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## **Migrant Children's Acculturation in China: The Roles of Parent-Child Communication and Parent-Child Relationship**

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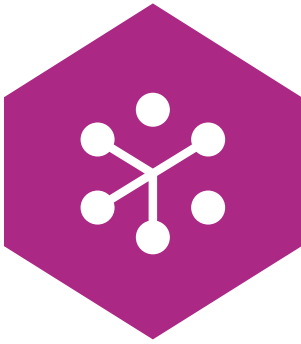
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# Migrant Children's Acculturation in China: The Roles of Parent-Child Communication and Parent-Child Relationship

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*Abstract: Due to the large number of internal migrant children in China, an ideal opportunity exists for scholars to examine the influencing factors of their acculturation. Also, because of research gaps, this study aimed to examine whether parent-child communication and relationship could play a role in migrant children's acculturation. In total, this study recruited sixty-five migrant children in Shenzhen and conducted an online survey to evaluate their level of acculturation as pertaining to parent-child communication and relationship issues. Through the regression analysis, this study determined that the different genders displayed diverse degrees of acculturation. For example, girls were more inclined to adapt to the new culture of their new city, while boys were more likely to retain their original cultural mores. Moreover, fathers tended to play a more significant role in children's acculturation than mothers. Meanwhile, there appears to be no correlation between children's acculturation and the parent-child relationship, while the parent-child relationship does have an impact on the level of children's assimilation. This study also proffers that the process of children's acculturation is changeable rather than fixed. Thus, parents should allot more time with their children in order to develop a positive line of communication with their children and focus more attention on their behavioral changes in the process of acculturation.*

*Keywords: Migrant Children, China, Acculturation, Parent-Child Communication, Parent-Child Relationship*

## Introduction

Internal migration from the countryside to a larger city has become more popular and common within most Asian, African, and South American developing countries due to the influence of globalization and urbanization (Gui, Berry, and Zheng 2012; Jordan and Graham 2012). Ying et al. (2019) also posited that many farmers will be planning to move to a larger city to find a better job because of the impact of industrialization. Previous studies demonstrated that Brazil, India, and Indonesia have faced significant internal migration over the last few decades (Lall, Selod, and Shalizi 2006; Deshingkar and Akter 2009; Meng and Manning 2010). China, as the largest developing country in the world, is following the same trend. Guo et al. (2015) argued that the number of migrants has grown over the last few decades in China. Fang, Sun, and Yuen (2017) proffered that nearly 227 million migrants moved from central or West China to the eastern sector of China, which is a more lucrative area, offering more high paying jobs. Meanwhile, according to the National Bureau of Statistics (2015), there were approximately 30 million children of migrant workers who moved to a larger city with their parents in China.

The Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China (2016) defined migrant children as children from seven to 14 years of age who left their hometown and moved to a larger city with their parents for at least six months and have the ability and willingness to study. Furthermore, Ying et al. (2019) proffered that parents from migrant families usually have a low-paying job, which causes migrant families to suffer economic and mental pressures, that have a negative impact on their children's social development. Meanwhile, the Hukou system is a unique Chinese household registration procedure that also significantly impacts the migrant family. Without Hukou, migrant children were not allowed to study at public city schools and were forced to

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attend migrant children's schools (Chen et al. 2019). However, due to the efforts of municipal governments of many cities, migrant children are now allowed to attend public schools with locals (Ying et al. 2019), which generates a different social context concerning acculturation.

Acculturation is a process whereby individuals make contact with a new social and cultural environment, causing a change in their personal attitudes and behavior (Berry et al. 2006), which is an important factor that may influence an individual to adapt and settle down in a new environment (Costigan and Dokis 2006). A previous study demonstrated that the level of acculturation could influence migrant children's overall satisfaction with life, evidenced by self-esteem, hopefulness, or depression (Fang, Sun, and Yuen 2017). This, in turn, could influence migrant children's overall development. Moreover, previous studies also suggested that migrant children sometimes suffer from acculturation, for example, when they move to a new place, it may impact their mental health, especially as related to academic challenges (Donato and Duncan 2011; Mishra 2016), combined with numerous household duties (Fang, Sun, and Yuen 2017). Meanwhile, migrant children are more likely to suffer physical injuries as compared to local students (Hu et al. 2018). Moreover, Frankenberg et al. (2013) postulated that the connectivity level of mainstream culture and migrant children's indigenous culture has a positive relationship with acculturation results. Therefore, there are four orientations of acculturation: integration; assimilation; separation; and marginalization. A study suggested that familial factors may have an impact on migrant children's acculturation (Thomson and Hoffman-Goetz 2009). Meanwhile, Cyril et al. (2016) suggested that acculturation has a direct impact on the family dynamic, which could indirectly influence children's social development. Also, previous studies demonstrated that parent-child relationships and communication could have a positive impact on social behavior with peers and children's mental health (Cheung and Cheung 2006; Diab, Palosaari, and Punamäki 2018; Khamis 2005; Punamäki 2014).

Due to the economic situation and Hukou obstacles migrant children face, the level of acculturation of migrant children certainly has a significant social impact. More specifically, the level of acculturation could have a long-term impact on migrant children's academic outcomes, mental health, and social behavior (Fang, Sun, and Yuen 2017; Cyril et al. 2016; Donato and Duncan 2011). Hence, it is important to examine the factors that could influence migrant children's acculturation. Meanwhile, most previous studies tended to highlight migrant children's outcomes in relation to their move to a new environment, such as academic outcomes (Liu, Holmes, and Albright 2015; Guo 2011), and health outcomes (Hu et al. 2018; Peng et al. 2018). Secondly, most of the studies highlighted the differences between local children and migrant children, instead of focusing strictly on migrant children. Thirdly, parents have a significant impact on children's development (Bronfenbrenner 1979). However, few studies examined the role of parents in migrant children's acculturation. Lastly, previous studies generally utilized samples from Beijing and Zhejiang Province; however, far fewer studies collected data in Shenzhen. Based on the research gaps, the research question is posited: "What is the role of parents in migrant children's acculturation in China?" In order to answer the research question, this study utilized an online survey to examine the role of the parent-child relationship and communication in relation to migrant children's acculturation.

