PARENTAL FACTORS INFLUENCING
ADOPTEE’S EXPOSURE TO BIRTH CULTURE

by Catherine Tindal

The purpose of this study was to investigate parental factors that may influence the incorporation of traditions and activities from an adoptee’s birth culture into their adoptive home. This study focused on analyzing the relationship between two demographic variables, adoptive parent’s individual level of education at the time of adoption and time adoptive parent’s spent living in their child’s birth culture prior to adoption in relation to their participation in birth culture traditions and activities. Sixty-seven subjects were surveyed using a questionnaire designed to measure the types of traditions and activities incorporated into the adoptive home from the adoptee’s birth culture. The questionnaire was also designed to measure the frequency to which adoptees were exposed to their birth culture. Results were examined to determine if parent’s level of education and time spent living in the child’s birth culture affected the incorporation of birth culture traditions and activities that were incorporated into the adoptive home. Results were analyzed using an analysis of variance (ANOVA). The hypotheses were not statistically supported. Other trends in the data, limitations of the study, and suggestions for future research are discussed.
PARENTAL FACTORS INFLUENCING
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A Thesis

Submitted to the

Faculty of Miami University

in partial fulfillment of

the requirements for the degree of

Master of Science

Department of Family Studies and Social Work

by

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2003

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Acknowledgements

I am indebted to several people for their guidance and constant support throughout the process of completing this study. There are many individuals who offered their assistance and encouragement to make this study possible.

First and foremost to my husband Ty who put his dreams on hold to see mine materialize. He kept a promise he made the day we met which was to see my dream of completing graduate school come true. There are no words to express my gratitude and appreciation for his love, patience and constant encouragement. I only hope I can return such kindness.

Secondly, to my committee, Dr. Elizabeth Thompson, Dr. Ellie Brubaker and Dr. Mary Link. From my first day at Miami they welcomed me in to the Family Studies family and encouraged me to follow my dreams. They offered their unlimited time and support which allowed me to explore a study of my choosing. Thank you to Dr. Brubaker and Dr. Link for their encouraging words and laughter during many long days of research and writing.

A special thank you to Dr. Elizabeth Thompson who served as both my thesis committee chair and my mentor. Serving as her teaching assistant provided me the opportunity to explore strengths in myself I never knew existed. Dr. Thompson believed from the start that I would succeed both as a graduate student and as a teacher. Because of her encouraging words and unwavering support I believe I have succeeded. Thank you.

Thank you to the members of the international adoption support groups that agreed to participate in this study. Without their help with study would not have been possible.

Thanks to my family who supported me in many ways. Thank you to my parents who always said that if I set my mind to something I can be accomplished. Their advice has served me well. Thank you to my Aunt Joan and Uncle Larry who encouraged me to work everyday to realize my dreams. Thank you to my Aunt Patty and Uncle Marvin for their encouraging words and support. Thanks to all of you for supporting my dreams and ambitions.

Thank you to my fellow graduate students for your endless support, encouragement and laughter. I wish you well.
Chapter One

Introduction

An adoptive child and the adoptive family face many issues both during and following the adoption process. One such issue is personal identity. This is of particular concern when a child joins a family of a different cultural background. This difference may result in the adoptee’s desire to explore his/her birth culture or in the adoptive family considering ways to address multicultural issues. In exploring his/her birth culture, the adoptee may encounter issues surrounding the development of personal identity.

The present study attempts to address the extent to which internationally adopted children are exposed to traditions and activities associated with their birth culture. The first research question is as follows: “Is the adoptive parent’s level of education, at the time of adoption, related to whether or not traditions from the child’s birth culture are incorporated into the adoptive family?” The second research question is, “Is the adoptive parent’s level of education, at the time of adoption, related to whether or not activities from the child’s birth culture are incorporated into the adoptive family?” The third research question is, “Is the amount of time adoptive parents spent living in the adoptee’s birth culture, prior to adoption, related to the amount of exposure the child has to his/her birth culture?” By addressing these questions, the role adoptive parents play in determining the amount of exposure their adopted child receives to their birth culture may be expanded.

An important element in identifying with one’s birth culture is gaining a sense of belonging to that culture. Friedlander, Larney, Skau, Hotaling, Cutting and Schwam (2000) conducted a study that explored ways by which adoptive Korean children identified with their ethnicity and race. One way to assist children’s increased identification with their ethnicity and race is to increase their exposure to the birth culture. Parents’ attempts to further their knowledge of their adoptive child’s birth culture influenced the child’s involvement in activities related to their birth culture (Friedlander, et al., 2000).

Prior to exploring how one’s birth culture affects their identity, it is important to be aware of the variation in adoption terms. For the purpose of this study, the terms inter-country and transracial adoption are defined. Kane (1993) defines inter-country as “the movement of children across international borders for the purpose of adoption….. (p. 323). While this study focuses generally on international adoption, and not specifically the issue of race, the literature on international adoption frequently uses the terminology of transracial and transcultural interchangeable. Silverman (1993) defines transracial adoption as “the joining of racially different parents and children together in adoptive families” (p. 104).

Trolley, Wallin, and Hansen (1995) explored the importance of parental acknowledgment of their child’s birth culture and found that the majority of parents who were surveyed placed a high level of importance upon the child identifying with both his/her birth culture and American culture. Much research has been conducted in regard to parental acknowledgement of the child’s birth culture after the adoption has been finalized. However, little research has focused on the effects that parental level of education at the time of adoption has on incorporating cultural traditions from the child’s
birth culture into the adoptive family. Research has also been lacking in regards to the amount of time parent’s spent living in the child’s birth culture, prior to adoption, and the effect it has on incorporating cultural traditions into the adoptive family.

**Theoretical Perspective**

This research reflects a Family Systems theoretical framework. Family Systems Theory focuses on viewing a system as a whole. Viewing a system as a whole is known as holism. From the perspective of systems theory, the focus is placed on the family as a whole, rather than an individual level analysis. This theory supports the current research in that the incorporation of traditions and activities from the adoptive child’s birth culture, into the adoptive family, affects not only the adoptee but the family as a whole (Whitchurch & Constantine, 1993).

**Statement of Problem**

Research has shown that many parents feel exposing their adopted child to his/her birth culture is important but the level of importance varies (Trolley and colleagues, 1995). The event of incorporating rituals or activities native to the child’s birth culture may depend upon the child’s age at time of adoption, the adoptive parents’ level of education at the time of adoption or the amount of exposure parents had to their child’s birth culture prior to the adoption.

Parents may be hesitant to expose their adopted child to traditions or activities related to their birth culture, due to their own lack of knowledge about the birth culture. As a result, parents may encourage their child to primarily identify with mainstream American culture. To help the child fit in with the mainstream American culture, parents may diminish the differences between themselves and the child (Huh & Reid, 2001).

**Justification of Problem**

There are many ways in which an adoptee can develop their personal identity. Huh and Reid (2001) address questions focused on how adoptive children develop a sense of personal identity. Huh and Reid’s study also identified a child’s participation in activities related to their birth culture as a factor associated with the development of their identity.

