. Their coping skills enabled them to perceive their situations in a more positive light.

Another aspect of transnational youth’s experiences in this study that represented a duality was their stance as “ambivalent outsiders”. Participants’ sense of isolation became normal and accepted to the point where it became a part of who they were—outsiders. As they matured, they became aware of some of the benefits of this positioning in that they were able to act autonomously and make decisions that most fit their needs. Their self-concept, thus, was built around their outsider status. So, on a temporal dimension youth reported more negativity in the past and positivity in the present. What makes their sense of identity unique is that

most participants reframed their dislocated status into something more positive over time; they came to perceive themselves as strong, independent individuals who do not ‘follow the herd of sheep’.

For most participants of this study, being an outsider during their adolescent years seems to be reflected in the uncertainty about their future as they enter into young adulthood. The experience of being an outsider is common to both immigrants and transnational youth. However, what seems to set transnational youth apart is a more pronounced uncertainty about their futures. Most participants in this study were unsure of whether they would continue to live in the host country after graduating from university, move back to Taiwan, or take up residence in an entirely different country. Not only were their futures uncertain, but most participants of the study did not have a clear preference of where they would like to settle down. Transnational parents often have hopes that their children will return to Taiwan once they have completed their studies, but this hope is not always realized (Tsang et al., 2003). Eventually, transnational youth may find themselves in a catch-22 situation; the education in which their parents invested so highly may be at risk of becoming null and void in Taiwan where training and certification requirements are different.

Without having a clear picture of whether they will stay in Canada upon completion of their studies or join their parents in Taiwan, participants of this study seem to be far less emotionally and psychologically invested in the host country. They live in a prolonged state of ambivalence in which their acculturation to the host country is minimal and their attachment to their home

country is still very real (Tsang et al., 2003). This unique population is most likely to adopt what Vertovec (1999) refers to as a hybrid cultural identity which involves the synchronization and "creolization" (p. 451) of their culture of origin and the host culture. What we are beginning to see is the creation of an entirely new form of cultural identity among transnational youth.

Alternative Support System

The 'ambivalent outsider' stance of transnational youth who participated in this study seemed to have led them to seek alternative forms of support that do not fit into the traditional constraints of time and place. Largely as a means to cope with the reconfiguration of their family systems and the distance from their peers in their home country, many transnational youth in this study resorted to relying more on their religious faith and their online cyber-community of peers. Both forms of support transcend boundaries of time and place and provide reliable and consistent support which transnational youth so desperately need.

As reported by previous studies on Asian immigrant youth (Yeh, Ma, Madan-Bahel, Hunter, Jung, Kim, Akitaya & Sasaki, 2005), religious faith played an important role for participants. For one, it provided emotional and psychological support to participants. Some participants relied on God to support them under any circumstances, especially when they felt very alone. Secondly, their faith brought with it a sense of connectedness with the broader community of worshippers that met regularly at church. Several youth in this study relayed the importance of their friendships with other Taiwanese in this context. Despite these benefits, seeking solace and support primarily from their church kept

transnational youth from integrating into the host society. In other words, the church created a microcosm of Taiwan and the former lives of Taiwanese transmigrants, which might have prevented them from reaching out to the broader culture of the host country to become more involved.

In addition, the participants in this study also sought ways of staying connected to family and friends overseas and in their home country through the use of the internet. As discussed by Tsang and colleagues (2003), the more recent advent of internet sites (i.e. Facebook, Meetup, and Twitter) that serve to connect people and build communities across borders facilitate the maintenance of relationships for transnational youth. The exponential growth of internet media in the last few years will also provide more ease in the maintenance of long distance relationships for this population in the future. The internet, thus, provide a vehicle through which transnational youth may reach out to their communities without physically being together, enabling them to establish what Vertovec (1999) refers to as 'imagined communities' of shared history and interests. With the exception of Tsang et al.'s study, very few researchers have broached the topic of how innovations in information technology impact transmigrants. This study, thus, contributes to a relatively new topic that would be worthy of further exploration.

