EXPLORING THE LEISURE BEHAVIORS OF OLDER KOREAN IMMIGRANTS
ASSOCIATED WITH LEISURE BENEFITS, FACILITATORS TO LEISURE,
LEISURE CONSTRAINTS, AND ACCULTURATION

A Dissertation in
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By

Junhyoung Kim

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The dissertation of Junhyoung Kim was reviewed and approved* by the following:

Garry Chick  
Department Head, Professor of Recreation, Park and Tourism Management  
Dissertation Adviser  
Chair of Committee

Deborah, L. Kerstetter  
Professor of Recreation, Park and Tourism Management

Careen M. Yarnal  
Associate Professor of Recreation, Park and Tourism Management

Jennifer Van Hook  
Professor of Sociology and Demography

*Signatures are on file in the Graduate School.
This study was aimed at exploring the leisure behavior of older Korean immigrants by focusing on leisure patterns, leisure facilitators, and leisure benefits and challenges associated with acculturation and immigration. After interpreting and analyzing the participants’ experiences and statements, I identified four common themes related to leisure and acculturation: (a) types of leisure involvement, (c) facilitators to leisure related to culture and immigration, (c) culture-related leisure constraints, and (d) leisure benefits associated with acculturation. The results indicate that acculturation and immigration created an environment in which participants pursued new types of leisure activities that were associated with their culture and immigration. In addition, the immigration environment provided older Korean participants with an opportunity that facilitates leisure participation. Through leisure participation, participants gained health benefits, such as psychological, social, and physical health. In spite of these leisure benefits, however, participants’ cultural conflicts and adaptation difficulties are constraining factors that restrict their leisure participation. Such adaptation difficulties are associated with acculturative stress. The findings highlighted the significance of leisure for coping with acculturative stress and facilitating acculturation.
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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

As of 2008, the number of people in the United States (U.S.) over the age of 65 was 40.2 million, representing 13% of the total population. This percentage has grown at a faster rate than the percentage of younger adults in the U.S.; the percentage of the population 65 and over increased by 15.1% from 2000 to 2010 and is projected to be 90.5 million by 2050 (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2010). The number of older ethnic minorities has been rapidly increasing in the U.S. and elderly immigrants presently account for approximately 11% of the foreign-born population (Leach, 2008). Among elderly immigrants, older Asian immigrants are one of the fastest growing ethnic groups and in 2008 the number of older Asian immigrants reached 15.5 million (Lee & Holm, 2011; Schneider, 2004). From 2000 to 2025, the population of older Asian immigrants is expected to increase by 246% (Mui & Kang, 2006).

The primary reason for the growing number of older Asian immigrants in the last decade is due to the passage of the Immigration Reform Act of 1965 (Lee & Holm, 2011). Under this act, immigrants are able to invite their parents and relatives who live in their original countries to the U.S. so they can achieve family reunification. In particular, East Asian countries (e.g., China, Japan, and Korea) emphasize the value of Confucianism related to filial obligations and the above act allows East Asian immigrants to fulfill this cultural value (Sung, 2001). Even though older East Asian immigrants face numerous life challenges associated with adaptation, their adult children desire to maintain their familial responsibilities of taking care of them and bringing them to the U.S. (Mui, 2001). Therefore, immigrants’ cultural value (e.g., filial obligation) has contributed to the increase in the number of older East Asian immigrants to the U.S.
Another reason for the increase is that many older East Asian adults came to the U.S. at a young age in order to achieve a better life by furthering their education or gaining economic success (Hurh & Kim, 1984). This group represents individuals who have immigrated to the U.S. with specific purposes such as education (their own education and/or their children’s education) and employment. According to this pattern of immigration, after retirement these individuals became part of the older generation in the U.S. (Lee & Holm, 2011).

In general, immersion into a new society is often a stressful and difficult process for East Asian immigrants because the adaptation process can create numerous challenges such as different cultural values, beliefs, and family structures, prejudice and discrimination, language barriers, and limited or non-existent social networks (Hsu, Davies, & Hansen, 2004; Hwang & Ting, 2008; Yu, 1997). In particular, research shows that older Asian immigrants display more significant adjustment difficulties than East Asian immigrants in other age groups (Berry, 1992; Diwan, Jonnalagadda, & Balaswamy, 2004; Oh & Sales, 2002). The primary factor that causes adjustment difficulties for older East Asian immigrants is limited English proficiency, which negatively impacts their social network increases the potential for psychological difficulties (e.g., depression, social isolation, and loneliness) (Lai, 2004; Nicassio, 1983; Weisman et al., 2005). For example, in a study conducted by Lai (2004), older Chinese immigrants experienced language barriers, which restricted their daily lives and caused adaptation problems.

A difficult adaptation process also negatively affects older Asian immigrants’ perception of their health and wellbeing (Mio, Barker-Hackett, & Tumambing, 2006; Shim & Schwartz, 2007). Kiefer et al. (1985) found that older Korean immigrants had
higher levels of psychological difficulties (i.e., acculturative stress, cultural conflicts and anxiety) than their Caucasian peers. Additionally, Mui and Kang (2006) found that older Asian immigrants experienced a high level of acculturative stress and cultural gaps, which caused depressive symptoms.

Leisure may play an important role in ameliorating negative psychological symptoms among older East Asian immigrants. A growing body of literature supports the idea that participation in leisure activities is associated with a reduction of psychological difficulties (e.g., depression and loneliness) and an enhancement of health and wellbeing among older adults (Hamer, Molloy, Oliveira, & Demakakos, 2009; Lampinen Heikkinen & Ruoppila, 2000). For example, using a nationally-based representative sample of 3,778 older Taiwanese adults, participation in leisure activities reduced the risk of having depressive symptoms and enhanced psychological wellbeing (Ku, Fox, & Chen, 2009). Hamer et al. (2009) found that participation in moderate or vigorous leisure-time physical activities was associated with a lower risk of depressive symptoms and improved health over the four years during the follow-up study among community dwelling older adults in the United Kingdom (U.K.). In addition, widowed older women in the U.K. reported that leisure participation after the loss of a spouse helped them to enhance their mental health (Janke, Nimrod, & Kleiber, 2008; Utz, Carr, Nesse, & Wortman, 2002). In spite of various benefits of leisure participation, there is little literature on leisure benefits on health and wellbeing among older East Asian immigrants.

As another positive outcome of leisure participation, previous research demonstrates that leisure participation facilitates acculturation among immigrants (Li & Stodolska, 2006; Stodolska & Yi, 2003; Yu & Berryman, 1996). Stodolska and
Alexandris (2004) explored how leisure and recreation participation facilitated the acculturation process among first generation immigrants. They determined that three distinct processes exist: (a) facilitating the adaptation process to mainstream society, (b) assimilating to the sub-culture of the individual’s inter-ethnic group and (c) maintaining his or her cultural values and beliefs, while still fostering ethnic group solidarity. In a study of Latino immigrants working in the U.S., Dale, Albin, and Kaolka-Ullom (2005) found that they participated in traditional leisure and spiritual activities as a way of adapting to their new environment. Furthermore, Stack and Iwasaki (2009) found that leisure activities provided Afghan immigrants with opportunities to socialize with others and facilitate their adaptation process. They also suggested that Afghan immigrants gained social, cultural, education, physical and mental health benefits from participation in leisure activities. Based on these studies, older East Asian immigrants may use leisure as a way of facilitating the acculturation process.

Additionally, a few studies have shown that older adults participate in leisure activities as a way of coping with stress (Bagheri-Nesami, Raftii, & Oskouie, 2010; Demers et al., 2009; Fitzpatrick et al., 2001; Zuzanek, Robinon, & Iwasaki, 1998). For example, in the park and recreation setting, Orsega-Smith et al. (2004) explored the interaction between stress and park use among older adults. Their study provided evidence that park-based leisure involvement was positively related to psychological and physiological health. As described, older East Asian immigrants encounter various adaptation challenges (e.g., different cultural values and beliefs, language barriers, and limited social networks). These adaptation difficulties are unquestionably linked to the major stressors in the lives of older Korean immigrants. Leisure may allow them to create
and develop their own coping strategies to deal with adaptation challenges and associated stressors.

In terms of leisure participation among older East Asian immigrants, they may maintain engagement in leisure activities in which they used to participate before immigration and/or pursue new activities provided by a new society. One example is that Stodolska (2000) examined the changes and patterns of leisure behaviors of immigrants after moving to a new country. She mentioned that acculturation provides an atmosphere in which immigrants can embrace new cultural and social values and beliefs, which, in turn, encourages them to pursue new recreation activities. However, Stodolska also showed that outside of the acculturation process, some participants were willing to continue to participate in certain leisure activities because of their familiarity with them.

In addition, adaptation difficulties (i.e., language barriers, limited social networks, and cultural differences) may create some challenges associated with leisure participation among older Korean immigrants. Several researchers stressed the importance of acculturation as another factor that influences leisure behaviors among immigrants (Stodolska, 1998; Tcha & Lobo, 2003; Tsai, 2000; Walker, Jackson, & Deng, 2007). However, leisure professionals still find it challenging to understand the complex nature and multifaceted impact of cultural and ethnic differences on leisure constraints (Shinew & Floyd, 2005). Little literature exists that has explored the constraining factors that restrict older immigrants’ leisure participation.

In sum, there is little research that has explored leisure benefits and/or challenges associated with acculturation and immigration experiences among older East Asian
immigrants. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to ameliorate that problem through the examination of leisure among older East Asian immigrants.
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

I provide four conceptualized frameworks that may influence the leisure behavior of older Korean immigrants: (a) the nature of Asian societies, (b) acculturation, (c) leisure and older adults, and (d) leisure and immigration. The background of each conceptualized area will be addressed below.

**Asian Societies and Older East Asian Immigrants**

To understand how immigration affects leisure participation among older East Asian immigrants, their fundamental cultural values should be addressed as they tend to be maintained and may not be always congruent with those of a host country (Masako, 1997; Sung, 2001). Based on previous studies, two important cultural values that older East Asian immigrants desire to maintain are (a) filial piety and (b) collectivism, both of which may affect leisure their leisure motivation and participation.

In East Asian societies, respect for older adults is one of the most important cultural values. Younger generations need to use more formalized language, such as honorific expressions and terms that are indicative of respect. Also, it is inappropriate for young adults to smoke in front of older adults in East Asian society. In a recreation setting, older East Asian immigrants may have different interpretations of behaviors and actions when they interact with others who lack their cultural understandings. Inversely, recreation professionals who lack understanding about East Asian societies may experience some conflicts with older Asian immigrants because of cultural differences.

In East Asian societies, culture also appears to influence decisions about leisure participation among older East Asian immigrants. East Asian societies emphasize in-group decisions and collectivistic ideas (Uchida, Norasakkunkit, & Kitayama, 2004). For
example, during the decision making process, East Asians place more importance on the opinions of others, which means that the opinions of others may have a significant impact on their decisions (Aaker & Maheswaran, 1997). This collectivistic thought and action may affect the decisions that older Asian immigrants make when it comes to leisure participation. In Western societies, individuals are encouraged to participate in recreation activities based on their self-determination and decisions, which may be incongruent with older Asian immigrants’ choices. Therefore, East Asian’s cultural background may influence the behaviors, attitudes, and thinking processes associated with their leisure participation.

Filial Piety. Filial piety has been characterized as an important value in East Asian societies; this is particularly true in China, Korea and Japan (Ho, 1994; Yeh & Bedford, 2003). According to Yang (1988), filial piety represents the conservative meaning of how to treat one’s parents. It is based on a Confucian value and involves unconditional love, support, respect, devotion and obedience to one’s parents (Leung, Wong, Wong, & McBride-Chang, 2010). To maintain this Confucian value, individuals in East Asian societies are obligated to provide financial, emotional, social, and physical support for their parents (Ho, 1994; Sung, 1998). If children (or young adults) fail to maintain this obligation, then they may experience guilt and shame because supporting their parents is an important obligation in their societies (Bedford, 2004).

Osako and Liu (1986) specified the main characteristics of filial piety: (a) respecting one’s parents, (b) being obedient and courteous, (c) providing support in old age, and (d) obtaining a good career in order to honor one’s parents. Sung (1998) explored the above categories and showed why respect for older adults emerged as the
most basic value in East Asian societies. In his study, respect for older adults was rooted in the fundamental social structure of East Asian societies and, as such, using honorific language is a way to respect older adults.

Previous research has shown that filial piety leads to positive outcomes in regard to psychological development in collectivistic societies. For example, using a sample of 240 Chinese individuals from Hong Kong, Cheung, Lee, and Chan (1994) demonstrated that filial piety is positively associated with family cohesion and health. The results of their study indicated that family members with strong filial piety expressed a sense of family cohesion and bonding, which contributed to positive family relationships. Lawrence, Bennett, and Markides (1992) suggested that filial piety was influenced by collectivistic values and provided a positive environment in which older immigrants could have positive interactions with the young adults and grandchildren in their families. Adult children also followed the value of filial piety and developed family ties (Lawrence et al., 1992). Furthermore, children who developed or maintained filial piety beliefs reported less maternal conflicts because they perceived parental control as parental warmth and support (Wong, Leung, & Catherine, 2010). This study stated that filial piety has often been an important element that fosters a better quality of relationships.

In contrast, other research on filial piety has found it generates negative consequences in regard to the personal development of children and causes the inhibition of self-expression, opinions, self-development, and creativity (Leung et al., 2001). Filial piety is also associated with overprotection by parents, controlling parents, an overemphasis on obedience, and restrictions on the personal lives of children (Ho, 1994; Yeh & Bedford, 2003). For example, 231 Chinese students in grades 5 and 6 who have
high levels of authoritarian filial piety reported incompetence, helplessness, or frustration because high levels of authoritarian filial piety foster the suppression of the children’s own wills.

Yeh (2003) developed a model of filial piety that identified several factors that influence the positive outcomes and negative consequences of such piety. This model also introduced two types of filial piety: reciprocity and authoritarianism. Reciprocal filial piety has been defined as “gratitude for [one’s parents’] efforts in having raised one, and physical and financial care for one’s parents as they age and when they die for the same reason” (Yeh & Bedford, 2003, p. 216). Authoritarian filial piety emphasizes hierarchy and submission and is defined as:

- suppressing one’s own wishes and complying with one’s parents’ wishes because of their seniority in physical, financial or social terms, as well as
- continuing the family lineage and maintaining one’s parents’ reputation because of the force of role requirements. (Yeh & Bedford, 2003, p. 216)

According to Lin (2008), reciprocal filial piety has had a positive effect on the parent-child relationship, while authoritarian filial piety has been negatively associated with intergenerational relationships.

*Collectivism and Interdependence.* The cultural orientation of older Asian immigrants is related to the promotion of family ties and interdependence. Among Korean immigrants in New York, older Korean immigrants provide essential childcare and housekeeping services for their children and take it for granted that they will live together with their children (Min, 1998). In Western societies, individuals emphasize the value of
independence and self-reliance, which indicates that cohabitation may not be as common within Western societies (Treas & Mazumdar, 2002).

Although culture is a complex and multifaceted construct, a fundamental difference in societies is that Western and Eastern societies have a different meaning of self-concept. Markus and Kitayama (1991) illustrated that individuals in Western societies emphasize the value of individualism and perceive the self as independent from the self of others. They tend to describe themselves in terms of internal characteristics or traits that make them unique from others (Ward, Bochner, & Furnham, 2001). They focus on their personal achievements and autonomy in terms of their choices, goals and decisions.

Specifically, Markus and Kitayama (1991) conceptualized cultural differences in the pattern of reciprocal relationship between the individual and the group. Their ideas are helpful in understanding different behaviors and/or attitudes among older East Asian immigrants. According to Moi et al. (2006), individualism represents a social pattern in which individuals focus on their own preferences, interests, and objectives when it comes to conflicts with others in a group. Collectivism refers to a social pattern in which group decisions and collectivistic preferences are emphasized when individuals come into conflicts with others (Moi et al., 2006).

On the collectivistic side, individuals regard themselves with an interdependent view of the self, which means the self is automatically connected with other selves. Self-concept is evaluated in terms of being accepted and valued by an individual’s in-groups (Uchida, Norasakkunkit, & Kitayama, 2004). Triandis and colleagues (e.g., Triandis, 1995; Triandis & Gelfand, 1998) introduced four important attributes of collectivism: (a)
collectivistic aspect of self (e.g., interdependent), (b) in-group goals for group harmony, (c) focus on relatedness, and (d) the importance of social norms. East Asian older immigrants may tend to place substantial emphasis on conformity and favorable uniformity in beliefs, customs and practices. Therefore, East Asian older immigrants who are influenced by collectivism and interdependence may exhibit different thinking processes, social acceptance, and behaviors.

In terms of the pursuit of happiness, Suh and Oishi (2004) stated, “happiness in North America is essentially attained via personal achievement and self-esteem, whereas happiness in East Asia is attained via supportive social relationships” (p. 220). This statement implies that social support from others and emotional attachment to the community may be important factors for enhancing psychological wellbeing and happiness among older East Asian immigrants. Thus, the environment that creates social support from others may facilitate leisure participation among older East Asian immigrants.

Confucian values also reflect gender inequality. In this culture, men are higher in status than women, and this notion often place women in submissive roles (Kim, 2009). In addition, women should respect and follow the decisions that their husbands make. Such a distinct gender role and gender inequality may influence the choice of leisure activities. Based on the unique cultural circumstances, leisure choices of older adult females may be restricted and negatively influenced.

**Acculturation and Health among Older East Asian Immigrants**

**Acculturation.** Acculturation refers to the process of acquiring new cultural values and beliefs, behaviors and/or attitudes through cross-cultural contacts and interactions with
culturally and ethnically diverse individuals (Berry, 1997; Berry, Trimble, & Olmedo, 1986; Gibson, 2001). Much research on acculturation focuses on individuals living in different countries through immigration, refugee status, asylum or education (Berry, 2001; Schwartz, Unger, Zamboanga, & Szapocznik, 2010). During acculturation, some individuals may find it easy to immerse themselves in the acquisition of new social circumstances and have positive interactions with others of different cultural and ethnic backgrounds. Others may be reluctant to embrace new cultural values and beliefs and/or find it challenging to reconcile the cultural and ethnic differences between their own country of origin and their host country. Thus, researchers have described the acculturation process as a multifaceted and continuous process associated with the degree of acquisition of new cultural characteristics (e.g., values, beliefs and practices), behaviors, thinking patterns and self-identification (Chirkov, 2009; Rudmin, 2003, 2009).

The prevailing theory of acculturation was presented by Berry (1980) and is known as the bidimensional model. In this model, cultural maintenance and cultural acquisition serve as independent dimensions, thereby resulting in the acculturation outcomes (Corral & Landrine, 2008; Schwartz et al., 2010). This model is characterized by four distinct outcomes: (a) separation, (b) integration, (c) assimilation, and (d) marginalization. Immigrants who maintain their traditional societies and exhibit a rejection of new cultural acquisition fall into the separation outcome. Those immigrants who maintain their cultures and accept new cultures fall into the integration outcome. Berry (1980) regarded integration as the most optimistic outcome. Those immigrants who accept the new culture and discard their heritage culture exhibit the assimilation outcome,
while those immigrants who reject both their traditional culture and the acquisition of new cultural values are characterized as being in the marginalized outcome.

Focusing on the acculturation dimension, several researchers have emphasized the role of the ethnic identity in the acculturation process in regard to how immigrants perceive the concept of ethnic ethnicity as an index of heritage-cultural identification (Berry, Kim, Power, Young, & Bujaki, 1989; Lieber, Chin, Nihira, & Mink, 2001). These studies have indicated that immigrants have different levels of ethnic identity and these levels affect acculturation. Based on Berry’s (1980) acculturation model, researchers (e.g., Berry et al., 1989; Lieber et al., 2001) explained the association between acculturation and ethnic identity as being the integrated group representing individuals who are highly acculturated and who have a strong ethnic identity; the assimilated group contains individuals who immerse themselves into new societies at the expense of their ethnic identity; the separated group consists of individuals who are less acculturated and preserve their strong ethnic identity; and the marginalized individuals do not have any strong acculturative pattern or ethnic identity.