Examining the ways that adoptive parents gain knowledge and incorporate activities and traditions from the adoptee’s birth culture into the adoptive home will shed light on the amount and type of involvement and exposure an internationally adopted child will have to his/her birth culture.
Chapter Two
Review of Literature

For individuals who desire to adopt children, international adoption provides an alternative to domestic adoption. The act of adoption, domestic or international, is not something that affects the adoptee alone, but the entire family. The finalization of the adoption is the beginning of a process that will effect the entire family for many years. (Henderson, 2000).

In the area of international adoption, research has been lacking. Researchers continue to examine different aspects of adoption in an effort to provide adoptive parents with valuable information; however, there is a paucity of general literature on international adoption. This information is valuable because it may strengthen the adoptive parents’ commitment to adopt internationally, as well as their decision to incorporate traditions and activities related to the adoptee’s birth culture.

In general, international adoption offers individuals, who wish to adopt an infant, a shorter waiting period opposed to adopting within the United States. This is due to low number of infants available for adoption in the United States. Johnson and Dole (1999) report that “with increased interest in adopting internationally and traditional placement countries such as Korea reducing the number of children available, China and the countries of Eastern Europe have become the source of the majority of children (61%) placed in American families” (p. 34).

Bartholet (1993) suggests that infertile individuals comprise the greatest percentage of those seeking an international adoption. Therefore, the increase in international adoptions may be due to a lack of infants available in the United States (Bartholet, 1993). In addition to a lack of infants available for adoption, Johnson and Dole (1999) state that individuals may choose to adopt from a country to which they feel an emotional connection. An emotional connection may be formed in a couple of ways. Adoptive parents may have immigrated to the United States but still feel a strong connection to their birth culture, or they may have visited a country and developed an emotional connection to a particular culture. This connection may result in an adoption from a particular culture. National Adoption Information Clearinghouse (2001) indicates, “in 2000, U.S. families adopted 18,477 foreign-born children. Overall, China was the greatest source for inter-country, followed in descending order by Russia, South Korea, Guatemala, Romania, Ukraine, India and Cambodia” (p. 1).

In addition to an emotional connection, adoptive parents may choose to adopt from a country that implements policies encouraging adoption by individuals outside their borders. Issues concerning policy of both the sending and receiving countries are an ongoing process. In many sending countries, policy makers decide which children are available for adoption. Despite political concerns, South Korea has made considerable political efforts to ensure there is a means for its homeless children to be adopted outside its borders (Bartholet, 1993).

Advantages and Challenges of International Adoption

While age may be a barrier to adopting children in the United States, there are
countries that permit older individuals, often over the age of forty, to adopt children (Bartholet, 1993). In addition to disadvantage of international adoption it is important for prospective parents to consider possible disadvantages of the adoption process.

Bartholet (1993) asserts that while adopting a child is generally seen as a positive act, it can also be seen as an act of power. Adopting a child from a country other than the United States, may be seen as American citizens exhibiting power by taking a child from their birth culture simply because they were born in a poverty stricken country. Removing a child from their birth culture and community is also seen as a major disadvantage of international adoption (Bartholet, 1993).

Another factor that restricts the adoption of children from other countries is the financial burden of adoption for the potential adoptive parents. While international adoption is an alternative to domestic adoption, financial costs may be significantly higher due to country specific requirements. Some countries may require the potential adoptive parent to travel to the child’s birth country multiple times or to provide financial support for the child’s living expenses prior to completing the adoption (Bartholet, 1993). Each country has rules that regulate the adoption process. A major part of the process is financial. In comparison to domestic adoption, international adoption is usually more expensive with costs often exceeding $15,000.00 (Riley, 1997). Although the number of international adoptions have increased, research in the area of intercultural adoption is lacking. Barth (1994) suggests there has been a lack of research in the area of adoption as well as a lack of research concerning adoption services. These concerns indicate more research is needed in the area of domestic and international adoption.

Even though adopting internationally may be more expensive than domestic adoption it is quickly becoming an alternative to domestic adoption. Statistics from governmental agencies documented that “at least 170,000 - 180,000 children were involved in international adoption in the past decade; that international adoption has increased by 62 percent during this period; and that 90 percent of the children involved during the decade came from only ten sending countries” (Kane, 1993, p. 323). According to Bartholet (1993) “close to 10,000 children per year have come into the United States from abroad for adoption in recent years. They comprise one-fifth to one-sixth of all non-relative adoptions in this country and a somewhat larger portion of all infant adoptions. Worldwide, there are an estimated 15,000 to 20,000 international adoption per year” (p. 90).

Transracial Adoption

When individuals adopt a child internationally, they may encounter racial and cultural differences between themselves and their adopted child. Addressing these differences may assist the child in identifying with his/her birth culture. Jones and Else (1979) indicate that American Indians and Asian children were the first transracially adopted individuals because adoption agencies viewed placement of American Indian and Asian children in white homes as more acceptable than placement of black children in white homes. The first intercountry transracial adoption occurred as a result of the Korean and Vietnam Wars (Baden & Stewart, 2002).

Identity

Ethnic identity as defined by Rotheram and Phinney (1987) is “one’s sense of
belonging to an ethnic group and the part of one’s thinking, perceptions, feelings, and behavior that is due to ethnic group membership” (p. 13). When placed in a racially or culturally different home, an adopted child may encounter many challenges throughout the process of discovering his/her personal identity.

There are many ways in which an adoptee can develop and integrate their cultural identity into his/her sense of self. In a study of children adopted from Korea, Huh and Reid (2001) address such questions as, “what kind of ethnic identities are developed by children who have experienced such adoptions” and “what factors appear to be associated with the development of these identities” (p. 77). Research conducted by Huh and Reid used a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods. According to Huh and Reid, adoptees who were intensely involved in cultural activities from their culture of origin found it easy to talk with their adoptive parents about the culture of origin. Simon and Alstein (1996) conducted a longitudinal study to, in part, examine transracially adopted children’s attitudes as well as their racial identity. Results of Simon and Alstein’s study indicate that the adoption of black children by white families resulted in the adoptive black children acquiring a positive self-identity as well as knowledge of their racial heritage.

Friedlander and colleagues (2000) conducted a study to “further our knowledge of the cognitive, emotional, and familial experiences of internationally adopted children of color” (p. 188). The sample consisted of 12 adopted Korean children and both of their parents who were classified as middle-income families living in a northeastern city. Interviews were utilized to gather data. Parents and their children were interviewed separately. Parents were asked questions regarding issues such as how the children identify themselves in regard to race and ethnicity. Parents were asked if they discuss their adoptive child’s culture of origin in the home, and parent’s efforts to relate to their adoptive child’s birth culture emerged as the major theme (Friedlander et al., 2000). Friedlander and colleagues also found, of the children interviewed, “all children attended a Korean culture camp, and most families attend support group functions that celebrate the child’s heritage” (p. 192). Parents exposed children to traditions and activities which included food from their culture of origin and the observance of holidays from the culture (Friedlander et al., 2000).

