Importance of Social Connectedness as a Moderator in Korean Immigrants’ Subjective Well-Being

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Subjective well-being theories of goal approach and value-as-a-moderator were applied to examine the role of importance of social connectedness on the relationship between social connectedness and subjective well-being in a community sample of 204 Korean immigrants. It was hypothesized that social connectedness in ethnic and mainstream society is a stronger predictor of well-being to immigrants who highly value/desire it than to those who do not. The results from hierarchical multiple regression analyses provided partial support for the hypotheses. For immigrants who highly valued connectedness in the ethnic community, positive affect increased with greater connectedness in the ethnic community, whereas, for immigrants who did not value it, connectedness in the ethnic community was not associated with positive affect. Implications for theory, research, and practice were discussed.

Keywords: goal approach, value-as-a-moderator, immigrants, social connectedness, subjective well-being

Acculturation in a completely different cultural context can be highly stressful to immigrants. Consistent with the numerous findings that social connectedness and support reduce negative effects of stressful life events and contribute to well-being (DeNeve & Cooper, 1998; Lee, Dean, & Jung, 2008; Oishi, 2000), social connectedness has been found to have protective effects in the acculturation process (Safdar, Lay, & Struthers, 2003; Yeh & Inose, 2003). Specifically, a sense of connection and belonging to both mainstream and ethnic communities may help immigrants feel accepted and grounded in their new environment (see Furnham & Bochner, 1990; Kim, 1999; Mehta, 1998). Yoon, Lee, and Goh (2008) found that social connectedness to mainstream and the ethnic communities contributed to Korean immigrants’ well-being via separate paths. However, few studies have investigated how social connectedness contributes to immigrants’ well-being beyond the direct, linear links. Inclusion of moderators will elucidate “when” or “for whom” social connectedness is more or less related to well-being, thus, advancing theory, research, and practice on immigrants’ well-being (see Frazier, Tix, & Baron, 2004). Furthermore, inclusion of positive outcome variables (e.g., subjective well-being, SWB) will expand our understanding of the psychological outcome of immigration beyond pathology (e.g., acculturative stress, depression). Thus, this study attempted to identify moderators in the relationship of social connectedness and SWB in a community sample of Korean immigrants. Specifically, we examined how this relationship varied as a function of values (i.e., subjective importance of connectedness) drawing on the SWB theories of goal approach and value as a moderator (Diener, Suh, & Oishi, 1997; Oishi, Diener, Suh, & Lucas, 1999).

Goal Approach and Value-as-Moderator Models of Subjective Well-Being

During the past several decades, SWB research has rapidly grown. Early studies examined external or bottom-up factors, such as income, age, gender, education, and marital status, to predict SWB (Diener, Oishi, & Lucas, 2003; Diener, Suh, Lucas, & Smith, 1999). Psychologists eventually came to realize that these...
external factors have only a slight to modest impact on SWB and began to turn to internal or top-down variables, including personality, cognitions, goals, culture, and coping abilities (Diener et al., 2003; Diener et al., 1999). For example, a meta-analysis found personality had a greater impact on SWB than did demographic variables (DeNeve, & Cooper, 1998). More recently, theoretical models have been developed to explain how internal/top-down factors, such as personality, goals, and coping abilities, mediate and moderate the effects of the environment on SWB (Diener et al., 1999). Diener and his colleagues (1999) stated,

The next steps in the evolution of the field are to comprehend the interaction of psychological factors with life circumstances in producing SWB, to understand the causal pathways leading to happiness, understand the processes underlying adaptation to events, and develop theories that explain why certain variables differentially influence the different components of SWB (life satisfaction, pleasant affect, and unpleasant affect). (p. 276)

This shift of focus in SWB research, from external/bottom-up to internal/top-down factors and to the study of mediators and moderators, has advanced our understanding of SWB.