A recent review of literature on acculturation has criticized the acculturation model introduced by Berry (1980) and suggested that, “Acculturation is an open-ended, continuous process that includes progresses, relapses and turns, which make it practically impossible to predict and control. This process should be described, interpreted and understood by the researchers” (Chirkov, 2009, p. 178). Chirkov mentioned that immigrants experience various reactions to multifaceted social contexts and have different approaches to the diversified elements of new cultures, such as not choosing either to accept or reject their own cultures or new cultures of a host country. Rudmin
(2009) suggested a new acculturation model based on a historical examination of acculturation constructs. He expanded upon this suggestion by considering acculturative motivations for acculturation (e.g., cultural attitudes, ethnic identity, reacting to acculturative stress, and the cost and benefits of cultural learning); acculturative learning (e.g., information, instruction, imitation and mentors); and changes in individuals (e.g., skills and behaviors, cultural identification, social relations, and beliefs and values).

Additionally, Kim and Abreu (2001) separated acculturation into behavioral, cognitive and affective domains. Schwartz et al. (2010) built off this approach and stated that behavioral acculturation includes cultural practices, cognitive acculturation includes cultural values, and affective acculturation focuses on cultural identification.

**Acculturation, Acculturative Stress, and Health.** Previous research has shown that psychological and socio-cultural adaptations are the main determinants of positive outcomes as they are associated with acculturation (Ataca & Berry, 2002; Searle & Ward, 1990). Psychological adaptation encompasses psychological distress, moods, and confidence in regard to adjustments and acceptance of others (Sam, 2006; Ying & Han, 2006). Socio-cultural adaptation is based on one’s ability to interact with others having different cultural backgrounds and acquire culturally appropriate behaviors and skills (Furnham & Bochner, 1982).

Broadly, nearly all older immigrants experience adaptation difficulties, which contribute to underutilized healthcare services (Aroian, Khatutsky, Tran, & Balsam, 2001; Damron-Rodriguez, Wallace, & Kington, 1994). Older East Asian immigrants face difficulties associated with acculturation, such as ethnic and cultural differences, language problems, racial discrimination, limited social networks and different social
environments (Berry, 1997; Kim, 1997; Oh & Sales, 2002). Oh and Sales noted that older Asian immigrants found it stressful to adapt to a new society due to differences (i.e., social norms, cultural values and beliefs, social environments and languages) between their old and new societies, which contributed to adaptation difficulties.

Adaptation difficulties associated with acculturation are unquestionably related to the stress that it causes. Berry, Kim, Minde and Mok (1987) called this “acculturative stress,” and defined it as “a reduction in health status (including psychological, somatic and social aspects) of individuals who are undergoing acculturation, and for which there is evidence that these health phenomena are related to systematically to acculturative phenomena” (p. 491). According to Berry (1992, 1997), acculturative stressors result from physical, social, cultural and functional factors. Physical stressors include unfamiliar social settings and social systems; social stressors are social isolation, limited social networks and homesickness; cultural stressors manifest themselves in languages differences as well as in differences in customs, traditions and cultural values and beliefs; and functional stressors occur due to language difficulties, finances, transportation, family structures and work (Berry, 1997; Church, 1982; Ryan & Twibell, 2000; Ying, 1996, 2005; Ying & Han, 2006). Furthermore, acculturative stressors have been negatively associated with wellbeing and life satisfaction (Berry, 1980, 1997; Cheung-Blunden & Jang, 2008).

Older East Asian immigrants may experience more serious acculturative stressors than other aging groups because they have very limited resources due to their dependency on their children, cultural conflicts, unfamiliar social systems, language problems, and adaptation difficulties (Hwang, Wood, & Fujimoto, 2010; Mui & Kang, 2006; Tran,
1990). For example, older East Asian immigrants tend to maintain their own cultural values and beliefs, which creates conflicts with their adult children who are highly acculturated and misunderstandings with others who are culturally or ethnically diverse (Weisman et al., 2005). This example indicates that older East Asian immigrants are ingrained in their lifestyles, behaviors, and attitudes that are influenced by their traditional cultural values and beliefs. These factors function as inhibitors of the adaptation process. Jang, Kim and Chiriboga (2005) found that older Korean immigrants experienced a lack of financial resources (e.g., depending upon the young adults in their families and limited job availabilities to them), physical mobility concerns, transportation problems, and low acculturation. They mentioned that these challenges were negatively associated with their self-control. Additionally, a study of six groups of older East Asian immigrants from China, Korea, India, the Philippines, Vietnam and Japan by Mui and Kang (2006) found that these individuals reported moderate or severe levels of depressive symptoms resulting from acculturative stress. They also mentioned that acculturative stress contributed to a poor quality of life for these individuals.

One important factor that has caused acculturative stress for older East Asian immigrants is a lack of communication with others. Several researchers have employed level of English proficiency as an important measure of acculturation among immigrants in regard to their ability to communicate with others (Kim, 1999; Lai, 2004; Nicassio, 1983; Tran, 1990; Weisman et al., 2005). They found that their ability to communicate was associated with psychological and social adaptation as well as wellbeing. However, older East Asian immigrants demonstrated deficient communication skills that occurred as a result of a lack of English skills, resulting in psychological problems (e.g.,
depression and anxiety), isolation from one’s community, and adaptation difficulties (Lai, 2004; Nicassio, 1983; Weisman et al., 2005). For example, Tran found that older Vietnamese refugees were not able to function normally because of their communication problems. Difficulties with new language acquisition and a decline of their memory capacities were associated with difficulties within the adaptation process, which contributed to acculturative stress. Kim (1999) demonstrated that older Korean immigrants who had communication problems because of their lack of English skills reported higher levels of loneliness.

Cultural differences, social norms, and values and beliefs also generate acculturative stress, which negatively influences older East Asian immigrants’ health. For example, Lai (2004) showed the prevalence of depressive symptoms among older Chinese immigrants and found that they reported higher levels of depressive symptoms when compared to other older members of ethnic groups. Lai (2004) also found that differences in cultural values and beliefs were the main predictors of depressive symptoms, and that acculturative stress is negatively associated with health and psychological wellbeing among older East Asian immigrants.

To ameliorate negative depressive symptoms, Kim (1999) found that older East Asian immigrants who exhibited a strong tendency toward interacting with members of their own ethnic group were able to develop social interactions with others and decrease a sense of social isolation. In a study of 200 older Korean immigrants, Kim, Hurh and Kim (1993) found that they maintained their ethnic, social and cultural ties with members of the same ethnic group in spite of their immigration. The tendency of these immigrants to interact with members of the same ethnic group was not found to provide an appropriate
way to facilitate the acculturation process. Furthermore, after conducting two studies focused on older Chinese and Korean immigrants, Mui (2001) reported that older East Asian immigrants experienced cultural conflicts as a result of cultural and ethnic differences and that their cultural conflicts between their old societies and new societies caused significant psychological and social problems when attempting to adapt to life in the U.S.

Due to cultural differences, older East Asian immigrants experienced an increase in family conflict and a decrease in family cohesion and family structure compared to before immigration (Farver, Narang, & Bhadha, 2002; Kwak, 2003; Ying, 1999). The main reason for these phenomena is that in the family, the adult children of older East Asian immigrants are more likely to become assimilated and acculturated to American culture than their parents (Hurh & Kim, 1984; Kim, 1999). Discrepancies within the adaptation process of members of the same family create different roles for the family members than those traditionally assigned and cause a decrease in family cohesion (Ying, 1999). In addition, different adaptation processes generated by communication problems between older East Asian immigrants and their adult children aggravate family relationships and negatively affect family wellness (Hwang, Wood, & Fujinmoto, 2010). The results of a qualitative study conducted by Soonthornchaiya and Dancy (2006) of older Thai immigrants found that the participants experienced different family structures and norms as they pursued the maintenance of their traditional customs (e.g., filial piety and financial and social support for the parents), which were not congruent with the customs of their adult children who are acculturated to the Western culture. Soonthornchaiya and Dancy noted that the study participants felt like a burden to their
adult children because they depended upon them financially, even though their adult children encouraged them to be more financially independent.

**Leisure and Older Adults**

*Leisure Behaviors of Older Adults.* Leisure plays an essential part in older adults’ lives as it provides them with the opportunity to enhance the quality of their lives and improve their health. In later life, leisure can encompass a wide spectrum of enjoyable and meaningful activities that may contain a physical component (i.e., gardening, bowling, golf); mental or cognitive component (i.e., reading, cooking, puzzles, Bible study); and/or a social component (i.e., social conversation, watching grandchildren, support groups).

The literature on leisure provides evidence that older adults’ participation in leisure activities leads to substantial physical, psychological, cognitive, and social benefits (e.g., Mannell, 2007). From the physical perspective, a strong relationship exists between leisure activities and physical health. It is well-established that participation in leisure time physical activities has been associated with a reduced risk of disease (Grove & Spier, 1999); improved physical strength and functions (Skelton, Young, Greig, & Malbut, 1995); and a reduction in hip fractures and osteoporosis (Feskanich, Willett, & Colditz, 2002). Research has also demonstrated that increased levels of leisure activity involvement have been associated with a slower rate of motor function decline and a lower risk of developing chronic diseases in older age (Ashe, Miller, Eng, & Noreau, 2009; Bassuk & Manson, 2005; Buchman, Boyle, Wilson, Bienias, & Bennett, 2007; Warburton, Nicol, & Bredin, 2006). For example, using the population-based Leisure World Cohort Study, Paganini-Hill, Kawas and Corrada (2011) explored the relationship between leisure time physical activity and mortality in older adults. They found that
participation in leisure time physical activity served as an important vehicle for decreasing the risk of mortality.

In addition, involvement in social activities has been linked to improved physical health among older adults. In a longitudinal cohort study of older adults, Buchman et al. (2009) demonstrated that older adults who are less involved in social activities tend to have a more rapid rate of motor function decline than those who are actively involved in social activities. They suggested that older adults be encouraged to participate in social activities in an effort to protect against motor function decline.

Studies have shown that leisure activities are associated with psychological wellbeing among older adults (Nets, Wu, Becker, & Tenenbaum, 2005; Poon & Fung, 2008). For example, using a qualitative approach with 28 community dwelling older adults, Stathi, Fox and Mckenna (2002) investigated the impact of leisure activities on psychological wellbeing. In their study, participants reported that leisure activities helped them to increase their levels of happiness and enjoyment and improve their positive attitudes and feelings. Lampinen, Heikkinen, Kauppinen and Heikkinen (2006) conducted an eight-year longitudinal study in order to examine the role of leisure activities as a predictor of psychological wellbeing among older adults. Their findings indicated that participation in leisure activities makes a significant contribution to psychological wellbeing.

In a six-year longitudinal study, Menec (2003) examined the relationship between activity and several indicators of successful aging, namely happiness, life satisfaction, function, and mortality. Menec created three groups of activities to explore how they are related to successful aging: (a) social activities (e.g., church-related activities, mass
activities, social events, and games); (b) solitary activities (e.g., hobbies, music, art, theatre, reading or writing); and (c) productive activities (e.g., volunteer work, gardening, and yard work). Menec found that most activities are positively associated with happiness, particularly solitary activities which are the main predictors of happiness. Engaging in various social and productive activities were positively related to reduced functional decline among older adults. Therefore, personally meaningful engagement in activities helped participants to develop meaning in their lives, which led to psychological wellbeing (Kahana et al., 2002).

Other research has shown that older adults participate in leisure activities as a way to experience a sense of belonging to a community as well as creating social connections with others (Dionigi & Lyons, 2010; Kerstetter, Yarnal, Son, Yen, & Baker, 2008; Lyons & Dionigi, 2007; Misener et al., 2010; Son, Kerstetter, Yarnal, & Baker, 2007). According to Lyons and Dionigi (2007), older adults expressed emotional attachment to their community by acknowledging the meaning of community as the site is designed for sharing leisure interests, fostering social interactions, finding life purposes and contributing to community. Kerstetter et al. (2008), based on a study of older women who are members of The Red Hat Society, reported that their leisure activities generated a positive environment that fostered a feeling of belonging to a social network. This feeling, in turn, enhanced their emotional support from their social networks. In addition, Lyons and Dionigi (2010) showed that active older adults perceived a greater sense of shared emotional connections to the community as well as intergenerational connections because of their participation in community based activities.
Schaie (2005) suggests that social engagement activities help older adults protect against cognitive decline and dementia. Recently, Genoe (2010) conceptualized the role of leisure as a tool for fighting dementia. Other studies have supported the idea that leisure activities serve as effective tools for improving cognitive functions. In a study of 189 older adults who live in retirement communities, Parisi, Stine-Morrow, Noh and Morrow (2009) found that leisure increased cognitive capacity and performance through recreation activities and social engagements. In addition, Dodge et al. (2008) found that older adults gain cognitive benefits through leisure activities.

Benefits of Different Types of Leisure and Older Adults. Based on the apparent benefits of leisure participation in the lives of older adults, some researchers have explored how different leisure activities influence health (Chen & Fu, 2011; Dodge et al., 2008; Everard, Lack, Fisher, & Baum, 2000). With a sample of 244 older adults, Everard and his colleagues (2000) used the Activity Checklist to explore the relationships between types of activities and physical and mental health. Four groups of activities were classified: (a) instrumental activities (e.g., shopping, cooking, paying bills, and doing housework); (b) social activities (e.g., traveling, entertaining, social events, and church; (c) high-demand leisure activities (e.g., swimming, woodworking, walking, and gardening); and (d) low-demand leisure activities (e.g., sewing, reading, watching television, and listening to music). They found that participating in high-demand leisure, social, and instrumental activities was associated with increased health among older adults, while only low-demand leisure activities were associated with better mental health. In another study, older adults who were engaged in solitary activities, such as hobbies, the arts, reading books or writing, reported that their mental health was enhanced (Menes, 2003). This
finding provides evidence that a positive association exists between less physical activities and mental health.

Chen and Fu (2011) examined the leisure patterns of older Taiwanese adults and found that participants who were engaged in social activities enjoyed increased socializing with their friends and expanded social networks. They also mentioned that social activities help older adults to ameliorate negative symptoms (e.g., depression and isolation) and improve mental health. Similarly, Iwasaki and Smale (1998) found that informal leisure activities, such as socializing with and visiting friends, were positively associated with psychological wellbeing. They went on to suggest that meaningful engagement in social activities helps older adults to improve their psychological health.

Dodge et al. (2008) examined the relationship between different types of leisure activities (e.g., physically demanding, nonphysical and social activities) and cognitive functioning. They found that nonphysical activities, such as reading books and traveling, were significantly and positively associated with cognitive health. The result of this study indicates that nonphysical activities help to improve the cognitive functions in older adults. Therefore, these findings imply that the type of leisure influences different domains of health and health functions.

Stebbins (1992) approached the phenomenon of leisure by exploring the degree to which individuals are involved, committed and identified through leisure. He proposed two types of leisure: casual and serious leisure. Stebbins used the term “serious leisure” as a way of describing individuals who have a committed orientation toward participation in a particular recreation activity that is personally meaningful to them. Serious leisure is defined as the “...systematic pursuit of an amateur, hobbyist, or volunteer activity
sufficiently substantial and interesting for participants to find a career there in the acquisition and expression of a combination of its special skills, knowledge, and experience” (Stebbins, 1997, p. 3). In contrast, casual leisure is an “... immediately, intrinsically rewarding, relatively short-lived pleasurable activity requiring little or no special training to enjoy it” (Stebbins, 1997, p. 17). Types of casual leisure include social conversation, passive entertainment and play.

From the serious leisure perspective, some researchers have stressed the importance of serious leisure experiences for improving the quality of life and successful aging of older adults. Through in-depth interviews with older adults who are shag dancers, Brown, McGuire and Voelkl (2008) found several major themes related to successful aging that occurred as the result of serious leisure participation. The outcomes associated with successful aging were lifelong learning, personal growth, a sense of satisfaction with life, interpersonal relationships, enjoyment, and happiness. This study indicated that older adults who have serious leisure experiences tend to identify with the characteristics of successful aging. They also suggested that superficial involvement in casual leisure activities did not predict the outcomes (e.g., personal growth, contentment, relationships, and satisfaction) that occurred as a result of serious leisure.

In addition, Heo, Lee, McCormick and Pedersen (2010) investigated how serious leisure is related to the subjective wellbeing of older adults who practice music with a group, play volleyball, volunteer at an event, or participate in music festivals. They suggested that serious leisure activities provide participants with opportunities to experience positive adjustments and positive affects in later life. In a context of volunteer activities, Misener, Doherty and Hamm-Kerwin (2010), who studied older adult
volunteers, reported that by volunteering at a sporting event, participants expressed a deep sense of purpose in life and gained health benefits through their active living style and social interactions with others. Furthermore, Heo and Lee (2010) demonstrated that affective attachment is one of the serious leisure indicators positively related to optimism, which is associated with psychological wellbeing. Thus, older adults who express a strong attachment to leisure activities experience positive outcomes such as wellbeing, positive affect, and adjustment.

*Leisure and Older East Asian Immigrants.* Little research focuses on the effect of leisure time physical activity among older Asian immigrants or explores the relationships between leisure time physical activities, health, and acculturation among older Asian immigrants. Parikh, Fahs, Shelley and Yerneni (2009) examined the health behaviors of older Chinese immigrants and showed how leisure time physical activities were related to their acculturation and mental health. One interesting finding that they presented was the increased participation in physical activity associated with the length of stay after immigration. This result indicates that older Asian immigrants who have been in the U.S. for a while are more acculturated and have more opportunities to engage in health promoting behaviors through participation in leisure activities than new immigrants.

Using a sample of 127 older Korean immigrants, Kim (2000) investigated the relationship between life satisfaction, acculturation and leisure participation. Older Korean immigrants were found to experience low levels of leisure participation, acculturation and life satisfaction. In addition, they preferred to participate in home-based and social activities rather than other leisure activities. As previous research has noted, even though older Asian immigrants have limited social networks and a sense of isolation
from their communities, they tend to interact with other older Korean immigrants for socialization and participate in family-oriented activities because of their cultural values (e.g., collectivism and interdependence). Overall, the results suggested that life satisfaction may be significantly increased through participation in leisure and, as such, leisure professionals should create culturally based activities that immigrants may be encouraged to participate in.

*Leisure as a Coping Resource among Older Adults.* Older adults face numerous life challenges and experience a multitude of physical, psychological and social changes, such as loss of significant others, retirement, diseases and/or illnesses, disabilities and a fixed income (Orsega-Smith, Mowen, Payne, & Godbey, 2004). Life challenges and changes are associated with potential stressors, which may negatively influence the perceptions of older adults’ health and wellbeing. A number of studies have suggested that older adults who actively cope well with changes and stressors tend to experience successful aging (Bagheri-Nesami, Rafii, & Oskouie, 2010; Ouwehand, de Ridder, & Bensing, 2007).

Thus, in the older population, developing and adopting coping strategies is important to improve health and wellbeing (Demers et al., 2009). Demers et al. (2009) defined coping strategies as “the identification, coordination and appropriate use of personal and environmental resources and are thus considered as a positive problem-solving approach to normal aging” (p. 234). However, previous leisure literature emphasized the role of leisure participation as a way of coping resources with a diverse group of participants such as people with disabilities and illnesses, adolescents, and individuals having stressful life events (Hutchison, Baldwin, & Oh, 2006; Iwasaki &
Barlett, 2006; Iwasaki et al., 2006; Mactavish & Iwasaki, 2005). For example, using focus groups comprised of Aboriginal individuals from Canada diagnosed with diabetes, Iwasaki and Bartlett (2006) examined the value of leisure as an important resource for coping with stress. These individuals stated that their involvement in leisure activities helped to reduce their daily levels of stress and facilitated social, cultural, spiritual, psychological and physical benefits.