Trolley, Wallin & Hansen (1995) conducted a similar study that focused on the adoptive family as a whole rather than the adoptee individually. Thirty-four families participated in the study which focused on the importance of adoptive parents acknowledging the adoptee’s birth culture as well as the actual adoption. Trolley et al., (1995) utilized Kirk’s (1988) Attitudes Toward Adoption as well as The Culture Form developed by Trolley (1993). Results found, “ninety percent of the parents felt it was beneficial to expose their children to their birth culture (value question) while 68 percent of the same sample felt it was very important to do so (importance questions). In regard to cultural identification and the adopted child’s birth culture, results indicate “78 percent of the parents indicated it was important for their children to identify with both American and birth culture, and 86 percent and 50 percent respectively said birth culture was relevant to their children’s identity and adjustment” (Trolley, Wallin, & Hansen, 1995; p. 473).
**Theoretical Perspective**

This study examines the ways adoptive parents incorporate traditions and activities from their adoptive child’s birth culture into their home. The theory guiding this study is Family Systems Theory. According to Whitchurch and Constantine (1993) the main assumption of Family Systems Theory is holism, which places the focus on viewing any system as a whole. Within every system boundaries exist. Whitchurch and Constantine explain that the extent to which boundaries are permeable is key in determining the amount of sources outside the system that are permitted to enter the system. Permeability of boundaries addresses the amount of sources from outside the system that are permitted into the main system. Systems are also categorized as either closed or open depending upon the amount of permeability that exists within the boundaries (Whitchurch & Constantine, 1993).

Kantor and Lehr (as cited in Whitchurch & Constantine, 1993) explain that closed systems tend to have little contact with environments outside the system whereas systems that interact extensively with environments outside their system are classified as open. Since all systems allow a certain amount of outside influence to enter the main system they are classified as open (Whitchurch & Constantine, 1993). From a Family Systems perspective, families with open boundaries are more willing than families with closed boundaries to expose their adoptive child to traditions and activities from his/her birth culture, as well as incorporate these traditions and activities into the adoptive home. Kantor and Lehr (as cited in Broderick & Smith, 1979) use the term “bonding” to describe the energy each member of a system puts into maintaining established boundaries within the system. The continual process of “bonding” determines which elements should be filtered out of the system and which elements should be actively pursued and incorporated in to the system.

Adoptive parents, as well as biological children living in the adoptive home, play a critical role in incorporating traditions and activities from the adoptive child’s birth culture into the adoptive home. Incorporating traditions and activities from the adoptive child’s birth culture affects each member of the family. The incorporation of at least one tradition or activity from the adoptive child’s birth culture into the adoptive home, may result in a positive feedback loop because a change has been made to the original family system. According to the concept of a feedback loop, family members may intentionally include aspects from the adoptive child’s birth culture into daily activities, as well as holiday celebrations (Whitchurch & Constantine, 1993).

**Summary of Literature Review**

Adoptive parents’ knowledge of the countries from which they adopt, exposure to traditions and activities from the adoptive child’s birth culture, and recognition of the adoptee’s birth culture may play a role in the amount of exposure the adoptee has to the culture of origin. Trolley and colleagues (1995) conducted a study that focused on adoptive parents’ acknowledgment of the child’s adoption and their acknowledgment of the child’s culture. Kirk’s (1988) Attitude Toward Adoption questionnaire was utilized to assess parent’s acknowledgment of the child’s adoption. Trolley’s Culture Form (1993) was used to assess parent’s acknowledgement of the child’s culture. Results of Kirk’s questionnaire found that the parents occasionally discussed the issue of the child’s adoption. It was also found that parents placed more importance on the finalization of the
adoption process as opposed to the day the child arrived.

A study conducted by Friedlander and colleagues (2000) focused on the how Korean children identify themselves in regard to their race and ethnicity. Results showed that parent’s effort to relate to their adoptive child’s birth culture emerged a major theme and parent’s involvement in issues related to their child’s birth culture influenced their child’s participation in a Korean culture camp, and activities related to their heritage.

Considering the rise in international adoptions, there is an increasing demand for parental awareness of their adoptive child’s birth culture. An increase in parental awareness may result in internationally adopted children participating in activities related to their birth culture as well as feeling connected to their heritage. The questions of interest in the present study are related to parental attitudes toward inclusion of the adoptee’s birth culture and the frequency to which adoptee’s are exposed to activities or traditions from their birth culture.

**Research Questions**

The purpose of this study was to determine parental factors that lead to the incorporation of traditions and activities from an adoptee’s birth culture into the adoptive home. Based on the literature the following questions have been developed:

**Question 1:** Is the adoptive parent’s level of education, at the time of adoption, related to whether or not traditions from the child’s birth culture are incorporated in to the adoptive family?

**Question 2:** Is the adoptive parent’s level of education, at the time of adoption, related to whether or not activities from the child’s birth culture are incorporated in to the adoptive family?

**Question 3:** Is the amount of time adoptive parent’s spent living in the adoptee’s birth culture, prior to adoption, related to the amount of exposure the child has to his/her birth culture?
Chapter Three

Methodology

For this research study, a quantitative research method was used. A quantitative questionnaire was used to collect the necessary data to analyze factors associated with incorporating cultural traditions and activities from the adoptee’s birth culture into the adoptive family. This chapter describes the methodology and instruments used in this research study. This chapter also includes a discussion of the sample, method of data collection, instrumentation and analysis technique used.

Sample

Using a convenience sample, this researcher obtained a sample of sixty-seven participants who have adopted at least one child from a country other than their own. Participants were recruited from several areas including: New Jersey, Illinois, California and Hawaii. The sample for this study consisted of 67 parents who have adopted internationally. Demographic data was collected regarding parent’s age at time of adoption, parent’s ethnicity, and parent’s education level at the time of adoption and child’s age at time of adoption. The adoptive parent’s education level at the time of adoption ranged from high school to graduate study with the average parent having graduated from college at the time of adoption. The adoptive parent’s age, at the time of adoption, ranged from 26 to over 40 years of age with the average age of the adoptive parent being over forty years of age. The child’s age at the time of adoption ranged from 0 to older than 8 years of age, with most being two years of age or older. Family income ranged from $30,000 to over $151,000.00. The average family income level ranged $61,000 to 90,999.99 (See Table 1)

Table 1: Demographic Information

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<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>N</th>
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<td><strong>Parent’s age at time of adoption</strong></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>31 - 40 years of age</td>
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<td>Older than 40 years of age</td>
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<td>Asian</td>
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<tr>
<td>Some college</td>
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Graduated from college                  31 46.3%  
Graduate Study                        31 46.3%  

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<tr>
<td>0 – 2 years of age</td>
<td>60</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 - 5 years of age</td>
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<td>4.5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>6 – 8 years of age</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Older than 8 years of age</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Data Collection**

The researcher contacted the facilitators of several support groups created to provide support to parents who have adopted a child from a culture other than their own. These groups offer support and information pertaining to adopting a child internationally. These support groups also provide websites that adoptive and potential adoptive parents can search for cultural information regarding the birth culture of their child. The researcher provided each facilitator with a brief description of this study which was placed on the website or list serve of each support group. Interested participants were instructed to e-mail this researcher their mailing address.