We draw upon two theories or models of SWB that were developed to advance SWB research in the direction articulated by Diener and colleagues (1999). Goal approach theory to SWB posits that the causes of SWB depend on individual goals, values and desires; that is, different resources predict SWB for different people (Diener et al., 1997; Diener et al., 1999). In addition, people make greater progress in the attainment of goals that are more important to them (Poehlmann, 2001). In a similar line of research, Oishi and his colleagues (Oishi et al., 1999; Oishi, Schimmack, Diener, & Suh, 1998) proposed a value-as-a-mediator model of SWB. People weigh value-congruent domain satisfaction more heavily than value-incongruent domain satisfaction when they evaluate life satisfaction. This model assumes that values are influenced by culture and developmental stages. Thus, salient values at the time and in the culture influence determinants of life satisfaction (Oishi, Diener, Lucas, & Suh, 1999).

Goals and values may play a particularly important role in immigrants’ well-being. There has been speculation that expectations/goals are major predictors of mental health and accultura-
tive stress for immigrants (Florsheim, 1997). Congruity/discrepancy between expectations/goals and actualities, in particular, may affect immigrants’ mental health. For example, if a desire to participate in mainstream society or a desire for cultural maintenance is frustrated, it can result in a decline in the mental health of acculturating individuals. Connection to the members of the society of settlement was found to be particularly helpful if the relationships were congruent to immigrants’ expectations (Berry & Kostovcik, 1990).

**Importance of Social Connectedness as a Moderator**

Social connectedness to mainstream and ethnic minority communities is conceptualized from the social connectedness and acculturation/enculturation literature. First, social connectedness is a global construct of belongingness in the social world (Lee & Robbins, 1995), but ethnic minorities’ sense of connectedness to mainstream versus the ethnic communities may differ depending on psychological (e.g., acculturation/enculturation, ethnic identity) and contextual factors (e.g., ethnic density, social acceptance/rejection) (see Lee, 2005; Lee & Davis, 2000). Thus, we measured social connectedness separately for the two communities. Second, acculturation/enculturation, respectively defined as cultural socialization to mainstream and the ethnic cultures (Berry, 1994; Kim & Abreu, 2001), may also be related to this connectedness. For example, a highly acculturated individual may develop a greater sense of connectedness to mainstream society and value this connectedness; conversely, a highly enculturated individual may develop a greater sense of connectedness to the ethnic community and value it. Moreover, acculturation/enculturation is assumed to have multidimensions including behavioral (e.g., language, food), affective (e.g., emotions, identity), and cognitive (e.g., beliefs, knowledge, values) components (Cuellar, Arnold, & Maldonado, 1995; Kim & Abreu, 2001). Thus, social connectedness may reflect one aspect of acculturation/enculturation—affective dimension. In a similar vein, ethnic identity is seen as one aspect of enculturation although it concurrently stands as an independent construct and field of study in ethnic mi-
Combining the goal approach and value-as-mediator models of SWB with social connectedness research, immigrants may place different values on the connectedness to mainstream and the ethnic communities depending on life contexts. For example, connectedness to the ethnic community may be highly important to an individual who runs a Korean grocery store or a laundromat in a Korean neighborhood. In the same way, an individual who works or goes to school in mainstream society may highly value connectedness to mainstream society in order to survive and succeed in that context. The variation in the subjective importance of connectedness to mainstream and the ethnic communities may, in turn, differentially affect the relationship between connectedness to either community and SWB. In brief, importance of social connectedness varies in the degree to which immigrants rely on social connectedness to judge their well-being. As a consequence, social connectedness is a stronger predictor of SWB to immigrants who value/desire it than to those who do not.

The Present Study

We hypothesized that social connectedness in mainstream society is a stronger predictor of SWB to immigrants who highly value/desire it than to those who do not and social connectedness in the ethnic community is a stronger predictor of SWB to immigrants who highly value/desire it than to those who do not. In addition to the aforementioned possible conceptual and empirical overlap between social connectedness variables and acculturation/enculturation, it is possible that connectedness variables to the two communities have common variances due to the confounding effects of general social connectedness. Thus, we tested two alternative hypotheses in the hope that significant findings in the original hypotheses testing versus nonsignificant findings in the alternative hypotheses testing would further corroborate this study. First, to rule out the possibility that social connectedness to the two communities are basically the same constructs with acculturation and enculturation, we tested the moderating effects on SWB (a) between acculturation (instead of social connectedness to mainstream society) and importance of social connectedness to mainstream society and (b) between enculturation (instead of social connectedness to the ethnic community) and importance of social connectedness to the ethnic community. Second, to rule out the possibility that social connectedness to the two communities and valuing them do not have any unique variances and simply reflect general social connectedness, we cross-examined the moderating effects on SWB of (a) social connectedness to the ethnic community (instead of social connectedness to mainstream society) and importance of social connectedness to mainstream society and (b) social connectedness to mainstream society (instead of social connectedness to the ethnic community) and importance of social connectedness to the ethnic community.