Some studies have investigated the role of leisure as a coping strategy for improving health and dealing with stress among older adults. For example, Demers et al. (2009) explored the role of social activity participation (e.g., daily activities and social roles) of community-dwelling older adults as a coping strategy. They found that there was a positive association between coping strategies and social activity participation, particularly with daily activities. They suggested that social activity participation used as a coping strategy reduced the effect of stressful life events associated with age.

Using grounded theory, Bagheri-Nesami et al. (2010) documented that leisure created an environment in which a sample of elderly Iranian women could facilitate coping strategies and improve their abilities to deal with stressors. Furthermore, when exploring elderly men’s coping strategies as created through participation in leisure activities, Fitzpatrick et al. (2001) found that leisure activities have a moderating effect on stress, which contributes to physical, but not mental health. They suggested that there may be gender differences related to health benefits.

Interestingly, studies have explored how leisure activities are helpful to develop the ability to cope with and adapt to life conditions and transitions in the lives of older adults (Hutchinson, Yarnal, Stafford-son, & Kerstetter, 2008; Nimrod, 2009; Orsega-
Smith, Payne, Mowen, Ho, & Godbey, 2007). Hutchinson and her colleagues (2008) identified the major elements of how leisure activities provide a coping resource for older women. They showed that participation in a women’s leisure-based social group, the Red Hat Society, create a positive atmosphere within which older adults receive social support, ameliorate negative emotions, maintain coping efforts and strengthen their meaning of life. They suggested that leisure provides older women facing stressful life events with opportunities to develop perceptions of belonging, acceptance and support and enhance the senses of personal control and purpose. These positive changes that occurred as a result of participation in leisure served as coping strategies among older women.

In a study of online communities for older adults, Nimrod (2009) found that their main function is to provide enjoyable interactions, resources for leisure activities and practice information (e.g., recreation, shopping, and travel). In this study, active engagement in leisure activities through online communities was considered to be a coping strategy for older adults that contribute to self-preservation and growth. Nimrod suggested that online communities as an expression of leisure involvement were used as an avenue for coping with stress and expanding social networks among older adults.

Son et al. (2007) examined the role of a leisure environment, the Red Hat Society, which provided older women with opportunities to gain health benefits such as positive mood enhancement, social integration, coping with stress, and self-development. In particular, this study found that participants used the leisure environment of the Red Hat Society as a way to cope with a variety of stressors by developing a circle of friendship and fostering social relationships. In this study, the researchers suggested that leisure provided a positive environment by which participants developed the emotional support
and personal attachment. This positive and intimate social support through leisure involvement served as an important tool for dealing with negative life events. They also claimed the role of leisure as a way of coping with stress through emotional support, social connections, and information provision.

Orsega-Smith et al. (2004) examined the relationship between stress, park-based leisure activity, and physical, mental, and physiological health among older adults. They found that park-based leisure participation was closely and positively associated with a reduction of stress and its negative health consequences and an increase in mental and physical health. Three years later, Orsega-Smith et al. (2007) addressed the role of social support and self-efficacy. This was in response to evidence that social support and self-efficacy are the important outcomes of leisure participation (Coleman & Iso-Ahola, 1983; Orsega-Smith et al., 2004). Their study found that leisure participation strengthened the interpersonal resources (e.g., social support) and intrapersonal resources (e.g., self-efficacy and confidence), which served as the important coping elements of older adults. Thus, leisure activities have been shown to provide a positive atmosphere by which older adults developed coping strategies and maintain coping efforts, which subsequently contributes to the social and psychological health among older adults.

Leisure and Immigration

Race, Ethnicity, and Culture. Concepts of race and ethnicity have evolved over time (Williams, 1997). Race suggests biological inheritance and physical characteristics (i.e., skin color, eye color, hair color) and implies genetic homogeneity within heterogeneous population groups (Kaplan & Bennett, 2003; Lin & Kelsey, 2000). A definition of ethnicity refers to “membership in a wide range of groups defined by culture, heritage, or
national origin” (Kaplan & Bennett, p. 2710). Anderson and Frideres (1981) defined an ethnic group as a group of people:

- possessing ties of cultural homogeneity; a high degree of loyalty and adherence to certain basic institutions such as family patterns, religion, and language;
- distinctive folkways and mores; customs of dress, art, and ornamentation;
- patterns of recreation. (p. 36)

Based on this definition of ethnicity, the concept of culture establishes important constructs in the study of ethnicity as specific cultural characteristics may affect the perception, behaviors, attitudes, and thinking process of certain ethnic groups. Chick (1997) defined culture as shared elements with the emphasis on beliefs and values related to ethnicity and nationality. Triandis (1996) provided a sophisticated definition of culture as “the standards for perceiving, believing, evaluating, communicating, and acting among those who share a language, a historic period, and a geographic location” (p. 408).

Depending on theoretical perspectives on the origin of ethnic identity, the approach to ethnicity varies. Primordialism and circumstantialism are basic theoretical frameworks that examine the definition of ethnicity. According to the primordial approach, ethnicity is designated to the individuals based on their physical appearances, skin color, assumed kinship, and self-attribution of membership (Bayar, 2009; Gil-White, 2001). Once ethnicity is formed or established, it is seldom reconstructed. From the primordialist perspective, an ethnic identity is established from a possessor of significant relational qualities. Primordialism acknowledges the role of social factors in the construction of ethnic identity and in the significance of perceived kinship ties (Bayar, 2011).
The circumstantialist model supports the notion that an individual must be raised in an ethnic group or the very least adopted into that ethnic group in order to belong to that ethnic group. Once ethnicity is established, the circumstantialists believe that an ethnic identity has been constructed or reconstructed. Accordingly, Bayar (2011) mentioned that individuals have multiple ethnic identities and an ethnic identity may be shifted depending on identification change. Therefore, Barth (1996) argued that ethnicity is not a matter of shared traits or cultural commonalities but rather of practice of categorization and classification, including both self-classification and categorization of (and by) others.

However, the existing leisure literature on the leisure of ethnic and racial minorities fails to distinguish the concepts of race and ethnicity with clarity. Even though Stodolska and Yi-Kook (2005) stressed the notion that the concepts of race and ethnicity are important variables that affect the leisure behaviors of minorities and immigrants, the theoretical background of ethnicity is poorly developed in the field of recreation and leisure studies. Additionally, much research on race and ethnicity in the leisure and recreation field overlooks the possibilities of intra-ethnic variation because many researchers simply assume within-group cultural homogeneity and between-group heterogeneity. Li, Chick, Zinn, Absher, and Graefe (2007) examined the internal homogeneity of ethnic groups (e.g., Anglos, Hispanics, and Asians) but did not find cultural consensus in terms of cultural values. Furthermore, Shinew et al. (2006) suggested that, in future research on race and ethnicity multi-cultural ethnic group comparisons are required to provide more sophisticated evidence of ethnic and racial
differences and similarities. They also claimed that leisure researchers should consider the complexity of measuring and negotiating multi ethnic identity.

Leisure, Immigration, and Ethnicity. A limited body of literature explores the relationship between ethnicity and leisure activities. Gao and Zhu (2010) identified group-sensitive physical activities and demonstrated that there were ethnic and racial differences in regard to leisure time physical activity participation. For example, African-Americans tended to participate in basketball and dance activities; Caucasians were more likely to participate in golf and hiking; and Hispanics preferred to engage in outdoor activities. In the park and recreation setting, Ho et al. (2005) showed the differences between ethnicities in regard to their use of the park and recreation facilities, including preferred park visitations, frequency and types of visits, and perception of park use. They suggested that collectivistic values and beliefs might affect the park use of Hispanics as they used park and recreation facilities with a group of members having the same ethnic characteristics.

In terms of the relationship between immigration and leisure activities, research demonstrates that immigrants display different patterns of leisure involvement and leisure behaviors. For example, in a comparison of Asian immigrants and Asian Americans born in the U. S., Asian immigrants reported that they participated in leisure time physical activities at a much lower rate than Asian Americans (Kandula & Lauderdale, 2005). In a similar study conducted in Sweden, Lindstrom and Sundquist (2001) found ethnic differences in the leisure time physical activity and, in particular, found that immigrants reported higher levels of sedentary leisure time activities than individuals of the host country. Choi, Wilbur, Miller, Szalacha and McAuley (2008) focused on the leisure time
physical activity behaviors of Korean immigrant women. In their study, only 23% of
Korean immigrant women satisfied the recommended amount of physical activity and
reported low self-efficacy for exercise. These findings imply that specific cultural
characteristics (e.g., adaptation processes and cultural conflicts) may be associated with
leisure behaviors of immigrants.

In another study, Li and Stodolska (2006) examined Chinese graduate students’
leisure behaviors. They found that academic success was the main goal in Chinese
graduate students’ lives, which restricted their participation in a variety of recreation
activities. Participants reported that they pursued unplanned, unorganized, and passive
activities and preferred to engage in leisure activities with others of the same ethnic and
cultural characteristics.

Thus, culture appears to be critical in regard to leisure behaviors and the
adaptation process among immigrants (Clayworth, 1986; Juniu, 2000; 2002; Tirone &
Pedlar, 2000). For example, Juniu (2002) explored the leisure experiences of a group of
female Latin American immigrants. The results of this study showed that they tended to
participate in family-oriented recreation activities because of their cultural values and
beliefs (e.g., collectivism and interdependence). South Asian immigrant adolescents
reported that the acquisition of new cultures created unexpected conflicts with their
parents due to the fact that the cultural values and beliefs that they acquired were not
always congruent with their parents’ values and beliefs (Tirone & Pedlar, 2000). Even,
some of the participants reported that cultural conflicts restricted them from having
positive interactions with others having different ethnic and cultural backgrounds, which
resulted in limited levels of leisure involvement (Tirone & Pedlar, 2000). Additionally,
Clayworth (1986) found that older immigrants exhibited a determination to participate in leisure activities with other individuals who have the same ethnic or cultural backgrounds. These results imply that immigrants express a sense of in-group bias, which means that they have a tendency to interact with members of a group who can share similar cultural patterns. Thus, specific cultural characteristics of each ethnic group are associated with leisure behaviors.

With two ethnic groups of Chinese Canadians and British Canadians, Spiers and Walker (2009) examined how ethnicity affects individuals’ happiness, peacefulness, and quality of life. In their study, they found that ethnicity significantly affected standard of living, achieving in life, and life as a whole, which are part of variables of quality of life. This study indicates that ethnicity is not associated with happiness. Their main explanation of this result is cultural differences on the concepts and meanings of happiness. Diener and colleagues (e.g., Diener, 2000; Diener & Diener, 1995) mentioned that there was cultural difference on the meaning of happiness between individualistic values and collectivistic values.

**Acculturation and Leisure among Immigrants.** Considerable research has focused on how leisure activities influence the acculturation process of immigrant adolescents (Li & Stodolska, 2006; Stodolska & Yi, 2003; Yu & Berryman, 1996). In a study of 117 immigrant Chinese adolescents, Yu and Berryman (1986) examined the relationships among self-esteem, acculturation and recreation participation. They found that a significant positive association exists between levels of acculturation and recreation participation. They also discovered that participants use recreation as a tool through which to facilitate the acculturation process into mainstream society. In another study,
Stodolska and Yi (2003) examined the impact of immigration on the ethnic identity and leisure behaviors of adolescent immigrants from Korea, Mexico and Poland. They found that individuals’ ethnic identities were established in three ways: (a) self-discovery of cultural differences, (b) comparisons of cultural identities with other ethnic groups and (c) outside labeling while developing an ethnic consciousness, which subsequently influenced leisure involvement. Developing ethnic identities through leisure participation, leisure activities provide a positive influence on adolescent immigrants’ leisure behaviors and the acculturation process (Stodolska & Yi, 2003).

In examining the influence of acculturation difference on meanings and preferences related to outdoor recreation experiences in a study of four national forests, Carr and Williams (1993) found that two of the national forests were used primarily by less acculturated Hispanic immigrants, while the other two were used by larger numbers of Caucasians and more acculturated Hispanic immigrants. These results indicate that less acculturated Hispanic immigrants tend to use outdoor recreation with other individuals who have similar cultural and ethnic backgrounds.

Some researchers also provide evidence that level of acculturation has been an important construct that affects leisure behaviors of immigrants (Afable-Munsuz, Ponce, Rodriguez, & Perez-Stable, 2010; Choe & Im, 2007; Dawson, Sundquist, & Johansson, 2005; Scharff, Homan, Kreuter, & Brennan, 1999). For example, Afable-Munsuz et al. (2010) found that third generation Chinese and Filipinos more easily gained information on physical activity resources and, therefore, participated in more leisure time physical activities than first generation Chinese and Filipinos. They suggested that the third generation was more acculturated than the first generation immigrants and that level of
acculturation may be associated with participation in leisure time physical activities. According to Hurh and Kim (1990), this situation stemmed from having fewer difficulties communicating with others and more resources for physical activities. This finding also shows an association between levels of acculturation and leisure time physical activity. This finding was collaborated by Cantero et al. (1999) who found that high acculturation levels were strongly associated with higher levels of leisure time physical activity participation among immigrant Hispanic women. Furthermore, a study by Dawson et al. (2005) found that a positive association exists between the length of time since immigration and a woman's level of physical activity. The more acculturated individuals are, the easier it is for them to access recreation facilities and the less likely they are to experience communication challenges.

*Leisure Constraints related to Culture among Immigrants.* Stodolska and Yi-Kook (2005) provided an overview of the theoretical constructs associated with constraints on the leisure of immigrants. They provided three important constraining factors related to immigrants' leisure constraints: (a) monetary and time constraints, (b) lack of English skills, and (c) lack of established social networks. They also suggested that immigrants are likely to experience more constraints than other ethnic groups because both immigration-related constraints and general leisure constraints influence their participation in leisure activities.

According to Yu and Berryman (1996), linguistic barriers prevented immigrant Chinese adolescents from seeking leisure partners and facilitating leisure resources. They found that the perceived barriers to the recreation participation of these individuals were negatively associated with levels of self-esteem. Juniu (2000, 2002), who studied South
American immigrants, reported that a lack of language skills and cultural and ethnic differences negatively influence their leisure behaviors, which restricts them in regard to participation in other recreation activities. Rublee and Shaw (1991) suggested that due to language difficulties immigrants’ participation in leisure activities was restricted to home-oriented, passive and child-care-related activities.

Ethnic and cultural differences have also been identified as constraints detrimental to the leisure pursuits of immigrants. For example, Livengood and Stodolska (2004) explored the effects of ethnic and cultural differences on the leisure behaviors of American Muslims. Ethnic and cultural differences served as another distinct level of leisure constraints and, as such, they modified their leisure behaviors accordingly. These modifications included an awareness of the social perceptions of Muslims, walking in groups and restricting or modifying their travel.

Some researchers have demonstrated that acculturation, gender and culture are associated with leisure constraints of immigrants. For example, Tsai (2000) explored the influence of acculturation on the perception of six leisure constraints (i.e., socio-cultural constraints, interpersonal constraints, access constraints, affective constraints, physiological constraints and resources constraints) in a study of 127 Chinese immigrants. In this study, the participants who were more acculturated reported that they had a lower level of socio-cultural, interpersonal and access constraints. Tcha and Lobo (2003), who studied Korean immigrants in Australia, found that female immigrants were more likely to perceive leisure constraints to be binding than males and, as such, reported less acculturation. Female immigrants were less exposed to interactions with others of different cultural and ethnic backgrounds. Furthermore, acculturated individuals
perceived fewer leisure constraints as they had increased access to leisure settings (Afable-Munsuz et al., 2010).

Walker, Jackson and Deng (2007) focused on three components of leisure constraints (i.e., intrapersonal, interpersonal and structural) when performing a cross-cultural comparison between Canadian and Chinese university students. They found that the Chinese students perceived more interpersonal constraints, while the Canadian students perceived more structural constraints. Hence, culture appears to play an important role in affecting components of leisure constraints.

Golob (2010) suggests that leisure professionals should develop a variety of leisure activities through which they can integrate ethnically diverse groups into dominant cultural practices and, therefore, minimize barriers to their participation. It is imperative that leisure professionals explore the effect of leisure constraints on immigrants’ participation in leisure activities. By putting forth significant efforts to help immigrants overcome these constraints, leisure professionals can help them to satisfy their leisure participation, which will lead to an increase in their quality of life and their ability to complete the adaptation process.

*Culturally Meaningful Activities and Immigration.* While culture is an important factor that affects the leisure behaviors of immigrants, there is a paucity of leisure research on culturally related activity participation. A few studies have demonstrated that immigrants create and develop culturally meaningful forms of leisure as a way of coping with stress (Iwasaki & Barlett, 2006; Stack & Iwasaki, 2009; Stodolska & Livengood, 2006). In a study of Canadian Aboriginal individuals with diabetes, Iwasaki and Bartlett (2006) found that they coped with stressors related to diabetes and racial discrimination by
participating in culturally appropriate forms of leisure, such as native arts, Aboriginal
dance, music, spiritual activities and going to reserves.

Afghan immigrants have also been found to engage in socially and culturally
meaningful forms of leisure in order to establish and develop social connections with
families, friends and their communities (Stack & Iwasaki, 2009). In a study conducted by
Stack and Iwasaki, culturally meaningful activities organized by Afghan associations for
cultural celebrations and problem-solving appeared to be an important aspect of the
immigrants’ lives and helped them gain meanings in their lives and facilitate the
adaptation process into mainstream society. Their findings suggested many immigrants
are involved in culturally meaningful activities to create social connections with
mainstream Americans.

The Muslim immigrants in Stodolska and Livengood’s (2006) study desired to
maintain their cultural values after immigration and, therefore, emphasized culturally
appropriate behaviors. In terms of leisure behaviors, they were encouraged to participate
in cultural and ethnic recreational and sports clubs with ethno-religious groups
(Carrington, Chievers, & Williams, 1987; Stodolska & Livengood, 2006; Tirone, 2000).
These findings indicate that immigrants adhere to their own cultural values and behaviors,
which help them to create and develop culturally appropriate forms of leisure. Therefore,
these studies (i.e., Iwasaki & Barlett, 2006; Stack & Iwasaki, 2009; Stodolska &
Livengood, 2006) suggest that specific cultural characteristics of immigrants affect their
leisure preferences and behaviors in many ways.
**Purposes of this Study**

This study is aimed at exploring the leisure behavior of older Korean immigrants by focusing on leisure patterns, leisure facilitators, and leisure benefits and challenges associated with acculturation and immigration. Four main purposes of this study are to: (a) explore leisure patterns after immigration; (b) examine how facilitates leisure participation; (c) understand leisure benefits related to acculturation; and (d) leisure constraints associated with acculturation. As illustrated, several concepts (i.e., acculturation, collectivism, filial piety, and interdependence) may serve as elements that influence leisure behaviors among older Korean immigrants.

For the purpose of this study, acculturation, leisure, and leisure constraints are defined as follows. Acculturation is a “…process of cultural and psychological change that follows intercultural contact” (Berry, Phinney, Sam, & Vedder, 2006, p. 305). It may involve alteration in cultural identity, preferences for distinct types of leisure activity involvement, and engagement with different types (e.g., Korean, other nationalities) of leisure activity groups.

Defining leisure among older Korean immigrants may be a challenge for two reasons. First, the Korean language does not have a word that is a direct translation of the English word “leisure.” In addition, according to Lee (2005), Korean leisure researchers have applied the meaning of leisure derived from Western cultures, which is characterized as discretionary time, activity, and a state of mind. As a consequence, leisure researchers in Korea often have different interpretations of the meaning of leisure. The challenge inherent in this approach is that, in Korea, leisure is not distinguished from
recreation (Lee, 2005). For this study, I approached the meaning of leisure as a fun, entertaining activity that older Korean immigrants engage in during their free time.

Leisure constraint is defined as “anything that inhibits people’s ability to participate in leisure and sport activities, to spend more time doing so, to take advantage of leisure and sport services, or to achieve a desired level of satisfaction” (Tcha & Lobo, 2003, p. 13). It may involve specific cultural factors such as communication issues and cultural and ethnic differences.