Once the researcher received a request to participate in the study including the participant’s mailing address, a consent letter and questionnaire were mailed to each participant (See Appendix A). The consent letter informed participants that their participation was voluntary and that they were free to discontinue their participation in the study at any time without penalty. Participants were instructed, through the consent letter, to return the questionnaire in the stamped envelope, provided by the researcher. Of the 98 surveys distributed, 67 were returned to the researcher. Overall the response rate for this research study was 68%. All data were collected during March 2003.

**Limitations of the Sample**

This study utilized a convenience sample, which limits the generalizability of the results. Additionally, a related possible bias may exist because participants are members of at least one adoption support group, which may illustrate their commitment to
maintaining ties to groups related to their child’s birth culture. Adoptive parents who are members of adoptive support groups and include cultural values or traditions from the adopted child’s birth culture into their home indicate an interest in cultural issues. The fact that these participants took time to respond to this survey may indicate their overall interest in this issue and may suggest that these families have time to introduce cultural factors.

**Operationalization of Variables**

The questionnaire used for this study was adapted from a Culture Form created by Trolley (1993). Trolley’s Culture Form was designed to collect demographic information and assess adoptive parents’ acknowledgment of the child’s culture. The questionnaire was designed to be completed in approximately twenty minutes. The following topics were addressed in the questionnaire:

- Parent’s level of education, at time of adoption (ranked from some high school to graduate study).
- Ways in which the adoptee is exposed to his/her birth culture (e.g., toys, books ranked either “yes or no”).
- Frequency in which the adoptee is exposed to his/her birth culture (e.g., toys, books, music and ranked from “daily to never”).
- Parental beliefs in regard to adoptee’s primary cultural identification (e.g., American culture, American culture and the culture of birth, or culture of birth).
- Parent’s self-evaluation in regard to their level of knowledge about the child’s birth culture prior to adoption (ranked from “know a great deal” to “know nothing”).
- Ways in which parents educated themselves regarding the adoptee’s birth culture (e.g., toys, reading materials, cultural events ranked from strongly agree to strongly disagree).
- Amount of time adoptive parents spent living in the adoptee’s birth culture, prior to adoption (e.g., more than six months).
Data Analysis Techniques

A series of one-way analyses of variance were used to analyze the data gathered from the questionnaire. An analyses of variance (ANOVA) is applicable because this study compares the mean scores of more than two groups. In addition to a one-way analysis of variance, a series of frequency analysis were conducted.
Chapter Four

Findings

This chapter details the statistical analysis used in examining the data regarding factors that lead to the incorporation of traditions and activities from an adoptee’s birth culture into their adoptive home. Traditions are defined as the celebration of cultural holidays or parent’s encouraging the adoptee to speak the language of his/her birth culture. Activities are defined as the use of toys or books related to the child’s birth culture. Each of the hypotheses will be presented as well as a discussion of the statistical analyses and findings. For each hypothesis an analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted. A discussion of other descriptive findings will also be discussed. All statistical analyses were conducted using the Statistical Program for Social Sciences (SPSS).

Sample Demographics

The sample for this study consists of 67 parents who have adopted internationally. Data was collected regarding parent’s age at time of adoption, parent’s ethnicity, and parent’s education level at time of adoption and child’s age at time of adoption. The adoptive parents, at the time of adoption, ranged in age from 26 to over 40 years of age. The majority of adoptive parents were over forty years of age (58.2%, n = 39). Less than half (40.3%, n = 27) were between 31 and 40 years of age. Less than two percent of adoptive parents were between 26 and 30 years of age (1.5%, n = 1).

The ethnic background of the sample is 95.5% Caucasian (n = 64), 3.0% Asian (n = 2) and 1.5% multiracial (n = 1). Adoptive parents’ level of education, at time of adoption, ranged from graduation from high school to graduate study. Almost half of the parents (46.3%, n = 31) graduated from college and 46.3% (n = 31) completed graduate school. A small percentage of the participants attended some college (6.0% , n = 4) and fewer parents were at least high school graduates (1.5% , n = 1).

The adoptive parents incomes ranged from $30,000 to more than $151,000 per year. Approximately one-quarter of the adoptive parents (26.9%, n = 18) indicated an income ranging between $61,000 and $90,999.99. Additionally, 23.9% (n = 16) reported an income ranging between $61,000 and $90,999.99 and 23.9% (n = 16) reported a family income of more than $151,000.00. Few parents (11.9%, n = 8) reported an income ranging between $121,000 and $150,999.99 and 10.4% (n = 7) reported a range of $30,000 to $60,999.99.

At the time of adoption children ranged from 1 year of age to older than 8 years. In this sample, the majority of children 89.6% (N = 60) were between the ages of 0 and 2 years at the time of adoption.

Hypotheses and Research Findings

The first research hypothesis stated that adoptive parents with a high level of education, at least a college degree, at the time of adoption, would include cultural traditions from their child’s birth culture, into the adoptive family. An analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to determine if adoptive parents incorporated cultural traditions from the child’s birth culture into the adoptive home and, if so, how often. A
one-way ANOVA was conducted, using parents’ level of education at time of adoption as the independent variable and the incorporation of cultural traditions into the adoptive home as the dependent variable, resulting in a non-significant F-value (F (2,42) = .821, p > .05). This suggests that the means differ only by chance and may be assumed to be equal (See Table 2).

Based on the computed analysis of variance this hypothesis was not supported, therefore, when looking at parents’ level of education, at time of adoption, there is no significant difference when comparing parents with less than a college degree, or greater, and parents with a college degree who incorporate cultural traditions from the child’s birth culture into the adoptive home.

**Table 2: ANOVA Results for Parental Education and Incorporation of Cultural Traditions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DF</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F-Value</th>
<th>P-Value</th>
<th>Lambda</th>
<th>Power</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parent’s level of education</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>16.542</td>
<td>8.271</td>
<td>.821</td>
<td>1.642</td>
<td>175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residual</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>432.236</td>
<td>10.077</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The second research hypothesis stated that adoptive parents with a high level of education, at least a college degree, would include activities from their child’s birth culture, into the adoptive family. An analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to determine if adoptive parents incorporate cultural activities from the child’s birth culture into the adoptive family. A one-way ANOVA was conducted, using parents level of education, at the time of adoption, as the independent variable and the incorporation of cultural activities into the adoptive home as the dependent variable, resulted in a non-significant F-value, (F (2,42) = .482, p > .05). This suggests that the means differ only by chance and may be assumed to be equal (See Table 3).

Based on the computed analysis of variance, this hypothesis was not supported. Rejecting the hypothesis shows that, when looking at parents’ level of education, at time of adoption, there is no significant difference when comparing parents with less than a college degree and parents with a college degree who incorporate cultural activities from the child’s birth culture into the adoptive home.