We used satisfaction with life, positive affect, and negative affect as indicators of SWB. Although these three variables are most widely used in SWB research, they have shown cultural variations in their relations with one another. For example, the correlations between positive and negative emotions were less negative in Asian cultures than in non-Asian collectivistic or Western cultures (Schimmack, Oishi, & Dieperink, 2002). The relation between hedonic balance (i.e., the balance between positive and negative affect) and life satisfaction was also found to be stronger in individualistic cultures than in collectivistic cultures (Schimmack, Radhakrishnan, Oishi, Dzokoto, & Ahadi, 2002). Similarly, independent, than interdependent, self-construal was more closely related to the use of emotions in judging life satisfaction (Suh, Diener, & Updegraff, 2008). Despite these cultural variations, satisfaction with life, positive affect, and negative affect have been used as valid measures of SWB in cross-cultural psychology.

We tested our hypotheses in an adult community sample of Korean immigrants. Korean Americans are one of the newest, fastest growing immigrant groups, making up 10% of the Asian population in the United States (U.S. Census Bureau, 2007). According to the U.S. Census Bureau, approximately 76% of Korean Americans are foreign-born, first generation immigrants, and 80% of Korean Americans speak Korean at home. Over half of Korean Americans have a bachelor’s degree or higher, compared to only 27% of the general U.S. popula-
tion. Korean Americans also have high affiliation with ethnic Korean churches, and are highly concentrated in small businesses (either owners or employees of Korean American owners; Jo, 1999). Additionally, several studies indicated that Korean Americans had lower levels of well-being than other Asian Americans, such as Chinese or Japanese Americans whose immigration histories are longer (Oh, Koeske, & Sales, 2002; Yeh, 2003). Korean Americans thus provide a great sample for acculturation research because of their cultural homogeneity and the relatively short immigration history (Lee & Sobal, 2003).

Methods

Participants

The sample consisted of 204 Korean immigrants mostly residing in two Midwestern metropolitan areas of the United States. Asian Americans comprised 4.1% and 4.3%, respectively, of the total populations of the two cities; about 10% of the Asian American population was Korean (U.S. Census Bureau, 2001). The sample is a part of a large data set on Korean immigrants that included such variables as acculturation/enculturation, independent and interdependent self-construal, social connectedness, well-being, and mental health indicators (Yoon, 2006). A portion of the data (Korean language data only) with selected variables was previously published in a study examining the mediating role of social connectedness in the relationship of acculturation/enculturation and well-being (Yoon et al., 2008).

The current participants consisted of 82 (40.2%) men, 121 (59.3%) women, and 1 (.5%) unreported; 193 (94.6%) were born outside of the United States (e.g., Korean), 9 (4.4%) were born in the United States, and 2 (1%) were unreported; and years in the United States ranged from less than 1 year to 41 years (M = 15.24, SD = 10.36, Mdn = 14). Ages ranged from 19 to 81 years of age (M = 43.35, SD = 12.80, Mdn = 44): 37 (18.8%), 19 to 30; 50 (24.5%), 31 to 40; 49 (24.0%), 41 to 50; 41 (20.1%), 51 to 60; 17 (8.3%), 61 to 70; 3 (1.5%), 71 to 81; and 7 (3.4%), unreported. Income was relatively evenly distributed across five levels: 26 (12.7%), level 1, under $20,000; 37 (18.1%), level 2, $20,000 to $40,000; 49 (24%), level 3, $40,000 to $60,000; 24 (11.8%), level 4, $60,000 to $80,000; 61 (29.9%), level 5, over $80,000; and 7 (3.4%), unreported. The majority of participants (n = 148, 72.5%) were either college graduates or had advanced degrees beyond college.

