Name of Measure: The Suinn-Lew Asian Self Identity Acculturation (Suinn, Ahuna, & Khoo, 1992)

Purpose of Measure: To level of acculturation of Asian populations

Author(s) of Abstract:

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Dear Colleague:
        You have my permission to use the SL-ASIA scale. It is duplicated below and on my web site: http://home.earthlink.net/~colosuinn/index.html.Please note that if you feel your sample is one that requires reading a translated version, this could mean that your sample is very restricted to a first generation. If so, then by definition you would not have enough subjects who represent the various levels of acculturation (low to middle to high). If so, then this restricted range will prevent you from testing any hypothesis regarding how "level of acculturation" or acculturation differences has effects.

        Also note the usual principles regarding use of standardized tests: if you revise any part of the test - order of questions, wording of answers, etc. - then it may be questionable whether the test still is valid. Certainly, the question can be raised about whether the same norms can be used to interpret the results. If you choose to do such a revision, you should discuss the matter with a colleague who is a methodologist, or your advisor if you are a student.

        After some thoughts about acculturation and its measurement, I have added questions 22-26 to the original 21 item scale. These questions can serve to further classify your research participants in ways that use current theorizing that acculturation is not linear, uni-dimensional but multi-dimensional and orthogonal. These new items were developed based on writings of those who felt that a linear, uni-dimensional scale was insufficient. Hence, we wrote some added items as a potential separate way of classifying the subjects...if the original scale did not turn out predictive. We have not obtained any validity/reliability info on these added items, but hope that users of the added items will share their results with me.

The following are suggestions for use of either the original 21 item scale or the newer items:

USING THE ORIGINAL 21 ITEMS:
        In scoring these 21 items, add up each answer for each question on the scale, then obtain a total value by summing across the answers for all 21 items. A final acculturation score is calculated by then dividing the total value by 21; hence a score can range from 1.00 (low acculturation) to 5.00 (high acculturation). Because of the nature of the multiple choice content, it is possible to view low scores as reflective of high Asian identification, with high scores reflecting high Western identification. In other words, a low score reflects low acculturation, while a high score reflects high acculturation.
        Another way of interpreting the total score relies upon recent discussions pointing out that there are actual three dimensions in acculturation. Thus, a person may be

entirely assimilated into the new culture in all ways, for example, the Asian becomes completely identified as a part of the dominant Western society. This would be called "Western identified" or "assimilated" and would be represented in a SL-ASIA score of "5". Another person may retain identify with their ethnic heritage and refuse
attempts to become integrated within the Western society. This would be called "Asian-identified" and would be represented in s SL-ASIA score of "1". Finally, there is now recognition that a person may be capable of assuming the best of two worlds, with denial to neither. The term used here is "bicultural"and would be reflected in a SL-ASIA score of "3". In addition to such an analysis of the total score, it is also possible to examine question number 20, which presents subjects with the opportunity to identify themselves as "very Asian," "bicultural," or "very Anglicized."

USING THE NEW ITEMS (Questions: 22/23, 24/25, OR 26)

1) Classifying by examining the answers to #22 and #23 together:

a) if #22 has "4" or "5" (high Asian values) and #23 has either "1", "2", or "3" (low Western values), then classify this person as Asian-identified; b) if #23 has "4" or "5" (high Western) and #22 has either "1", "2", or "3" (low Asian), then classify this person as Western-identified; c) if #22 has "4" or "5" (high Asian) and #23 has "4" or "5" (high Western), then classify this person as "bicultural"; d) if the subject has checked "1", or "2" for BOTH 22 and 23 (low Asian and low Western values), this person is denying any identification and may be alienated from both cultures.

Using these questions, you can re-examine your data with these items being used to re-classify or re-categorize your sample. For convenience call the scoring of the questions #22 and 23 the "SL-ASIA values score". Because the categorizing method uses a different set of variables then classification using the original 21 item SL-ASIA scores, you might obtain different results.

2) Classifying by examining the answers to #24 and #25 together:

   a) if #24 has "4" or "5" (high Asian fit) and #25 has either "1", "2", or "3", (low Western fit) then classify this person as Asian-identified;
   b) if #25 has "4" or "5" (high Western fit) and #24 has either "1", "2", or "3" (low Asian fit"), then classify this person as Western-identified
   c) if #24 has "4" or "5" (high Asian fit) and #25 has "4" or "5" (high Western fit), then classify this person as "bicultural";
   d) if the subject has checked "1", or "2" for BOTH 24 and 25 (low Asian and low Western fit) this person is denying any identification and may be alienated from both cultures.

As with use of items #22 and #23, this procedure involves categorizing and is not on a continuum. For convenience, call the scoring of items #24 and 25 the "SL-ASIA behavioral competencies score". The assumption is that "fitting" reflects the presence of behaviors that enables such a fit.