Implications for Future Research

This study has made unique contributions to the existing body of literature on the transnational family phenomenon. It is one of few studies that provides rich information on the experiences of transnational youth from their own perspectives. The outcomes of this research have provided insight into the

emotional and psychological costs of entering a transnational arrangement for youth. In addition to the challenges that transnational youth may face, the study also illuminated the rewards of entering a transnational arrangement—over time, youth developed a stronger sense of independence, a broader worldview, and confidence in their abilities. The most salient findings of this study are the long-term implications of the transnational arrangement for youth and for the family system as a whole. The retrospective interview utilized in this study allowed participants to reflect on the changes of their psychosocial experiences that took place throughout their adaptation to transnational living over time.

Despite these contributions, there are several limitations of the study. One of the limitations of this study is related to limited transferability of results, a limitation embedded in all qualitative research. Due to the emphasis on information-rich cases and uniqueness of data, the results of the study cannot be fully transferred to other groups of transnational youth (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). This is further complicated by the small size of the study. Even though the repetitiveness of data was observed (i.e., indication of saturation of data) with 6 participants, the small size may have limited the range of variations of a certain theme. Thus, a future study with a bigger sample size seems beneficial. That being said, the literature on Asian transnational youth is still in its early stages of development, and further in-depth exploration of topics affecting youth from different cultural backgrounds would be useful. A quantitative approach would be complimentary to studies of this nature in order to examine the relationships between variables identified in qualitative studies.

Another limitation in this study was in the translation of the interviews that were conducted in Mandarin. Although the authors took additional steps to maximize the accuracy of translation by having them checked by a bilingual graduate student trained in translation, true meanings of the Mandarin text might have been unavoidably lost. Considering the significant differences in sentence structures and syntax systems of Mandarin and English as well as in idioms and colloquial terms, it is impossible to accurately capture the emotional and contextual nuances of the Mandarin text in English translation.

In addition, as noted in other studies (e.g., Kinnier, Tribeensee, Rose, & Vaughan, 2001), the experiences of participants may not have been captured accurately through the use of retrospective interviews due to selective memory and memory loss. In order to capture more accurate representations of long-term trajectories of transnational youth's experiences, future studies could use a longitudinal design and interview transnational youth at multiple points over time. Further examinations of the long-term implications of the transnational arrangement for youth as grown adults and the family system as a whole would have important and very useful implications for both helping transnational families themselves and informing helping professionals about the unique issues that are faced by these transnational families. Also, the long-term outcomes of this type of migration on family systems could potentially influence future migration patterns.

Implications for Practice

Although the transnational phenomenon possesses some positive implications for the individual youth, its implications for the family system and the long-term emotional and psychological well-being of this system is unclear. Combined results of this study and existing research suggest that the transnational phenomenon has high social costs for families, without clear educational or professional advantages for youth in the long-run. Although it is too early to tell because Asian transnational youth from this wave of migration are still young, the transnational living arrangement may disrupt families' sense of cohesion. Furthermore, the transnational living arrangement robs transnational youth of opportunities to observe and model spouses raising a family together. It is unclear how this would affect transnational youth's ability to form and raise their own family in their adulthood.

Against this backdrop, the provision of culturally-effective support services for transnational families would be beneficial. First, when working with transnational youth in individual counseling, it would be important to avoid using the "cultural literacy" approach (Tsang et al., 2003), which views every individual as possessing ethnospecific characteristics. As this study has indicated, transnational youth appear to hand-pick their own cultural identities by selecting aspects of their home and host cultures that best fit their self-concept. Keeping this in mind, when counselling transnational youth, it would be especially important to be aware of the ever-shifting and transient nature of their identities.

In addition to having an awareness of the transient nature of transnational youths' identities, counsellors should be attuned to potential psychosocial and developmental challenges that transnational youth may face amidst their adolescent and early adulthood years in the host country. Lacking a sense of belonging and a network of familial and peer support, some participants of this study reported entertaining suicidal thoughts and gang membership. While these were more extreme cases of transnational youth maladjustment to the host country, they are nonetheless risk factors worthy of concern.

As for family counseling, the greatest challenge in providing services for transnational communities lies in the outreach itself. The transient nature of these families with one or both parents returning to the home country frequently, language barriers, and various cultural stigmas attached to seeking out helping services may all contribute to the challenge of reaching out to these communities. Targeting mothers could be an effective outreach strategy as illustrated in Water's (2002) study on Asian lone mothers in Canada, in which the women's support groups ran by an immigrant services society were proven to very effective sources for participant recruitment.