## Literature Review

This section aims to summarize the definition of acculturation, parent-child communication, and parent-child relationships. Afterward, this section will summarize previous studies on migrant children in China and acculturation, and the role of parents in children's social development, so as to draw attention to the research gaps.

### *Conception of Acculturation*

Acculturation is an important factor relating to the exploration of a child moving to a new environment (Costigan and Dokis 2006). Additionally, acculturation is defined as how a migrant child interacts with a new social and cultural environment and its influence on individuals' attitudes and behavior (Berry et al. 2006). Hence, acculturation is a reciprocal process that involves all migrants and impacts them through cross-cultural contact (Sam 2006). Aksel et al. (2007) proposed that migrants not only experience a new geographical environment, but they must also change their various cultural, social, and psychological attitudes and beliefs. Thus, acculturation is regarded as a process of an individual to accept and acclimate to another culture through prolonged contact (Berry 1980). The phenomenon of acculturation is not unique to international migration, but also occurs in domestic movement (Fang, Sun, and Yuen 2017; Chen et al. 2019). Hence, due to the large number of migrant populations in China, it offers a salient opportunity to investigate the acculturation of migrant children in China during this transition process.

Furthermore, Berry (1980) proffered that acculturation is a process that combines remaining, rejecting, and coexisting with acceptance or rejection of a novel culture. Berry (2005) mentioned four types of orientations of acculturation: integration refers that a migrant not only remains close to their original culture, but also welcomes the new culture. Assimilation is when a migrant embraces the new culture, but rejects his/her own culture. Separation means that migrants display a strong willingness to remain true to their own culture and refuse to embrace the new culture. Lastly, marginalization refers to a migrant rejecting both the new and his/her own indigenous culture. Meanwhile, integration is regarded as the most effective tactic whereby migrant children can adapt to a new place. However, marginalization is the most ineffective strategy, where assimilation and separation tend to formulate a middle ground of acculturation (Chen et al. 2019). Previous studies also demonstrated that the longer migrant children lived in a new place, the better they adapted to the new environment (Shen and Takeuch 2001; Berry et al. 2006).

Additionally, there are many perspectives to evaluate acculturation, including public and private perceptions. The public perspective refers to education and work, while private perspective refers to social behavior and personal attitudes that lean toward an acceptance of the new environment (Fang, Sun, and Yuen 2017). Previous studies already demonstrated that acculturation may influence migrants' social behaviors as related to food preference, language, attitudes, and cultural understanding (Lim et al. 2002). Also, prior studies already proved that it also applies to the context of Chinese migration (Liu et al. 2009). For instance, Berry and Kim (1988) posited that language, especially the preference of a mother tongue or new dialect, could play a significant role in indicating the understanding of migrant children's acculturation under the social context with family and community. Applied to the case of China, although Mandarin is the official and most common language in China, there are still more than 200 dialects in China (Fang, Sun, and Yuen 2017). Thus, migrant Chinese children study Mandarin in schools, but learn to speak the local dialect in social life. Hence, the language preference represents a significant factor in migrant children's acculturation experience (Fang, Sun, and Yuen 2017). Migrant children experiencing a higher level of integration and assimilation are more likely to speak a new dialect, while children with a higher level of separation and marginalization are more likely to speak their original dialect or Mandarin (Fang, Sun, and Yuen 2017). This situation could also be applied to food preferences, attitudes, and understanding of the new culture (Fang, Sun, and Yuen 2017). Hence, this study opted to use a private perspective to examine the level of acculturation of migrant children in China.

### *Hukou and Chinese Migrants*

The Hukou system is a unique household registration system in China that was created by the government in the 1950s and was a significant factor that influences migrant families (Chen et al. 2019). This system was primarily designed to control population mobility by assigning “a residency to each person at birth, tying their rights and benefits to his/her Hukou status and location. Children’s Hukou is determined by the government according to their parents’ (until 1998, only by the mothers’) category” (Chen et al. 2019, 15). Wang (2005) suggested that migrants find it difficult to get permanent residence where they do not have their Hukou. Moreover, many migrant children could not have the same right as locals. For instance, migrant children without a local Hukou were not able to attend public schools in the city where they moved to, but only attend migrant schools (Chen et al. 2019). However, since the development of human rights, many cities now allow migrant children to attend public schools with locals (Chen et al. 2019). However, migrant children must take the university entrance exam in their hometown; therefore, migrant children are still under pressure and face obstacles. Although migrant families are facing many challenges to migrate to a larger city, there are still many migrants in China because the larger cities can offer them and their children better medical care, job opportunities, and education (Wang 2005). Therefore, migrant children face both dilemmas and opportunities to adapt to large cities, which offer a unique social context for them to acculturate. Hence, it is important to explore the correlation between acculturation and Chinese migrant children.