**Table 3: ANOVA Results for Parental Education and Incorporation of Cultural Activities**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DF</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F-Value</th>
<th>P-Value</th>
<th>Lambda</th>
<th>Power</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parent’s level of education</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.040</td>
<td>1.020</td>
<td>.482</td>
<td>.963</td>
<td>.121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residual</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>88.938</td>
<td>2.118</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The third hypothesis stated that adoptive parents who spent at least six months living in the adoptee’s birth culture, prior to adoption, would include traditions and activities from the child’s birth culture, in the adoptive family more often than adoptive parents who spent less than six months living in the adoptee’s birth culture. An analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to determine if adoptive parents who spent at least six months living in the adoptee’s birth culture, prior to adoption, will include cultural traditions and activities from the child’s birth culture, into the adoptive home more often than parents who spent less than six months living in the adoptee’s birth culture prior to adoption. A one-way ANOVA was conducted, using the time parents lived in child’s birth culture as the independent variable and frequency of child’s exposure to his/her birth culture as the dependent variable, resulting in a non-significant F-value (F (1,53) = 2.401, p > .05). This suggests that the means differ only by chance and may be assumed to be equal (See Table 4).

Based on the computed analyses of variance, the hypothesis was not supported. Therefore, there is no significant difference between parents who spent six months living in the child’s birth culture prior to adoption, and those who spent less than six months living in the child’s birth culture and the incorporation of cultural traditions and activities from the child’s birth culture into the adoptive home.

Table 4: ANOVA Results for Time Parents Spent Living in Child’s

| Birth Culture and Incorporation of Cultural Traditions and Activities |
|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
|                 | DF | Sum of Squares | Mean Square |
| Time parents lived in child’s birth culture prior to adoption | 1  | 59.399         | 159.399    |
| Residual        | 53 | 3518.528       | 68.387     |

Although the hypotheses were not statistically supported, several variables emerged in a descriptive analysis of the sample. An examination of these additional variables is important to possibly shed light on ways in which parents incorporate cultural traditions and activities into the adoptive home.

Adoptive parents were asked how they educated themselves about the child’s birth culture, prior to adoption, and how they continued to educate themselves following the adoption. A frequency analysis was conducted to determine the ways adoptive parent’s educated themselves prior to and following adoption. Adoptive parents educated themselves regarding the child’s birth culture, prior to adoption, through the use of books, television and talking with family or friends who have adopted a child internationally. Prior to adoption, 77.6% (n = 52) of adoptive parents strongly agreed they educated
themselves by reading books and 46.3% (n = 31) agree they received information regarding the child’s birth culture from television or radio. The majority of adoptive parents, 68.7% (n = 46), strongly agreed that they educated themselves about the child’s birth culture by talking with family or friends who had adopted a child internationally. Additionally, 68.7% (n = 46) of parents strongly agreed that they educated themselves by reading adoption information and 56.7% (n = 38) strongly agreed to educating themselves through information found on the internet. Place of worship was not a source of information about the birth culture. In this sample, 35.8% (n = 24) of adoptive parents agreed that their place of religious worship did not provide information about the child’s birth culture.

Following adoption, the majority of the adoptive parents 76.1% (n = 51) continued to educate themselves about the child’s birth culture by reading books about the birth culture. Less than half of adoptive parents, 46.3% (n = 29), strongly agreed that they continued to educate themselves through information obtained through television or radio. A decrease in parent’s use of adoptive information utilized from adoption agencies was found after the adoption. Approximately one-third of the adoptive parents, 32.8% (n = 22), strongly agreed that they educated themselves, following the adoption, through the use of information from adoption agencies. In comparison, 68.7% (n = 46) of parents indicated they educated themselves about the child’s birth culture prior to the adoption, through information from an adoption agency. Of the adoptive parents, 61.2% (n = 41) strongly agreed that they continued to educate themselves through information found on the internet. Additionally 37.3% (n = 25) did not continue their education through their place of religious worship.

Parent’s beliefs about exposing the child to his/her birth culture were also examined. A frequency analyses was conducted to determine if adoptive parents believed the child’s exposure to his/her birth culture is beneficial. The majority of adoptive parents, 95.5% (n = 64), believed it was beneficial for the child to be exposed to his/her birth culture. Only 4.5% (n = 3) of parents believed it was not beneficial for the child to be exposed to his/her birth culture.

Adoptive parents were also asked if they exposed the child to his/her birth culture following adoption through the use of culturally related activities such as toys, reading materials and music. A frequency analysis was conducted to assess the child’s exposure to culturally related activities. Data showed that 95.5% (n = 64) of the adoptive parents exposed the adoptee to his/her birth culture through reading, and 85.1% (n = 57) used toys. Music was also used as a way to expose the adoptee to the birth culture. Results showed that 95.5% (n = 64), of adoptive parents exposed their child to the birth culture by serving food from the birth culture. Additionally, 89.6% (n = 60) indicated they exposed their child to music from the birth culture. Additionally, 88.1% (n = 59) of adoptive parents indicated they expose their child to clothing from his/her birth culture.

After determining if cultural activities were included in the adoptive home, parents were asked how often they exposed their child to his/her birth culture. A frequency test was conducted to determine how often parents expose their child to the birth culture. Approximately two-thirds of adoptive parents, 67.2% (n = 45), indicated they read books to their child that related to the birth culture at least once a month. Nearly half of adoptive parents, 47.8% (n = 32), indicate that they expose their child to his/her birth culture by encouraging the child to play with toys from the birth culture. A
large percentage of parents, 47.8% (n = 32), indicated that they used music as a way of exposing their child to the birth culture at least once a month and 46.3% (n = 31) of adoptive parents indicated that they expose their child to clothing from the birth culture at least once a year. The use of food from the birth culture was important in many families. At least once a month, 74.6% (n = 50) of parents incorporated food from the birth culture into the adoptive home.

Adoptive parents were asked if their child was exposed to cultural events related to the birth culture and how often they were involved in each event. A frequency analysis was conducted to determine if the child was exposed to cultural events as well as how often the child was exposed. Nearly all of the adoptive parents, 97.0% (n = 65) exposed their child to cultural events. Specifically, 97.0% (n = 65) of adoptive parents exposed their child to holidays from the birth culture. In addition, 71.6% (n = 48) of adoptive parents read or discussed current events with their child that relate to the birth culture.

In addition to asking parents if they exposed their child to cultural events from the birth culture, parents were asked how often their child was exposed to cultural events. At least once a year, 46.3% (n = 31) of adoptive parents exposed their child to cultural events from the birth culture, and at least once a month, 47.8% (n = 32) of parents incorporated holidays from the child’s birth culture into the adoptive family.

Adoptive parents were also asked if and how often their child had contact with individuals from his/her birth culture. A frequency analysis was conducted to determine if the child had contact with individuals from his/her birth culture. Parents indicated that 92.5% (n = 62) of children had contact with someone from his/her birth culture. Specifically, children had contact with individuals from their birth culture through their neighborhood, school, friends from the adoptive family and culturally related social events.

