

## Chapter 12

# Comparing the Acculturation Goals of Parents and Adolescents in Chinese Canadian Families

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Every year, millions of people leave their home country in pursuit of economic and social opportunities, as well as political and religious freedom. Many of these migrants, such as Chinese immigrants to Canada, are challenged to adapt to a settlement country with considerably different attitudes, values, and practices (Hofstede, 2001; Schwartz, 2006). For many immigrants, these personal acculturation processes occur in the context of family relationships, which creates additional challenges (Berry, Phinney, Kwak, & Sam, 2006). Although many studies have investigated acculturation within the family context, few have examined whether family members have similar preferences and goals for engaging with the settlement society and/or preserving their ethnic culture. To address this gap, we explored the *acculturation goals* of mothers, fathers, and adolescents in immigrant Chinese families in Canada to gain a better understanding of family members' preferences for holding on to their ethnic culture and embracing the new culture. We also investigated whether parents have acculturation goals for their adolescents that differ from their own and if adolescents accurately perceive their parents' acculturation goals for them.

We address these issues among immigrant Chinese families in Canada. Canada attracts a large number of immigrants (United Nations, 2009); over 20% of the Canadian population is foreign-born, which is one of the highest rates in the world (Citizenship & Immigration Canada [CIC], 2014a). This is due, in part, to Canada's official multiculturalism policy (Department of Canadian Heritage, 2006) and the extensive network of settlement agencies and support services that are offered

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(Chuang, Rasmi, & Friesen, 2011). Although people in Canada report over 200 ethnic origins (Statistics Canada, 2008), the People's Republic of China has been one of the top source countries for immigrants since the 1990s (CIC, 2001, 2014b). According to the most recent census, about 10% of all immigrants (i.e., 122,000 people) came to Canada from China (Statistics Canada, 2011). This consistent stream of immigration has led Chinese youth to become the fastest-growing segment of the school population in Canada's major metropolitan areas (Li, 2009). Chinese immigrants to Canada encounter many cultural differences, and practical challenges such as language barriers can negatively affect their sociocultural adaptation.

## Acculturation Goals

Acculturation is a complex process that can involve changes to one's attitudes, behaviors, and cognitions as a result of sustained intergroup contact (Tsai, Chentsova-Dutton, & Wong, 2002). Early unidimensional conceptualizations of acculturation that suggested that individuals abandon their ethnic culture as they acquire the settlement culture have given way to bidimensional models in which ethnic culture maintenance and settlement culture acquisition reflect separate, orthogonal dimensions (Ryder, Alden, & Paulhus, 2000). In the bidimensional model, acculturation centers around two choices: the extent to which an individual wishes to preserve their ethnic culture and the extent to which an individual wishes to interact with and acquire the settlement culture (Berry, 2003).

Most recently, acculturation research has expanded further to evaluate additional "cultures" with which a person might identify. For example, Ferguson, Bornstein, and Pottinger (2012) proposed a tridimensional (3D) acculturation model to acknowledge that Jamaican immigrants to the United States orient toward Jamaican, African American, and European American cultures. The 3D model highlights that for some individuals, there is more than one dimension to the settlement culture. Tridimensional acculturation reflects the growing multicultural nature of many societies and is one example of a movement toward examining the ways in which multiple identities intersect. Interviews with immigrant parents, however, revealed that the contrast between the heritage culture and new culture remained quite salient (e.g., Ochocka & Janzen, 2008). Therefore in this chapter, acculturation goals are explored in these two core dimensions (i.e., the Chinese ethnic culture and the Canadian culture of settlement).

Acculturation goals are distinct from acculturation itself. *Acculturation goals* refer to individuals' preferences and desires regarding acculturation—their aspirations regarding how they will acculturate. Acculturation itself, on the other hand, is typically assessed in terms of the actual behaviors, identity, or values that are currently held (e.g., what languages they read, how they identify themselves ethnically). This distinction reflects the difference between what people *do* and what people *want to do* (Berry, 2003). For example, a Chinese immigrant in Canada may

face difficulty maintaining their traditions if certain heritage food items are not readily available. Similarly, immigrants living in a community with a large co-ethnic population may not desire English language fluency as much as those who do not. This distinction between an individual's actual acculturation and their acculturation goals is largely overlooked in the literature. As a result, very little is known about immigrants' *goals* for their own cultural retention and cultural adoption. In addition, little research has systematically evaluated immigrant parents' goals for their *adolescents'* acculturation.

## Acculturation Goals Within the Family

Acculturation is an individual process that is experienced within the context of the family. Adolescents in immigrant families must negotiate developmental demands in a bicultural context (Costigan, Su, & Hua, 2009), whereas immigrant parents are challenged to undergo their own acculturation process while they simultaneously socialize their children (Bornstein & Cote, 2006). Often, but not invariably, parents are more oriented to the ethnic culture than their children, whereas their children are more oriented to the settlement culture (Fuligni, 2012; Kwak, 2003). Immigrant parents, who have been socialized in their country of origin, may have a more innate sense of belonging and understanding about the ethnic culture compared to their children. The children of immigrants, on the other hand, are influenced by peers, teachers, and the media in the settlement society and therefore may have more opportunity and demands to embrace the new culture (Costigan & Dokis, 2006a; Schönplflug, 2001).