### *Acculturation and Migrant Children*

Although many studies focused on the acculturation of migrant children, these studies are still incomplete. Most of the studies highlight the rights of migrant children concerning social justice issues (Yuan et al. 2013) and the differences between local and migrant children in academic achievement (Chen et al. 2019). For example, Chen et al. (2019) examined the school adjustment of migrant children in China, which suggest that migrant children have better academic achievements than local students. Meanwhile, Marks, Ejesi, and García Coll (2014) found the same pattern which highlights the fact that migrant children have better school, psychological, and physical outcomes than non-migrant children, since they work harder than local students. However, Mao and Zhao (2012) expressed a contrary outcome that showed migrant children suffered from excessive academic and psychological challenges. Due to this controversy, Chen et al. (2019) explained that academic adjustment has a positive correlation with the level of acculturation. Due to the fact that migrants with a high level of acculturation are more likely to receive help from locals, migrant children with a high acculturation level have a better psychological and school adjustment pattern than those with a low level of acculturation, and more positive self-esteem and self-feelings (Chen et al. 2019). Meanwhile, previous studies also found that the differences in parent-child acculturation can trigger conflicts between migrant children and their parents (Fu Keung Wong et al. 2010) and prompt a sense of anxiety to adapt to a new environment (Farver, Narang, and Bhadha 2002). Also, Thomson and Hoffman-Goetz (2009) proffered that migrant children’s acculturation level could be significantly influenced by parents’ attitudes, beliefs, and their views of adapting to a new place. The previous studies on acculturation and migrant children are well-developed; however, fewer studies have explored the influencing factors relative to migrant children’s acculturation, especially considering the role of parents.

### *Ecological Systems Theory*

Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems theory is a well-known and useful theory that has been utilized to better understand and analyze individual social development. Bronfenbrenner (1979) postulated that cultural factors and other multiple interacting variables could have an impact on individual social development. Thus, numerous variables could influence children in which is around children themselves and in the ecologies that centers on them, such as family, school, peer relationships, culture, and beliefs along with many other factors (Bronfenbrenner 1979). Moreover, social interactions and social environment are important to an individual's social development (Bronfenbrenner 1979), due to the fact that the children's development is "a product of complex interactions between the child and his or her social environment" (Trach, Lee, and Hymel 2018, 12). Therefore, Bronfenbrenner (1979) postulated that microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem represent the five systems that could influence children's social development.

Bronfenbrenner (1979) also proposed that microsystem refers to a system containing a set of events, social roles, and interpersonal relations that are close in proximity to children, such as parents, peers, teachers, and neighbors. Mesosystem refers to a system consisting of two or more microsystems which could co-exist and together have a direct influence on children's social behavior and development (Bronfenbrenner 1979). The exosystem refers to the correlations between two or more interactions or ecologies, such as a parent's work environment, which could have an impact on children (Bronfenbrenner 1979). The macrosystem highlights the role of beliefs, culture, ideologies, and values present in all four of the systems, which tend to influence children in an indirect way (Dietrich et al. 2013). Therefore, it requires us to comprehend the culture of a new environment due to the fact that social behavior is influenced by culture (Monks et al. 2009). Although the ecological systems theory ignores children's own ability to self-reflect and influence themselves (Paquette and Ryan 2001), the theory still offers a salient opportunity to examine and understand the children's social development from a reductionist to holistic perspective.

Meanwhile, Bronfenbrenner (1979) indicated that the microsystem is the closest system which could have the most significant impact on children's social development. Ashiabi and O'Neal (2015) also proffered that parents are one of the closest variables around the children in the microsystem. Hence, this paper focused on the role of parents. Moreover, previous studies have already been proved that parent-child communication and relationships have a significant impact on children's social development (Khamis 2005; Diab, Palosaari, and Punamäki 2018). Therefore, this study primarily focused on the role of parent-child communication and parent-child relationship, which are indicative of migrant children's acculturation.

Parent-child communication is generally defined as the interaction between parents and their children in a verbal and non-verbal context (Munz 2015). Moreover, the positive parent-child communication within a family system is regarded as communication between children and their parents where they speak frequently and openly about a wide range of topics; meanwhile, they also need to have a mutual understanding which could make them feel less secluded or isolated (Ying et al. 2019). For instance, previous studies argued that parent-child communication could have a substantial impact on children's mental health (Narayan et al. 2015; Punamäki 2014). Meanwhile, Diab, Palosaari, and Punamäki (2018) also proposed that parent-child communication and children's mental health have a positive correlation. More specifically, parent-child communication has a positive influence on children's peer relationships (Khamis 2005) and parent-child relationship (Liu 2010).

Meanwhile, when considering the role of parents in children's social development, it is unavoidable to take the level of the parent-child relationship into consideration (To 2015). Overall, the studies focusing on the parent-child relationship were well-developed.

Additionally, the parent-child relationship is generally based on the quality of contact and the emotional bond between children and their parents (Lezin et al. 2004). Numerous previous studies have examined the correlation between the parent-child relationship and children's overall development. For example, Chui and Chan (2012) argued that positive parent-child relationship could inspire children to develop positive peer relationships. In addition, Chui and Chan (2012) conducted a survey with 1,377 samples in Hong Kong and determined that a positive parent-child relationship could play a role in preventing children's criminal, antisocial, and violent behavior. Thus, it could be argued that parent-child communication and their relationship could have a substantial impact on children's social development.

### ***Recent Studies on Migrant Children in China and Research Gaps***

Due to the large population of internal migrant children in China, scholars focused a significant amount on this specific group. Dan (2013) suggested that migrant children's parents usually work as low-level manual laborers due to their low education level; thus, the family endures a lower economic status and migrants have to work hard to survive with limited time to interact with their children. Consequently, increasingly more scholars have focused on migrant children's quality of life and rights. A cross-sectional survey conducted in Shaoxing, Zhejiang Province ascertained that the quality of life for migrant children could be influenced by parental characteristics (Xu et al. 2017). Parental characteristics include parental rejection or the mother's overprotection, whereas parental rejection refers to parents' strictness in dealing with their children, while the mother's overprotection incorporates a mother's over-protective nature resulting in over-controlling her children (Tie 2014). More specifically, Xu et al. (2017) postulated that parents' rejection and mother's overprotection could have a negative impact on migrant children's quality of life.