The results of this study indicate that the church and immigrant services may be effective places to direct outreach efforts. Although these sources of support may have proven to be helpful on many levels for the psychosocial well-being of individuals and families as a whole, they also serve to maintain 'cultural trenches' between Taiwanese immigrants and the dominant culture in which they are immersed. To decrease the isolation or marginalization of transnational

families in the host country, practitioners may take a more proactive stance and create partnership programs between immigrant and non-immigrant service providers, creating more opportunities for inter-ethnic relationship building.

Conclusion

The Taiwanese transnational youth that participated in this study shared experiences that shed light on the phenomenon of dual household living from their perspectives. What began as a fairly traumatic experience for many of the participants in this study post-migration due to the absence of sufficient family and peer support, the unfamiliar cultural and social context, and the additional pressures from their family to succeed resulted in the adoption of a more independent stance. One of the notable shifts that occurred for many of these participants was in turning to alternative sources of support. Through learning to better cope with challenges on their own, by turning to their religious faith, or in communicating with friends and extended family online, participants became more self-reliant and autonomous. This shift in their coping strategies lead to an even greater change in that they began to view themselves as separate entities from their families, their peers, and their communities. The most significant disadvantage of their independent stance is the uncertainty they feel towards their futures. Without a firm notion of their lifestyle and cultural preferences, and a weak attachment to both the host country and their country of origin, it is difficult for these youth to make plans to settle down in the future. Considering the exploratory nature of this study, follow-up studies need to be conducted to further examine the experiences of transnational youth.

Summary

Many of the outcomes reported in this study support the main finding of the existing literature on Asian transnational families—the emotional and economic costs of entering into a transnational living arrangement are quite high. Most Taiwanese transnational youth in this study reported that they struggled on an individual level to find their self-identity, develop lasting peer relationships with members of the dominant culture, maintain contact with their family and peers in their home country, and to satisfy their parents' academic expectations of them. The various strains in their relationship with themselves, their peers, and their families led them to develop a 'hyper' self-reliance. This seemed to be especially necessary for participants because of the emotional and physical unavailability of their parents due to the dual household arrangement. They had to learn to cope with their day-to-day challenges in the host country on their own. They also develop alternative support networks that include involvement in their own ethnic community in Canada and maintaining relationships with their peers in the home country through the use of technology. While these networks seem to buffer the acculturative stress experienced by participants in this study, they also served to further segregate the participants from the dominant culture, and to feed into their hyper-independent stance.

As a result of their independent coping styles and the adoption of cultural 'hybrid' identities (Vertovec, 1999), participants in this study had very uncertain ideas of their future plans. They were 'on the fence' about whether to live in Canada, move back to Taiwan or take residency in an entirely new country.

Follow-up studies on the long-term impact of the transnational arrangement on family cohesion and adolescent decision-making would be worthy of exploring to develop a better understanding of the consequences of this arrangement.

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Table 1

Study	Destination Country	Participants	Method of data collection	Focus of the study
Lee & Koo (2006) Qualitative	United States	*N*=8 (8 lone fathers of transnational families whose wives and children reside in the United States)	In-depth interviews	The motivations behind the Kirogi family arrangement for middle-class Koreans from the perspectives of the fathers
Wong (2004) Qualitative	Canada	*N*=15 (Taiwanese business immigrants under the category of entrepreneur)	Study 1: In-depth interviews	Study 1: Transnational kinship groups and transnational circuits (circulation of goods, people and information across states based on a concept of reciprocity) of Chinese immigrants in Canada
Tsang et al. (2003) Qualitative	Canada	*N*=93 (Young immigrants from China, Taiwan, or Hong Kong aged 16-24)	Semi-structured interviews	Negotiation of identity in transnational family arrangements
Chee (2003) Qualitative	United States	*N*=30 (30 mothers of Taiwanese children)	Semi-structured interviews	The main motivations behind the transnational family arrangement and the impact of such an arrangement on women's employment status and marital relationships
Waters (2002) Qualitative	Canada	*N*=43 (43 family members from Hong Kong and Taiwan: 24 lone wives, four lone husbands, and 15 satellite children)	In-depth interviews with individual members of families	Localization of the female in the astronaut family arrangement; the effects of migration on female gender role within the family
Creese et al. (1999) Qualitative	Canada	16 focus groups conducted in five districts in Greater Vancouver	Focus-group with new immigrants, service providers, and wives of transnational families	Network-building; the interplay of gender, generation, and racialization; and the negotiation of educational and employment opportunities
Pe-Pua et al. (1998) Qualitative	Australia	*N*=249 (60 principal applicants for migration from Hong Kong, their	In-depth interviews with astronaut family members; focus groups for spouses	Nature of the astronaut family arrangement and the various economic, political and cultural consequences