This basic expectation—that parents will be more orientated toward the ethnic culture and adolescents will be more orientated toward the new culture—underlies the assumptions of the acculturation gap-distress model (Kwak, 2003; Szapocznik & Kurtines, 1993). The acculturation gap-distress model argues that differences between immigrant parents and their adolescents create distress within the family, such as greater parent-adolescent conflict (Tardif-Williams & Fisher, 2009; Telzer, 2010). The research evidence for the acculturation gap-distress model has been mixed. Some empirical studies of Chinese immigrant families have supported the links between parent-child acculturation gaps and distress (e.g., Tardif & Geva, 2006; Tsai-Chae & Nagata, 2008). Other researches, however, have not found the expected gaps between parents and their adolescents and/or have not found that acculturation gaps predict poorer adjustment. For example, Costigan and Dokis (2006b) found that large differences between immigrant Chinese parents and their adolescents with respect to English language use and the adoption of Canadian values were unrelated to family conflict or adolescent adjustment. Similarly, Lim, Yeh, Liang, Lau, and McCabe (2009) found that acculturation differences between Chinese American parent-child dyads regarding both Chinese and American culture were not associated with physical or psychological symptoms.

**Parents' goals versus adolescents' goals.** A better understanding of parents' and adolescents' goals for their acculturation may shed light on the contradictory findings related to the acculturation gap-distress model. For example, gaps in which parents are less orientated toward settlement culture than adolescents may not predict distress within families if these differences are desired (e.g., if those cultural orientations reflect parent and/or adolescent acculturation preferences). An implicit assumption in the acculturation gap literature is that uniformity in acculturation among family members is a desirable and sought-after goal. However, this may not be the case. A first step in evaluating the potential role of acculturation goals is to clarify acculturation dynamics within immigrant families by examining whether parents' and adolescents' acculturation goals are similar or different.

**Parents' goals for self versus adolescent.** It is also important to explore whether parents differentiate between the goals they have for themselves and the goals they have for their adolescents. The goals that parents hold for themselves may be especially likely to differ from the goals they hold for their adolescents with respect to the settlement culture. This is consistent with studies that have found that some parents actively socialized their children with behaviors and values that were inconsistent with their own, in order to prepare them for a successful life in their cultural environment (e.g., Chen & Chen, 2010; Tam, Lee, Kim, Li, & Chao, 2012).

Parents' self-goals and their goals for their adolescents may not be as disparate with respect to the ethnic culture. Parents can simultaneously encourage their children to adopt the settlement culture and retain their ethnic culture, as these two dimensions are orthogonal. In addition, first-generation parents actively transmit their ethnic culture values (Knight et al., 2011) and behaviors (Costigan, Hua, & Su, 2010) to their children. This ethnic culture socialization may be facilitated by the official multiculturalism policy in Canada, which promotes the right for its citizens and residents to maintain any of cultural beliefs, values, and traditions that do not violate civil or criminal laws (Bourhis, Moise, Perreault, & Senecal, 1997).

**Adolescents' perceptions of parents' goals.** Although no studies have examined adolescents' perceptions of parents' acculturation goals for them, past research has shown that adolescents' perceptions of their parents' acculturation (Merali, 2002) and their parents' values (Knafo & Schwartz, 2003) did not always match parents' reports. Misperceiving or misinterpreting parental value messages may be particularly likely in immigrant families, as parents tend to be less clear and consistent as they undergo their own acculturation process (Phinney, Romero, Nava, & Huang, 2001; Umaña-Taylor, Bhanot, & Shin, 2006). These unclear and inconsistent messages, in turn, can compromise transmission (Grusec & Goodnow, 1994).

## The Present Study

The aim of the present study was to explore the acculturation goals of immigrant Chinese fathers, mothers, and adolescents in Canada. Our first goal was to evaluate the factor structure of a measure of acculturation goals. We expected that a

two-factor structure, in which Chinese and Canadian goals are differentiated from each other, would best represent family members' acculturation goals. Second, we compared parents' and adolescents' self-goals. We expected that adolescents would hold stronger Canadian acculturation goals than their parents, whereas parents were expected to hold stronger Chinese acculturation goals than their adolescents. Third, we evaluated the similarity between parents' acculturation goals for themselves and their goals for their adolescents. We expected parents to hold stronger Canadian acculturation goals for their adolescents than for themselves but to endorse equally strong Chinese goals. Finally, we compared adolescents' perceptions of their parents' acculturation goals for them to parents' actual reports. We expected that adolescents would underestimate how much their parents want them to adopt the Canadian culture and overestimate how much their parents want them to retain the Chinese culture.