Based on gaps within the current literature focusing on older Korean immigrants’ leisure behaviors related to acculturation, five research questions guided data collection:

1. What do older Korean immigrants do for fun or entertainment in their free time (i.e., leisure activities)?
2. Why do older Korean immigrants participate in leisure activities?
3. What benefits do older Korean immigrants experience through leisure participation during immigration process?
4. With whom do older Korean immigrants participate in leisure activities?
5. If any, what constraints to participation in leisure activities exist for older Korean immigrants?

Older Asian immigrants in the U.S. represent heterogeneous sub-groups of Asians with diverse historical, cultural, religious, linguistic and immigration experiences (Kuo, Chong, & Joseph, 2008; Mui & Kang, 2006). Thus, a multitude of important differences exist among older Asian ethnic groups. Additionally, it is important to note that older Asian immigrants may have unique and different cultural views on language, social norms, customs, and traditions (Ho, 1994; Yeh & Bedford, 2003).
I selected to study older Korean immigrants for several reasons. First, older Korean immigrants are the fourth largest Asian immigrant group in the U.S. (Berkman & Ko, 2008). In spite of the growth of this group, older Korean immigrants are an understudied population and face more adaptation difficulties than other older Asian groups (Berkman & Ko, 2008). For example, as a group, older Korean immigrants report lower levels of English efficiency and acculturation than other Asian immigrants (Jang & Chiriboga, 2010; Sung, 2001). Also, Lee and Yoon (2011) addressed the issue that many older Korean immigrants experience acculturative stress and socio-economic changes. In terms of participation in leisure, it can be argued that older Korean immigrants may face more challenges associated with acculturation, which result in an increase of negative psychological symptoms and leisure barriers. Finally, I (the primary investigator) am bilingual in Korean and English and have observed the life challenges and barriers experienced by older Korean immigrants. Based on my personal experience and observation, this study provided important information for future research in the field of leisure and recreation.
CHAPTER 3: Methods

Design

I employed a qualitative approach based on in-depth interviews. Crabtree and Miller (1999) defined the in-depth interview as “a particular field research data-gathering process designed to generate narratives that focus on fairly specific research questions” (p. 93). The in-depth interview is personal and intimate and places an emphasis on “depth, detail, vividness and nuance” (Rubin & Rubin, 1995, p. 76). This method primarily uses open, direct, and verbal questions that describe individuals’ interpretations of their experiences and probe their life events (Crabtree & Miller, 1999). Through in-depth qualitative interviews, researchers are able to understand experiences and reconstruct life events in which they were not involved. In addition, in-depth qualitative research enables researchers to gain scientific knowledge of human experience and collect multiple accounts of experiences, such as parenting a child with a disability or understanding the life of individuals with illnesses and/or disabilities (Sandelowski, 1996; Stake, 1995). In this sense, in-depth qualitative interviews are designed to obtain deep information and knowledge and construct a meaning-making partnership between interviewers and their respondents (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2005).

In-depth interviews are often semi-structured as interviewees commonly have information about the particular topics and knowledge that they may not have considered in advance. Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2005) stated that when new and unexpected directions in regard to interviewers’ life experiences emerge, a semi-structured design is helpful in allowing the conversation to develop and explore new topics relevant to the interviewee. Rubin and Rubin (2005) manifest benefits of semi-structured interviews that
interview questions can be prepared ahead of time, which help to provide reliable, comparable qualitative data. In addition, participants are given the freedom to express their own views in their terms. According to Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2005), in-depth interviews are useful when the researcher has a particular topic that he or she wants to obtain deep information and probe life events. Thus, as described above, semi-structured in-depth interviews are the most appropriate method to gain rich qualitative data.

Theoretically, several reasons existed for choosing the semi-structured in-depth interviews. Firstly, I attempted to gain the perspectives of older Korean immigrants on a particular subject regarding leisure behaviors (i.e., leisure constraints and leisure benefits related to acculturation). In addition, these in-depth interviews are useful for accessing subjugated voices and discovering subjugated experiences, such as those of women, people of color, homosexuals, and the poor (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2005; Reinharz, 1992). In-depth interviews likely would also be an appropriate technique to use with Older Korean immigrants. By listening to them and beginning to understand their challenges and life stories as they relate to leisure participation, I will be better able to understand the factors that influence leisure participation. Finally, Henderson (2006) described research in the area of parks, recreation, tourism, sports and leisure that has been conducted using quantitative approaches. In the recreation and leisure fields, interpretive qualitative approaches have become a viable method by which to determine the meaning of social phenomena related to leisure behaviors and provide rich data using words. Therefore, interpretive qualitative data is helpful in regard to increasing research efficacy in the area of parks, recreation, tourism, sports, and leisure.
Participants

Purposeful criterion-based sampling strategies identified by Strauss and Corbin (1998) were used in order to capture themes associated with leisure behaviors of older immigrants associated with acculturation. Patton (1990) suggested that a criterion-based sampling strategy permits logical generalization and maximum application of information to other cases. This strategy is also beneficial when attempting to describe and interpret experiences and mechanisms of particular social phenomenon that individuals experience under particular circumstances.

The criteria for the participants were that they (a) had legally moved to the U.S. and are Korean American citizens and/or have permanent residence; (b) are able to speak, read, and understand Korean; (c) are 65 years or older, a figure based on comparisons with prior studies; and (d) have lived in the U.S. for at least 10 years, a number again based on previous research (i.e., Hurh & Kim, 1984; Kim, Kleiber, & Kropf, 2001). The criterion, length of stay, is based on evidence that the longer individuals live in a hosting country, the more they are acculturated to the new culture (Hurh & Kim, 1984). Kim et al. (2001) found that older Korean immigrants who have lived in the US for 15 years have been there long enough to adapt to the host culture. Other researchers found that there is a strong association between acculturation and participation in leisure activities (Dawson et al., 2005; Park et al., 2009). These findings imply that the more acculturated individuals are, the easier it is for them to access recreation facilities and the less likely they are to experience communication challenges. Even though some older Korean immigrants may have little acculturation experience, I explored in-depth leisure experiences related to acculturation of older Korean immigrants who are exposed to a new culture.
I recruited study participants using the cooperation of Korean communities in the northwestern United States. I placed flyers on notice boards at Korean community centers (e.g., churches, Korean markets, and Korean senior centers). In the first two weeks I had recruited five participants (i.e., Kwon- female, aged 70, Lee-J- male, aged 80, Jang- male, aged 68, Lee-Si- male, aged 70, and Kim- male, aged 65) who contacted me via phone calls to express an interest in the study. I briefly described the study and its purpose, confidentiality, the time frame for the study, and my contact information. To increase the number of participants, I began to use snowball sampling, a technique used by researchers to recruit additional participants through third parties and participants (Freeman, Palmer, & Baker, 2006). I started interviewing each individual and at the end of each interview I asked him or her if s/he would nominate other older Korean immigrants who would be willing to participate in this study. Using snowball sampling, I recruited eight more participants for this study. Jeun (female, 82) and Park (male, 73) participated in the interview after being introduced by a third party and in turn, Park introduced Jo (female, 70) for this study. Jang introduced Choi (male, 74) who in turn introduced Kwon-F (female, 70). Lee-Si introduced Chen (female, 66) and Lee (female, 77) and Kim introduced Lee-W (male, 65). Only the last name (a pseudonym) was used to identify participants. All of the participants voluntarily participated in this study. The Pennsylvania State University Institutional Review Board approved these procedures.

The total 13 participants participated in this study. Seven of the participants were males and six were females. The participants in this study ranged in age from 65 to 82 (M=68.8). Four were widows and the average length of time since their immigration was 32 years (See Table 1 below). The sample size was determined on the basis of theoretical
saturation, as suggested by Mack et al. (2005). Guest, Bunce, and Johnson (2006) indicated that if researchers conduct qualitative work with a sample from a relatively homogeneous group (i.e., culture, race, ethnicity, or gender), 12 participants are generally sufficient to reach saturation. In this study 13 participants appeared to be adequate as we reached a saturation point. No payment was offered for participation in this study.

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Length of Stay (year)</th>
<th>Educational Background</th>
<th>Marital Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lee</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Bachelor</td>
<td>Widow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Park</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>Married</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jo</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>Married</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kwon</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>Married</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lee-Si</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>Married</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chen</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>Married</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kim</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>Married</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lee-J</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>Married</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choi</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>Bachelor</td>
<td>Widow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lee-W</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>Married</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kwon-F</td>
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<td>Female</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>Bachelor</td>
<td>Widow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jang</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>Married</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeun</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>Widow</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Data Collection

The qualitative in-depth interview method was employed in order to obtain information about participants’ knowledge, feelings and experiences associated with immigration and acculturation as well as their leisure behaviors such as leisure changes and constraints and the benefits of leisure participation on acculturation.

Each interview lasted between 50 and 90 minutes. I developed the interview questions in collaboration with my dissertation committee (Appendix 1). As preferred by participants, I conducted all interviews in Korean as I am fluent in English and Korean. With participants’ permission, each interview was recorded using a MP3 player. I employed grand tour and mini tour questions to obtain rich data from participants. The goal of the grand tour question was to provide participants with a verbal description of the significant features of the study’s purpose (Spradley, 1979). Examples were “Do you feel most comfortable speaking in English or Korean?” “When did you move to the United States?” “Could you tell me about your life story?” and “With whom do you currently live?” Mini tour questions were asked to deal with specific aspects of their experience. Spradley (1979) mentioned that the mini-tour question puts a magnifying glass on an activity or area related to research questions such as “Why do you participate in activities you mentioned?” “What benefits do you experience when participating in these activities?” and “What role, if any, has these activities helped you deal with the challenges in your life during your immigration processes?”

At the end of the interview, participants were asked to answer questions regarding their age, marital status, educational background, and length of stay in the U.S. This
information was used to profile participants. In addition, it created insight into the leisure behaviors of older Korean immigrants.

I electronically recorded interviews and took field notes, which included personal insights and observed emotional changes, behaviors, communication skills and environmental conditions (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Interviews were recorded to help reduce the natural limitations of my memory and allowed me to have thorough examination of participants’ statements. Field notes served as a supplement to the recordings that helped me to capture nonverbal information.

**Data Analysis**

A thematic analysis was used in order to explore participants’ understandings so that I could “...increase their accuracy or sensitivity in understanding and interpreting observations and interviews about people, events and situations” (Boyatzis, 1998, p. 5). The five steps of data collection and analysis presented by Creswell (2009) were used in this study. The steps were: (a) generate raw data (e.g., transcriptions and field notes); (b) organize and prepare data for analysis; (c) read through the data; (d) code the data; and (e) interpret themes and their meanings. The data were coded and analyzed using the constant comparative method (Merriam, 1998), which allowed me to identify emerging conceptual categories from the first interview and to constantly compare data from one time to the next and from one participant to another.

1. Raw data production. I transcribed the data in order to create raw data and to verify the accuracy of the transcriptions. After I conducted the interviews, I created the raw data. With the first draft of the transcript, I read the transcript while listening to each tape in order to verify its accuracy. Two research
professionals who are bilingual participated in the back-translation process to verify accuracy and to improve the credibility of the data.

2. Preparing for data analysis. Once I verified the accuracy of the transcriptions, I organized the transcriptions for data analysis.

3. Reading the data. I read the transcripts repeatedly in order to fully understand participants’ statements and experiences. I briefly captured the general ideas from the data and discussed them with my dissertation committee chair.

4. Coding data. An open coding scheme for each transcription was developed and compared across the participants in order to determine similar patterns and interesting statement of experiences. Open coding schemes illustrated broad emerging themes and patterns of each participant’s immigration life and leisure behaviors associated with acculturation. I created a brief summary of the open coding schemes and shared it with my dissertation chair. The dissertation chair reviewed each coding scheme category to substantiate the relevance and relatedness of the coding.

5. Interpretations of themes and meanings. I interpreted and analyzed the themes identified and incorporate them with the meanings of the core themes and subthemes including rich quotes and narrative descriptions. Strauss and Corbin (1998) emphasized the process of analyzing the core themes and subthemes as a method of systematic and solidified coding data. Data collection and data analysis was conducted concurrently, allowing me to modify interview guidelines and incorporate emerging themes for subsequent in-depth interviews.
Trustworthiness in Qualitative Research

Qualitative researchers have different approaches and techniques in order to increase the validity and reliability of the qualitative data (Creswell, 1998; Kvale, 1996). Among various techniques, such as negative case analysis, the expert debriefing process, and the member checking process (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2005), I established trustworthiness and rigor in data analysis through the expert debriefing and member checking processes for this study. In the process of member checking, Lincoln and Guba (1985) emphasized the idea that reviewing the data analysis with participants helps to increase credibility of data. This method was helpful to ascertain that their voices are appropriately captured and interpreted. Creswell (1988) mentioned that member checking could be performed either at the end of research or during the research. According to the guidance suggested by Peterson et al. (2007), I invited participants to review a summary of the themes and rate the interpretation of the data as “unsatisfactory” or “satisfactory.” At the end of research, 10 participants voluntarily participated in the member checking process and I provided an opportunity for clarification and elaboration with a summary of the data analysis. Participants reviewed a summary of the themes and expressed that my interpretations of the data were satisfactory.

Back-translation has been shown to improve the reliability and credibility of the data (Guillemin, Bombardier, & Beaton, 1993; Su, Kagan, & Strumpf, 2009). These qualitative researchers proposed that a good method of back-translation is to employ at least two bilingual professionals who may be familiar with the research without having seen the original text. I invited two research professionals fluent in English and Korean to participate in the back-translation process in order to improve the quality of the final
version. In terms of the process of back-translation, which was guided by the work of Gillemín et al. (1993), I sent a randomly chosen 22-page set of translations that allowed the two research professionals to do the back-translation. Two weeks later, we had a conference call to validate the quality and conceptual equivalence of the translation. There were several cases of varying word choices and sentence structures (i.e., “It was challenging to adapt to a new society- the challenging thing was to adapt to a new society”) when translated; however the conceptual meanings and contents of the translation did not include any concerns. After the discussion, we agreed that a professional editor needed to review the transcriptions for proofreading. In addition, the dissertation chair and I were involved in the coding process in order to reach an agreement associated with the findings of the themes and interpretation of the data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This expert review process is helpful in regard to increasing the credibility of qualitative data as it helps reduce an interviewees’ personal bias (Lincoln & Guba).
CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

The participants experienced a variety of stressors related to acculturation, such as language barriers, limited social networks, racial conflicts, cultural and ethnic differences, family conflicts related to acculturation, and stressful immigration life. As part of the positive aspects of immigrant life, the majority of the participants gained a sense of cultural sensitivity and developed cultural understanding by interacting with their own grandchildren and exchanging information with other Korean immigrants. Regardless of either positive or negative immigrant life experiences, these various immigration experiences had a major impact on participants’ leisure behaviors.

To explore leisure behaviors of older Korean immigrants, I focused on four main areas of older immigrants’ leisure behaviors: (a) leisure patterns after immigration; (b) leisure facilitators; (c) leisure benefits related to acculturation; and (d) leisure constraints associated with acculturation. After interpreting and analyzing the participants’ experiences and statements, I identified four common themes related to leisure and acculturation: (a) types of leisure involvement, (c) facilitators to leisure related to culture and immigration, (c) culture-related leisure constraints, and (d) leisure benefits associated with acculturation. The following details these four distinctive characteristics of leisure behaviors among older Korean immigrants.

Types of Leisure Involvement

The process of adapting to a new culture and society created leisure opportunities for older Korean participants to discover, explore, and create leisure pursuits. According to all 13 participants, the main leisure activities in which they were involved were home-based leisure activities, church-based activities, volunteer activities, culturally
meaningful activities, and leisure-time physical activities. Gender differences were identified when participants were involved in home-based activities and leisure-time physical activities.

**Home-Based Leisure Activities.** Home-based leisure activities were common activities in which twelve participants were involved. Of the various home-based leisure activities, six participants who lived with their adult children mentioned that taking care of grandchildren was a fun and enjoyable activity. Even though taking care of grandchildren is a physically demanding work, they considered it to be fun and rewarding. Lee-Si (male, 70) said, “spending time with my children is the secret of [good] health.” In addition, they used similar expressions to describe this leisure pursuit, such as “taking care of grandchildren is a fun activity,” “this is the happiest and most rewarding activity in my life,” “at home I enjoyed taking care of my grandchildren,” and “the secret of my health is to play with them.” They often said that their adult children (e.g., son and daughter-in-law) would go to work and until they came home, they took care of their grandchildren. For example, according to Kwon (female, 70),

… Taking care of grandchildren is physically demanding and it was not an easy thing. Sometimes, I thought I should stop taking care of them because of my age. Some of my close friends said that I needed to take a break and focus on my personal life. However, I believe that I should do meaningful things for my children and grandchildren until I am physically unable to give some help. The relationship between parents and their children is built on compromise and a great deal of give and take on both sides. When I get older and older and am not able to
walk or move anymore, they will take good care of me in return. This positive relationship has been built strongly in our family.

She believed that taking care of her grandchildren was a meaningful and rewarding activity. Based on her life experiences, she acknowledged that her adult children would take care of her when she becomes weak and unable to walk. As a reward, she was taking care of her grandchildren.

Another participant, Lee-Si (male, 70), stated:

taking care of four grandchildren requires lots of work and dedication. However, this is the happiest and most rewarding activity in my life …

Interestingly, he also mentioned that as a result of raising his grandchildren, his health had improved greatly. In spite of the fact that caring for grandchildren was a physically demanding work, he believed that this activity enhanced his psychological and emotional health. Thus, it had become an important intergenerational activity in his life.

However, two male participants (Park and Lee-Si) made some interesting comments that their responsibilities were distinguished from their spouses’. They mentioned that they had different responsibilities to taking care of their grandchildren. They said that they were mainly engaged in playing with their grandchildren such as activities related to balls and provided them with transportation; their spouses mainly provided them with meals and cleansed them. For example, Park (male, 73) stated:

My wife and I have a little bit different role in taking care of my grandchildren. I enjoyed playing swimming and basketball with my grandchildren. My wife mainly made food and bought some gifts instead of me.
Gardening is another form of home-based activity in which participants were involved. In Korea, doing gardening at home was considered a luxury hobby because individuals had their own lands and spaces for that. In addition, most people in Korea live in a high-rise apartment house so they would not have a chance to do gardening. For example, Lee (female, 77) explained that she could not have an opportunity to enjoy gardening because of a living environment of Korea.

Three participants mentioned that their gardens produced a variety of chemical-free vegetables and fruits and they enjoyed growing and procuring these products. For example, Lee (female, 77) stated:

I just watched TV and did gardening. I harvested some vegetables and fruits, which are chemical-free, and I eat them with my family and friends. Yesterday, my granddaughter told me that watching television and gardening were my favorite friends.

She mentioned that gardening had become an important part of her life and she was emotionally attached to the garden. Gardening provides a positive environment for her interaction with the garden. Similarly, Lee-Si (male, 70) said:

I enjoy gardening. All of the vegetables you ate today were harvested from our garden. I planted a variety of vegetables and fruits and enjoyed observing their growth.

Interestingly, Park (male, 73) indicated that being a new immigrant enabled him to own his farm because it was challenging to own a farm in Korea. He had raised a variety of animals at his new home, such as horses, goats, chickens, and turkeys. He also
built a swimming pool at his home for his grandchildren and achieved contentment in his life by engaging with them.

Such examples show that older Korean participants engage in home-based activities such as taking care of their grandchildren, gardening, and farming. Interestingly, older Korean participants who lived with their adult children regarded taking care of grandchildren as a fun and rewarding activity. In addition, there was a gender difference on taking care of grandchildren by sharing different responsibilities.

Volunteer Activities. Volunteering is another common activity in which six participants were involved. In most cases they volunteered to help other older Korean immigrants adapt to a new culture and society. They mentioned that it was typical for older Korean immigrants to face numerous challenges and that they had some specific physical and emotional needs. Based on their own immigration experience, they utilized their skills, knowledge, and information related to acculturation to help increase other older Korean immigrants ability to adapt. Volunteering helped participants gain a sense of belongingness and connectedness with the community.