		60 spouses, and 129 children)	of the astronaut and their children; and, "key informant" interviews with community representatives, and service providers	
Wong (1997) Quantitative	Canada	*N*=305 (54% from Hong Kong, 33% from Taiwan, 13% from other parts of the Asian Pacific primarily from Malaysia and Singapore)	Phone and face-to-face interviews	Decision-making process of transnational families and the nature of their family and personal business networks
Lam (1994) Qualitative	Canada	*N*=28 (20 heads of families from Hong Kong: 12 females and 8 males, and eight children)	In-depth interviews	Reasons for emigration; experiences adjusting to their new life; future plans, and the effect of migration on family dynamics
Smart (1994) Qualitative	Canada	*N*=4 (Parents of two immigrant families from Hong Kong)	In-depth interviews	Living circumstances of Chinese immigrant families who came to Canada under the BIP

Table 2

Participant Demographics

#	Status	Religious Affiliation	Current Age	Age at Migration	Gender
001	Student	Christian	27	12	Female
002	Employed	Christian	27	13	Female
003	Student	None	23	16	Male
004	Student	Buddhist	25	16	Female
005	Student	Christian	25	13	Female
006	Employed	Christian	27	16	Male

N=6

McGill

Research Ethics Board Office
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Research Ethics Board III
Certificate of Ethical Acceptability of Research Involving Humans

REB File #: 349-0508

Project Title: The influence of intercultural peer relationship building for Chinese Canadian youth adaptation experiences

Principal Investigator: Leah Petersen

Department: Educational&Counselling Psychology

Status: Master's student

Supervisor: Prof. Jeeson Park

Funding agency and title: N/A

This project was reviewed on June 9, 2008 by

Expedited Review ✓
Full Review ____

Blaine Ditto, Ph.D.
Chair, REB III

Approval Period: July 29, 2008 **to** July 28, 2009

This project was reviewed and approved in accordance with the requirements of the McGill University Policy on the Ethical Conduct of Research Involving Human Subjects and with the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct For Research Involving Humans.

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* All research involving human subjects requires review on an annual basis. A Request for Renewal form should be submitted at least one month before the above expiry date.
* When a project has been completed or terminated a Final Report form must be submitted.
* Should any modification or other unanticipated development occur before the next required review, the REB must be informed and any modification can't be initiated until approval is received.

McGill University

ETHICS REVIEW - AMENDMENT REQUEST FORM

This form can be used to submit any changes/updates to be made to your currently approved research project. Explain what these changes are, and attach any relevant documentation that has been revised. Significant changes that have ethical implications must be reviewed and approved by the REB before they can be implemented. This form is also to be used for indicating changes to funding and personnel.

REB File #: 349-0508
Project Title:
Principal Investigator: Leah Petersen
Department/Phone/Email: Counselling Psychology/604 338 0851/leah.petersen@mail.mcgill.ca
Faculty Supervisor (for student PI): Dr. Jeeseon Park

In the process of recruiting participants for my research on the adaptation and adjustment experiences of Chinese adolescents, I was fortunate to speak with an immigrant from Mainland China who pointed out that I needed to narrow down my targeted population to distinguish between different Chinese-speaking groups. She explained that immigrants from Mainland China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan came to Canada in different waves, and for very different political and economic reasons. Based on her suggestion, I did more research on immigrants of Chinese descent from different regions, and discovered that immigrants from Taiwan and Hong Kong have a very unique migratory pattern. Both Taiwan and Hong Kong have faced political and economic instability in the last couple of decades, and many families from these regions chose to immigrate to New Zealand, Australia, the United States and Canada to gain political and personal freedom, and to meet the developmental and educational needs of their children (Tsang et al, 2003).