TABLE 1
SCORING OF QUES. 22/23 OR 24/25

		Answers to Questions 22 or 24				
		1	2	3	4	5
Q.	1	N	N	(A)	A	A
23	2	N	N	(A)	A	A
or	3	(W)	(W)	(B)	A	A
25	4	W	W	W	B	B
	5	W	W	W	B	B

A=asian identified
B=bicultural
W=western
N=neither (Alienated)
The scoring in parentheses are open to question. Either they can be used to score, or the alternative is to eliminate these persons from the analyses

3) Classifying by using item #26 is straightforward, since each possible answer is a category in itself:

      a) answer 1 defines the person as Asian self-identified,
      b) answer 2 is Western self-identified,
      c) answers 3, 4, 5 are all bicultural-identified, but with sub-categories:
            (1) answer 3 is "Bicultural, Asian self-identity"
            (2) answer 4 is "Bicultural, Western self-identity"
            (3) answer 5 is "Bicultural, bicultural self-identity"

Item #26 could therefore be scored on a continuum: Asian identified, Bicultural Asian, Bicultural/bicultural identity, Bicultural Western, and Western identified. In using item #26, for convenience call the scoring the "SL-ASIA self-identity score".

4) Item #26 might also be scored by another procedure, based on a very small pilot study we just completed:

a) answers using either 1 OR 3 would classify the person as "Asian identified"
b) answers using either 2 OR 4 would classify the person as "Western identified"
c) answer using 5 classifies the person as "bicultural"

THEORETICAL COMMENT:

Let me suggest the following definitions (which is a simplified approach, but consistent with definitions used by some other writers):

      Acculturation is a process that can occur when two or more cultures interact together. There are several possible outcomes of this process, including assimilation, whereby a host culture absorbs the immigrant culture, or multiculturalism, whereby both cultures exist side-by-side. On an individual level, exposure to another culture can lead a person to resisting change in his/her values and behavioral competencies, adopting the host culture's values and behavioral skills and styles as a replacement for his/her parent

culture's values/behaviors, acquiring host culture values/behaviors while retaining parent culture values/behaviors with situational reliance determining which values/behaviors are in effect at different times.

Identity involves the individual's self-perception or subjective statement of his/her cultural character. By this definition, it is the individual who declares his/her "identity". It is therefore possible that a person's self-definition might be in contrast to the actual behavioral competencies or values possessed or expressed by the individual. For instance, an individual might fully possess the behavioral competencies necessary to "fit" and be accepted into a Western environment (job, school, residence, etc.), yet privately retain the identity of being "Asian".

Although the original SL-ASIA scale offers one method for measuring acculturation, these additional items (questions #22-26) might measure the topic in other ways. First, the items are not stated as uni-dimensional, linear but orthogonal. Secondly, research results might lead to different results using the different ways of classifying the participants:
 • using the SL-ASIA 21 item scale, or
• using the SL-ASIA values scores to classify acculturation based upon values, or
• using the SL-ASIA behavioral competency scores to classify acculturation based upon behavioral skills that permit "fitting in", or
• using item #26 as a self-statement of identity, including three possible levels of bicultural, or
• using various scores in combination, e.g., high Asian values/high Asian behavioral competencies versus high Asian values/low Asian behavioral competencies; or high Asian values/high Asian self-identity versus high Asian values/Bicultural, bicultural self-identity, etc.

It is conceivable that new information might surface when the data are analyzed using one classification, but not another classification or scoring method. For example, it may turn out that identification based on self-identity is associated with different outcomes, than identification based on behavioral competencies or values. Further, each scoring method might lead to sub-categories. Consider the differences between a person who strongly believes in Western values and is able to strongly fit into a non-Asian group but who views him/herself as "Bicultural, Asian self-identity" versus a person who also strongly believes in Western values, is a strong fit into non-Asian environments but who views him/herself as "Bicultural, Western self-identity".

It is also possible that values scores and self-identity might represent a more stable prediction across diverse outcomes or settings, while predictions based on the behavioral competency scores might be situationally based. For instance, possibly behavioral competency scores can predict performance ratings at work, but not predict choice of spouse or sex role behaviors at home or on dates.

Not only am I encouraging research to study the differences when acculturation or identity is determined with the different methods of measurement or scoring, but I would also encourage the distinction between measuring performance versus satisfaction. Consider the following:

• An Asian-American client with strong Asian values and fits well into either Asian or Western environments (possesses Western behavioral competencies) and who self-

identifies as an Asian- American ("Bicultural, bicultural self-identity ") is assigned to a non-Asian counselor who encourages self-disclosure. Our analysis would predict that although initial progress might be slow, this client will be able to work with the non-Asian counselor. This is based upon the client's possessing the Western behavioral competencies. Satisfaction ratings of counseling by the client, however, will probably be low.