Three participants provided transportation and meals for other older Korean immigrants who could not drive. For example, according to Kwon (female, 70):

Helping new immigrants who were emigrating from Korea was my passion and love, even though we, too, were struggling to adapt to new societies. If newcomers needed a ride, we offered a ride and helped them settle in a new place.

For 29 years, I have been providing a ride for one person.

She also provided meals for and supported other Korean immigrants who had encountered adaptation and psychological difficulties. She mentioned that she was
willing to help new Korean immigrants because she herself had faced numerous challenges associated with acculturation. By volunteering, she was satisfied by the fact that she was able to provide emotional and social support for other immigrants. As a reward, she considered this volunteer work to be a fulfilling, fun activity.

Similarly, Chen (female, 66) engaged in volunteer activities to help older Korean immigrants. She organized a social support group called “Enoch” for older Korean immigrants. She volunteered to help them in various ways, such as by providing transportation and meals and communicating with them on the phone. She mentioned that most Korean immigrants experienced negative feelings, such as depression, loneliness, and isolation because of family conflicts related to acculturation, adaptation difficulties, and the loss of their spouses. As a way of helping them, she encouraged them to focus on the positive aspects of their lives. She said,

We started the Enoch organization, and every Wednesday we provide meals and transportation to older Korean adults. We also have a regular phone call to ask how they are doing on a daily basis, and it takes some time for me to talk with other older adults on the phone. Through this phone call, we encouraged them so they focused on keeping a positive attitude. We spend a lot of time communicating with them via phone call.

Based on her life experiences, she understood what the challenges of immigration life could be and started involving herself in various volunteer activities to help others who had difficulties.

In addition, as a form of volunteer activity, Kim (male, 65) raised funds for other older Korean immigrants by coordinating golf tournaments and Korean festivals. He
mentioned that he had volunteered to become the president of the Greensboro Korean senior center. As president he attempted to provide rich opportunities for older Korean immigrants to gain health benefits. Some of the programs he provided were free computer and badminton classes. He also mentioned that he continued to volunteer by helping older Korean immigrants in the community with valuable programs.

Interestingly, four participants such as Lee-J (male, 80), Choi (male, 74), Jang (male, 68), and Kim (male, 65) were described themselves as well adjusted in Western cultures as they described their ethnic identity as neither American nor Korean. They utilized their knowledge and information to help older Korean immigrants learn how to solve their immigration-related concerns and problems. In addition, they were helping other minority groups. For example, Choi mentioned that through his life as an immigrant he had built social connections and developed the ability to find ways to solve some immigration issues. He stated:

I’ve lived in USA for a long time and have developed good social connections with others (Americans). If other Korean older adults faced some challenges, I tried to help them out and find someone who gave some help. I helped them solve their challenging things and whenever I realized I helped others, it was such a great feeling.

He described himself as a problem-solving person as he helped a great number of Korean immigrants with various issues such as problems with their visa, car and house purchases, business counseling, and other legal issues. He also built a strong sense of social connections with other ethnic groups and, as a result, he believed that volunteering was fun and fulfilling.
Jang (male, 68) mentioned that he chose to help other refugees and/or minority groups because he believed they had had similar experiences and needed some help to overcome these challenges. For example, Jang (male, 68) said:

I do not share with others the information that I am helping the poor. Any society has a group of people who are isolated from society and community, and they feel a sense of loneliness and social isolation. I believe that there are many reasons why they don’t get along with others. Perhaps they lack social skills, or are self-centered, selfish, and/or have negative personalities. I visit each one of them individually and become friends so we can share some emotions and feelings together. Through an organization that helps the underprivileged, I met one friend who was entering 10th grade. I volunteered to help as a mentor and a friend in various ways. He lives in a challenging family environment: his mom married three times and there is no father figure in his life. His family also has financial problems. I provide him with inspiration and encouragement as a mentor.

Most people believe that this organization (Habitat for Humanity) helps only by building the houses for the poor. But it is an international organization that stems from USA. There is an associated organization that helps the poor buy the house. In the States, volunteers are needed to provide information and knowledge about how to purchase the houses. I met refugees from Sudan and, as a mentor, I educated them on the purchasing process.
Jang engaged in various volunteer activities to provide emotional and intellectual support for other underprivileged groups. In addition, he volunteered to tutor refugee children in math and science.

Lastly, Kim (male, 65) was also willing to find ways to help other minority groups who needed social and emotional support from others. He mentioned that when he had free time, he strove to find resources and knowledge to help the underprivileged.

Therefore, older Korean participants utilized a variety of resources, skills, information, and knowledge to help Korean immigrants and underprivileged groups. Based on the participants’ statements, it seems that their volunteer activities are done as a means of helping other immigrants adapt to new societies and to provide emotional and intellectual support to underprivileged groups, which result in a sense of belonging and connectedness.

*Leisure-time Physical Activities.* Only seven male participants participated in leisure-time physical activities such as golf, badminton, tennis, and swimming. In Korea, playing golf was considered a luxury sport because the cost of equipment and green fees was very high. Compared to the financial conditions of playing golf in Korea, golf is inexpensive in the United States. For this reason, seven participants stated that playing golf was one of their leisure activities and mentioned that the US was a heaven for golf players. Choi (male, 74) stated:

I volunteer to take care of many things as an elder in my church. Besides that, playing golf is my favorite activity I am involved in. There are other older Korean adults who are retired, and we usually play golf together. I play golf with them four times a week.
He was absorbed with playing golf and mentioned that he was more involved in learning advanced skills to improve his scores. He also described golf as a competitive sport because, most of the time, he played golf with other older Korean friends and they competed with one other.

Another participant, Kim (male, 65), who had played golf for many years, mentioned that he had advanced golf skills. He even described himself by saying that he was good at golf and enjoyed the challenge of improving his golf scores. He also enjoyed playing with Korean friends and colleagues as a means of socialization. In addition, based on his leisure pursuits, he realized the value of leisure-time physical activities and created opportunities such as free badminton classes, that encouraged older Korean immigrants to be physically active.

Lee-W (male, 65) and Kim (male, 65) regularly take part in the free badminton classes and stated that they were content with this activity as it maintained and developed their physical functions. Lee-W (male, 65) said:

I had played badminton when I was young and had not had the chance to play it for a while. The Korean senior community (SangRockSoo) started a badminton class for older adults in order to improve health. It was a motivation for me to participate by learning how to play badminton. Before the badminton class, I played tennis and table tennis with other Korean friends every Saturday. It was not enough for me to be physically active, so I participated in the badminton activity. It was so much fun to play and I am so happy to participate in badminton class on Mondays.
He also stated that some of the older adults brought their family members to play badminton together as part of family leisure. Playing badminton became a huge part of his life and he practiced badminton with his wife and other friends at home. It seems that he extended his participation in badminton into a home-based activity for fun and enjoyment.

Lee-J (male, 80) is a member of the recreation facility and participates in a variety of recreation activities offered by the recreation facility, such as water aerobics, swimming, and using the exercise equipment. He did not encounter any challenges to utilizing various recreation resources because he had good communication skills and was highly acculturated to American society. He mentioned that his favorite activities were swimming and working out in the weight room and on the treadmill. He noted:

Working out at the gym is very important to me. To be honest, I have no idea of what I would do with my free time other than going to the gym. I go to the gym every day to participate in many programs and go swimming. This is very important to me. As for me, I do not have regular work and nothing to do. At home, when I had some free time, I do some drawing as a hobby.

He also mentioned that he used to play tennis and golf, but that due to age-related physical decline, he sought to discover new forms of leisure-time physical activities, such as walking, swimming, and stretching at the gym.

Choi (male, 74), who had formerly been a Judo coach, engaged in Judo teachings and practice with his students. When he had free time, he enjoyed visiting a Judo studio to practice with some learners and to demonstrate some techniques and skills for them.
Based on these examples, leisure-time physical activities are another form of leisure activity in which older male Korean immigrants participate. All of the male participants in this study expressed an interest in golf and had played golf throughout their lives. Interestingly, the female participants did not describe any experiences with leisure-time physical activities such as golf.

Church-based Activities. Nearly all participants (i.e., 7 Presbyterians and 5 Baptists) mentioned that they were involved in church-based activities. Church provided a unique environment in which older Korean participants developed faith and used spiritual peace and comfort to deal with challenges such as loneliness, depression, and isolation. There were a variety of church-based events in which participants were encouraged to participate so that they developed feelings of emotional and social connectedness and developed their spiritual lives. Nearly all participants belonged to Korean churches and were involved in various church activities such as Bible studies, missionary work, and volunteer work.

Twelve participants mentioned that the church provided a unique function in that they formed and developed their own community, one that facilitated a sense of belongingness and social connectedness. For example, they used similar expressions to describe the value of their participation in church-based activities, such as “Going to church was the only meaningful activity I was involved in,” “I am greatly involved with church activities,” and “I engaged in various church activities and it was rewarding and worthwhile for my immigration life.” In addition, Jang (male, 68) participated in missionary work as a church-based activity. He thought that missionary work would be another enjoyable activity offered by the church.
As part of their church-based activities, Lee-Si (male, 70) and Chen (female, 66) founded a Bible study group that helped older Korean immigrants develop faith and a sense of spirituality. They mentioned that through this Bible study, many older Korean immigrants developed the positive aspects of their lives and relieved negative feelings, such as depression and loneliness. Such positive outcomes encouraged them to pursue church-based activities with enthusiasm and passion. Lee-Si (male, 70) described it as follows:

We have around 10 older adults and gather with them once a week. At this gathering, we share our lives together and develop our faith. Our meeting has become very important to us because typically, other older adults stayed at home and felt lonely and depressed. In particular, when older adults who are widowed get up every morning, they said that they were very depressed and thought negatively, not positively. My wife suggested that we do something meaningful for them. Finally, I believe that we are like family and I want to take care of them.

He realized the value of spirituality to sharing life stories with each other through the Bible study and actively engaging in this activity. He also mentioned that as a result of their participation in this activity, many participants in the group had improved their negative feelings and emotions.

With enthusiasm similar to Lee-Si’s, Chen (female, 66) felt that older Korean immigrants struggling with adaptation difficulties needed spiritual peace and comfort. Based on the church, she organized social gatherings and strove to develop faith and spiritual strength for older Korean immigrants. She said:
I wanted to help other older adults develop their spiritual lives because they were so depressed and isolated from the community. So I thought about how I could help them. One day, I learned that there was a Korean female in Greensboro who was homeless. I received a phone call from her. She was at the Korean market and wanted to attend the Korean church. Spiritually, I wanted to help her, and I listened to her story about how she had married an American and then been abandoned. There was nowhere to go and she slept next to the trash bin under the bridge.

She believed that helping others with their spirituality enabled her to feel rewarded and worthwhile. She also mentioned that she would participate in more church-based activities whenever she was given the opportunity to help others.

In addition, Lee-Si (male, 70) was involved in a different form of church activities from some of the other participants: he took care of church work and service. He described it by saying:

There are some things that I do for fun when I have free time… When I was a member of the church, the church was small and doing service required lots of work. For example, I took care of the lawns that surrounded the church building and participated in a choir group to celebrate with gospel songs. Also, I help homeless people whenever I have the opportunity. Particularly, as a group in the church we are helping the poor and homeless by providing food …

He was involved in various church-based activities that resulted in a sense of reward and excitement. He also said that in his leisure time he also put additional efforts into creating programs that help the poor and homeless through the church.
These examples indicate that older Korean immigrants are actively engaged in various church-based activities because it helps others develop faith and spirituality and reduce some of their negative feelings.

*Culturally Meaningful Activities.* Five participants created and developed culturally meaningful activities as a way of delivering Korean culture and etiquette to others who were not familiar with them, such as Korean’s children who were born in the US. In addition, culturally meaningful activities were developed and provided to make social connections for people who had connections to Korea, such as American veterans of the Korean War and people who had been adopted from Korea. For young adults and children who are not accustomed to Korean culture, Korean language classes and culture-related events were offered that helped deliver knowledge and information about how to appropriately interact with older adults. According to Lee-Si (male, 70),

I teach Korean culture to my grandchildren. Sometimes, the third grandchild calls her older brother “John Park,” not “OPPA” (the Korean-specific honorific language used to address the older brother). I tried to understand this situation by reminding myself that English had become their first language, but I did my best to teach them how to call their brothers and sisters appropriately based on Korean etiquette. I understand that it is difficult for them to follow the Korean culture; however, I am proud of the fact that they do their best to respect my advice and teachings. At my church, we offer a well-organized Korean language class in which we teach culture, customs, and traditions to children who were born in the US. This class is well organized and some of the teachers are very passionate about teaching Korean culture to the children.
Through the Korean language class, he delivered culturally appropriate information and knowledge so that young adults and children could gain cultural knowledge about how to interact politely with older Korean immigrants. He mentioned that his grandchildren often failed to use the honorific language to others, but by educating the grandchildren about Korean society, they acquired more appropriate manners for their interactions with other older Korean immigrants.

Similarly, Chen (female, 66) provided culture-related lessons at home when she had free time. By interacting with her grandchildren, she sought to teach them how to greet adult Korean immigrants in Korean ways. Chen mentioned that she was educating her grandchildren how to appropriately respect and communicate with other Korean adults. In addition, she organized culturally meaningful activities such as Korean food festivals to raise money so she could provide financial support for the poor and for international missionaries. According to Chen:

… We created some events where we could sell Korean food (Kimchi) and other fruits we had planted to raise some funds. We did lots of things to achieve that… When we make some Songpyon (a traditional Korean food that consists of a rice cake steamed on a layer of pine needles) and dumplings (stuffed rice cakes), I did not ask other older adults to come and help me make those things. When they wanted to come, I always asked them to rest if they were tired due to their age. But they were happy when they were done making food for fundraising. The interesting thing was that when they came to the church to participate in these events, their faces would not be happy, but after the events were over, they smiled a lot and were happy to do that…
In addition, Kwon-F (female, 65) was involved in Korean cultural events that offered others an opportunity to gain knowledge about Korean etiquette and customs. She taught participants about Korean food, traditional games, customs, and holidays. She mentioned that such culturally meaningful activities made her feel rewarded and worthwhile. Also, she created a variety of Korean-related activities and programs to celebrate each holiday.

Interestingly, Choi (male, 74) became involved in culturally meaningful activities in order to develop an intimate relationship with American veterans of the Korean War and to make a connection with people who were adopted from Korea. He said,

I am involved in PCUSA (Presbyterian Church of USA), which runs a program called SDOP (Self-Development of People). I was a chairperson for the Midwest region and applied for the funds for Korean immigrants’ community. As a result, I received $18,000 of funds and began an organization for older Korean immigrants’ welfare. A long time ago, I realized that the Korean church community should pay more attention to Korean War veterans and adopted children from Korea. So I organized two regular events for Korean War veterans and adopted children from Korea. Through these programs, we developed a close and intimate relationship with an adoption organization from Korea and created many events to foster friendships with them. We still developed a deep level of relationships with Korean War veterans’ families. The sad thing is that the number of Korean War veterans has decreased because of their ages. Such programs enabled me to give something back to society and make positive connections with them.

Such culturally meaningful activities enabled him to develop friendships with the mainstream culture and help adopted individuals understand their country of origin. He
also noted that the adopted children were eager to gain some knowledge and information about Korea, such as the language, culture, and customs. As part of the group that shared common interests, they were participating together in several traditional Korean games.

When she had free time with her Korean friends, Jeun (female, 82) also enjoyed participating in traditional Korean games with them:

… we played traditional Korean games such as Yut-nori, Go-stop, Baduk, etc.

Playing Korean games together like this helped us develop our friendships and relieved any stress related to loneliness.

She maintained that playing traditional Korean sports and games with her friends was an enjoyable activity for her.

Culturally meaningful activities play an important role in delivering specifically Korean cultural values and beliefs and cultural knowledge for others, along with educational purposes. In addition, through these culturally meaningful activities, participants expressed an appreciation of the American veterans of the Korean War and an interest in making some connections with people who were adopted from Korea as infants.

In summary, based on participants’ personal statements and experiences, they engage in various forms of leisure such as home-based activities, volunteer activities, leisure-time physical activities, church-based activities, and culturally meaningful activities. It seems that some forms of leisure, such as volunteer activities, church-based activities, and culturally meaningful activities are related to participants’ cultural and life experiences as an immigrant. The participants volunteered to assist underprivileged groups, such as other Korean immigrants and the poor, which they considered to be
“leisure.” Church-based activities were also pursued during older Korean immigrants leisure time. They enabled participants to help other older Korean immigrants deal with the various stressors related to acculturation. Participants created and developed a variety of leisure activities that are meaningful and fulfilling for others, such as American veterans of the Korean War and Korean adoptees. In addition, it seems that culturally meaningful activities create some opportunities that allow older Korean immigrants to make connections with others and relieve negative feelings related to acculturation. Some of the participants are actively engaged in some types of leisure-time physical activities in order to improve their health. Therefore, it appears that the main leisure pursuits of older Korean participants are associated with their acculturation and immigration experiences. Such acculturation and immigration experiences serve as vehicles for new and/or modified leisure behaviors.

**Facilitators to Leisure Related to Culture and Immigration**

Some participants highlighted how immigration as well as their own cultural values were leisure facilitators. In this study, participants’ immigration circumstances served as leisure facilitators as they engaged in certain activities both because of their own culture and their awareness of social and emotional support for others. For example, one of the reasons participants gave for taking care of grandchildren was that it was a form of leisure. Further, some were living with their adult children, which showed they were also influenced by their cultural values related to filial piety. Thus, types of living environment in concert with maintenance of cultural (i.e., they should take care of their grandchildren and spend most of their time at home) were leisure facilitators.
Park (male, 73) mentioned that he had built a swimming pool at home in which he allowed his grandchildren to swim. He was happy to watch his grandchildren have fun. Sometimes, he swam and played with his grandchildren. It seems that the leisure environment he built for his grandchildren caused Park to swim with his grandchildren.

Jang (male, 68) stated that his leisure participation was mainly focused on his children’s education and leisure interests. According to Jang,

I have played tennis over 20 years and learned how to play golf later. Once I had children, I participated in any activities that focused on my children. I traveled to other states and countries with my family. As you may know, there were a variety of activities for children. In terms of music, my wife taught my children how to play musical instruments and she also made arrangements with other tutors. Regarding sports, I took them to sports facilities to play various sports. We played together and it was so fun. Most of our family’s leisure activities were determined by our children’s interests.

Jang focused on his children’s leisure preferences. It seems that his cultural values of focusing on his children’s interests facilitated his participation in activities.

Six participants created educational programs such as Korean language classes, Korean events, and East Asian sports that allowed new immigrants to participate and acquire cultural knowledge and information. This means that educating others about Korean culture and language served as leisure facilitators. For example, Choi (male, 74) was encouraged and facilitated the creation of cultural events that expressed a level of thankfulness for the American veterans of the Korean War because of the sacrifices they
made for Korea. In addition, he was involved with Korean culture and language classes for adults who were adopted from Korea. He stated:

It is obvious that without their help, we would not have our freedoms if we lived under communist rule. Around 30,000 young soldiers from the USA died for Korea’s peace and 11,000 soldiers were injured. As a Korean immigrant, we should appreciate their help and sacrifices for our country. They were our heroes. In terms of children adopted from Korea, they share the Korean heritage and if we failed to express our interest, it would not be the right thing to do. From a philanthropic perspective, we should think of any way we can help them out.

As he described, he created and provided culturally meaningful activities to deliver culture-related meanings and purposes to others who were associated with Korea.

According to four participants, there were many older Korean immigrants who struggled with adaptation difficulties and who lacked social or psychological support. According to them, many older Korean immigrants experienced negative feelings, such as isolation and depression, as a result of immigration. Based on some of the challenges associated with acculturation, some participants were willing to help other older Korean immigrants cope with the various adaptation challenges.

