

ABSTRACT

This study investigated the relationships of international high school students of Asian, Western, and mixed Asian-Western ethnicities with self-esteem and level of Asian-Western family conflicts in Bangkok, Thailand. The sample of the study consisted of 414 students of two (top tier) international schools. The measures used in this study were: 1) demographic questionnaire (age, gender, grade, number of years in the school, number of years lived in a Western country); 2) Rosenberg's Self-Esteem Scale (RSES, Rosenberg, 1965); and 3) Asian American Family Conflict scale (FCS; Lee, Choe, Kim & Ngo, 2000), consisting of two subscales – likelihood and seriousness.

The findings revealed that Western students had less Asian-Western family conflicts (both likelihood and seriousness) and higher self-esteem than did their Asian or Asian-Western counterparts. Those Asian students whose parents (either or both) had lived abroad for at least two years had less family conflict than the individuals whose parents did not have such an experience. Further, the likelihood of this acculturation-based family conflict was significantly and positively related with the length of time students had spent in their current international school. Male students had significantly higher self-esteem than did female students. As hypothesized, those students who had more family conflicts had lower self-esteem. The findings of this study indicate that there are linkages between self-esteem, Asian-Western family conflict, and parents' ethnic background amongst international school students in Bangkok. The results of this study suggest that parents, school administrators, and counselors need to be sensitive to possible acculturation-based, Asian-Western family conflicts as contributing to students' psychological well being. Suggestions for further studies are discussed.