Within each set of analyses, we also evaluated whether expected differences were larger for newcomer families (e.g., those who have resided in Canada for a shorter period of time) or for families that had been living in Canada longer. These analyses were exploratory. Our analyses included both mothers and fathers, although no hypotheses were made about differences in the self-goals of mothers and fathers or mother-child versus father-child differences.

## Methods

### *Participants*

Data were collected from 182 immigrant Chinese families (165 fathers, 179 mothers, and 181 adolescents), as part of a larger study of the adaptation and adjustment of Chinese Canadian immigrant families. To be eligible, families had to self-identify as ethnically Chinese and had to include at least one adolescent between the age of 12 and 17 years old. In addition, parents had to have immigrated as adults so that their core socialization took place outside of Canada.

On average, fathers were 47.16 years of age ( $SD = 5.71$ ), mothers were 44.79 years of age ( $SD = 4.74$ ), and adolescents were 14.95 years age ( $SD = 1.70$ ). Parents had lived in Canada between 2 and 36 years (fathers  $M = 11.07$  years,  $SD = 7.12$ ; mothers  $M = 10.66$  years,  $SD = 6.57$ ). We created a family-level length of residence variable by categorizing participants into recent immigrants (<8 years in Canada; 48.9%) and more established immigrants (> 8 years in Canada; 51.1%) groups. We selected this cutoff based on previous research suggesting that achieving settlement language fluency typically occurs around 8 years (Cabrerá, Shannon, West, & Brooks-Gunn, 2006; Cummins, 1984).

The families emigrated from either the People's Republic of China (66.1%), Taiwan (20.4%), or Hong Kong (13.5%). In terms of adolescents' generational status, slightly more than half of the adolescents (54.1%) immigrated at the age of 6 or

older (first generation), whereas the remaining adolescents (45.9%) were either Canadian-born or immigrated prior to the age of 6 (second generation or 1.5 generation). There were approximately equal numbers of female (51.9%) and male (48.1%) children. Many mothers (46.3%) and most fathers (60.3%) had completed a 4-year university degree or higher. The majority (79.2%) of the parents were employed at the time of recruitment (88.5% of fathers and 69.8% of mothers).

## ***Procedure***

Families were recruited from a mid-sized city and a large metropolitan area in British Columbia, Canada. Approximately two-thirds (67.0%) of the participants were recruited randomly through a survey research center. The remaining participants (33.0%) came from referrals primarily from families who had participated. All but one of the participating families chose to complete the study in their own homes versus at the university. Two research assistants, at least one able to speak the family's native language, attended each data collection session. Each family member (father, mother, and adolescent) independently completed a package of self-report measures. The majority of parents chose to complete the measures in Chinese script, whereas all of the adolescents completed the measures in English. The measures were originally developed in English and then translated into Chinese by a team of bilingual individuals from Mainland China, Taiwan, and Hong Kong. The Chinese versions were then back-translated by a different team of bilingual individuals to ensure cross-language equivalency. All families received small monetary compensation for their participation. The project received approval from a university human ethics research board.

## ***Measures***

**Demographic information.** Parents and adolescents provided background information including age, immigration and education history, and current employment status.

**Acculturation goals.** The measure of parent and adolescent acculturation goals was developed in our lab as part of the larger study. This measure assessed acculturation goals in the Chinese and Canadian dimensions. We assessed self-goals, parents' goals for the child, and children's perceptions of parents' goals separately. All items were rated on a scale from one (*not important at all*) to five (*of great importance*). A total score for each construct was calculated by averaging the scores for each individual item. Higher scores reflected stronger acculturation goals.

**Self-goals.** Participants individually answered nine questions with respect to their own personal goals (i.e., "How important is it to you that YOU..."). *Chinese* self-goals included four items: to identify strongly as Chinese, to participate in

Chinese traditions, to continue to speak Chinese, and to follow traditional Chinese values. *Canadian* self-goals included five items: to develop a strong identity as Chinese, to have good relationships with Canadians, to participate fully in Canadian culture, to adopt the values of Canadian culture, and to understand the way most Canadians think. Strong internal consistency coefficients were found across the board: alphas ( $\alpha$ ) of 0.84 for all three family members in the Chinese dimension and 0.89, 0.86, and 0.87 for fathers, mothers, and adolescents, respectively, in the Canadian dimension.

**Parents' goals for the child.** After rating their self-goals, parents completed the same nine questions, this time with respect to how important it was to them that their child achieve each goal (i.e., "How important is it to you that YOUR CHILD..."). Cronbach's alpha coefficients were strong for fathers and mothers on the Chinese (0.86 and 0.85, respectively) and Canadian dimensions (0.92 and 0.86, respectively).

**Children's perceptions of parents' goals.** After rating their self-goals, adolescents completed the same nine questions, this time with respect to how important it was to their parents that they achieve each goal (i.e., "How important is it to YOUR PARENTS that you..."). Adolescents were asked about their parents' goals collectively (rather than mothers and fathers separately). Cronbach's alpha coefficients were strong for the Chinese (0.87) and Canadian dimensions (0.89).