The majority of adoptive parents, 61.2% (n = 41), indicated that their child associated with neighbors who were from the birth culture. Additionally, 70.1% (n = 47) associated with individuals from their school who were from the birth culture. Friends of the adoptive family, from the birth culture, also served as a connection to the child’s birth culture. Specifically, 73.1% (n = 49) of adoptive parents indicated their child had contact with a friend of the adoptive family who was from his/her birth culture. It is unknown if these individuals were adults, children or other adoptees. Additionally, 89.6% (n = 60) indicated their child associated with individuals from his/her birth culture during social events associated with the birth culture.

Parents were asked how often their child associated with someone from their birth culture. A frequency analysis was conducted to determine how often adoptee’s associated with someone from their birth culture. At least once a month, 64.2% (n = 43) of adoptive parents indicated their child associated with someone from his/her birth culture. Nearly half, (41.8%, n = 28) of parents indicated that their child associated with neighbors who were from the birth culture at least once a month. Results also showed that 59.7% (n = 40) of parents indicated that their child associated with someone from the birth culture on a daily basis at school. Many parents agreed (41.8%, n = 28) that friends of the adoptive family who were from the birth culture had contact with the child at least once a month. The majority of parents, 59.7% (n = 40), indicated that their child had
contact with individuals from the birth culture by attending culturally related social events at least once a month.

In addition to the incorporation of traditions and activities related to the birth culture, parents were asked if they believe their child should primarily identify with the American culture, or a combination of the American culture and culture of birth. A frequency analysis was conducted to determine parents’ belief about their child’s primary cultural identification. Data showed that 91.0% (n = 61) of adoptive parents believe their child should identify with both the American culture and the culture of birth.

Summary

Although the hypotheses were not statistically supported, several interesting trends emerged in the data. Trends emerged regarding the ways in which parents educated themselves prior to and following the adoption. Prior to adoption, the majority of parents educated themselves about their child’s birth culture by reading books and watching television programs related to the birth culture. Parents also talked with family and friends to gain information about the birth culture. More than half of the parents strongly agreed that they attempted to learn about their child’s birth culture by talking with family or friends who had adopted a child internationally. Talking with family and friends who have adopted internationally may provide parents with examples of what to expect throughout the adoption process as well as examples of ways to incorporate traditions and activities from the birth culture.

The sample in this study is very homogenous in terms of the ways parents educated themselves about the child’s birth culture prior to the adoption. One way that parents may have educated themselves about the child’s birth culture prior to the adoption is through their membership in an international adoption support group. Because each parent in this sample belonged to a group that offered support to adoptive parents, they may have received information prior to the adoption from the adoption support group as well as from the adoption agency.

Following the adoption, the majority of parents strongly agreed that they continued to learn more about their child’s birth culture by reading books related to the birth culture and talking with family and friends who had adopted a child internationally. In the present study, the majority of parents continued to educate themselves about their child’s birth culture by reading material related to the birth culture. Parents may have continued using written materials because the information was easily obtainable from their adoption agency or adoption support group. Parents strongly agreed that, after the adoption, television continued to provide them with information about their child’s birth culture. This may reflect an increase in information available to the public about adoptive birth cultures.

Trends also emerged regarding ways in which these parents exposed the adoptee to activities from his/her birth culture. The majority of parents exposed their child to his/her birth culture by incorporating books into the adoptive family that pertain to the birth culture. Parents also exposed their child to cultural events and toys related to the birth culture. Food from the child’s birth culture was also a major part of the adoptive family. This sample is homogenous in terms of ways they exposed their child to his/her birth culture. Because every parent was a member of an international adoption support group, they may have had more exposure to activities from the birth culture than parents
who were not members of support groups. Future studies should examine differences between parents who are members of support groups and parents who are not members and the effects that membership has on exposing and adoptee to his/her birth culture.

Contact with someone from the child’s birth culture was also common among adoptive families and served as a way to expose the adoptee to his/her birth culture. The majority of parents indicated that their child had contact with someone from his/her birth culture in their neighborhood and at school. More than half of adoptive parents indicated that their child associated with someone from the birth culture on a daily basis at school. It was unclear from the data if the neighborhood and school contacts were with adults or children from the birth culture. For example, it is possible that these contacts were with other adoptees.

Another major trend that emerged was parents’ beliefs regarding their child’s primary cultural identification. The majority of adoptive parents believed their child should identify with both the American culture and the culture of birth. This sample is very homogenous in their beliefs regarding the child’s primary cultural identification with both the American culture and the birth culture. This may be due to the parent’s membership in an adoption support group that encourages parents to include traditions and activities from both the birth culture and the American culture and furthers parental discussion of the issue of cultural identification. Future research should examine adoptive parents’ ethnicity and their primary cultural identification to determine if their personal cultural identification influences their decision to expose the adoptee to his/her birth culture.
Chapter Five

Discussion, Limitations and Recommendations

The purpose of this study was to examine the factors that lead to the incorporation of cultural traditions and activities from an adoptee’s birth culture into their adoptive home. The variables that were examined were parent’s individual level of education at the time of adoption and the amount of time parents spent living in the child’s birth culture prior to the adoption. This chapter will discuss the findings regarding the type and amount of birth culture traditions and activities incorporated into the adoptive family in relation to the existing literature. Limitations of the present study and recommendations for future research will be addressed.

Discussion of the Present Study as it Relates to Existing Literature

Parent’s level of education prior to the adoption

It is important for adoptive parents to acknowledge their child’s birth culture since it may be an integral part of their personal identity. For most parents, acknowledging the child’s birth culture reached beyond the parent’s cognitive acknowledgment to include the celebration of traditions and exposure to activities from the birth culture in the adoptive home. Upon reviewing the existing literature, it was expected that parents who completed college would incorporate cultural traditions and activities from the birth culture into the adoptive family. The statistical analyses showed that the majority of parents had graduated from college or completed graduate study at the time of adoption. Parental level of education in this sample is similar to the levels reported in other studies. Trolley, Wallin, and Hansen (1995) reported that 55.8% of parents in their sample attended some college and 44% of parents reported pursuing some graduate study. In the present study the sample is very homogenous in terms of educational attainment in that more than half of the adoptive parents completed college and attended or completed graduate study. Future studies should be conducted to further our understanding of the connection between parent’s educational level and the interest in international adoption.

Time parents spent living in adoptee’s birth culture

The amount of time parents spent living in the adoptee’s birth culture prior to adoption, and its effects on the family’s incorporation of traditions and activities from the birth culture, has not been adequately studied. In the present study the majority of parents indicated they did not live in the adoptee’s birth culture for more than six months prior to the adoption. It was hypothesized that a parent’s prolonged personal experience in the adopted child’s country of origin would be a factor in adopting from that country and in the subsequent inclusion of cultural activities and traditions. This was not supported. Future studies should examine what factors do contribute to parents deciding to adopt internationally and from a specific country.