Often termed *astronaut* or *transnational* families, immigrants from Taiwan and Hong Kong followed a similar pattern of strategic migration, in which one or both of the parents returned to their country of origin after migrating to Canada to earn a higher living and secure long-term financial stability (Tsang et al, 2003). The adolescent children of these transnational families were often left on their own in Canada, or with their mother, to adapt to Canadian culture and settle in while the head of the family (typically the father) returned to their home country to earn a better living.

Seeing as 43% of new immigrants in Vancouver in the 1990s were from Taiwan and Hong Kong, I decided to interview Chinese students in university to get a retrospective account of their experiences immigrating in their adolescence (from 13-18 years of age). This retrospective approach will allow me to explore the long-term impact of family separation on children of transnational families, which has not been examined in the pre-existing studies. I chose to focus on the experiences of Taiwanese adolescents in particular because they have a fairly intact cultural identity in Taiwan (being quite separate from the Republic of China), thus facing a cultural dilemma in negotiating which parts of their home culture to keep, and which to let go while adapting to Canadian culture. Adolescents from Hong Kong, on the other hand, would undergo a very different process of identity development coming from a country formerly colonized by the United Kingdom, and reinstated as a province of China in 1997. The sociopolitical history of Hong Kong is very different from that of Taiwan, and therefore the adolescent immigrant experiences in Canada would also look very different from a researcher's perspective.

While the original of focus of my research was on social support system of Chinese immigrant youth, I will explore the participants' relationship dynamics including family dynamics, relationship with peers , and the process of negotiating cultural identity living in a transnational family. Participant eligibility criteria will include the following: being within the age range of 13 to 18 at the time of immigration to Canada, and having one parent return to Taiwan to work for extended periods of time after migration. I will recruit participants from universities (U.B.C. and S.F.U.), and immigrant service centers. Participant recruitment will be done through the

following means: by posting flyers at university campuses and community centers (see appendix A); sending emails through undergraduate university listserves; and, approaching ethnic student associations in Vancouver. In order to recognize participants for their contribution to this study, I will be giving gift certificates for local bookstore in Vancouver of a 20$ value. I decided to provide this small gift because of the reciprocal nature of Taiwanese culture. Gift-giving is a common practice among Taiwanese people and it would be culturally appropriate to provide this small token of my appreciation for the participants' contribution to my study. (see appendix A). There will be minor adjustments to the content of the consent form (see appendix B) and the interview protocol (see appendix C) as well to reflect the change in the target population. Please see the attached documents.

Principal Investigator Signature: _____ Date: Oct. 23, 2008

Faculty Supervisor Signature: email Date: _____
(for student PI)

For Administrative Use **REB:** ___REB-I ___REB-II ✓ REB-III

✓ Expedited Review ___ Full Review

✓ This amendment request has been approved.

Signature of REB Chair/ designate: L McNeil Date: Nov. 13, 2008
Research Ethics Officer

Submit to Lynda McNeil, Research Ethics Officer, McGill University, 1555 Peel Street, 11th floor, Montreal, QC H3A 3L8
tel:514-398-6831 fax:514-398-4644 email: Lynda.mcneil@mcgill.ca (version 02/08)

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Participant agreement form

Dear participant,

I am doing a study on Taiwanese immigrants in the greater Vancouver area. By participating in this study, you will have the chance to tell me about your experience settling into Canada during your adolescence, the rewards and challenges of living apart from one of your parents throughout this process, and how settlement services could be improved to make things easier for new immigrants in the future.

If you accept to participate, you will be asked to partake in an audio recorded interview led by a researcher for 45 to 60 minutes and to fill out a questionnaire. The interview will take place at a location that is convenient for you (for example, in your home or in a classroom at school).

During the interview, you will be asked questions about your experience settling into Canada during your adolescent years. You do not have to answer all of the questions during the interview, or in the questionnaire if you so choose. These questions will be audio (voice) recorded. The results will be used for research purposes only, and will not affect the services you receive at your school/community center. In addition, your responses will be completely confidential; your name will not be mentioned in any of the documents describing the results from this study, nor will anyone have access to the audio recordings other than myself, my research assistants, and my supervisor. Even if you accept to participate now, you are entitled to change your mind at any time and withdraw from the study without negative consequences.