• An Asian-American client with strong Asian values who fits poorly into Western environments and who self-identifies as Asian is assigned to a non-Asian counselor who encourages self-disclosure. Our prediction would be for an early termination. This is due to the conflict of values plus the inability of the client to engage in the Western behaviors required by the counselor.

Clearly, other factors can be expected to affect the ability to use acculturation or identity as a predictive variable. Free-choice versus restricted-choice is one dimension. With increased levels of restriction (e.g., savings too low to permit purchasing a home near a city with an Asian population), acculturation is- less influential as a predictive variable. With increased free-choice (e.g., numbers of eligible Asian and non-Asian dating partners), acculturation and self-identity might be more useful in prediction of behaviors. Consider:
• An Asian-American student needs electives for graduation. This student has high Asian values, possesses Western and Asian behavioral competencies, and self-identifies as "Bicultural, bicultural self -identity". This student could enroll in either an Asian-American Studies or Western Civilization elective and be satisfied with either set of courses.
• An Asian-American student needs electives. This student has high Asian values, possesses Western and Asian behavioral competencies, and self-identifies as Asian. This student would be more likely to select an Asian History course than a History of the Western World, if both were available as electives.
• An Asian-American student needs electives. This student has high Western values, possesses Western and Asian behavioral competencies, and identifies as "Bicultural, bicultural self-identity". This student would be more likely to select an Asian-American Studies elective than an Asian History or History of the Western World elective.

These views are theoretical predictions or hypotheses, based upon current beliefs about multi-dimensionality and orthogonality of acculturation. I am hopeful that those of you who are using the SL-ASIA will adopt the 26 item approach (especially if your research predictions are not upheld when using only the 21 item scores), and the various ways of analyzing your data. Please inform me of your results!
Sincerely,

Richard M. Suinn, Ph.D.
Professor of Psychology

References: Suinn, R. M., Ahuna, C., Khoo, G. (1992). The Suinn-Lew Asian Self-Identity Acculturation Scale: Concurrent and factorial validation. *Educational & Psychological Measurement*, 52(4), 1041-1046.

SUINN-LEW ASIAN SELF-IDENTITY ACCULTURATION SCALE
(SL-ASIA)

INSTRUCTIONS: The questions which follow are for the purpose of collecting information about your historical background as well as more recent behaviors which may be related to your cultural identity. Choose the one answer which best describes you.

1. What language can you speak?

    1. Asian only (for example, Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Vietnamese, etc.)
    2. Mostly Asian, some English
    3. Asian and English about equally well (bilingual)
    4. Mostly English, some Asian
    5. Only English

2. What language do you prefer?
    1. Asian only (for example, Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Vietnamese, etc.)
    2. Mostly Asian, some English
    3. Asian and English about equally well (bilingual)
    4. Mostly English, some Asian
    5. Only English

3. How do you identify yourself?
    1. Oriental
    2. Asian
    3. Asian-American
    4. Chinese-American, Japanese-American, Korean-American, etc.
    5. American

4. Which identification does (did) your mother use?
    1. Oriental
    2. Asian
    3. Asian-American
    4. Chinese-American, Japanese-American, Korean-American, etc.
    5. American

5. Which identification does (did) your father use?
    1. Oriental
    2. Asian
    3. Asian-American
    4. Chinese-American, Japanese-American, Korean-American, etc.
    5. American

6. What was the ethnic origin of the friends and peers you had, as a child up to age 6?
    1. Almost exclusively Asians, Asian-Americans, Orientals
    2. Mostly Asians, Asian-Americans, Orientals
    3. About equally Asian groups and Anglo groups
    4. Mostly Anglos, Blacks, Hispanics, or other non-Asian ethnic groups
    5. Almost exclusively Anglos, Blacks, Hispanics, or other non-Asian
       ethnic groups

7. What was the ethnic origin of the friends and peers you had, as a child
    from 6 to 18?
    1. Almost exclusively Asians, Asian-Americans, Orientals
    2. Mostly Asians, Asian-Americans, Orientals
    3. About equally Asian groups and Anglo groups
    4. Mostly Anglos, Blacks, Hispanics, or other non-Asian ethnic groups
    5. Almost exclusively Anglos, Blacks, Hispanics, or other non-Asian
        ethnic groups

8. Whom do you now associate with in the community?

    1. Almost exclusively Asians, Asian-Americans, Orientals
    2. Mostly Asians, Asian-Americans, Orientals
    3. About equally Asian groups and Anglo groups
    4. Mostly Anglos, Blacks, Hispanics, or other non-Asian ethnic groups
    5. Almost exclusively Anglos, Blacks, Hispanics, or other non-Asian
        ethnic groups