Other findings

In addition to the main hypotheses, interesting descriptive trends emerged in these data. This section will discuss these findings as well as suggestions for future studies. Specifically, this section will discuss the possible impact the parental knowledge
of the child’s birth culture and the amount of time the parent spent living in the child’s birth culture prior to the adoption had on the inclusion of birth culture traditions and activities into the adoptive family.

**Parent’s knowledge of child’s birth culture prior to adoption**

Parents can encourage their child to learn about his/her birth culture by learning about the birth culture themselves. There are many ways parents can learn about their child’s birth culture. In the present study, the majority of parents educated themselves about their child’s birth culture, prior to and following the adoption, by reading and watching television that relates to the birth culture. Parents also spoke with family and friends who had adopted internationally to gain information about international adoption. This sample is very homogenous in terms of utilizing reading materials, television and talking with family and friends as a way to learn about their child’s birth culture.

It is interesting to consider why parents chose these methods as their main source of information. Since parents were members of a support group that encouraged the incorporation of traditions and activities from the birth culture into the adoptive family, parents may have had easier access to reading materials and individuals from the birth culture through group membership. Also, the adoption agency working with the parents may have provided information related to the birth culture. This study did not specifically identify the type of reading materials or television programs used by the family, and this would be an interesting point to clarify in future studies. Future studies should also concentrate on the factors that influence parents to utilize a particular method of education about their child’s birth culture to determine if being a member of a support group that coordinates culturally related gatherings influences their decision to use a particular method.

**Child’s exposure to his/her birth culture**

Also of interest were the ways that the adoptee was exposed to his/her birth culture and the frequency of participation in the celebration of traditions or activities from his/her birth culture. In the present study, the majority of parents incorporated reading materials and food related to the adoptee’s birth culture as a way of exposing the child to his/her birth culture. After statistical analyses were completed, it was found that the majority of adoptive parents read books to their child that were related to the birth culture. Parents also indicated that at least once a month their child played with toys from the birth culture. In the present study, the majority of parents indicated that at least once a month they included foods from the child’s birth culture into their home. Previous literature has discussed the impact the adoptive parents’ understanding of their child’s birth culture may have on their child’s participation in culturally related traditions and activities (Friedlander, et. al., 2000). It is important to determine the ways that an adoptee is exposed to his/her birth culture because the ways that parents incorporate traditions and activities from the birth culture could influence which traditions and activities the child will continue to practice as an adult. The impact of cultural identity on the self-identity for the adopted child needs further study.

In the present study, the sample is very homogenous in terms of using books, toys and personal relationships as a way of exposing their child to his/her birth culture. This sample was also very similar in that parents were all members of adoption support
groups. Typically, these support groups offer culturally related activities and celebrations as well as an on-line discussion of cultural issues such as identity. Cultural support group membership may influence parent’s decision to include traditions and activities into the adoptive home.

Given the recent increase in international adoption, the long-term impact of cultural traditions and activities for adoptees is unknown. Future studies should be conducted to determine if the amount inclusion throughout his/her life and it’s impact on the adoptee’s cultural identity. Future studies should also examine the connection between the ways adoptees are exposed to their birth culture as a child, such as through the use of cultural events or relationships with individuals from the birth culture, and the ways the adoptee will choose to experience his/her birth culture as an adult.

**Primary Cultural Identification**

In addition to parents acknowledging traditions and activities from their child’s birth culture, they must also consider their child’s primary cultural identification. In the present study, the majority of parents agreed that it is important for their child to identify with both the American culture and the birth culture. Trolley, Wallin, and Hansen (1995) support this finding in their study which explored the importance of parents acknowledging their child’s birth culture and found that the majority of parents surveyed placed a high level of importance on the child’s identification with both the birth culture and the American culture. This sample is very homogenous in their beliefs regarding the child’s primary cultural identification. This may be due to parent’s membership in an adoption support group that encourages parents to include traditions and activities from both the birth culture and the American culture.

Future research should examine parents’ beliefs about the adoptee’s cultural identity and the adoptee’s personal identity. Future studies should also be conducted to determine if parent’s beliefs regarding their child’s cultural identity affects the amount of time their child spends involved in traditions or activities from both the American culture and the birth culture.

**Limitations of the Study**

**Sample**

One limitation of the present study is that the sample was not randomly selected. The sample was obtained using a convenience sample of international adoption support group members. Each support group provided information to parents adopting internationally. Snowball sampling was also used. Facilitators of the support groups forwarded the request for participants to other group facilitators who then posted the information on their group’s websites as well.

The sample was very homogenous, consisting of only adoptive parents who were members of groups that offer support to parents who are adopting or have adopted a child internationally. This sample was also very similar in terms of the parent’s educational level at the time of adoption, parent’s age at the time of adoption, and the ways parent’s incorporated traditions and activities from the birth culture into the adoptive home. Since this sample is very homogenous, findings can not be generalized to all adoptive families. It would be interesting to determine if parent’s educational level affects the parents’
decision to adopt internationally. Future studies should include a larger sample and incorporate more variables in terms of parental education level, age and income level.

**Research Design**

Several limitations emerged in relation to the statistical design and instrumentation of this study. Due to the homogenous nature of the sample, the analysis of variance was not a viable statistical tool. Future research may benefit from studies that utilize a longitudinal design to determine if parents’ ideals at the time of adoption remain the same as their child ages. It would be of interest to survey parents prior to the adoption, two years following the adoption and again seven years post adoption to determine if the level of incorporating traditions and activities from the birth into the adoptive family has changed from the parents pre-adoption ideals.

One limitation of this research design is that parents may have felt a desire to indicate that they incorporated traditions and activities from the birth culture into the adoptive home more than they did in reality. Parental responses may be a reaction to a social desirability effect based on their membership in an adoption support group that encourages adoptive families to incorporate traditions and activities from the child’s birth culture into the adoptive home. Future studies should examine what factors motivate adoptive parents to incorporate traditions and activities from the birth culture into the adoptive home.

A second limitation is that a possible bias may exist because participants are members of at least one international adoption support group and this membership may demonstrate their interest in including traditions and activities from the adoptee’s birth culture into the adoptive family. The sample is very homogenous in terms of each participant being a member of a support group that offers suggestions and opportunities for including traditions and activities from the birth culture into the adoptive home. Future studies should examine what factors motivate adoptive parents to join and be active members of support groups that promote the incorporation of traditions and activities from the child’s birth culture into the adoptive family.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

Findings from this study indicate the need for further research regarding the factors that encourage adoptive parents to incorporate traditions and activities from the child’s birth culture into the adoptive family. Additionally, findings from this study may shed light on opportunities for adoptive parents to incorporate their child’s birth culture into the adoptive family. Cultural support groups that coordinate activities related to the child’s birth culture may increase the adoptive family’s participation in activities from the birth culture as well as exposure to cultural traditions.