## Results

### *Evaluating the Theorized Two-Factor Model of Acculturation Goals*

We compared the proposed two-factor model for the nine-item acculturation goal scale (Chinese and Canadian dimensions) to a one-factor model using AMOS 22.0. The one-factor model specified that all nine items load on a single latent variable. The two-factor model specified that four items loaded on a Chinese latent factor and five items for the Canadian latent factor. We evaluated three separate models: a multiple-group analysis of self-goals (fathers, mothers, children), a multiple-group analysis of parents' goals for their children (fathers, mothers), and an analysis of adolescents' perceptions of their parents' goals for them. All items loaded significantly on their respective latent factors (see Table 12.1).

Evaluation of model fit was based on the chi-square goodness-of-fit test, the comparative fit index (CFI; Bentler, 1990), and the root-mean-square error of approximation (RMSEA; Steiger, 1990). Good model fit is indicated by a  $\chi^2/df$  ratio less than 3.0, a CFI of 0.95 or greater, and an RMSEA of less than 0.05. Adequate fit is indicated by a CFI value between 0.90 and 0.95 (Kline, 2011) and an RMSEA between 0.05 and 0.08 (Byrne, 2010).



**Table 12.1** Standardized loadings for the two-factor models of acculturation goals

Items	Father	Mother	Adolescent
<i>Chinese self-goals</i>			
Identify as Chinese	0.75	0.77	0.77
Participate Chinese traditions	0.86	0.83	0.87
Speak Chinese	0.67	0.69	0.60
Follow Chinese values	0.77	0.75	0.75
<i>Canadian self-goals</i>			
Identify as Canadian	0.74	0.77	0.73
Good relations with Canadians	0.79	0.76	0.71
Participate fully in Canada	0.86	0.81	0.85
Adopt Canadian values	0.79	0.78	0.80
Understand how Canadians think	0.77	0.60	0.66
<i>Parents' Chinese goals for child<sup>a</sup></i>			
Identify as Chinese	0.82	0.80	0.87
Participate Chinese traditions	0.91	0.88	0.83
Speak Chinese	0.56	0.62	0.66
Follow Chinese values	0.81	0.80	0.82
<i>Parents' Canadian goals for child<sup>a</sup></i>			
Identify as Canadian	0.76	0.76	0.83
Good relations with Canadians	0.87	0.78	0.73
Participate fully in Canada	0.94	0.76	0.74
Adopt Canadian values	0.79	0.77	0.76
Understand how Canadians think	0.78	0.63	0.75

Note: All factor loadings significant at  $p < 0.001$

<sup>a</sup>Father and mother columns are parents' reports of their goals for their children; adolescent column is adolescents' perceptions of their parents' goals for them

For the analyses of self-goals, as shown in Table 12.2, the one-factor model (Model 1) demonstrated a poor fit to the data. In contrast, as expected, the two-factor model (Model 2) showed good model fit. Invariance analyses were used to compare the baseline model (Model 2) with a constrained model (Model 3) in which all nine factor loadings and the latent factor covariance were constrained to be equal among fathers, mothers, and adolescents. The constrained model showed a good fit to the data (see Table 12.2). A comparison of the constrained model to the baseline model indicated that the two models were not significantly different ( $p = 0.81$ ),  $\chi^2_{\text{DIFF}}(16) = 11.01$ , suggesting that the strength of the factor loadings and covariance for personal acculturation goals are of similar magnitude among family members.

Similar analyses were conducted to examine the factor structure of fathers' and mothers' reports of their acculturation goals for their children. As before, all items loaded significantly on their respective latent factors (see Table 12.1), and the two-factor model (Model 5) showed an adequate fit to the data and significantly better fit than the one-factor model (Model 4; see Table 12.2). Invariance analyses were again used to evaluate whether the item loadings or covariance between the two latent



**Table 12.2** Goodness-of-fit indicators for models of acculturation goals

Model	$\chi^2$	df	$\chi^2/\text{df}$	CFI	RMSEA
<i>Self-goals</i>					
Model 1: One factor	876.35***	81	10.82	0.64	0.134 (0.127–0.143)
Model 2: Two factor	215.47***	78	2.76	0.94	0.057 (0.048–0.066)
Model 3: Constrained	226.48***	94	2.41	0.94	0.051 (0.043–0.059)
<i>Parents' goals for the child</i>					
Model 4: One factor	1343.05***	54	24.87	0.62	0.181 (0.173–0.190)
Model 5: Two factor	166.13***	52	3.19	0.93	0.078 (0.065–0.091)
Model 6: Constrained	175.32***	60	2.92	0.93	0.073 (0.060–0.086)
<i>Adolescents' perception of parents' goals</i>					
Model 7: One factor	362.17***	27	13.41	0.63	0.27 (0.24–0.29)
Model 8: Two factor	77.52**	26	2.98	0.94	0.11 (0.08–0.13)
Model 9: With one modification	40.57*	25	1.62	0.98	0.06 (0.02–0.09)

\* $p < 0.10$ ; \*\* $p < 0.05$ ; \*\*\* $p < 0.01$

factors was significantly different between fathers and mothers. A constrained model (Model 6) in which all nine factor loadings and the covariance were constrained to be equal between fathers and mothers showed good fit to the data (see Table 12.2). This model was compared to the baseline model (Model 5), and the results indicated that the two models were not significantly different ( $p = 0.33$ ),  $\chi^2_{\text{DIFF}}(8) = 9.19$ , suggesting that the strength of the item loadings and covariance regarding parents' goals for their children's acculturation are of similar magnitude among fathers and mothers.