Instruments

Social Connectedness in Mainstream Society and Social Connectedness in the Ethnic Community Scales (SCMN and SCETH; Yoon, 2006). Based on Lee and Robbins’s (1995) Social Connectedness Scale, two sets of five parallel items were developed to measure respective social connectedness to mainstream and the ethnic communities. The items are rated on a 7-point scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree), with higher scores representing greater sense of connectedness. Sample items read, “I feel like I fit into U.S. society” for the Social Connectedness in Mainstream Society Scale (SCMN) and “I feel like I fit into the ethnic community” for the Social Connectedness in the Ethnic Community Scale (SCETH). Depending on research purpose, the “ethnic community” may be specified (e.g., Korean American community, Mexican American community) and either total scores (ranging from 7 to 35) or item means (ranging from 1 to 7) can be used. The scale development and validation studies (Yoon, 2006; Yoon, Lee, Jung, & Felix-Mora, 2010) indicated a clear distinction of the two scales from each other via an exploratory and a confirmatory factor analysis. The scales demonstrated convergent and divergent validity with acculturation/enculturation measures by revealing positive correlations of (a) the SCMN and acculturation and (b) the SCETH and enculturation, and negative or nonsignificant correlations of (a) the SCMN and enculturation and (b) the SCETH and acculturation. In a sample of Mexican American college students, the SCMN and the SCETH provided concurrent validity by revealing positive and negative correlations, respectively, with generational status after immigration (Yoon et al., 2010). The scales also accounted for additional variance of subjective well-being indicators above and beyond general social connectedness, acculturation, enculturation, ethnic identity, and other ethnic group orientation, supporting their incremental validity (Yoon et al., 2010). The respective Cron-
bach’s alphas of the SCMN and the SCETH were .92 and .93 for the current sample.

Importance of Social Connectedness in Mainstream Society and Importance of Social Connectedness in the Ethnic Community Scales (Imp of SCMN and Imp of SCETH; Yoon, 2006). By adding value judgment to each item of the SCMN and the SCETH, two sets of five parallel items were developed to measure subjective importance of connectedness to either community (e.g., *It is important to me* that I feel like I fit into U.S. society). The items are rated on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree), with higher scores representing greater importance of social connectedness to either community. Either total scores (ranging from 7 to 35) or item means (ranging from 1 to 7) can be used. The scales demonstrated clear distinction from each other through an exploratory factor analysis (Yoon, 2006). Their respective Cronbach’s alphas were .97 and .98 for the current sample.

Abbreviated Multidimensional Acculturation Scale (AMAS-ZABB; Zea, Asner-Self, Birman, & Buki, 2003). The AMAS-ZABB is a bilinear acculturation/enculturation measure designed to assess the levels of acculturation and enculturation in the three dimensions of identity, cultural competence, and language competence. The total 42 items are rated on a 4-point scale from 1 (strongly disagree, or not at all) to 4 (strongly agree, or extremely well) with higher scores representing a higher level of acculturation or enculturation. Zea et al.’s instrument development study revealed appropriate internal consistency estimates in Latino/a samples. The AMAS-ZABB also showed adequate convergent and discriminant validity in relation to the Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM; Phinney, 1992) and adequate concurrent validity with length of residence in the United States. Zea et al. developed the AMAS-ZABB to use with various ethnic groups by replacing “native” with a specific ethnic group. The examination of cross-cultural validity in the Korean immigrant sample indicated convergent and discriminant validity in relation to social connectedness to mainstream and the ethnic communities and concurrent validity in relation to the length of residence in the United States (Yoon, 2006). The respective Cronbach’s alphas for acculturation and enculturation scales were .92 and .95 for the current sample.

Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS; Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985). The SWLS is a measure of cognitive self-evaluation of global life satisfaction. The total 5 items are rated on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree), with higher scores reflecting greater life satisfaction. The sample items include, “In most ways my life is close to my ideal” and “The conditions of my life are excellent.” The SWLS had moderate to high correlations with other measures of SWB (e.g., Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale; Diener et al., 1985). The initial validation of the SWLS indicated high internal consistency and temporal reliability. In the current sample, the SWLS revealed a positive correlation with positive affect ($r = .37, p < .01$) and a negative correlation with negative affect ($r = -.24, p < .01$), supporting its convergent and discriminant validity. The Cronbach’s alpha was .89 for the current sample.