In addition, participants created and organized social gatherings in a context of social activities to provide social and emotional support for other older Korean immigrants. Through social gatherings, they were able to communicate with others and offer encouragement and hope for their lives. Even though participants expressed similar challenges related to acculturation, they were encouraged to develop groups that provided social and emotional support, which allowed them to interact with each other. Sharing
immigration experiences and providing encouragement were the determinants of leisure facilitators. For example, Lee-Si (male, 70) stated:

We have around 10 older adults and gather with them once a week. At this gathering, we share our lives together and develop our faith. Our meeting has become very important to us because typically, other older adults stayed at home and felt lonely and depressed. In particular, when older adults who are widowed get up every morning, they said that they were very depressed and thought negatively, not positively. My wife suggested that we do something meaningful for them. Finally, I believe that we are like family and I want to take care of them.

According to Lee-Si (male, 70), by providing a social gathering for other older Korean immigrants, he and his wife formed and developed a strong sense of connectedness and belonging.

Similarly, to help other Korean older immigrants relieve negative feelings, Chen (female, 66) created a social activity to encourage and develop spiritual lives for them. Through this spiritual activity, she mentioned that older Korean immigrants developed spiritual lives and strengthened the meaning and purpose of their lives. In addition, they developed a strong sense of group friendships and shared life experiences with each other, which resulted in less depression and loneliness. She stated:

I believe that taking care of other older adults via the Enoch group is my mission. God gave me an inspiration that I should take care of other older adults. Many older adults felt a sense of depression and isolation and had no hope, even though they were rich. Sometimes they even acted like children and I wanted to get some help for them. As Christians, we should put our hope and vision toward heaven,
not earthly things. They were not happy or joyful in their minds even though their children were very successful. They said that they wanted to die… I wanted to help other older adults develop their spiritual lives because they were so depressed and isolated from the community. So I had been thinking about how I could give them some help… . Through this meeting, she provided emotional and social support for others and as a result, many older adults experienced fewer negative feelings and developed hope and happiness.

Kim (male, 65) realized that many older Korean immigrants were not physically active; thus, he decided to encourage them to participate in physical activity. Through the Korean senior community, he offered a badminton class for older adults so that they became more fit and healthier. He was a member of the badminton class and had good interactions with other participants. Thus, the activity class only for Korean immigrants provided a leisure facilitator to others. For example, Lee-W (male, 65) joined this class to improve his health and interact with other Korean friends. He said:

I had played badminton when I was young and had not had the chance to play it for a while. The Korean senior community (SangRockSoo) started a badminton class for older adults in order to improve health. It was a motivation for me to participate by learning how to play badminton. Before the badminton class, I played tennis and table tennis with other Korean friends every Saturday. It was not enough for me to be physically active, so I participated in the badminton activity. It was so much fun to play and I am so happy to participate in badminton class on Mondays.
He expressed gratitude for the badminton class that was offered by the Korean senior community because it allowed him to play with other Korean older adults and develop a sense of friendship.

Two participants, Chen (female, 66) and Jang (male, 68) engaged in volunteer activities related to leisure facilitators when they lived as immigrants. They believed that helping underprivileged groups of people had become an important task in their lives because as minorities, they had experienced similar challenges. For example, Chen (female, 66) organized and provided various culturally-related events to raise donations for helping the poor. She was part of the Korean senior community and created various events such as a Korean food festival and charity events to raise funds to help the poor. In addition, Jang was involved with a volunteer organization to help underprivileged groups. Based on his experience, he shared:

I do not share this information with others that I am helping the poor. Every society has a group of people who are isolated from their society and community, and these people feel a sense of loneliness and social isolation. I believe that there are many reasons why they do not get along with others. Perhaps they have a lack of social skills, are self-centered, selfish, and/or they have negative personalities. I individually visit them and become friends so that we can share some emotions and feelings together. Through the organization that helps the underprivileged, I met one friend who was entering the 10th grade. I volunteered to help him in various ways as a mentor and a friend. He has a challenging family environment: his mom has gotten married three times and yet there is no father figure in his life. His family also has financial problems. I provide him with inspiration and
encouragement as a mentor… Yes. As an immigrant, and as a minority, I have faced numerous challenges so I would like to help minority groups to improve their quality of life.

According to participants, as immigrants, they had unstable financial statuses and faced many challenges associated with acculturation. Not only were they facilitated to help other immigrants, but they also helped the underprivileged.

The participants’ illustrated how their lives as immigrants had facilitated their leisure participation. Immigration experiences provide participants with an opportunity that facilitated leisure participation such as taking care of grandchildren for fun and focusing on their children’s leisure interests. To convey Korean culture and ways of interacting with Korean immigrants, older Korean immigrants are facilitated to engage in various leisure activities. With this intention, participants created culturally meaningful activities that provided social and emotional support for others who are associated with Korea, such as veterans and adopted adults. Under challenging acculturation contexts, it appears that older Korean immigrants help each other through social gatherings, which contribute to a reduction in negative feelings. They may have similar immigration experiences and be familiar with the challenges that others may experience. Due to some challenges, they were encouraged to organize social events and gatherings. Therefore, various contexts in immigration serve as leisure facilitators to engage in various leisure activities related to their cultural values and beliefs.
Culture-related Leisure Constraints

A main theme emerging from the data was that nine participants experienced challenges associated with leisure participation related to their culture and immigration experiences. Four participants mentioned that they were well adjusted in their host culture and did not describe any challenge associated with leisure participation. However, nine participants experienced some challenges when they tried to engage in various leisure activities because of cultural conflicts and adaptation difficulties. Based on their experiences and personal statements, there was a gender difference in leisure constraints.

Gender Differences. Six female participants mentioned that their adaptation difficulties such as language barriers and new cultural roles restricted their participation in leisure activities. They faced challenges such as language barriers, transportation problems, and cultural and ethnic differences. Such challenges served as constraints from participating in various leisure activities. They experienced communication issues because of a lack of English skills, which also resulted in limited social networks that did not include other ethnic groups. For example, Kwon (female, 70) experienced a language barrier that restricted her from socializing with others.

It was very inconvenient to live here because of English. Physically, I was fine because I did not have real experience interacting with others, but I felt bored because the only thing I was supposed to do was to take care of my children at home. That’s all I could do as a grandmother.

Limited social networks and language barriers served as factors that limited her socialization with others.
Two female participants were unable to drive and use public transportation, which keeps them dependent on their adult children for their transportation. An inability to drive negatively affected their participation in leisure because without their children’s help, they could not go anywhere to socialize with others and enjoy themselves. Such adaptation difficulties prohibited them from participating in various activities and served as constraints to leisure participation. For example, Lee (female, 77) and Chen (female, 66) could not drive and therefore, they could not really engage in any activities. They mentioned that even though they intended to participate in social events, their inability to drive restricted them from participating in them. They also stated that they were unable to go to the public parks to get some fresh air or relieve their stress because of their inability to drive. They felt embarrassed asking their children for transportation because they were busy with work, too.

Interestingly, Jeun (female, 82) mentioned that she was reluctant to depend on her son for transportation. As a way of overcoming the transportation challenge, she learned how to use public transportation. She said that she had difficulty understanding the bus routes because of the language issue. As a result, she obtained knowledge and information related to the bus routes and enjoyed taking the bus during her free time. As an outcome, she developed a sense of self-accomplishment and independence. In addition, while she was on the bus, she shared her life experience as part of her leisure activities. She mentioned that most passengers were African-Americans and that she failed to communicate them because of language barriers and cultural and ethnic differences. She stated:
When I am on the bus, I feel so isolated because most passengers are African American and I cannot join in the conversation. I feel different from them and wish that I would ride a bus with my Korean friends.

She tried to ride the bus with her Korean friends, but could not do so because her friends thought that using public transportation was not fun. Thus, cultural differences, language barriers, and limited social support for her leisure served as additional determinants to leisure constraints.

Four females who lived with their adult children had constraints that prevented them from engaging in various activities due to the new cultural roles at home. They mentioned that Korean culture demanded that daughters-in-law should look after their mothers-in-law when they were weak and sick. The cultural belief system indicates that daughters-in-law should prepare meals and take care of household chores at home. However, since immigrating, these older women have encountered the opposite. For example, Lee (female, 77) stated:

When I lived in Korea, my family supported and respected me as an older adult. They provided me with many things and my life was not difficult. After immigration, when my son and daughter-in-law went out to work, all household chores have become my responsibility. Taking care of household chores keeps me busy and I had no chance to feel lonely or do something for myself …

She also mentioned that she had no time to do something meaningful for herself because of household chores. She was unaccustomed of taking care of household chores and believed that such work went against her cultural values and beliefs. This cultural role transition created stressful and distressing situations.
Jo (female, 70) shared a similar experience, explaining that a new cultural role as a housewife restricted her from engaging in various activities. She shared her cultural perspective that in Korea, many older adults had enough time to do any activities for themselves, even that they had too much free time and did not know how to spend their free time. Compared to this aspect of an older adult’s life, she thought that she had not earned the privilege of spending time on herself because she should embrace a new cultural role at home.

I did not have my personal or free time for myself because I should take care of the household chores that I did not used to…

Two female participants such as Jo (female, 70) and Kwon (female, 70) experienced different ways of lifestyle and living circumstances. Compared to the lifestyle in Korea, they embraced new lifestyles and adapted to new life circumstances. Such adaptations created some barriers from having their own free time to participate in activities. One example was the role of gender. Jo (female, 70) said that Korean women were mainly expected to take care of household chores. Since immigration, she mentioned that she should take care of household chores as well as help her husband’s business, which has in turn in a lack of leisure time.

According to Jo (female, 70):

[America] is a fast-paced society and I did not have much time to do for myself. In this American life, I should work and make money because we could not survive with only my husband’s financial support. In Korea, there were many women who did not work… I am supposed to work so hard and do not have any personal time for myself. It was so difficult to live and do something for myself.
To adapt to a new society, she is still involved in her business because she feels she should support her family and grandchildren, along with her husband. Also, she mentioned that she was satisfied because she was able to provide financial support for her adult children. However, this situation was not helpful for her personal leisure time.

Only three male participants mentioned that they experienced some challenges to participate in leisure activities. For example, Lee-W (male, 65) maintained a strong sense of his gender role in that he only focused on his responsibility of taking care of his family. Korean culture demands that males should be responsible for their family and expect that their wives should stay at home to take care of children. This acculturation pressure enabled him to engage in unhealthy behavior, which led to issues with alcohol. Due to this unhealthy behavior, he mentioned that he could not strive to do something meaningful or enjoyable for his persona life. He said:

I drink every day. Whenever I felt bored and lonely, I drink a lot. I did not know what I could do for myself except work. It is a miracle that I am still alive here…

I could not enjoy doing something for fun because of many challenges.

He also mentioned that he did not utilize any resources related to leisure because of his work and alcohol issues. It appears that adaptation difficulties can be negatively associated with negative leisure behaviors and attitudes.

Based on the participants’ experiences and statements, there is a gender difference in leisure constraints. It seems that female participants may perceive more adaptation challenges such as language barriers, cultural differences, transportation issues, and limited social networks rather than male participants, which resulted in constraints to
leisure participation. Only three male participants experienced leisure constraints due to a
cultural gender role difference.

**Leisure Benefits Associated with Acculturation**

The final theme was that participants gained various benefits as a result of their
participation in leisure. In spite of negative immigration challenges and experiences,
thirteen participants used leisure as a means of psychological wellbeing, social
connection, physical health, an acculturative stress coping strategy, and a facilitator of
acculturation. This indicates that leisure serves as a catalyst for enhancing the overall
quality of their lives. There were five subthemes emerged from participants’ personal
statements and experience: (a) psychological benefits, (b) physical benefits, (c) social
benefits, (d) acculturative stress and coping, and (e) a facilitator of acculturation. The
following details these distinctive characteristics of leisure benefits generated by
engagement in leisure activities.

*Psychological Benefits.* Psychological benefits are the most common subtheme related to
leisure benefits that the participants experienced. Nearly all participants mentioned that
participation in leisure contributed to their sense of happiness and psychological comfort.
As described, participants engaged in various types of leisure activities and experienced a
range of leisure experiences that were related to their acculturation and immigration. To
respond to various stressful immigration and acculturation, leisure played an important
role in enhancing psychological wellbeing and mental health among participants. In
particular, they named specific psychological benefits such as self-accomplishment,
independence, and positive feelings. For example, Choi (male, 74) attempted to convey
Korean culture and etiquette to others who were not accustomed with Korean societies
through his participation in Judo. He shared his personal life story in regard to how his teachings affected his students:

I taught Judo to many children. Through teaching Judo, I wanted to teach them Korean culture and etiquette because they should know how to respect the master through Judo, such as by bowing or using two hands. A few years ago, when I was at a shopping mall, an adult came to me and bowed. I did not know who this person was, but he introduced himself to me and said he had been one of my students. He had his own children and became a productive adult. When I had a conversation with him, I remembered who he was. I was so proud of my students because I wanted to teach them how to respect each other in different ways and they still remembered some of what they had learned. I felt a sense of accomplishment and it was a good experience.

He sought to provide culture-related instructions and manners for his students. When he realized that his students had gained new cultural perspectives, he felt a sense of self-accomplishment. He also mentioned that through teaching Judo, he experienced happiness.

Similarly, Lee-W (male, 65) gained positive feelings and emotions as a result of participating in badminton. He suffered from the alcohol issues and playing badminton allowed him to find a new life opportunity that boosted his self-esteem and reduced unhealthy behaviors. Through this badminton activity, he developed a sense of friendship with other Korean immigrants and experienced fewer negative feelings about himself. He also said that his life had changed a lot because of his involvement in this activity.
Park (male, 73), who engaged in various leisure activities such as raising animals and practicing yoga, experienced psychological benefits such as an increased sense of comfort and happiness. When he raised these animals, he found peace and happiness. In addition, his leisure life enabled his grandchildren to enjoy themselves via new pursuits such as a horseback riding and swimming, which in turn made him feel satisfied and fulfilled. Interestingly, he expressed more happiness when he was watching his grandchildren’s ride horses or swim, instead of when he engaged in his own favorite leisure pursuits.

As a result of dealing with her adaptation difficulties in areas such as transportation, Jeun (female, 82) made the effort to be independent, so she used public transportation and pursued new leisure activities, which were riding the bus and touring new places. After a while, she gained information about the bus routes and had developed real expertise. One of her leisure activities was to take a trip to downtown and local areas by taking the bus herself:

Right now, I know how to get downtown and to church, and even to most places in Greensboro. Whenever I have some free time, I ride a bus and enjoy the beautiful scenes through the window. I went downtown, to the park and just about everywhere. I became totally independent and am proud of myself.

As I said, taking the bus makes me feel independent. Every bus driver knows who I am because I am the only older female who frequently takes the bus. They wave and say “hi.” Interestingly, when I ride the bus, most of the other passengers are African American and it seems like heaven to them.
She developed a sense of independence and experienced enhanced self-confidence, which in turn resulted in a sense of accomplishment and happiness.

One aspect of Korean culture is to share food with neighbors, as it is an expression of collectivistic values and beliefs. Two participants, Lee (female, 77) and Lee-Si (male, 70), who enjoyed gardening, shared their vegetables and fruits with their close friends and neighbors. By sharing food and having dinner together, they felt happy and emotionally rewarded. As a result of their gardening activities, they developed a stronger sense of friendships and relationships, which consequently resulted in positive emotions. Thus, taking care of their gardens was an important element that brought happiness and emotional reward to them. It also became an important part of their lives.

Six participants emphasized that caring for their grandchildren was one of their most enjoyable activities, and they experienced feelings of gratitude and happiness as a result. They mentioned that taking care of grandchildren was physically demanding, but that it was also one of the happiest and most rewarding activities in their lives. According to Lee-Si (male, 70), for example:

The happiness and joy that my grandchildren bring me cannot be compared to anything else. Physically, I am sometimes tired and exhausted because of my age, but mentally and psychologically, I am so happy to play with them and take good care of them. Without them, my life as an immigrant would be unsatisfactory and stressful. The value of my grandchildren is the most important thing in my life. When people meet me, they are surprised to learn that I am 70 years old. I think that my life is filled with joy and happiness because of my grandchildren. Every day when I take care of them, I think about what they might become in the future.
Similarly, Chen (female, 66) mentioned that spending quality time with her grandchildren brought her contentment:

No, I really enjoy taking care of my grandchildren and this is one of my favorite activities... Even though I am sometimes physically tired from caring for them, I am happy to take care of and play with them, and it brings me the best feelings and excitement.

It seems that playing with her grandchildren as it provided her with enjoyment and excitement enhanced her quality of life. She faced physical challenges when taking care of her grandchildren due to her age, but psychologically, she experienced happiness.

Volunteering provided psychological benefits to 6 participants. They were the most likely to receive psychological and mental health benefits by volunteer activities such as helping others (i.e., older Korean immigrants and the underprivileged). Kwon (female, 70), who had been involved in various volunteer activities, mentioned that volunteering was an activity that required sacrifices and commitment to certain matters.

Through these activities, she said:

… Sometimes, I cook corn and potatoes for people and when people are happy to eat some, I am so pleased to see that. I am much happier when I see them encouraged by my food. It is physically demanding and sometimes I get tired, but when I see their faces and learn about the situations they are in, I am not able to stop helping them in various ways. Whenever I see them feel encouraged and inspired by small things I have done, it is the happiness moment in my life.
In addition, she provided transportation for older Korean immigrants who could not drive. Through this activity, she mentioned that she derived psychological and emotional benefits from people, not from her actions.

Chen (female, 66) shared a similar experience related to psychological benefits as a result of volunteering activities. In her case, she organized a social activity for older Korean immigrants who felt depressed and lonely. Helping others required time, energy, and physical challenges related to her age, but through this activity, she felt happiness and emotionally rewarded. According to her:

The good thing was that older adults were satisfied with the meals that I prepared. I did appreciate the fact that they very cheerfully ate whatever food I prepared. Some older adults felt sorry that they were always gathered at my place, so we went to the church every Wednesday for a social gathering. Anyway, we faced many challenges against organizing this gathering, but we overcame them and this made us happy. To be honest, after offering all the rides for other adults, when I got home, I was totally burned out physically, but I was so happy to have done this work. All I wanted to say is that physically, it was a difficult activity, but psychologically it was one of the most rewarding activities I am involved in. No one and nothing else can make me as happy and excited.

She also mentioned that at a social gathering, she organized improved social and personal interactions, which resulted in a reduction in her isolation and negative feelings, such as depression.

These life examples show how leisure contributes to psychological benefits such as happiness, self-confidence, accomplishment, and independence among older Korean
participants. Regardless of the type of leisure in which an individual engages, leisure plays an essential part of their lives as it serves as an important means of enhancing positive feelings, self-accomplishment, and a sense of independence. By performing various activities, older Korean immigrants developed a deeper sense of happiness and reaped emotional rewards, even in the face of some significant physical challenges and other demands. It seems that participating in a variety of leisure activities can increase one’s sense of wellness, health and their quality of life, as psychological benefits that derive from leisure participation are associated with such positive outcomes.

*Physical Benefits.* Physical benefits are another subtheme that emerged from the participants and that are associated with leisure benefits. Only four male participants out of the seven participants who engaged in leisure-time physical activities identified some positive outcomes as a result of participation in leisure-time physical activities such as physical strength, physical energy, physical functions, and associated skills. In addition, participants expressed benefits to their overall physical health when they engaged in leisure-time physical activities. It seems that leisure-time physical activities lead to the development of physical health, which in turn increases the frequency of involvement in leisure-time physical activities.

Kim (male, 65), who pursued golf, commented that as a leisure-time physical activity, golf was the best activity one could do to enhance physical health. He stated:

Some people say that golf is not a physically demanding activity, but it requires lots of physical energy and strength. When I play golf, I do not use the golf cart and I usually walk. I believe that golf is a physical and mental sport that requires whole body movement and specific skills. I expended lots of energy, which made
me physically healthy. I always tell older adults that playing golf is the best activity for health.