For adolescents' perceptions of their parents' goals, the one-factor model (Model 7 in Table 12.2) showed poor fit to the data. The two-factor model (Model 8) was significantly better, although the RMSEA was higher than desired. AMOS' modification recommendations suggested that fit could be improved by manually correlating the residuals of two items related to Canadian goals: to participate fully in Canadian culture and to adopt the values of Canadian culture. These residuals were allowed to correlate because theoretically the items share considerable conceptual overlap (Byrne, 2010). Specifying this error term as a free parameter resulted in adequate model fit (Model 9).

Collectively, these analyses support the hypothesized two-factor structure of acculturation goals. The relations between Chinese and Canadian acculturation goals were significant and positive in each model. Specifically, with respect to self-goals, Chinese and Canadian goals were correlated 0.35, 0.40, and 0.48 for fathers, mothers, and adolescents, respectively. For parents' goals for their children, Chinese and Canadian goals were correlated 0.39 for fathers and 0.35 for mothers. Finally, adolescents' perceptions of their parents' goals were correlated 0.47. All of these associations were significant at  $p < 0.001$ . A comparison of Chinese and Canadian acculturation goals showed that fathers,  $F(1, 155) = 30.43$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ,  $\eta^2 = 0.16$ , and mothers,  $F(1, 171) = 12.31$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ,  $\eta^2 = 0.07$ , held stronger Canadian self-goals than Chinese self-goals (see Table 12.3 for means). The difference between adolescents' Chinese and Canadian acculturation self-goals was not significant ( $p = 0.707$ ).

**Table 12.3** Means and standard deviations of main study variables

	Canadian dimension M (SD)	Chinese dimension M (SD)
Father self-goal	3.56 (0.77) <sup>a</sup>	3.13 (0.89) <sup>b</sup>
Mother self-goal	3.39 (0.69) <sup>a</sup>	3.12 (0.84) <sup>b</sup>
Adolescent self-goal	3.40 (0.78) <sup>a</sup>	3.37 (0.86) <sup>a</sup>
Father goal for child	3.90 (0.70) <sup>a</sup>	3.15 (0.86) <sup>b</sup>
Mother goal for child	3.74 (0.66) <sup>a</sup>	3.08 (0.88) <sup>b</sup>
Adolescent perception of parents' goal	3.34 (0.82) <sup>a</sup>	3.88 (0.84) <sup>b</sup>

Note. Rows with different superscripts are significantly different at  $p < .05$

### ***Family Member Comparisons: Preliminary Analyses***

The within-group analyses comparing acculturation goals among family members are based on the 159 families for whom complete data from fathers, mothers, and adolescents were available. Prior to conducting the within-family comparisons, we examined the associations between demographic factors (i.e., adolescent gender, adolescent generational status, parent and adolescent age, parent education, parent region of origin) and acculturation goals. There were no differences in the acculturation goals for mothers or of fathers (for self or for their adolescents) based on region of origin (Mainland China, Taiwan, or Hong Kong);  $F$ s ranged from 0.06 to 1.26 for mothers and between 0.07 and 1.41 for fathers;  $p$  values ranged from 0.25 to 0.94. Similarly, there were no differences in adolescents' acculturation goals or perceptions of parents' acculturation goals based on adolescents' generational status;  $F$ s ranged from 0.00 to 0.16 and  $p$  values ranged from 0.69 to 0.99. There were also no differences based on adolescent gender;  $F$ s ranged from 0.79 to 3.15 and  $p$  values ranged from 0.08 to 0.37. Correlations between acculturation goals and age and education were low in magnitude, ranging from  $r = -0.12$  to  $r = 0.22$ . Only mother age was consistently related to acculturation goals. Specifically, mother age was associated with self-goals on the Chinese dimension ( $r = 0.22$ ,  $p = 0.007$ ) and on the Canadian dimension ( $r = 0.21$ ,  $p = 0.01$ ). Therefore, we included mother age as a between-subjects factor in the main analyses when examining mothers' Chinese and Canadian self-goals.