Positive Affect Negative Affect Scales (PANAS; Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988). The two 10-item scales measure aroused or activated states of affect (Positive Affect, PA; and Negative Affect, NA). Using a 5-point scale (from 1 = very slightly or not at all to 5 = extremely), respondents are asked to indicate the extent to which they felt various emotions over a certain period of time. For this study, a direction was given to indicate “the extent to which they feel various emotions in general.” Since social connectedness or its importance does not develop over a short period of time, we measured general rather than temporary states of affect corresponding to these scales. Sample items indicating positive affect include “proud” and “enthusiastic” and sample items indicating negative affect include “ashamed” and “distressed.” The PA and NA scales have demonstrated convergent and discriminant validity with other emotional wellbeing measures and psychological distress measures (Watson & Clark, 1997; Watson et al., 1988). The respective Cronbach’s alphas for PA and NA were .89 and .88 for the sample of this study.

For the present study, “excited” was excluded from PA because of its double loading on both PA and NA in an exploratory factor analysis. We found interesting that PA and NA were not clearly discriminant from each other in the current sample as shown in their positive correlation ($r = .16, p < .05$). Although a momentary level anal-
ysis of emotional arousal revealed that pleasant and unpleasant feelings were rarely activated at the same time across cultures, their relationship over a period of time varied across cultures (Scollon, Diener, Oishi, & Biswas-Diener, 2005). Specifically, a study of 40 nations revealed especially strong negative correlations between pleasant and unpleasant emotions in the samples from the United States and Australia, but less negative or even positive correlations in the samples from China and Japan (Schimmack et al., 2002). This cultural difference may be partially attributed to the “dialectical” thinking in the East Asian culture which is tolerant to paradox due to its “cognitive tendency toward acceptance of contradiction” (Pen & Nisbett, 1999, p. 742, cited in Scollon et al., 2005). Given the lack of discriminant validity for PA and NA, we decided to include PA over NA as an outcome variable in consideration of the following factors: (a) emphasis on positive outcomes of immigration in this study; (b) a stronger correlation of satisfaction with life and PA ($r = .37, p < .01$) than NA ($r = -.24, p < .01$); and (c) previous findings of less importance of negative affect in judging life satisfaction in collectivistic than in individualistic cultures (Kuppens, Realo, & Diener, 2008).

Procedure

In order to achieve linguistic equivalency between the English and the Korean versions, all questionnaires were first translated to Korean and then back-translated to English independently by two bilingual graduate students. Both translators’ primary language was Korean. They majored in English Education and served as English teachers for several years in K-12 schools before becoming graduate students in counseling psychology. After examining linguistic equivalency between the original and the back-translated English versions, a few words of the Korean version were revised to clarify original meaning.

Because of the difficulty in recruiting a large number of Korean immigrants in one place in the Midwest, survey data were collected from various places including Korean restaurants, churches, a video rental store, and personal contacts. Three doctoral students and two Ph.D.’s in counseling psychology, education, and pharmacy participated in data collection. The principal investigator instructed them of the data collection procedure, especially how to ensure voluntariness and confidentiality of study participation. For data collected from restaurants, churches, and a video rental store, and permission for data collection was sought in advance from the owners/leaders of the stores/organizations. Upon their approval, potential participants at or over the age of 18 were informed of the purpose, benefits and risks, and voluntary and confidential nature of the study. If they chose to participate in the study, they were given a packet of questionnaires. Participants could choose either the English or the Korean version of questionnaires and spent about 15–30 minutes to complete the survey. They were instructed to deposit a completed survey inside a sealed collection box or a large collection envelop without indicating any identifiable personal information. Participants from one church were given a return envelope with a postage stamp because no space or time was available to complete the survey at church. As an expression of appreciation, $5 were offered to participants from Korean restaurants and one videotape was rented for free at a video rental store. In other settings including churches and personal contacts, participants volunteered without any incentives.