If you accept to participate, please sign and return the consent form. You may keep a copy of this letter. If you have any questions concerning this study, you may contact me directly by phone at 604-338-0851 or send me an email at leah.petersen@mail.mcgill.ca. In addition, you may contact my supervisor, Dr. Jeeseon Park, at McGill University, at 514-398-3452 or by email jeeseon.park@mcgill.ca.

Sincerely,

Leah Petersen
M.A. candidate, Counselling Psychology

Agreement Form

I have read the research description and I agree to participate. I was informed that the results would be used for research purposes only, that my identity would remain confidential, and that I can withdraw from the study at any time without negative consequences.

Name: _____ Signature: _____

Date: _____

Name _____

Date _____

DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE

1. What is your age?

2. What is your sex?

3. How old were you when you immigrated to Canada?

4. Are you currently in school? If yes, what is your program of study?

5. What is your country of origin?

6. After immigrating to Canada, did one or both of your parents return to Taiwan regularly for business purposes? If yes, which parent—your mother or father?

7. Do you have any brothers or sisters? If yes, how old are they?

8. Do you currently live with your parents?

9. What is your native language? What other languages do you speak other than English?

10. What is your religious affiliation?

Researchers from McGill University are looking for **Taiwanese immigrants** to participate in a study, here is how you can get nvolved…

- The study
  - We would like to learn more about the changes in relationship dynamics and the overall adaptation experiences for Taiwanese immigrants who have "transnational" family arrangements, where the family maintains a household in Vancouver and in Taiwan. We are conducting in-person interviews that will take approximately 1 hour.
- Am I eligible?
  - If you are a Taiwanese immigrant in your 20s who came to Canada with your family in your adolescent years (13-19 years of age), and one of your parents returned to Taiwan regularly for business purposes, then you are eligible.
- Why should I participate?
  - By sharing your experiences adjusting to Canada, you may gain insight on your personal growth and development, and you may improve Vancouver community services for immigrant youth.
  - You will receive a gift card to Future Shop as a token of our appreciation!
- How do I participate?
  - Please contact Leah Petersen by email or by phone if you have any questions, or you would like to be interviewed:
  - 604-338-0851
  - leah.petersen@mail.mcgill.ca

Taiwanese Transnational Youth
Interview Protocol

Pre-Migratory Expectations

1) What is your understanding of why your family decided to maintain two households in Taiwan and Vancouver?
    i) Were you involved in reaching a decision about this living arrangement?

2) What were your expectations surrounding your new life in Canada?
    i) Were they met?

Family Dynamics

1) How did your family dynamics change over time since you moved to Vancouver?
    i) How did your relationship with your father change over time?
    ii) How did your relationship with your mother change over time?
    iii) How did you relationship with your siblings change over time?
    iv) How did your parents' relationship with each other change over time?

2) How are things different when your family members visit each other vs. when your family is not living together?
    **Prompt: How have your relationships with extended family members in Taiwan changed over time?*

Peer Relationships

1) Describe your most significant friendship after you arrived in Vancouver. What qualities did this friend have that were important to you?
    i) Is this friendship with another Taiwanese or someone with a different ethnic background?
    ii) How has your relationship with this person changed over time?
    iii) Do you have other close friendships with (the opposite of most significant friend: Taiwanese/other ethnicity)?
    iv) How have these friendships changed over time?

2) Tell me about your relationships with your friends in Taiwan.
    i) How have they changed over time?

Identity Issues

1) Looking back upon your experience immigrating to Canada, how do you feel that this significant change in your life influenced you as a person?
    i) How have your values changed over time since you moved here?

2) What are your plans after you graduate?
    i) What factors draw you to this decision?

Social Support Network

1) Looking back upon your experience adjusting to living and going to school in Vancouver, what was your primary source of emotional support? (this could be friends/family, a social club, government social services, religious organization)
    i) Is there anything you wish could have been different about your social support network?
    ii) Did your support network change over time?

2) How do you think government services could be improved to better meet the needs of new immigrant youth?
   **prompt: what are immigrant youths' perceptions of mental health services in Vancouver?*

Wrap-up

1) Do you have any suggestions for other Taiwanese youth who are immigrating to Canada while their parents maintain a household in Taiwan?

2) Is there anything else you would like to add?

3) Do you know anyone who would like to participate in this study?

**Once the interview is finished, please mention to participant that they will receive an online survey by email that will only take about 15 minutes to fill out. Participation is, of course, optional.*