Moreover, the challenges of the Hukou system and family dynamics tend to validate various issues that migrant children face (Wang 2005; Dan 2013). Previous studies also focused more attention on migrant children's educational rights in China (Liu, Holmes, and Albright 2015) as well as health (Hu et al. 2018) and mental health issues (Liu et al. 2017; Guo et al. 2015). Ying et al. (2019) and Rodriguez et al. (2015) proffered that migrant children's perceived economic pressure could influence their mental health as related to parent-child communication or relationship issues. For instance, migrant children in China often suffer from depression, more so than local students. Moreover, the parent-child relationship could have a significant impact on the level of severity of depression among Chinese migrant children (McCarty et al. 2005; George, Herman, and Ostrander 2006). Besides, gender is also a factor that could influence migrant children's sense of depression. More specifically, Wang and Liu (2019) determined that male migrant children are more unlikely than girls to experience bouts of depression. Ultimately, based on empirical studies, it could be argued that parents play a significant role in migrant children's social development in China.

Previous studies on Chinese migrant children are well developed; however, most of the studies only focused on the migrant children's rights and mental health (Xu et al. 2017; Hu et al. 2018), with fewer studies focusing on the adaptation of Chinese migrant children. Meanwhile, previous studies on migrant children's adaptation primarily looked at the effect of acculturation and the differences between local and migrant children in school adjustment (Chen et al. 2019), but fewer studies examined the role of parents in migrant children's acculturation. Moreover, Liu, Holmes, and Albright (2015) utilized the multivariate regression method and found that individual characteristics, the parent situation, and school types play a significant role in migrant children's scholastic outcomes. This aligns with Guo's (2011) finding that the family's economic status plays a role in migrant children's academic results. More specifically, the family's income level and migrant children's test grades have a positive correlation (Guo 2011). Furthermore, children's social development is deeply influenced by their parents, while the

parent-child relationship and migrant children's test outcomes have a positive relationship (Lau and Leung 1992). Meanwhile, increasingly more scholars have begun to focus on the health of migrant children. For instance, Hu et al. (2018) found that migrant children from lower-income families suffer more from unintentional injuries. This is partially in line with Peng et al.'s (2018) finding that Chinese migrant children's health could be influenced by parents' income or economic status. Meanwhile, most of the previous studies were conducted in Beijing and Zhejiang Province (Liu et al. 2017; Xu et al. 2017); however, no studies were conducted in Shenzhen, which has the largest migrant population in China (National Bureau of Statistics of China 2012). Hence, this study conducted an online survey with migrant children in Shenzhen to provide more insight into whether the parents play a role in migrant children's acculturation.

## Methodology

To answer the research question, namely, what is the role of parent-child communication and relationship in migrant children's acculturation in China, this study utilized quantitative methods. This methodology highlights the objective measurements and the statistical, mathematical, or numerical analysis of samples collected by surveys or questionnaires, to answer the research question (Babbie 2010). Also, this method is useful to explain a specific situation across a group of persons (Babbie 2010). Hence, this study followed the suggestions of Ying et al. (2019), Xu et al. (2017), and Guo et al. (2015) to conduct a survey to answer the research question. Kuechler (1998) posited that a survey represents a handful of methods to examine attitudes, beliefs, opinions, and behaviors. However, due to the influence of COVID-19, it was difficult to collect data face-to-face; thus, this study utilized an online survey focusing on migrant children who are living in Shenzhen, which is one of the cities with the most migrant people in China. Additionally, the questionnaire was posted on a popular Chinese online questionnaire platform, namely, Wenjuanxing (问卷星).

## *Samples and Data Collection*

This study used cross-sectional sampling by sending questionnaires to 100 migrant children from March 2020 to June 2020, and seventy-eight students submitted their answers. However, excluding some invalid questionnaires that were not fully completed, sixty-five migrant children completed the online survey, consisting of thirty-four boys and thirty-one girls. The researcher made contact with many migrant schools' headmasters in Shenzhen. The purpose and aim of the study were introduced to them and permission was acquired from five migrant schools. However, since there are numerous migrant children schools in Shenzhen (due to the large number of migrants), this study selected two migrant schools which were the most accessible. Meanwhile, the study required that the participants had to complete the survey independently without the influence of their teachers or parents (Gallagher 2009), which aims to ensure that the children could answer the questions objectively without extraneous interference. Therefore, the study selected migrant children from grade four to grade nine in both primary and junior schools to ensure all the children who participated were old enough to understand the questions (Field and Behrman 2004), and could complete the survey independently and answer the questions correctly.

Furthermore, the selected participants were required to have lived in Shenzhen for at least six months but have a permanent household registration (Hukou) outside Shenzhen (Peng et al. 2018). Meanwhile, these selected participants were also required to live with their parents in Shenzhen, with at least one of their parents not holding a Shenzhen Hukou. The reason for these requirements is due to the definition of migrant children in China, whereby the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China (2016) defined migrant children who left their hometown and moved to a larger city with their parents for at least six months. Moreover, they

had to be between seven to 14 years of age and have the ability to study. Zhou and Shan's (2011) study also followed this definition of migrant children and had the same requirement for their participants.

Meanwhile, in order to increase the validity and reliability of the study, the study controlled some demographic variables. This study controlled the time duration after their relocation that all the participants have lived in Shenzhen for no more than two years. Previous studies determined that the length of time since the relocation and the level of acculturation have a positive correlation (Shen and Takeuch 2001; Berry et al. 2006). Hence, it aimed to minimize the influence of time by avoiding children who have lived in Shenzhen for an extensive period of time in that they have already adapted to Shenzhen. This study also controlled gender variables since it examined the role of parents' involvement in Chinese migrant children's acculturation. Shao et al. (2018) proffered that gender differences have a significant influence on the parent-child relationship. Hence, it is crucial to balance the number of male and female migrant children to control gender differences. Therefore, this study required a class tutor to give both male and female migrant children an equal opportunity to complete the questionnaire. Moreover, Guo et al. (2015) proposed that the age differences in children would have an impact on the parent-child relationship. Hence, the study sent fifty questionnaires to both primary and junior migrant schools to maintain a balanced survey.