He also indicated that golf served as a means of improving his physical health and keeping him physically active. It seems that the physical benefits related to golf enhanced his quality of life due to his active involvement in a line of physical activity.

Lee-J (male, 80), who is a member of a recreation facility, participated in a variety of activity programs and as an outcome, he mentioned that his physical strength and sense of flexibility had improved. He stated that his involvement in the various activities offered by the facility helped improve his mobility and physical functions. At the facility, he used the swimming pool to improve his flexibility and physical functions, which led to improvements in his physical health.

As a volunteer Judo teacher, Choi (male, 74) practiced Judo with learners, which required physical strength and energy to teach skills and techniques demanded:

Practicing Judo with my students requires a great deal of physical energy and strength. I maintain my physical strength and power through Judo practice and teaching.

To maintain and improve his physical strength, he was involved in practicing Judo with his students and he mentioned that Judo was a means of keeping him physically fit and healthy.

In addition, Lee-W (male, 65) takes classes such as badminton and table tennis that are offered by the Korean senior center as part of his leisure-time physical activities:
Trying these activities helped me improve my health. In particular, my physical health has been improved significantly. At home, I practice playing badminton with my wife every day (Lee-W).

Practicing badminton with my wife may be helpful in that I am able to improve my skills. Usually, I practice from 4:00 pm to 7:00 pm with my wife. After working up a good sweat by playing badminton, I take a shower, have dinner, and sleep well. It is a great feeling after playing badminton.

In spite of some of the physical challenges related to his age that could hinder his participation in a physical activity such as badminton, he was motivated to participate in this activity with his spouse. He mentioned that he enjoyed playing badminton with his wife and, as a result, they gained some physical benefits together.

These examples indicate that leisure-time physical activities provided physical benefits for only older male participants. Four male participants are involved in different types of leisure-time physical activities, which may require different levels of physical strength for participation. Such participants’ statements and experience indicate that as a result of their participation, participants gained physical benefits such as physical strength, flexibility, mobility, related skills and techniques, and physical functions. It also implies that, older Korean immigrants’ lives can be enhanced through leisure-time physical activities.

Social Benefits. Nearly all participants gained social benefits as a result of their participation in leisure. They interacted with other Korean immigrants and developed a sense of friendship with them. Such interactions with other Korean immigrants may have
a foundation of their collectivistic values and beliefs as they shared their personal lives and exchanged practical information and knowledge about acculturation together. They mentioned that they had had similar immigration experiences and were more likely to find common ground that facilitated interpersonal interactions for friendships. According to the participants, leisure provided an opportunity for them to alternate ways of socializing with others and helping them adapt to new societies using each other as support. Lee-W (male, 65) said:

Also, when I played it (badminton) with my wife, some of our Korean friends joined us to play together. After a game, we usually have dinner together. Playing together provided me with the opportunity to socialize with each other and made my life more exciting. During our conversation, we exchange useful information related to immigration life and share our stories. For example, if someone needed a plumber, based on our experience, we recommended a good plumber who was reliable and had good skills. These activities help us to adapt to new things.

Based on his experience, leisure activity served as a method of providing social support to each other and aiding in cultural adaptation. Immigrants needed practical information about how to adapt to a new place, and from Lee-W’s (male, 65) experience, it seems that leisure provided an environment in which immigrants shared practical information related to acculturation, which resulted in social interactions.

Like Lee-W’s experience, Jang (male, 68) enjoyed playing golf with his retired Korean friends. He mentioned that after their golf game, they had lunch together as a group and discussed various topics such as politics, sports, the economy, and so forth.
Through playing golf, his friendships were established and maintained, or, as he put it, “This is a good social support group.”

A couple of participants participated in traditional Korean games such as *Yut-Nori*, *Go-Stop*, and *Baduk*. As a result of their participation in these activities, they developed a sense of friendship and expanded their social networks. For example, Jeun (female, 82) stated:

Sometimes, we played traditional Korean games such as *Yul-nori*, *Go-stop*, etcetera. Playing such Korean games together helps us develop our friendships and relieve any stress related to loneliness…Many older adults living in Greensboro are very lonely. There are few communities or nursing homes for older Koreans. Because of loneliness, we hang out together and gather to play some Korean games. Whenever we play these Korean games, we get to know each other better, meet new people, and ameliorate our loneliness and stress. Once a week, we have a regular meeting at the church, where we play a variety of Korean traditional games …

Interestingly, church functions as a unique place in which older Korean immigrants are able to socialize with others. It also provided various activities for older Korean immigrants so that they had the opportunity to interact with people who, as immigrants, had had similar experiences. Jo (female, 70) mentioned that church was a good place to socialize and she was eager to engage in various church-based activities:

When I went to the church, I was able to meet Korean people and exchange a great deal of information with them. While I was working at the company, I only ran into Americans and had no interactions with others during my day.
She also commented that church was an important place for her to relieve loneliness because she made many friends there. Similarly, Kwon-F (female, 65) mentioned that:

Yes. I am involved in a Korean community church and because of the Korean church I do not feel lonely. Through the Korean community, we made good friends and have regular meetings. As a group, we took trips to many places and had lots of fun together. Without their presence in my life, my life would be miserable …

In the context of leisure, Lee-Si (male, 70) developed a friendship with his neighbor, who was a member of a different ethnic group. According to practices in Korean culture, he shared some vegetables and fruits that he had cultivated in his garden with his American neighbor. He stated:

My neighbor is a retired soldier, and one day I picked some vegetables and gave some to him. He asked to me “What is it? And why did you give it to me?” I explained to him that based on our culture, sharing food with neighbors is a very valuable thing. That’s why I would like to give it to you… The interesting thing is that he started to garden, too. He gave us some tomatoes and cucumbers. We became really good friends.

As a part of the cultural exchange related to leisure, he conveyed the Korean value of sharing food with neighbors and thus developed a sense of friendship. Similarly, Lee-J (male, 80) started a social gathering where he shared food with his Korean friends at his home. By sharing food that he harvested, he mentioned that he had the opportunity to interact with other Korean immigrants. In addition, some of his friends had similar leisure pursuits of gardening and exchanged information related to gardening. It seems that the
environment of leisure provides an opportunity to build upon Korean culture and improve social relationships with others.

Based on the study participants’ experiences, leisure plays an important part in their lives, as it provides an opportunity for them to have meaningful interpersonal interactions with others. Older Korean immigrants utilized leisure as a means of providing opportunities for socialization with others and developing emotional and social support. Leisure enabled participants to share similar experiences and develop deeper, more intimate friendships. It seems that leisure is an important medium through which participants obtained social benefits, which led to a reduction in stress and feelings of loneliness.

Acculturative Stress and Coping. All of the participants had experienced various stressors related to acculturation, such as adaptation difficulties, language barriers, family issues, children’s struggles, and racial conflicts and tension right after their immigration. In particular, four participants (e.g., Jang, Kim, Choi, and Lee-J) mentioned that they had had a level of acculturative stress, but currently they did not have any specific stress related to the acculturation process. Nine participants mentioned that they used leisure as a method of dealing with the stress related to acculturation. For example, Jo (female, 70) experienced various stressors related to acculturation, such as racial tension and conflicts as the owner of a business in the African-American community. She mentioned that it was challenging for her to deal with acculturative stress related to racial tension:

When I stressed out, I went to my garden. I cultivated many vegetables and fruits and it was so fun to harvest all these crops. I have cucumber, pumpkins, green onions, sesame leaves, etc. I am planting all the vegetables that I need to make
food. I got rid of all my stress in my garden. It is not easy for me to deal with African American customers every day. Sometimes, I shout at them and don’t care if they understand me or not. We had many arguments at the store.

She had many unpleasant experiences while running her business in this specific neighborhood because of racial tension, which led to acculturative stress. In addition, because of cultural and ethnic differences, she had discrimination experiences from her customers. To deal with cultural conflicts and racial tension, she developed her own strategy of coping, which was to participate in gardening. She mentioned that cultivating various vegetables and fruits served as an effective way of coping with acculturative stress.

Cultural role transitions were additional stressful transitions for four female participants because immigration unexpectedly provided them with unfamiliar cultural roles, such as they were now expected to take care of household chores. When they lived in Korea, such household chores were the responsibility of their daughters-in-law. To deal with acculturative stress related to different cultural roles, the participants’ social activities and spiritual life played important roles in their lives. For example, Lee (female, 77) stated:

Since I developed my faith through interactions with other older adults and exchanged our life experiences together, I began to find some peace and comfort. After that, my relationship with my daughter-in-law and granddaughter improved and we have a better understanding of each other.
In the past, I vented my anger and frustration to my daughter-in-law because I believed this was an effective and reasonable way of dealing with my stress. Recently, having faith and sharing my life with others became a better way of dealing with such stress. I talk to my Korean friends and we garden together. It helps me a lot to reduce this type of stress and have a better life.

Through these social gatherings, she mentioned that she had developed a deep sense of faith and shared the life stories related to her relationship with her daughter-in-law with other Korean immigrants so that she could develop a better understanding of the new cultural roles in her home. Similarly, she participated in gardening with her friends, and it seems that the social support formed through this social activity was helpful for developing coping mechanisms.

Church-based activities are another good way of dealing with acculturative stress. As a faculty member, Kim (male, 65) mentioned that he had experienced challenges associated with acculturation, such as language barriers, cultural and ethnic differences, and racial discrimination. The most effective way of coping with acculturative stress was to become involved in spiritual activities. He stated, “My spiritual activities helped me to deal with a great deal of stress.” In addition, facing similar acculturative stress, Chen (female, 66) got involved with various church activities to develop faith. She utilized these as a way of dealing with acculturative stress:

Whenever I faced a challenge, I went to the church and prayed and cried a lot. I know that some people go shopping to deal with stress, but I don’t. Every morning I go to church for the service and this helps me deal with most of my
stress. When I make mistakes related to personal relationships, I read the Bible and work in my spiritual life and it has helped me deal with these stresses.

She also mentioned that taking care of her grandchildren was another way of coping with acculturative stress. She thought that spending time with her grandchildren was the most important activity in which she was involved, which helped her deal with a great deal of the acculturative stress.

To deal with acculturative stress, a few participants participated in leisure-time physical activities during their leisure time. Lee-W (male, 65) participated in the badminton activity and through this activity he reduced his unhealthy behaviors (i.e., drinking problems) and dealt with acculturative stressors in a healthier way. He mentioned that playing badminton was a good way to deal with acculturative stress. After the game, he socialized with other older Korean immigrants by sharing food and expanding their social networks. Such a gathering was a means of dealing with acculturative stress and helping each other acculturate.

Interestingly, Jeun (female, 82) mentioned that culture-related activities and spiritual materials contributed to a coping mechanism for acculturative stress:

On major Korean holidays, we participated in and organized several recreational programs to teach traditional Korean games and customs to the younger generations here. We are so proud of ourselves for teaching the younger generation because they were able to learn and acquire Korean culture and better understand our lifestyle. Many children who are born in USA do not know how to speak Korean and they do not respect older people. Through Korean language classes and traditional holidays, we convey Korean culture to them. Additionally,
reading spiritual books provided me with mental and psychological peace and comfort. In spite of challenging life circumstances, I try to look at the optimistic side of things and pursue a psychologically better life. I am aware of the fact that I do not have the ability to change my life circumstances, but I realized that I have the ability to change my attitude and develop my potential to look at the world and people.

Examples of participants’ life experiences illustrate that leisure serves as an acculturative-stress coping mechanism that reduces acculturative stress, facilitates a better understanding of different cultural roles, expands social networks, and develops social support groups. By engaging in leisure, participants developed the ability to cope with acculturative stress. In addition, sharing their life stories with others and interacting with their social support groups helped participants deal with various stressors related to acculturation. It seems that social and spiritual activities played an important role in dealing with acculturative stress.

Leisure as a Facilitator of Acculturation. The final subtheme related to leisure benefits was that leisure facilitates acculturation. Nine participants encountered some challenges related to acculturation, which led to a lack of interpersonal interactions with other ethnic groups. They mentioned that they had social limitations because they did not have the opportunity to interact with other ethnic groups. According to their experiences, language barriers and cultural and ethnic differences prevented them from interacting with other ethnic groups and adapting to new societies. In spite of acculturation challenges, they mentioned that their participation in leisure helped them adapt to new societies as well as gain new ones by interacting with their own ethnic groups. Interacting with other Korean
immigrants as a form of social activity played an important role in adapting to new societies. Six participants participated in social activities with other Korean immigrants and exchanged practical information on how to adapt to new societies. They had similar experiences with immigration, and sharing their experiences enabled them to develop strategies to adapt to new societies. It seems that through social activities, participants became more acculturated to new societies in effective ways.

Volunteer activities played an important role in facilitating acculturation, as they provided an opportunity to share their personal immigration lives with other immigrants as well as provide practical information for acculturation. For example, Kwon (female, 70) mentioned:

Helping other Korean immigrants is a good way of dealing with various stressors because I had prior experience with my immigration life. Based on my personal immigration experience, I helped newcomers and provided a variety of information and knowledge on how to adapt to this society.

Jeun’s (female, 82) favorite activity was to ride the bus as she strived to be independent from her son in terms of transportation. She mentioned that she faced communication issues when she used public transportation:

I do not want to place any burden on my son because of transportation, so I decided to learn the bus route system. I am the only one who figured out how to ride the bus and tried to understand all of the bus routes. With my lack of English skills, I just rode on any bus that came and learned the bus schedule and routes. If necessary, I jotted down the bus number and where the bus was going.
Riding the bus as part of her leisure enabled her to be independent from her son, which consequently facilitated acculturation. In addition, she discovered cultural differences, such as the fact that African Americans spoke louder and laughed a lot between themselves when she was on the bus:

They (African Americans) speak louder and laugh a lot. It seems that they care little for other people (other racial groups). In the plaza where I own my business, they (African Americans) are quiet and do not speak louder than normal. However, on the bus I feel a sense of their freedom and they act and speak in a free and comfortable way …

Additionally, interacting with grandchildren enabled Lee-Si (male, 70) to gain cultural insight into American culture and learn English from his grandchildren.

In contrast with the other nine participants, four mentioned that leisure provided them with opportunities to interact with other ethnic groups, which helped facilitate acculturation. For example, Jang (male, 68) organized various volunteer activities, which had enabled him to interact with other ethnic groups. By interacting with other ethnic groups, he developed some language skills and expanded his circle of friends. For example, he stated:

I volunteered to organize some events such as corporate outings, company picnics and family gatherings. When the company had a Christmas party, I was a member of the committee that organized the event. Also, we had a softball event and I always participated in the softball game events. The reason was that when I engaged in volunteer work activities, I was able to interact with Americans and
develop good friendships. In particular, I developed communication skills and learned how to interact with them.

However, through my participation in various volunteer activities, I had many opportunities to interact with others, which helped me to understand the American culture and improve my English. My self-confidence also improved and I started to believe that regardless of where you come from, I had the capacity to overcome any challenges. At the company, I became the first line supervisor.

Based on Jang’s experience, he gained some benefits associated with acculturation, such as developing friendships, improving his self-confidence, and mastering his English skills through volunteer activities. In terms of enhancing his English skills, Choi (male, 74) improved English skills by teaching Judo as a result of volunteering to teach it. He mentioned that he improved his communication skills because of the social interactions he had with students during Judo classes.

Lee-J (male, 80) believed that his participation in leisure helped him assimilate into the mainstream:

After I got the job, I played various activities with other colleagues (mainly Whites) and this made me feel like I was part of their community and society.

They also acknowledged cultural differences and stated that they gained a sense of cultural knowledge, which helped them become acculturated to new societies. By playing golf, Kim (male, 65) discovered cultural differences. He stated,

Absolutely, there is a difference. When I play golf with Korean friends, we had some great jokes and good communication. After golf, we went to Korean
restaurants to have lunch or dinner together. When I play golf with Americans, we bet on our golf games with 50 cents for each hole. It is also fun to play together. He also mentioned that by playing golf, he made many American friends, which enabled him to learn English and better understand American culture. Similarly, Choi (male, 74) discovered cultural differences through his Judo activities:

I frequently attended some conferences and events related to Judo in USA and Korea. In Korea, if different ideas and suggestions came up in these meetings, the people who had different ideas were more likely to dislike each other or even be enemies. So it was difficult to go against others’ opinions because I did not want to be seen as an enemy. In our culture, age is a very important factor that decides something important, so I respect opinions that come from others who are older than I am. However, in the USA, even though they had different opinions and ideas, after the meeting, they smiled and became good friends. They shared many good ideas freely and I felt no restrictions related to age. This was a difference.

For Choi (male, 74), leisure provided an environment in which he discovered cultural differences. In addition, by interacting with Judo students, he gained cultural knowledge and mentioned that Judo provided him with an opportunity to understand different societies.

Based on the participants’ experiences and statements, leisure facilitated acculturation by allowing them to gain practical information for acculturation, learning English and about other societies, gaining cultural knowledge, and developing friendships with other ethnic groups. Such positive outcomes as a result of leisure participation helped participants better understand cultural and ethnic differences and become part of
the mainstream. It seems that leisure provides an environment in which participants interact with others and develop a sense of friendship.
CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

I sought to understand leisure behaviors of older Korean immigrants by focusing on leisure patterns after immigration, leisure facilitators, leisure benefits, and leisure constraints. The analysis uncovered four salient themes associated with leisure and acculturation: (a) types of leisure involvement, (b) facilitators to leisure related to culture and immigration, (c) culture-related leisure constraints, and (d) leisure benefits related to acculturation including physical, social, and psychological benefits, acculturative-stress coping, and acculturative facilitator. The results indicate that acculturation and immigration created an environment in which participants pursued new types of leisure activities that were associated with their culture and immigration. In addition, the immigration environment provided older Korean participants with an opportunity that facilitates leisure participation. Through leisure participation, participants gained health benefits, such as psychological, social, and physical health. In spite of these leisure benefits, however, participants’ cultural conflicts and adaptation difficulties are constraining factors that restrict their leisure participation. Such adaptation difficulties are associated with acculturative stress. The findings highlighted the significance of leisure for coping with acculturative stress and facilitating acculturation. The dynamic interplay of each of the identified themes in relation to leisure benefits associated with gender and group differences is illustrated in Figure 1, which is proposed as an emergent model.

Based on the findings of this study, all participants had experienced adaptation difficulties such as language barriers, limited social networks, cultural differences, and cultural conflicts. Various factors (e.g., gender, education backgrounds, and the length of stay) may influence the perceptions of adaptation difficulties as some older Korean
immigrants did not describe any more challenges and others still identified adaptation difficulties. It indicates that some older Korean immigrants become acculturated and others navigate to deal with the new culture within which they are embedded. In this study, in particular, four male participants who were highly educated and lived longer in the U.S. did not describe any challenges associated with leisure participation and had social and interpersonal relationships with their own and other ethnic groups through leisure, which may be associated with acculturation. Nine participants, mainly females, encountered numerous challenges related to adaptation difficulties, which allowed them to mainly interact with their own ethnic group and experience leisure constraints, which may be associated with less acculturation (See Figure 2). This model implies that the more Korean older immigrants are acculturated to the new culture, the less they experience challenges associated with leisure participation.
Figure 1. A model of Leisure Benefits Associated with Gender Differences

ACCULTURATIVE STRESS
Language barriers
Cultural differences
Transportation issues
Limited social networks
Lack of intergroup contacts
Cultural conflicts

BUFFERS OF ACCULTURATIVE STRESS

LEISURE OUTCOMES
- Psychological
- Social
- Physical
- Stress-coping
Figure 2. Acculturation and Leisure

Adaptation difficulties (e.g., language barriers, limited social networks, cultural difference and cultural conflicts, transportation issues)

Low adaptation difficulties due to length of stay, employment, educational background, gender, etc.

Less challenges associated with leisure participation & more interactions with other ethnic groups

Less accultivated to host culture

High adaptation difficulties due to length of stay, employment, educational background, gender, etc.