The total number of collected data was 229. After excluding 25 questionnaires with incomplete information, 204 were usable. One hundred eighty-nine (92.6%) participants used Korean questionnaires and 15 (7.4%) used English questionnaires. Among these 204 participants, 84 were recruited from two Korean restaurants, 65 from three Korean churches, 11 from a Korean video rental store, 65 from three Korean churches, 11 from a Korean video rental store, and 44 through personal contacts.

Results

Preliminary Analyses

Before collapsing data across gender and incentive (i.e., whether participants received rewards or not), we examined possible group differences in study variables. We conducted 2 (gender) × 2 (incentive) multivariate analyses of variance (MANOVA’s) by using the following dependent variables: (a) Social Connectedness in Mainstream Society Scale, Social
Connectedness in the Ethnic Community Scale, Importance of Social Connectedness in Mainstream Society Scale, Importance of Social Connectedness in the Ethnic Community Scale, AMAS-ZABB acculturation scale, and AMAS-ZABB enculturation scale, for the first MANOVA; and (b) SWLS and PA, for the second MANOVA. No significant main or interaction effects were detected for any set of variables at the significance level of \( p < .05 \). We were not able to test the effects of the Korean versus English versions because of their discrepancy in sample sizes (i.e., 189 Korean data vs. 15 English data). Table 1 presents the means, standard deviations, and correlation matrix for demographic variables and study variables. Given the multiple number of correlation tests, a conservative alpha level of .01 was used to control Type I error. Examination of the correlation matrix revealed that age, years in the United States, and income had significant correlations with study variables. Consequently, they were included as covariates for subsequent analyses.

**Main Analyses**

Following the recommendations of Aiken and West (1991), we tested three sets of moderation effects on the respective SWB variables of SWLS and PA in hierarchical multiple regression equations. Age, years in the United States, and income were entered in Step 1 as covariates, predictors and moderators in Step 2, and interaction terms in Step 3. Raw scores of predictors and moderators were centered (i.e., subtracted their sample means to produce revised sample means of zero) to reduce potential problems with multicollinearity (Aiken & West, 1991; Frazier et al., 2004). The later examination of the regression equations provided additional assurance that multicollinearity was not a problem: variance inflation factor (range = 1.06 to 2.67) and condition index values (range = 1.00 to 12.82; see Tabachnik & Fidell, 2001). Given the typically small moderation effects in nonexperimental studies, we did not adjust the alpha level for multiple tests (e.g., Bonferroni adjustment) due to concern about Type II error (see Bettendorf & Fischer, 2009).

**Main hypotheses.** Predictors (i.e., social connectedness in mainstream society, social connectedness in the ethnic community) and moderators (i.e., importance of social connectedness in mainstream society, importance of social connectedness in the ethnic community) were entered in Step 2, and their product terms (i.e., social connectedness in mainstream society \( \times \) its importance, social connectedness in the ethnic community \( \times \) its importance) were entered in Step 3. No

**Table 1**

**Correlation Matrix, Means, and Standard Deviations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Years in the U.S.</th>
<th>Income</th>
<th>SCMN</th>
<th>SCETH</th>
<th>Imp of SCMN</th>
<th>Imp of SCETH</th>
<th>Acc</th>
<th>Enc</th>
<th>SWLS</th>
<th>PA</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>.49**</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Income</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td>.36**</td>
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<tr>
<td>SCMN</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>.37**</td>
<td>.25**</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCETH</td>
<td>.18**</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Imp of SCMN</td>
<td>.26**</td>
<td>.24**</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>.54**</td>
<td>.23**</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Imp of SCETH</td>
<td>.18</td>
<td>.18</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.19**</td>
<td>.63**</td>
<td>.48**</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Acc</td>
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<td>.61**</td>
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<td>-.02</td>
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<td>.04</td>
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<td>-.37**</td>
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<td>.18</td>
<td>.25**</td>
<td>.27**</td>
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<td>.26**</td>
<td>.23**</td>
<td>.41**</td>
<td>-.04</td>
<td>.37**</td>
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</table>

**Note.** SCMN = Social Connectedness in Mainstream Society; SCETH = Social Connectedness in the Ethnic Community; Imp of SCMN = Importance of Social Connectedness in Mainstream Society; Imp of SCETH = Importance of Social Connectedness in the Ethnic Community; Acc = Acculturation; Enc = Enculturation; SWLS = Satisfaction With Life Scale; PA = Positive Affect.