**Comparison of father, mother, and adolescent self-goals.** Repeated measures ANOVAs were used to determine if parents and adolescents differed in their average acculturation self-goals. Family member (father, mother, adolescent) was included as the within-subjects factor, and length of residence (shorter, longer) and mother age were the between-subjects factors (see Table 12.3 for means). In order to explore mothers' age, as suggested by the preliminary analyses, mothers were classified into three age groups: younger (<42 years old;  $n = 48$ ), middle (42–46 years old;  $n = 70$ ), and older (>47 years old;  $n = 61$ ) based on a tertile split. In the Canadian dimension, contrary to our hypothesis, there was no main effect for family member,  $F(2, 153) = 2.83$ ,  $p = 0.062$ ,  $\eta^2 = 0.036$ . Thus, Canadian acculturation goals did not differ

for fathers, mothers, and adolescents. In addition, there were no main effects for length of residence or mother age or significant interaction terms.

In the Chinese dimension, the results showed a significant main effect for family member,  $F(2, 152) = 3.47, p = 0.034, \eta^2 = 0.044$ . Contrary to our hypothesis, post hoc comparisons showed that adolescents held significantly stronger Chinese acculturation self-goals than fathers ( $p = 0.05$ ) and marginally higher Chinese acculturation goals than mothers ( $p = 0.063$ ). There was also a significant interaction between family member and mother age,  $F(4, 306) = 4.66, p = 0.001, \eta^2 = 0.06$ . Adolescents reported higher Chinese self-goals compared to younger mothers and mothers in the middle age group, but not compared to the oldest group of mothers. Length of residence was unrelated to differences in the Chinese dimension.

**Parents' goals for self versus adolescent.** Repeated measures ANOVAs were also used to determine whether parents' acculturation goals for themselves differed from parents' goals for their adolescents. Family perspective (parent self-goal, parent goal for child) was included as a within-subjects factor, and length of residence (shorter, longer) was included as a between-subjects factor. These analyses were conducted separately for father-child and mother-child dyads. For all analyses involving mother data, mother age was also included as a between-subjects factor.

In the Canadian dimension, a significant main effect was found for family perspective for father-child dyads,  $F(1, 160) = 73.37, p < 0.001, \eta^2 = 0.31$ , and mother-child dyads,  $F(1, 172) = 72.84, p < 0.001, \eta^2 = 0.30$ . Consistent with our hypothesis, fathers and mothers held significantly weaker Canadian acculturation goals for themselves than their adolescents (see Table 12.3). There were no significant main effects or interactions with length of residence; mother age was also unrelated.

In the Chinese dimension, consistent with our hypothesis, fathers,  $F(1, 160) = 0.17, p = 0.684, \eta^2 = 0.001$ , and mothers,  $F(1, 167) = 0.34, p = 0.558, \eta^2 = 0.002$ , reported similar goals on the Chinese dimension for themselves and their adolescents (see Table 12.3). Length of residence and mother age were unrelated to Chinese acculturation goals.

**Adolescents' perceptions of parents' goals for them.** We conducted two repeated measures ANOVAs to determine whether adolescents accurately perceived their parents' acculturation goals for them. Family member (father goals for child, mother goals for child, adolescent perception of parents' goals) was included as a within-subjects factor, and length of residence (shorter, longer) was included as a between-subjects factor.

In the Canadian dimension, a significant main effect was found for family member,  $F(2, 156) = 23.82, p < 0.001, \eta^2 = 0.23$ . Consistent with our hypothesis, adolescents underestimated the extent to which their fathers and mothers wanted them to adopt the Canadian culture. Adolescents' perceptions of parents' Canadian goals were significantly lower than parents' actual goals for their children (see Table 12.3). Fathers' and mothers' goals for their adolescents did not differ. Length of residence was unrelated, as either a main effect or an interaction with family member.

In the Chinese dimension, a significant main effect was found for family member,  $F(2, 151) = 45.37, p < 0.001, \eta^2 = 0.375$ . Consistent with our hypothesis, adolescents' perceptions of their parents' Chinese goals for them were significantly

higher than parents' actual goals. That is, adolescents overestimated the extent to which their fathers and mothers wanted them to retain the Chinese culture. There were no differences between fathers' and mothers' Chinese goals for children. In addition, there were no significant relations with length of residence.

## **Discussion**

This study extended our understanding of acculturation goals in several ways. First, we confirmed that the factor structure of our measure of acculturation goals was consistent with a bidimensional acculturation model (e.g., Berry, 1997). Second, we identified some key differences among family members in their acculturation goals, which enhances our understanding of the acculturation process for immigrant Chinese mothers, fathers, and adolescents living in Canada. For example, we found that the mothers and fathers in our study held stronger Canadian acculturation goals for their children than they did for themselves and that adolescents tended to misperceive the strength of their parents' acculturation goals for them (underestimating parents' Canadian acculturation goals and overestimating their Chinese acculturation goals). In addition to deepening our understanding of acculturation processes, these findings have the potential to shed light on inconsistent findings within the acculturation gap-distress literature.