## ***Measurement***

### **Demographic Information**

The study collected a number of demographic variables including gender (male, female, not willing to say), age (7 to 14) and grade (from grade four to grade nine) and duration since they moved (from six months and two years).

### **The Acculturation Scale for Migrant Children**

This study followed Fang, Sun, and Yuen's (2017) suggestion to utilize The Acculturation Scale for Migrant Children to measure the level of acculturation. This scale includes twenty items that measure integration, assimilation, separation, and marginalization, aiming to evaluate cultural and behavioral manifestations of adaptation, including language/dialect use, social networking, self-identity, and lifestyle. Meanwhile, the Cronbach's alpha for the total scale for their study was set at 0.75, while the subscales of the alphas were established as follows: integration (0.75); assimilation (0.79); separation (0.72); and marginalization (0.83), which were acceptable to measure the variables.

### **Measures of Parent-Child Communication**

The study followed Su et al.'s (2013) study to utilize the scale of parent-child communication. This scale contains five items to evaluate the frequency of father-child communication and mother-child communication. Furthermore, the scale requires children to answer questions that relate to how often (1 = never, 2 = sometimes, 3 = often) they communicate with their father and mother by taking five different aspects (daily life, academics, interpersonal interaction, safety and emotional issues) into consideration. The grade and the frequency of the parent-child communication reflected a positive relationship. Although the Cronbach's alpha of the mother-child communication for this scale was 0.65, there were fewer previous studies that measured parent-child communication; therefore, this paper still followed this scale. Meanwhile, the Cronbach's alpha of father-child communication was 0.70.

### **Child-Parent Relationship Scale**

This study followed Pianta's (1992) Child-Parent Relationship Scale to measure the child-parent relationship. However, in this study, the children were approached to answer the questionnaire instead of the parents. Hence, appropriate changes were made to the object of the questions while questions deemed not fit for the migrant children were deleted. The scale utilized the 5-point Likert scale, while the scores and relationships had a positive correlation. Cronbach's alpha for the mother-child relationships was set at 0.75 and 0.76 for the father-child relationships for his study. Hence, this study concluded that a Trust Scale had to be followed.

### ***Ethical Consideration***

UNICEF (n.d.) suggested that migrant children represent a vulnerable group since they are more likely to face abuse, discrimination, and less time with their parents. Therefore, this study places a high value on ethical issues in conducting research related to migrant children in order to avoid ethical harm. This meant that informed consent forms were disseminated and collected from the schools, class tutors, children's parents/guardians, and the children themselves, respectively. Since the recruitment process was initiated with the teachers and children at the school, the researcher followed the suggestions from Gallagher (2009) to prepare three versions of the research leaflet and informed consent forms in advance (respectively for the school, parents and children). The research leaflet is to introduce the terms, nature, purposes, benefits, and risks of this study to the school, class tutor, and children, and informed them of their right to voluntarily participate in the study. If the children were interested, they were invited to take the informed consent forms and research leaflet back home to their parents. The study received ethical approval from all schools' administrators, class tutors, children's parents/guardians, and the children themselves.

Meanwhile, the possibility existed that some of the questions may have triggered negative memories and emotions in the migrant children with regard to their parents and negative experiences, especially since the migrant children may have experienced some conflict with their parents (Dan 2013) and face discrimination and prejudice (Sun 2006). Therefore, the study also listed a note on the first page of the questionnaire that informed them of their right to withdraw whenever they felt uncomfortable. Moreover, the survey also offered a helpline to a local migrant children support organization and researcher's contact information on each page of the questionnaire (Boscarino et al. 2004), to ensure they received appropriate assistance when they encounter negative feelings. Furthermore, the study also gained help from the school in that the class tutors monitored all the participants' feelings and emotions after they completed the survey (Labott et al. 2016). Meanwhile, the study promised that all the questionnaires were anonymous, and any identifying details would be avoided and not be released to their parents, teachers, or any other individual. Moreover, this study promises that all raw data would remain confidential and be stored safely.

### **Result and Discussion**

This section will display the results of the data analysis and discuss the reasons behind. The section begins with the demographic information of the data; afterwards, this section will list the results of the role of parent-child communication and parent-child relationship in acculturation respectively, with consideration given to the moderate role of age and gender. The study controls accounted for the length of time after the migrant children had relocated to Shenzhen in all analyses.

**Demographic Results**

Table 1 and Table 2 illustrated that this study used sixty-five migrant children from Shenzhen as samples, consisting of thirty-one girls and thirty-four boys. The average age of the samples was 12 and the average school grade level of the samples was 6. In terms of the girls, their average age was 11.9 with an average grade of 6.1, while the minimum age was 9 and the maximum age 14. Additionally, the highest-grade level was 9 and the lowest 4. In terms of the boys, their average age was 12.3, with an average grade level of 6.4. Meanwhile, the maximum age was 14 and the minimum age 9, while the highest-grade level was 9 and the lowest 4.

Table 1: Sample Description

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std.Dev.	Min	Max
Age	65	12.062	1.609	9	15
Grade	65	6.262	1.544	4	9
Gender (Male)	65	0.523	0.503	0	1

Source: Zhang and Zhang

Table 2: The Differences between Male Children and Female Migrant Children

		N	Mean	sd	Min	Max
<b>Girls</b>	Age	31	11.839	1.573	9	14
	Grade	31	6.097	1.535	4	9
	Integration	31	15.387	2.348	8	20
	Assimilation	31	16.226	4.169	5	20
	Separation	31	10.903	3.37	5	20
	Marginalization	31	7.484	3.335	5	20
	Father-communication	31	13.613	2.319	8	15
	Mother-communication	31	14.226	1.687	9	15
<b>Boys</b>	Relationship	31	40.484	4.76	30	51
	Age	34	12.265	1.639	9	15
	Grade	34	6.412	1.559	4	9
	Integration	34	16	2.449	10	20
	Assimilation	34	14.235	3.955	8	20
	Separation	34	11.941	3.717	5	20
	Marginalization	34	8.765	4.593	5	20
	Father Communication	34	12.412	2.204	9	15
<b>Boys</b>	Mother Communication	34	13.441	1.691	9	15
	Relationship	34	38.029	6.626	25	52