9. If you could pick, whom would you prefer to associate with in the community?

    1. Almost exclusively Asians, Asian-Americans, Orientals
    2. Mostly Asians, Asian-Americans, Orientals
    3. About equally Asian groups and Anglo groups
    4. Mostly Anglos, Blacks, Hispanics, or other non-Asian ethnic groups
    5. Almost exclusively Anglos, Blacks, Hispanics, or other non-Asian
        ethnic groups

10. What is your music preference?

    1. Only Asian music (for example, Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Vietnamese, etc.)
    2. Mostly Asian
    3. Equally Asian and English
    4. Mostly English
    5. English only

11. What is your movie preference?
    1. Asian-language movies only
    2. Asian-language movies mostly
    3. Equally Asian/English English-language movies
    4. Mostly English-language movies only
    5. English-language movies only

12. What generation are you? (circle the generation that best applies to you:)

1   1st Generation = I was born in Asia or country other than U.S.
2   2nd Generation = I was born in U.S., either parent was born in Asia or country other than U.S.
3   3rd Generation = I was born in U.S., both parents were born in U.S, and all grandparents born
    in Asia or country other than U.S.
4   4th Generation = I was born in U.S., both parents were born in U.S, and at least one
    grandparent born in Asia or country other than U.S. and one grandparent born in U.S.
5   5th Generation = I was born in U.S., both parents were born in U.S., and all grandparents also
    born in U.S.

6   Don't know what generation best fits since I lack some information.

13. Where were you raised?
   1. In Asia only
   2. Mostly in Asia, some in U.S.
   3. Equally in Asia and U.S.
   4. Mostly in U.S., some in Asia
   5. In U.S. only

14. What contact have you had with Asia?
   1. Raised one year or more in Asia
   2. Lived for less than one year in Asia
   3. Occasional visits to Asia
   4. Occasional communications (letters, phone calls, etc.) with people in Asia
   5. No exposure or communications with people in Asia

15. What is your food preference at home?
   1. Exclusively Asian food
   2. Mostly Asian food, some American
   3. About equally Asian and American
   4. Mostly American food
   5. Exclusively American food

16. What is your food preference in restaurants?
   1. Exclusively Asian food
   2. Mostly Asian food, some American
   3. About equally Asian and American
   4. Mostly American food
   5. Exclusively American food

17. Do you
   1. Read only an Asian language?
   2. Read an Asian language better than English?
   3. Read both Asian and English equally well?
   4. Read English better than an Asian language?
   5. Read only English?

18. Do you
   1. Write only an Asian language?
   2. Write an Asian language better than English?
   3. Write both Asian and English equally well?
   4. Write English better than an Asian language?
   5. Write only English?

19. If you consider yourself a member of the Asian group (Oriental, Asian, Asian-American, Chinese-American, etc., whatever term you prefer), how much pride do you have in this group?
   1. Extremely proud
   2. Moderately proud
   3. Little pride
   4. No pride but do not feel negative toward group
   5. No pride but do feel negative toward group

20. How would you rate yourself?
    1. Very Asian
    2. Mostly Asian
    3. Bicultural
    4. Mostly Westernized
    5. Very Westernized

21. Do you participate in Asian occasions, holidays, traditions, etc.?
    1. Nearly all
    2. Most of them
    3. Some of them
    4. A few of them
    5. None at all

22. Rate yourself on how much you believe in Asian values (e.g., about marriage, families, education, work):

    1   2   3   4   5
    (do not   (strongly believe
    believe)   in Asian values)

23. Rate your self on how much you believe in American (Western) values:

    1   2   3   4   5
    (do not   (strongly believe
    believe)   in Asian values)

24. Rate yourself on how well you fit when with other Asians of the same ethnicity:

    1   2   3   4   5
    (do not   (fit very well)
    fit)

25. Rate yourself on how well you fit when with other Americans who are non-Asian (Westerners):

    1   2   3   4   5
    (do not   (fit very well)
    fit)

26. There are many different ways in which people think of themselves. Which ONE of the following most closely describes how you view yourself?

1. I consider myself basically an Asian person (e.g., Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Vietnamese, etc.). Even though I live and work in America, I still view myself basically as an Asian person.
2. I consider myself basically as an American. Even though I have an Asian background and characteristics, I still view myself basically as an American.
3. I consider myself as an Asian-American, although deep down I always know I am an Asian.
4. I consider myself as an Asian-American, although deep down, I view myself as an American first.
5. I consider myself as an Asian-American. I have both Asian and American characteristics, and I view myself as a blend of both.