### ***Measuring Acculturation Goals***

One of the major contributions of this study is an empirical validation of the bidimensional theory of acculturation goals. Our analyses confirm that acculturation goals can be assessed reliably among parents and adolescents. In addition, we confirmed that acculturation goals within ethnic and settlement cultural dimensions are distinct. That is, acculturation goals in the settlement culture dimension were conceptually independent of acculturation goals in the ethnic culture dimension for all family members. These results support the bidimensional model of acculturation at the level of goals: immigrants' aspirations to maintain an ethnic identification do not necessarily interfere with their desires to integrate into Canadian culture and vice versa. Indeed, correlations between Chinese and Canadian acculturation goals were positive and significant for all family members, arguing for the compatibility of Chinese and Canadian acculturation goals from the perspective of fathers, mothers, and adolescents.

### *Canadian Acculturation Goals*

A pattern emerged across analyses which highlights the strength with which both parents and adolescents in immigrant families desire to adopt features of the Canadian culture. First, both mothers and fathers had stronger aspirations to adopt Canadian culture than to retain the Chinese culture. In addition, mothers, fathers, and adolescents did not differ in the strength of their Canadian acculturation goals. Thus, adolescents did not report a stronger desire to engage with Canadian culture than parents. Parents also held strong Canadian goals for their children. These goals were higher than the Canadian goals that they held for themselves and higher than the Canadian goals that children perceived their parents to hold for them.

The strong endorsement of Canadian goals for their children among immigrant parents is consistent with previous research suggesting that parents socialize their children for success in their new cultural environment, even if it means emphasizing behaviors and values that are not consistent with their own (Peterson, Steinmetz, & Wilson, 2003; Tam & Lee, 2010). Thus, even though parents and children often differ with respect to their engagement in the host culture (e.g., Costigan & Dokis, 2006a), these differences in actual cultural orientations are not reflected in family members' acculturation goals.

Together, these findings contradict the stereotype that immigrant parents are slow or reluctant to embrace the settlement culture (Kwak, 2003). Instead, the findings suggest that for parents, there may be a disconnect between their Canadian acculturation goals and their actual engagement with Canadian culture. Although individuals who immigrate in adulthood may face challenges in cultural adoption, the results of this study suggest that, on average, their desires to do so are strong. This suggests that more efforts to address barriers to engagement in the new culture are needed so that immigrant parents can meet their acculturation goals. For example, immigrants will have difficulty fully engaging in Canadian society in communities where English language learning opportunities are scarce (Isphording & Otten, 2014). Barriers related to labor market participation, experiences of discrimination, and policies that make it difficult to engage in education and employment courses (e.g., lack of child care) may also interfere with immigrant adults' ability to turn their acculturation goals into their reality (e.g., Guo, 2013; Sethi, 2015).

These findings related to Canadian acculturation goals also challenge stereotypes that parents are wary of their children's engagement with the new culture of settlement, as is implied in the acculturation gap-distress model (Telzer, 2010). Immigrant parents may object or fear specific aspects of the new culture, such as values related to adolescent assertiveness or adolescent dating and substance use (Ochocka & Janzen, 2008). But these results suggest that at a broad level, parents are supportive of their children's engagement with the new culture.

## *Chinese Acculturation Goals*

Family members all endorsed strong goals to retain the Chinese culture. In fact, for adolescents, Chinese acculturation goals were as high as Canadian acculturation goals. These findings are consistent with the ethnic identity literature, which highlights the strength with which ethnic minority youth identify with their ethnic heritage (e.g., Schwartz et al., 2014). Interestingly, and unexpectedly, adolescents' self-reported desire to retain their Chinese culture was stronger than their parents' self-reported Chinese acculturation goals. In addition, adolescents' Chinese acculturation goals were as strong as their parents' goals for them; there was no evidence of a disconnect between parents' strong desires for their children's ethnic culture maintenance and their children's goals for themselves. In fact, adolescents overestimated the extent to which parents desired them to retain the Chinese culture. Thus, the picture that emerges is one in which adolescents are strongly motivated to retain the Chinese culture, more strongly than their parents are, and on par with their parents' desires for them.

It may be more important to adolescents than their parents to feel connected to the Chinese culture. Adolescents are at an age of active identity exploration (Pahl & Way, 2006) and are growing up in a multicultural context. Adolescents in immigrant families have daily experiences in which their ethnicity is made salient (Umaña-Taylor et al., 2014). Thus, they may need to put forth greater effort in learning or maintaining their Chinese heritage and may strongly prioritize the maintenance of their ethnic culture as an important personal goal. Their parents, in contrast, were fully socialized in their ethnic culture and may have more of an internalized sense of their Chinese heritage. As a result, parents' sense of being Chinese may be taken for granted and not viewed as an important priority.