Future research would benefit from a replication of this study using a group of parents who are members of an international adoption support group and a group of parents who are not members of a support group to determine if membership affects parents incorporation of cultural traditions and activities into the adoptive home. This would be of interest because parents who are members of a support group may be exposed to opportunities and examples that promote the incorporation of traditions and activities from the child’s birth culture into the adoptive home. Support groups that initiate and coordinate activities may provide families with the motivation and opportunity to participate in traditions and activities from their child’s birth culture.
Support groups may coordinate the celebration of cultural holidays or provide adoptees the opportunity to interact with individuals from his/her birth culture. It would be interesting to see if parents who were not involved in a support group would include traditions and activities from the birth culture into the adoptive home. It would also be interesting to determine if parents who are not members of a support group value the incorporation of cultural traditions and activities at the same level as parents who are members of a support group. Future research may also benefit from conducting a longitudinal study to determine if the incorporation of cultural traditions and activities into the adoptive home decreases as the adoptee ages. It would also be of interest to conduct a longitudinal study to assess the relationship between cultural interest and the child’s developmental stage.

Identifying factors that motivate individuals to adopt internationally and choose to include traditions and activities from the birth culture into the adoptive home may assist adoption agencies in determining which services would best suit the needs of perspective adoptive parents and the adoptee. In addition, identifying factors that motivate individuals to adopt internationally and include birth culture traditions and activities into the adoptive home may help the cultural support groups to better serve their members’ needs.

Further research is needed to help adoptive parents and adoption agencies determine which methods of cultural inclusion will best serve the adoptee. While the inclusion of cultural traditions and activities from the adoptees birth culture is not a mandatory step in the adoption process, it may help adoptees cultivate their identity and feel a sense of connectiveness to their heritage.
References


LaRossa, W. Schumm & S. Steinmetz (Eds.), Sourcebook of family theories and methods a contextual approach (pp.325-355). New York: Plenum.
APPENDICES
APPENDIX A: Questionnaire and Letter to Participants
Questionnaire

If you are the parent of a child adopted internationally, please answer the following questions. Please do not write your name on this questionnaire or on the return envelope.

1. Child’s age at time of adoption.
   - 0 – 2 years of age
   - 3 – 5 years of age
   - 6 – 8 years of age
   - older than 8 years of age

2. Parent’s age at time of adoption.
   - less than 25 years of age
   - 26 – 30 years of age
   - 31 – 40 years of age
   - older than 40 years of age

3. Parent’s ethnic origin.
   - African American
   - Caucasian
   - American Indian or Alaskan Native
   - Chicano/Mexican American
   - Puerto Rican
   - Multiracial
   - Asian
   - Other (please specify:________________________)

4. Parent’s level of education at time of adoption.
   - some high school
   - graduated from high school
   - some college
   - graduated from college
   - graduate study (ie: M.A., Ph.D, M.D.)
5. Estimated current family income.

- less than $ 30,000 per year □
- $ 30,000 – $ 60,999.99 per year □
- $ 61,000 – $ 90,999.99 per year □
- $ 91,000 - $120,999.99 per year □
- $ 121,000 - $150,999.99 per year □
- more than $151,000. per year □

6. Please answer the following five questions by checking the appropriate box.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Frequently</th>
<th>Periodically</th>
<th>Seldomly</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I speak the language from my child(ren)’s birth culture:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My family celebrates holidays from my child(ren)’s birth culture:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I encourage my child(ren) to speak his/her (their) native language:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our family has contact with other people from my child(ren)’s birth</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>culture:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I expose my child(ren) to his/her (their) birth culture:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7. I believe that exposing my child(ren) to his/her (their) birth culture is:

- beneficial to my child(ren) □
- not beneficial to my child(ren) □
- confusing to my child(ren) □

8. I expose my child(ren) to his/her (their) birth culture via : (please check yes or no)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading materials</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toys</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current events</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holidays/traditions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural events</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dress</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal relationships with someone from</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>their birth culture</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
9. Please indicate how often your child(ren) are exposed to his/her (their) culture via the following materials.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reading materials</th>
<th>Daily</th>
<th>At least once a month</th>
<th>At least once a year</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Toys</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current events</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holidays/traditions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cultural events</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dress</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal relationships with someone from their birth culture</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10. My child(ren) has contact with people from his/her (their) birth culture via:
(please check yes, no or not applicable)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Not Applicable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

in the neighborhood  
at school  
at church  
via adult friends in the family  
through culturally related social events

11. Please indicate the amount of contact your child(ren) has/have with individuals from his/her (their) birth culture? (Please choose the most correct answer)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Daily</th>
<th>Once a month</th>
<th>Once a year</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

in the neighborhood  
at school  
at church  
via adult friends in the family  
through culturally related social events
12. I believe my child(ren), in regards to his/her (their) birth culture, has (have):

- [ ] a high level of awareness
- [ ] a moderate level of awareness
- [ ] a minimal level of awareness
- [ ] no awareness

13. I believe it is important for my child(ren) to primarily identify with:

- [ ] The American culture
- [ ] The American culture and the culture of birth
- [ ] Culture of birth

14. In regards to my knowledge of my child(ren)’s birth culture I:

- [ ] Know a great deal
- [ ] Know some
- [ ] Know little
- [ ] Know nothing

15. Please answer the following by checking yes or no.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I have lived in my child(ren)’s birth country for more than six months.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have visited my child(ren)’s birth country prior to his/her (their) adoption.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have not visited my child(ren)’s birth country prior to his/her adoption.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
16. Prior to your child’s adoption, how did you educate yourself regarding your child’s birth culture?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Books</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Television or radio</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talking with family or friends who have adopted a child internationally</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading information provided by an adoption agency</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet services</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

17. I continue to educate myself about my child’s birth culture via: (Please check all that apply)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Books</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Television or radio</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Letter To Participants

Catherine Tindal
106 McGuffey Hall
Miami University
Oxford, Ohio 45056

Dear potential participant,

My name is Catherine Tindal I am a graduate student attending Miami University in Ohio. I am conducting a survey to learn more about the experiences of families after international adoption.

Participants will be asked to complete one survey. The survey will take approximately twenty minutes to complete. Participation is on a voluntary basis. All participants’ surveys will be completed anonymously. There will be no way to connect the participant to an individual survey. Participants may decline to participate at any time. There will be no penalty for not participating or dropping out of the research study.

There are no foreseeable risks involved with participation in the research study. In the future results from this study may benefit individuals considering international adoption. Because this is a research project, information from this study may be published. Information which would personally identify a participant will not be released by the researcher or faculty. Information you provide will be stored in a locked area.

If you have any questions regarding the study, please contact Catherine K. Tindal (513-529-2151 or tindalck@muohio.edu) or Dr. Elizabeth Thompson (513-529-2339). If there are any questions regarding the rights of subjects please contact Office for Advancement of Scholarship and Teaching (513-528-3734).

If you agree to participate in this study please return the completed questionnaire in the enclosed self addressed stamped envelope. Returning the enclosed questionnaire will serve as your authorization to participate in this study. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Catherine Tindal
Primary Investigator

Dr. Elizabeth Thompson
Major Advising Professor