Source: Zhang and Zhang

Fang, Sun, and Yuen (2017) proffered that each scale of “The Acculturation Scale for Migrant Children” has a positive relationship, which means the higher the children’s grade level, the better the level of the migrant children they have in this scale. Hence, Table 2 refers to the boys’ level of integration (M = 16), which was slightly higher than the girls’ (M = 15.4). That said, the girls’ assimilation level (M = 16.2) was higher than the boys’ (M = 14.2). Meanwhile, the boys’ level of separation (M = 11.9) was higher than the girls’ (M = 10.9), and the girls’ marginalization level (M = 7.5) was lower than the boys’ (M = 8.8). Hence, there is a

difference in the level of acculturation, which is aligned with Chen et al.'s (2019) findings. Besides, this study determined that female migrant children are more likely to have better acceptations of the new culture in new places, whereas boys are more likely to have a higher level of integration, marginalization, and separation. This also corresponds to Diaz et al.'s (2009) study that proffered that girls are more likely to accept a new culture, due to the fact that female children have a more positive attitude and a stronger willingness to accept a new culture; they also exhibit a better normative influence than boys. Meanwhile, this study also ascertained that boys are more likely to maintain their original culture than girls, which mirrors Tang and Dion's (1999) finding. As with this study, other researchers also determined that the male Chinese migrants prefer to adhere to their original culture or are more traditional than the females (Tang and Dion 1999; Kulis et al. 2007). Hence, Kulis et al. (2007) argued that acculturation influences the extent to which a person adheres to the gender roles prescribed by the culture of origin and, thus, it influences the extent to which substance use norms and behaviors vary by gender. Hence, this study suggests that gender is an indicator to influence children's level of assimilation.

However, some feel it is debatable and that female migrant children may actually struggle to adapt (Kulis et al. 2007). For example, female migrants may face physical changes and depression when going through adolescence, such as experiencing menses and breast development, which may have a negative impact on their social behavior and adaption (LeCroy and Daley 2001; Kulis et al. 2007). It is partially suited to this study that girls are more unlikely to accept their original culture; however, it could be argued that previous studies did not evaluate females' orientation of acculturation. Hence, gender indeed influences the process of acculturation of Chinese migrant children (Tang and Dion 1999).

Moreover, Table 2 also demonstrates that female migrant children have better and more communication with their parents than male migrant children. The average points given for communication between the girls and their fathers were 13.6, and between them and their mothers 14.2. However, the average points given for communication between the boys and their fathers were 12.4, and their mothers 13.4. Therefore, it shows that migrant children have better communication with their mothers as compared to their fathers. Lastly, Table 2 reveals that female migrant children ( $M = 40.5$ ) have a better relationship with their parents than male migrant children ( $M = 38.0$ ). Therefore, this study also found that female migrant children are more likely to have a superior relationship and communication with their parents than boys. This aligns with Nolin and Petersen's (1992) finding that girls appear to engage in more open communication with their parents. Meanwhile, previous studies also indicate that when girls communicate with their parents, they are actively discussing and negotiating with their parents, while boys are more coercive (Fitzpatrick and Vangelisti 1995). Therefore, parents tend to give more parental affection and interact more verbally with their daughters than sons (Fitzpatrick et al. 1996). Hence, it is unsurprising that female migrant children are more likely to have a superior relationship and communication with their parents.

### **Parent-Child Communication and Acculturation**

Table 3 illustrates that both the father-child communication and mother-child communication play a role in migrant children's assimilation. More specifically, in the regression table,  $R^2 = 0.442$  refers to the regression relationship that can explain the 44.2 percent variation of the dependent variable. Moreover, Table 3 demonstrates that mother-child communication could have an impact on assimilation ( $p < 0.05$ ) and father-child communication has a significant impact on assimilation ( $p < 0.01$ ). However, Table 3 also illustrates that both mother-child communication and father-child communication have no effect on integration, separation, or marginalization. Parent-child communication refers to the verbal and non-verbal interaction between children and their parents (Munz 2015), which could have a significant impact on

children’s social development (Bronfenbrenner 1979). Previous studies proved that parent-child communication could influence children’s peer and parent relationships (Khamis 2005; Liu et al. 2010), which could enable children to have more confidence and tolerance when confronting new issues. Thus, parent-child communication could have an impact on children’s acceptance level of a new culture.

Table 3: The Role of Parent-Child Communication in Acculturation

	<b>Integration</b>	<b>Assimilation</b>	<b>Separation</b>	<b>Marginalization</b>
Father Communication	-0.084 (-0.447)	0.892*** (3.223)	0.043 (0.155)	-0.022 (-0.069)
Mother Communication	-0.082 (-0.324)	-0.646* (-1.737)	-0.222 (-0.597)	-0.036 (-0.083)
Gender (male)	0.098 (0.159)	-1.837** (-2.043)	0.875 (0.972)	0.724 (0.689)
Age	0.183 (1.000)	0.799*** (2.976)	-0.883*** (-3.284)	-0.508 (-1.620)
Constant	14.370*** (3.907)	4.792 (0.890)	26.510*** (4.918)	20.958*** (3.331)
Observations	65	65	65	65
R-squared	0.224	0.442	0.243	0.206

t-statistics in parentheses  
 \*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1  
 Source: Zhang and Zhang