More challenges associated with leisure participation & limited interactions with other ethnic groups

More accultivated to host culture

More challenges associated with leisure participation & limited interactions with other ethnic groups

Less accultivated to host culture
The first research question was “What do older Korean immigrants do for fun or entertainment in their free time?” To report this research question, I first had to define leisure because, for example, older Korean participants regarded taking care of their grandchildren as a leisure activity even though it is a physically demanding work. From a Western perspective on leisure, it should be “nonwork”, which is not affected by social expectations. However, the findings in this study showed that older Korean participants consider taking care of grandchildren as a fun and rewarding activity. It indicates that they may interpret the meaning of leisure in a different way and leisure professionals should consider the cultural complexity of immigrants in terms of how they interpret and understand the meaning of leisure. The existing literature on leisure in later life has mainly focused on the leisure patterns of predominantly White, middle-class, and non-Hispanic older adults (Ananian & Janke, 2010). With little knowledge of leisure patterns among older ethnic minorities, it is difficult to determine leisure patterns of their participation. Also, a limited body of literature explores the relationship between ethnicity and leisure behaviors (Gao & Zhu, 2010; Ho et al., 2005). This study introduces their leisure patterns of older Korean immigrants and suggests a better understanding of their leisure behaviors. This data broadens our conceptualization of leisure and helps us understand the behaviors of older Korean immigrants.

The findings show that older Korean participants mainly engaged in home-based leisure activities, church-based activities, volunteer activities, culturally meaningful activities, and leisure-time physical activities. Interestingly, most of leisure activities that older Korean immigrants participated in are associated with their own cultural values and beliefs. They may have a limited range of leisure activities due to Korean culture, custom,
and history. For example, various volunteer activities (e.g., helping other Korean immigrants), church-based activities (e.g., Korean food festival), and culturally meaningful activities (e.g., Korean language class and traditional Korean games and play) are provided and developed by participants. Also, older Korean immigrants experienced adaptation difficulties, which are associated with acculturative stress. The results of this study suggest that older Korean immigrants used leisure activities as a way of coping with acculturative stress.

One interesting finding is that only male older Korean participants who were involved in leisure-time physical activities gained physical benefits. This finding, that only older male participants engage in leisure-time physical activities, should be examined further. There is one possible explanation for this finding even though this study did not explore the background of this phenomenon. The possibility is that female participants have numerous adaptation difficulties, which restricted their participation in leisure-time physical activities. As a consequence, they may be less acculturated to their host culture. Previous studies support this idea that immigrants who participate in more leisure-time physical activities are more likely to be acculturated to new cultures rather than those who were less involved (e.g., Afable-Munsuz et al., 2010; Dawson et al., 2005).

In addition, this study suggests that immigration and acculturation may influence the leisure patterns of older Korean immigrants. As noted, filial piety and Confucian values play an important part in Korean culture (i.e., Ho, 1994; Leung et al., 2010; Yeh & Bedford, 2003). In this study, the results indicated that, based on participants’ cultural values and beliefs, their adult children fulfilled their familial responsibilities by taking
care of them while living together. Such a family environment is related to Korean culture in which participants are expected to take care of their grandchildren as part of their leisure pursuits.

Kim (2000) demonstrated that older Korean immigrants are mainly involved with family-oriented activities because of their own cultural values (e.g., collectivism and interdependence). This study provides support for her study that acculturation and immigration influence participants’ leisure pursuits as they were engaged in home-based activities. In addition, Ruble and Shaw (1991) suggested that adaptation difficulties such as language barriers restrict participants from engaging in home-oriented or passive children-related activities. This study expands their finding to show that not only did the participants engage in home-based activities, but that older Korean participants also created and developed a variety of leisure activities such as church-based activities, culturally meaningful activities, volunteer activities, and leisure-time physical activities.

The second research question was “Why do older Korean immigrants participate in leisure activities?” Raymore (2002) defined leisure facilitators as “factors that are assumed by researchers and perceived or experienced by individuals to enable or promote the formation of leisure preferences and to encourage or enhance participation” (p. 39). Raymore conceptualized a leisure facilitator framework and illustrated that a leisure facilitator is not the process, but the condition itself. Raymore proposed that ethnicity serves as a structural leisure facilitator. This study broadens the conceptualization of leisure facilitators in that the immigration environment may serve as a structural leisure facilitator. For example, according to this study, older Korean participants organized culturally meaningful activities to provide others with information on Korean culture and
etiquette so that they gained cultural knowledge and learned how to interact in a culturally appropriate manner with Korean immigrants. Such immigration conditions may facilitate leisure participation for older Korean immigrants as the new environment may affect their motivation to participate in culturally meaningful activities, volunteer activities and church-based activities.

Oak and Martin (2000) showed that due to the Korean culture’s focus on children’s education paying attention to their children’s education is one of the best means of expressing the love and affection they have for their children. This study suggests that the values of Korean culture inspire leisure facilitators among older Korean immigrants in order to engage in grandchildren-related activities. In addition, the value of Confucianism related to filial obligations provided older Korean participants with an opportunity to live with their grandchildren, which facilitated their leisure participation such as taking care of grandchildren for fun.

Even though this study did not compare the current with previous leisure behaviors before immigration, the immigration environment itself provided older Korean participants with opportunities to exchange emotional and social support with each other and engage in grandchildren-related activities. As a result, older Korean participants established and developed a variety of leisure activities for other Korean immigrants. Thus, the immigration environment may serve as a facilitator to leisure.

The third research question was “What benefits do older Korean immigrants experience through leisure participation during the immigration process?” As a result of leisure participation, older Korean participants gained physical, psychological, and social health benefits. This finding is consistent with the leisure literature. Leisure studies in
later life demonstrate that older adults participate in leisure as it contributes to substantial health benefits such as physical, psychological, cognitive, and social benefits among older adults (e.g., Mannell, 2007; Paganini-Hill et al., 2011). Among these health benefits, psychological benefits are the main outcomes that older Korean participants said they obtained. The background of this finding is that older East Asian immigrants perceive and deal with a significant amount of stress related to adaptation, which negatively affects their perception of health and wellbeing (Kiefer et al., 1985; Mio, Barker-Hackett, & Tumambing, 2006; Shim & Schwartz, 2007).

Considerable research has stressed the importance of serious leisure (i.e., amateurism, volunteerism, or hobby) for improving the quality of life and successful aging of older adults (i.e., Brown et al., 2008; Heo et al., 2010). However, the existing literature on serious leisure in later life has mainly been conducted with predominantly White, middle-class, and non-Hispanic older adults. This study supports the idea that by engaging in volunteer activities, older Korean participants experienced psychological benefits such as happiness, self-confidence, accomplishments, and independence. Even though this study determines serious leisure experiences among older Korean participants, it suggests that volunteer activities in a context of serious leisure may play an essential part in their lives as it serves as an important means to enhancing psychological wellbeing.

Previous studies demonstrated that leisure activities are used to develop the ability to cope with and adapt to life conditions and transitions in the lives of older adults, mainly White, middle-class and non-Hispanic ones (i.e., Hutchinson et al., 2008; Nimrod, 2009). Interestingly, the findings of this study show that, as a means of coping with
acculturative stress and adaptation difficulties, older Korean participants participate in leisure. As a result, they reduce their acculturative stress, facilitate cultural understanding, and develop social support groups. In addition, they create and provide social and emotional support for each other.

In addition, the findings in this study are consistent with previous studies that leisure provides older women with opportunities to develop their perceptions of belonging, acceptance, and support (e.g., Hutchison et al., 2008; Son et al., 2007). These authors mention that, among older women, such positive social outcomes serve as a strategy for coping with stress. This study supported the idea that older female participants developed a sense of acceptance and connectedness with each other through leisure.

Several studies (i.e., Nimrod, 2009; Son et al., 2007) found that leisure provided an opportunity for older adults to share resources regarding leisure activities and practical information (e.g., recreation, shopping, and travel). Compared to these studies, this study introduced a unique function of leisure as a means of sharing practical information for acculturation, gaining cultural knowledge and information, and helping other Korean immigrants with their adaptation.

Furthermore, previous studies have mainly focused on young adult immigrants such as Latinos, Chinese graduate students, and Afghan immigrants to stress the importance of leisure for acculturation (e.g., Li & Stodolska, 2006; Stack & Iwasaki, 2009; Stodolska & Alexandris, 2004). These studies suggested that interactions with Americans enabled immigrants to facilitate the acculturation process by learning cultural knowledge, developing cross-group friendships, and improving English skills. This study
showed that older Korean participants facilitated the acculturation process by interacting with their own ethnic groups. This study broadens the means of facilitating acculturation in a different method among older Korean participants. It seems that cultural exposure through leisure is helpful for participants to interact with each other and gain different cultural perspectives.

The fourth research question was “With whom do older Korean immigrants participate in leisure activities?” From a social psychological perspective on intergroup contact, interacting with other ethnic groups leads to interracial tension, the perception of group threat, and the development of group bias and interracial conflicts (Dovidio et al., 2008; Otten & Moskowitz, 2000). Due to the lack of opportunities for interacting with other ethnic groups, individuals are likely to avoid personal contact and interactions with a specific ethnic group (Stephan, Ybarra, & Bachman, 1999). In particular, among older immigrants, adaptation difficulties provided immigrants with a lack of opportunities to interact with other ethnic groups (e.g., Afable-Munsuz et al., 2010; Choe & Im, 2007; Dawson, Sundquist, & Johansson, 2005; Scharff, Homan, Kreuter, & Brennan, 1999; Tcha & Lobo, 2003). In this study, older Korean participants had little experience interacting with other ethnic groups, which resulted in a lack of personal interactions with other ethnic groups.

The tendency to interact with individuals from their own ethnic group may be also related to the collectivistic values of Korean culture. Previous researchers (i.e., Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Suh & Oishi, 2004; Uchida et al., 2004) mentioned that Korean culture emphasizes the value of in-group decision and social harmony. As prior research has noted, older Korean immigrants tend to interact with other older Korean immigrants for
socializing and tend to participate in family-oriented activities due to their own cultural values and beliefs. In this study, as a means of maintaining collectivistic values, older Korean participants strived to help other Korean immigrants to adapt to a new environment. They also utilized their own skills, immigration information, and practical suggestions for acculturation, which facilitates their leisure participation.

In leisure settings, this study showed that older Korean participants are mainly involved with various leisure activities with others from their own ethnic group. The background of this finding is that they may have similar immigration experiences and shared culture. By engaging in leisure, they were able to provide emotional and social support to each other, which contributed to enhanced social interactions and friendships. In addition, they had adaptation difficulties such as deficient communication skills, cultural conflicts, transportation issues, and cultural differences, which generate a lack of an opportunity to interact with other ethnic groups and lead to less acculturation.

Tcha and Lobo (2003) suggest that female immigrants do not have many opportunities to interact with other ethnic groups and that they have communication challenges which lead to less acculturation. This study supported that female immigrants may be less acculturated to Western cultures as they have limited interactions and contact with other ethnic groups. Also, female participants experienced adaptation difficulties and had communication challenges. Such challenges may be negatively associated with their leisure participation because they perceived more culture-related leisure constraints rather than male participants. Interestingly, older Korean participants who were culturally well adjusted in Western cultures had social and interpersonal interactions with their own ethnic groups and other ethnic groups through leisure. At the same time, as noted, they
did not describe any challenges to participate in leisure activities, which may lead to more acculturation.

The last research question was “If any, what constraints to participation in leisure exist for older Korean?” Stodolska and Yi-Kook (2005) provided theoretical constructs associated with leisure constraints among immigrants: (a) monetary and time constraints, (b) lack of English skills, and (c) limited social networks. In terms of leisure constraints, a limited body of research has explored the relationship between acculturation and leisure constraints (e.g., Stodolska, 1998; Tcha & Lobo, 2003; Tsai, 2000; Walker, Jackson, & Deng, 2007). Many researchers suggested that adaptation difficulties such as language barriers and cultural and ethnic differences prevented immigrants from pursuing a variety of leisure activities (e.g., Juniu, 2000; 2002; Livengood & Stodolska, 2004; Rublee & Shaw, 1991; Yu & Berryman, 1996). With these leisure constraints, this study extends the body of knowledge affirming that adaptation difficulties serve as constraining factors that restrict older Korean immigrants’ leisure participation. The results demonstrate that language barriers, transportation issues, limited social networks, and cultural and ethnic differences are all constraining factors. Thus, this study suggests that various constraining factors may be associated with participants’ leisure involvement.

Ruble and Shaw (1991) suggested that language barriers related to acculturation restrict participants from engaging in home-oriented or passive children-related activities. This study supports Ruble and Shaw’s suggestion that due to some immigration challenges, participants’ involvement in leisure is restricted to home-based and church-based activities (e.g., the Korean church). However, this study also suggests that older
Korean participants engaged in active leisure as well such as leisure-time physical activities.

The results also suggest that there was a gender difference in leisure constraints among older Korean participants. Based on these findings, this study suggests that female participants have more constraints to leisure because of cultural differences and their dependence on adult children. This finding supports Tcha and Lobo’s (2003) study, which found that female immigrants perceive more leisure constraints than their male counterparts. From a cultural perspective, reflecting Confucian values, daughters-in-law support their mothers-in-law in various ways, such as providing meals and doing household chores. After immigration, this cultural value becomes reversed, which causes cultural conflicts between older female participants and their daughters-in-law. Such cultural conflicts are related to leisure constraints because they result in a lack of time that can be used to engage in meaningful activities for oneself.

In terms of the relationship between leisure constraints and acculturation, this study showed that older Korean immigrants who were well adjusted in Western cultures perceived fewer leisure constraints. This finding may imply that they may not perceive acculturative stress and have a challenge to participate in leisure activities. Previous studies mentioned that the level of acculturation is an important factor that increases participation in leisure activities (e.g., Afable-Munsuz et al., 2010; Dawson et al., 2005). Although this study did not explore the relationship between the level of acculturation and leisure activities, the level of acculturation may be positively associated with involvement in leisure activities.
Limitations and Need for Future Research

This dissertation has some limitations that need to be addressed. First, this study mainly focused on how immigrant experiences affected leisure behaviors such as facilitators to leisure, leisure patterns, leisure benefits, and leisure constraints among older Korean immigrants. There may be other factors that influence immigrant experiences among older Korean immigrants such as gender, level of acculturation, educational background, immigration motivation, children’s acculturation, and/or length of stay. Future research is needed to examine what factors influence leisure behaviors among older Korean immigrants.

The present study does not determine which factors influence immigrants’ adaptation abilities. Some immigrants may develop the ability to negotiate adaptation difficulties and others may tend to sustain with adaptation difficulties. It may be helpful for future research to explore what factors influence the ability of adaptation. Also, if leisure professionals find a way to assist older Korean immigrants to develop the ability to negotiate adaptation difficulties, they are more likely to experience acculturation and perceive less leisure constraints.

Another limitation exists in regard to generalizing our results as this study focused only on a small sample of older Korean immigrants using a qualitative research method. For example, if future researchers employ quantitative research methods with larger, representative samples to investigate the relationships among leisure involvement, acculturative levels, acculturative stress, and health, they may provide some interesting data that could be generalized to larger sections of the immigrant populations.
A third limitation exists because this study provided limited information on how other older ethnic minorities pursue their leisure activities. In particular, older immigrants from other countries such as countries of European, Middle Asian countries, and South Americans may have different leisure patterns and leisure experiences. If future researchers examine leisure among other ethnic immigrants, it may help leisure professionals understand leisure behaviors and then, provide more effective programs for them.

Lastly, this study examined the leisure behaviors among only older Korean immigrants. Other ethnic older immigrant may pursue different types of leisure and their own cultures may influence their leisure behaviors. Future research is needed to examine how other older immigrants pursue their leisure behaviors such as benefits and constraints.

Implications and Conclusions

This study has important implications for advancing the literature on leisure by acknowledging older Korean immigrants’ leisure patterns, leisure behaviors, and leisure constraints. Considering the immigration life conditions of older Korean immigrants, developing community-based and culturally relevant recreation programs is important as they may facilitate their leisure participation and gain social inclusion and integration.

Despite the small number of participants in this study, the results provide an important contribution to the literature as it contains rich data and offers a series of significant insights into older Korean immigrants’ leisure behaviors, benefits related to a coping strategy, and acculturation and culture-related leisure constraints. Leisure may be
an important role in facilitating acculturation and functioning as an acculturative stress coping strategy.

In terms of preventive health care, leisure professionals and therapeutic recreation specialists can offer volunteer activities, culturally meaningful activities, church-based activities, and leisure time physical activities to older adult immigrants who experience adaptation difficulties to enhance their quality of life and psychological wellbeing.

There are some recreation activities that are reflective of Korean cultural values and beliefs such as Taekwondo, Korean traditional games, art activities including calligraphy, and Korean food festivals. These activities may provide opportunities for older Korean immigrants to interact with other ethnic groups and develop friendships. In addition, they may volunteer to assist other participants who have different cultural backgrounds in learning different cultural perspectives.

This study suggests there may be untapped value of leisure as an acculturative stress coping strategy and as a means of acculturation. Older Korean immigrants indicated that leisure participation allows them to share practical information leading to acculturation, improve their communication skills, gain cultural knowledge and awareness, and develop friendships,

Finally, this study expands the conceptualization of leisure constraints by suggesting that a relationship between acculturation and leisure constraints may exist. According to the findings of this study, participants’ cultural values and beliefs and adaptation challenges serve as the constraining factors that restrict their leisure participation.
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the margins: Stress, active living, and leisure as a contributor to coping with


Table 1) Demographic characteristics of participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Length of Stay (year)</th>
<th>Educational Background</th>
<th>Marital Status</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>Female</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Bachelor</td>
<td>Widow</td>
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<tr>
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<td>33</td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>Married</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jo</td>
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<td>33</td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>Married</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kwon</td>
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<td>45</td>
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<td>Married</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lee-Si</td>
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<td>Male</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>Married</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>25</td>
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<td>Lee-J</td>
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<td>Jeun</td>
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<td>High School</td>
<td>Widow</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Interview Protocol

Introduction: As immigrants, we face numerous challenges associated with acculturation such as communication barriers, cultural and ethnic differences, and limited social supports. With this dissertation I intend to examine your leisure life experiences that are related to acculturation, constraints, and benefits. In addition, I am interested in exploring your current leisure preferences and pursuits. I believe that this research will be useful to recreation professionals to provide them with information that helps them to design effective leisure programs that meet your needs.

Grand-tour Questions

- Do you feel most comfortable speaking in English or Korea?
- When did you move to the United States? Tell me about that time…
- With whom do you currently live?

Mini-tour Questions

- Please tell me about the kinds of things you do for fun or enjoyment in your free time (Leisure lifestyles).
  - Probe: what do you do when you have free time? Please elaborate in details about this?
  - Probe: is there any difference in your free time when you lived in Korea compared to now? If so, what is it?
- Why do you participate in these activities?
  - With whom do you participate in these activities?
- What benefits do you experience when participating in these activities? Provide some examples (Leisure benefits).
  - Probe: based on your experiences, what role, if any, has these activities helped you deal with the challenges in your life during your immigration processes? (Leisure and acculturation)

- Do you experience any challenges when seeking to participate or participating in these activities? If yes, please tell me what it is? (Leisure constraints)

- What are things that cause stress in your life after immigration?
  - Probe: based on your experiences, what role, if any, has these activities helped you deal with your stress? (Leisure benefits)

**Conclusion:** Thank you for your time and contribution. The information you provided me is very helpful. I appreciate your willingness to speak with me. Would you like me to keep you informed of the findings from my study?
VITA

Junhyoung Kim

EDUCATION

The Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA
Major: Leisure Studies
Concentration: Social Psychology

Indiana University, Bloomington, IN
Major: Therapeutic Recreation

B.S. (2001) Department of Physical Education
Kyung Pook University, South Korea
Major: Physical Education

EXPERIENCE

2011- present Instructor
Department of Human Performance and Sport Sciences
Winston-Salem State University, NC

2009- 2011 Graduate Research Assistant
Department of Recreation, Park, and Tourism Management
Pennsylvania State University, PA

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