**p < .01; two-tailed.**
significant moderation effect was detected for SWLS, $\Delta R^2 = .01, p = .43$, although significant main effects were detected for social connectedness in mainstream and the ethnic communities, whereas a significant moderation effect was discovered for PA, $\Delta R^2 = .05, p < .01$. The interaction terms accounted for an additional 5% of the variance in PA, above and beyond the 22% explained by the first-order effects (see Table 2).

Given the significant beta coefficient of the interaction term of social connectedness in the ethnic community by its importance, the particular form of the moderation effect on PA was inspected by examining the simple slopes of the interaction (plotted at $\pm 1 SD$; see Figure 1). Simple slope analyses revealed that the slope of the simple regression line for high importance of social connectedness in the ethnic community was significantly different from 0, $t(176) = 2.62, p < .01$, whereas the slope for low importance was not, $t(176) = .24, p > .05$. Consistently with the main hypothesis, for immigrants who highly valued connectedness in the ethnic community, positive affect increased with greater connectedness in the ethnic community; for immigrants who did not value it, however, connectedness in the ethnic community was not associated with positive affect. The beta coefficient of the interaction term of social connectedness in mainstream society by its importance did not reach statistical significance although it was consistent with the hypothesized direction.

**Alternative hypotheses.** In order to rule out competing hypotheses, first, we tested interaction effects of acculturation by importance of social connectedness in mainstream society and enculturation by importance of social connectedness in the ethnic community. No significant moderation effect was detected for either SWLS ($\Delta R^2 = .00, p = .97$) or PA ($\Delta R^2 = .01, p = .32$). Second, in the same way, we tested interaction effects of social connectedness in the ethnic community by importance of social connectedness in mainstream society and social connectedness in mainstream society by importance of social connectedness in the ethnic community. Again, no significant moderation effect was detected for either SWLS ($\Delta R^2 = .00, p = .64$) or PA ($\Delta R^2 = .00, p = .63$).

**Discussion**

Drawing on the SWB theories of goal approach and value-as-a-moderator, this study investigated moderation effects of values (i.e., importance of social connectedness) on the relationship of social connectedness and SWB in a community sample of Korean immigrants. The results provided partial support for our hypotheses. Importance of social connectedness in the ethnic community indicated a moderating effect on positive affect in the hypothesized direction, substantiating the important role of goal/value/desire in Korean immigrants’ well-being. This result is also consistent with the findings in acculturation literature that highlighted the importance of congruence between expectation/goals and actuality for immigrants’ mental health (Berry & Kostovcik, 1990; Florsheim, 1997). In addition, the nonsignificant findings for the alternative hypotheses suggest that social connectedness to mainstream and the ethnic communities require independent research attention despite their common variance due to general social connectedness and the conceptual and empirical overlap with acculturation/enculturation. The effect sizes of the nonsignificant findings were too small to consider low power ($R^2$ Changes ranged .00 – .01). As evidenced by the significant main effects of social connectedness to the two communities on life satisfaction even after controlling for the effects of demographic variables (e.g., age, length of residence in the United States, income), psychologists should help immigrants to be connected and grounded in both communities. They should also consider immigrants’ expectations, goals, and values as an important factor in counseling. For example, the wishes of immigrants who highly value connectedness to the ethnic community should be reflected in counseling goals and interventions.

We found interesting that moderating effects were detected for emotional well-being (i.e., positive affect), but not for cognitive well-being (i.e., satisfaction with life). Despite the fact that Diener et al. (1999) already suggested the need for theories to explain why certain variables differently influence various components of SWB (e.g., life satisfaction, positive affect, and negative affect), surprisingly, only a few studies have examined different predictors of affective versus cognitive well-being (Schimmack,
Schupp, & Wagner, 2008). For instance, Shimmack, Diener, and Oishi (2002) found that personality (e.g., extraversion, neuroticism) had a direct effect on affective well-being but an indirect effect on cognitive well-being via affective well-being. In contrast, occupational/academic achievement, status, and income were found to be stronger predictors of cognitive than affective well-being.