Table 4 shows that age did not have any moderating effect on the relationship between parent-child communication and integration. Yet, in the regression relationship, age did have a significant moderating effect on the relationship between father-child communication and assimilation ( $p < 0.01$ ) or separation ( $p < 0.05$ ). However, age had no moderating effect on the relationship between mother-child communication and assimilation or separation. Lastly, age had no moderating effect on the relationship between parent-child communication and marginalization. Although a previous study suggested that age and frequency of parent-child communication have a positive relationship (Ojebuyi, Fagbamigbe, and Akinola 2019), children decrease the frequencies of communication with their parents during adolescence (Keijsers and Poulin 2013). Keijsers and Poulin (2013) also proffered that the parents lose their parental control during their children’s adolescence, since children have a strong willingness to be independent at that age. For example, they may not completely follow the father’s rules or even oppose their parents’ suggestions purposefully (Keijsers and Poulin 2013). The age of the samples in this study ranges from 9 to 14, which means that most of them are in adolescence. Overall, this study determined that during father-child communication with the moderating effect of age, migrant children may totally accept new cultures but will reject the original culture (assimilation); or reject the new culture but totally accept their indigenous culture (separation). Hence, it could be argued that father-child communication is more authoritarian and solution-oriented (Fitzpatrick and Vangelisti 1995; Block 1983), yet adolescent children usually oppose their parents and have more extreme thinking (Keijsers and Poulin 2013). Therefore, age could play a moderating role in the relationship between father-child communication and separation or assimilation.

Table 4: The Role of Parent-Child Communication in Acculturation with the Moderating Effect of Age

	<b>Integration</b>	<b>Assimilation</b>	<b>Separation</b>	<b>Marginalization</b>
Father communication	-1.257 (-0.789)	-5.099** (-2.377)	4.698** (2.148)	1.283 (0.469)
Mother communication	0.506 (0.242)	1.988 (0.705)	-0.977 (-0.340)	-1.009 (-0.281)
Father communication_age	0.101 (0.734)	0.514*** (2.783)	-0.397** (-2.108)	-0.113 (-0.479)
Mother communication_age	-0.054 (-0.297)	-0.243 (-0.996)	0.078 (0.315)	0.087 (0.280)
Gender (male)	0.080 (0.125)	-1.899** (-2.211)	0.818 (0.934)	0.770 (0.704)
age	-0.396 (-0.236)	-2.602 (-1.150)	3.281 (1.423)	-0.237 (-0.082)
Constant	21.549 (1.067)	46.709* (1.718)	-24.156 (-0.871)	17.417 (0.502)
Observations	65	65	65	65
R-squared	0.234	0.534	0.344	0.209

Source: Zhang and Zhang

Meanwhile, this study also evaluated the moderating effect of gender. Table 5 reflects that only the male gender played a moderating role in the relationship between father-communication and assimilation ( $p < 0.05$ ), while it had a zero moderating role in the relationship between mother-child communication and assimilation. Moreover, gender did not play any moderating role in parent-child communication with respect to integration, separation, and marginalization, respectively. Hence, it could be argued that gender only moderates the relationship between father-communication and assimilation. It is partly the same as Kim et al.'s (2009) research that only fathers play a significant role in children's acculturation. This could be explained by the different parenting styles between the mother and father. For instance, the previous study found that the father is more likely to give instrumental feedback and offer solutions to their children if their children face problems (Fitzpatrick and Vangelisti 1995). Additionally, Chinese fathers are more authoritarian than mothers when they communicate with their children (Block 1983). Thus, when children face adaptation problems, they may tend to follow the father's guidance more than the mother's, since fathers are much more authoritarian and solution-oriented, whereas mothers focus more on the emotion of the children, and try to make excuses for their children (Fitzpatrick and Vangelisti 1995; Block 1983).

Table 5: The Role of Parent-Child Communication in Acculturation with the Moderating Effect of Gender

	<b>Integration</b>	<b>Assimilation</b>	<b>Separation</b>	<b>Marginalization</b>
Father-communication	-0.167	0.459	0.370	0.132
	(-0.739)	(1.431)	(1.135)	(0.335)
Mother-communication	-0.305	-0.643	-0.089	0.023
	(-0.978)	(-1.456)	(-0.199)	(0.043)
Father-communication Gender (male)	0.090	1.146**	-0.788	-0.375
	(0.231)	(2.075)	(-1.404)	(-0.551)
Mother-communication Gender (male)	0.526	-0.348	-0.097	-0.036
	(0.987)	(-0.460)	(-0.126)	(-0.039)
Gender (male)	-8.397	-11.844	12.444*	6.086
	(-1.650)	(-1.642)	(1.697)	(0.685)
age	0.245	0.782***	-0.910***	-0.520
	(1.291)	(2.903)	(-3.319)	(-1.567)
	(0.857)	(-0.558)	(0.721)	(-0.164)
Constant	19.018***	11.314*	19.510***	17.704**
	(4.187)	(1.758)	(2.980)	(2.234)
Observations	65	65	65	65
R-squared	0.264	0.504	0.306	0.217

Source: Zhang and Zhang

### Parent-Child Relationship and Acculturation

Table 6 illustrates that parent-child relationship had no impact on all four orientations of acculturation ( $p > 0.05$ ), even though parent-child communication had a significant impact on the children’s social development (To 2015). However, it could be argued that their parents have less time to accompany with their children, due to the fact that migrant children’s parents are usually low-educated and work as low-level manual laborers (Dan 2013). Thus, the migrant children seek companionship elsewhere, thereby spending more time with peers or someone else. Meanwhile, as Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) ecological systems theory suggests, children could be influenced by many ecologies including peers, teachers, parents, communities, etc. Therefore, it could be inferred that the impact of peers on children is becoming increasingly more significant than parents in recent years, since students are spending more time at school with their peers (Bao et al. 2015). Hence, the effect of the parent-child relationship may be minimized since they spend less time with their children.