These differences in Chinese acculturation goals share some similarities to comparisons of actual Chinese identity among mothers, fathers, and adolescents in Chinese families. For example, in a separate sample of immigrant Chinese families, Costigan and Dokis (2006a, 2006b) found that adolescents tended to endorse measures of ethnic identity more strongly than their parents. Parent-child differences in which children are more oriented toward the ethnic culture than parents are often associated with family conflict and poorer adolescent adjustment (e.g., Telzer, 2010). The current finding that some adolescents hold stronger desires for ethnic cultural retention than their parents suggests that these adolescents may need additional support as they navigate their cultural identity in a multicultural society. Further research is needed to understand how parents view their children's desires to maintain the ethnic culture and how families navigate forward when cultural maintenance is a greater priority for children than adults.

### ***Parents' Goals for Their Children: Clarifying the Acculturation Gap-Distress Model***

Overall, the results add to the growing literature that calls into question the assumption that parents are more oriented to the ethnic culture than their children and children are more oriented to the settlement culture (e.g., Birman, 2006). While this dynamic exists within some families, it does not capture acculturation-related dynamics for many immigrant families. This is an important finding because it may help explain why some acculturation gaps do not translate into distress (e.g., Rasmi, Chuang, & Hennig, 2015). Specifically, acculturation gaps in the settlement dimension can arise in two ways. Some parents encourage their children to be more oriented to the settlement society so as to facilitate their sociocultural adaptation. In effect, these parents are contributing to the development of an acculturation gap. However, this gap is consistent with parents' acculturation goals for their children and therefore may not be associated with distress. In other families, children's strong orientation to the settlement culture may be against their parents' wishes. In this case, acculturation gaps can more easily translate into distress. Thus, we propose that parental goals for their children's acculturation may exacerbate or mitigate the effects of acculturation gaps on adaptation. Parents with high Canadian adoption goals for their children hope that their children become well integrated into the new culture, whereas other parents may feel threatened by their children's interest in the new culture; these different reactions may be associated with relatively inconsequential acculturation gaps in the former case and problematic gaps in the latter.

Unlike the Canadian dimension, we would expect that parent-child acculturation gaps in the ethnic dimension, in either direction, may more consistently translate into distress. Here, too, however, parents' goals for their children's ethnic cultural retention are expected to play an important role in identifying when acculturation gaps will be problematic and when they will be benign, with violations of parents' acculturation goals for children leading to distress.

The findings regarding children's perceptions of their parents' goals for them may also help us understand why some acculturation gaps are linked with distress. The results showed that adolescents underestimated the extent to which their parents wanted them to adopt the Canadian culture and overestimated how much their parents wanted them to retain Chinese culture. If children believe that their parents hold a certain set of goals for them (high ethnic orientation, low settlement orientation), then regardless of whether they are accurate, children may interpret parents' actions in that light. For example, they may frame any rule or restriction a parent sets as stemming from a set of acculturation goals that the child is not living up to and react with distress (guilt) or oppositionality. If children accurately perceive their parents' acculturation goals for them, then there is less opportunity for misunderstanding. Future research should explore how adolescents' perceptions of parents' goals shape their responses to everyday issues encountered in the parent-child relationship.



## Limitations and Future Directions

Our findings can only be generalized to Chinese Canadian immigrant families with adolescent children. Expanding the study of acculturation goals beyond these parameters represents an important direction for future research. First, it is possible that acculturation goals may differ as a function of developmental stage. For example, immigrants in late adulthood may be less motivated to engage with the settlement society than those in younger age groups, given that they are less likely to be employed or in school. Further, parents may hold stronger settlement culture goals for children who are transitioning into adulthood, compared to younger children, in light of the importance of intercultural contact at school, in their workplace, and the broader community. On the other hand, ethnic culture goals may be prioritized for younger children who spend more of their time in the family home. Second, there may be variation in the extent to which various ethnocultural groups, on average, hold ethnic and/or settlement culture goals, depending on factors such as the cultural distance between the two cultures and the size of the ethnic community. Third, immigrants in Canada may hold stronger ethnic culture goals than immigrants in other countries that do not have an official multicultural policy. Fourth, in today's multicultural world, parents and/or adolescents may seek to orient toward additional cultural groups, beyond Chinese and Canadian dimensions. Future research should examine how acculturation goals in these two dimensions fit into a larger matrix of cultural orientations.

We speculated earlier that a key area of disconnection may be between parents' Canadian acculturation goals and their actual Canadian cultural orientation. Future research should systematically examine the link between acculturation goals and actual behaviors, as well as how their compatibility relates to psychological and sociocultural adaptation. Future research should also test our hypothesis that parental acculturation goals moderate the link between acculturation gaps and distress. This may greatly extend our understanding of the acculturation gap-distress model. Specifically, it may explain why some studies have failed to find a link between acculturation gaps and distress, despite empirical, anecdotal, and clinical evidence (Fuligni, 2012).

Overall, the construct of acculturation goals may clarify the acculturation process in myriad ways. Our findings suggest that there is considerable diversity in how families approach the acculturation process, among individual family members and as broader family systems; there is not one standard way in which to resolve the challenge of navigating two cultural worlds. Future research should seek to understand these within-group nuances and be careful not to perpetuate broad assumptions about their homogeneity.

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