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*p < .05, two-tailed. **p < .01, two-tailed. ***p < .001, two-tailed.
affective well-being (Diener, Kahneman, Tov, & Arora, 2010; Kahneman, Krueger, Schkade, Schwarz, & Stone, 2006; Schimmack, 2009). Advancement of the research that examines the predictors of different components of SWB will elucidate the complexity of immigrants’ well-being.

In addition to values, researchers should consider cultural and personality factors to understand the relationship between social connectedness and immigrants’ well-being. For example, social connectedness may be an even more important contributor to the well-being of immigrants from collectivistic than individualistic cultures whose identity is strongly based on group affiliation. Specifically, cultural beliefs such as independent versus interdependent self-construal may moderate the relationship of social connectedness and SWB. Given the previous finding of the mediating role of social connectedness on the relationship of extraversion and SWB (Lee et al., 2008), future researchers may examine the contribution of personality factors (e.g., extraversion, openness) to immigrants’ well-being via social connectedness.

Additionally, it is noteworthy that income explains a unique variance of Korean immigrants’ well-being after partialing out the effects of other demographic and social connectedness variables. Korean immigrants in this study indicated a relatively high association between income and SWB ($r = .31$ for satisfaction with life and $r = .25$ for positive affect) compared to various U.S. samples ($r$ range = .12 – .24, $Mdn = .17$) or Korean samples in Korea ($r$ range = .11 – .17; see Diener & Biswas-Diener, 2002; Howell & Howell, 2008). Previous education, skills, and experiences of immigrants from non-English speaking, non-Western countries are not well acknowledged in the United States. They strive to survive and succeed in the new environment even without the essential survival tool of language proficiency. Even though the U.S. society in general has a high level of economic and physical security compared to many other countries, how immigrants feel about their status and environment may be different from host citizens’ reality. As a result, tangible income may provide a sense of security and protection, significantly contributing to immigrants’ well-being. In order to have a comprehensive understanding of immigrants’ well-being, future research should include socioeconomic variables (e.g., income, social status) in addition to psychological and cultural factors.

The results of the present study should be interpreted with the following limitations in mind. Demographic composition of the sample, especially, needs attention. Most participants were recruited from Korean American organizations and used Korean as a primary language. Thus, the participants in this study are likely to be more enculturated than Korean Americans in...
The participants were mostly first generation immigrants from the Midwest and had a slightly higher level of education than average Korean Americans. Therefore, caution is required when generalizing the findings of this study to Korean immigrants in general. Studies with Korean immigrants from other areas in the United States, immigrants from different ethnic backgrounds, and U.S. born ethnic minority groups will add new information not only for generalization but also for specification of the current findings. Generalization is needed to build grand theories on immigrants’ well-being; specification is needed for clinical application to specific populations.

Next, self-reported satisfaction with life and positive affect may not necessarily indicate a good life because certain individuals may report high levels of SWB in spite of immoral or even evil lifestyles (Ryff & Singer, 1996). Thus, Ryff and her colleagues purported six dimensions of psychological well-being drawing on theoretical literature of positive psychological functioning: self-acceptance, positive relations with others, autonomy, environmental mastery, purpose in life, and personal growth (Ahrens & Ryff, 2006; Ryff & Singer, 1996). However, cross-cultural validity should be examined to apply these constructs in collectivistic cultures, especially self-oriented dimensions such as self-acceptance and autonomy. Lastly, this study has inherent limits as a correlation study. It is plausible that a third-variable such as extraversion contributed to both social connectedness and SWB or individuals who experienced greater well-being were better connected to both communities. Bidirectional effects are common among psychological constructs and the findings of this study do not prove causality between social connectedness and well-being.

Overall, the present study illustrated that the relation between social connectedness and immigrants’ well-being is not a simple, direct, linear relationship as was assumed in previous studies. Goals/values played a moderating role in this relationship. Future research should build on the current findings and further explore multidimensional factors and paths leading to immigrants’ well-being in order to develop comprehensive theories of immigrants’ well-being.

References


Received January 7, 2010
Revision received April 9, 2010
Accepted April 22, 2010