Table 6: The Role of the Parent-Child Relationship in Acculturation

	<b>Integration</b>	<b>Assimilation</b>	<b>Separation</b>	<b>Marginalization</b>
Relationship	0.002	0.110	-0.074	-0.105
	(0.037)	(1.387)	(-1.006)	(-1.244)
Gender (male)	0.274	-2.442**	0.824	0.580
	(0.464)	(-2.646)	(0.963)	(0.586)
age	0.164	1.010***	-0.888***	-0.531*
	(0.915)	(3.615)	(-3.428)	(-1.772)
Constant	12.703***	1.927	27.115***	24.064***
	(3.536)	(0.344)	(5.218)	(4.002)
Observations	65	65	65	65
R-squared	0.210	0.355	0.250	0.226

t-statistics in parentheses  
 \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*  $p < 0.1$

Source: Zhang and Zhang

The study also took age as a consideration to evaluate whether age could play a moderating role in relation to parent-child relationships and migrant children's acculturation. Table 7 demonstrates that age only plays a moderating role in the correlation between parent-child relationship and separation ( $p < 0.05$ ). However, age has a zero impact on the correlation between parent-child relationships and integration, assimilation, and marginalization, respectively. Clarke et al. (1999) postulated that age and parent-child relationships have a negative relationship. Therefore, this study surmises that the older the migrant children, the less likely they are to have a close relationship with their parents and the more they will miss their hometown. However, this study still cannot offer solid evidence as to why age could play a moderating role in the relationship between parent-child relationships and separation.

Table 7: The Role of Parent-Child Relationship in Acculturation with the Moderation of Age

	<b>Integration</b>	<b>Assimilation</b>	<b>Separation</b>	<b>Marginalization</b>
Relationship	0.482	-0.348	1.093**	0.181
	(1.434)	(-0.656)	(2.330)	(0.317)
Relationship_ Age	-0.039	0.037	-0.095**	-0.023
	(-1.444)	(0.872)	(-2.516)	(-0.507)
Gender (male)	0.232	-2.402**	0.722	0.555
	(0.396)	(-2.594)	(0.882)	(0.556)
age	1.734	-0.487	2.931*	0.406
	(1.574)	(-0.280)	(1.906)	(0.217)
Constant	-6.387	20.121	-19.305	12.672
	(-0.467)	(0.932)	(-1.010)	(0.544)
Observations	65	65	65	65
R-squared	0.239	0.364	0.326	0.230

Source: Zhang and Zhang

This study also reviewed gender as a consideration to examine its moderating role in migrant children's acculturation and parent-child relationship. As Table 8 indicates, gender had no moderating effect on the relationship between parent-child relationship and integration, assimilation, separation, and marginalization. Although gender could indirectly influence the relationship between children and parents (Shao et al. 2018), gender has no impact on parent-child relationship and acculturation.

Table 8: The Role of the Parent-Child Relationship in Acculturation with the Moderation of Gender

	<b>Integration</b>	<b>Assimilation</b>	<b>Separation</b>	<b>Marginalization</b>
Relationship	-0.075	0.127	0.090	-0.034
	(-0.861)	(0.926)	(0.726)	(-0.233)
Relationship_Gender (male)	0.118	-0.027	-0.253	-0.110
	(1.083)	(-0.158)	(-1.618)	(-0.596)
Gender (male)	-4.443	-1.360	10.895*	4.955
	(-1.010)	(-0.196)	(1.735)	(0.669)
age	0.180	1.006***	-0.923***	-0.547*
	(1.006)	(3.557)	(-3.603)	(-1.807)
Constant	15.934***	1.186	20.218***	21.067***
	(3.415)	(0.161)	(3.033)	(2.678)
Observations	65	65	65	65
R-squared	0.226	0.356	0.284	0.231

Source: Zhang and Zhang

Overall, although the study could not ascertain a correlation between parent-child relationships and acculturation, it did determine that parent-child communication could play a role in migrant children's assimilation (this study argues that this is not an opposing view). Dan (2013) proposed that Chinese migrants are usually busy making a living with limited time to spend with their children. Consequently, this study suggests that it increases the influence of peer relationships since they spend more time with their peers than their parents, yet it could also lead to migrant children valuing any opportunity to communicate with their parents. Therefore, this situation could increase the impact of parent-child communication. Meanwhile, this paper surprisingly found that the father plays a larger role in migrant children's acculturation compared to the mother (Kim et al. 2009), due to the differences in parental styles. Hence, this study suggests that parents, especially fathers, need to pay more attention to their children and frequently communicate with their children when the children have recently moved to a new place.

Furthermore, it is undeniable that the process of acculturation is a changeable process rather than fixed. Hence, migrant children's attitudes towards acculturation could be influenced by gender and could also alter due to maturing. In conclusion, the parents need to be aware of their communication and parental style as well as the development of their children to facilitate proper acculturation in the new environment.

## Limitations

Although this study attempted to control the variables, it is the first study to examine the role of parents in migrant children's acculturation, which presented some drawbacks. On the one hand, this study only had sixty-five samples. Compared to the large number of migrant children, the sample size is small, which means it cannot guarantee that the findings reflect the overall situation in China. Meanwhile, due to the influence of COVID-19, this study was conducted through an online survey. Although the study required all the participants to complete the survey independently, it is still possible that the parents or teachers interfered while the children undertook the survey. Therefore, these factors may influence the validity of the research. On the other hand, as Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems theory suggests, children could be influenced by multiple levels and ecologies, and those ecologies could co-exist and collectively influence children. Moreover, this study controlled the time duration of the migrant children's move to Shenzhen since the length of time could also influence migrant children's acculturation (Shen and Takeuch 2001; Berry et al. 2006). Thus, it is challenging to control all the variables, such as the family's economic status, peer relationships, community situations, which may have influenced the study's reliability and validity. Meanwhile, it is worth noting that Cronbach's alpha of mother-child communication was below 0.7, which makes it relatively less valid. Yet, since there are few empirical studies to evaluate parent-child communication, this study still regards it as a reliable scale to follow even though it is recognized as one of the limitations of this study. Finally, although this paper has these limitations, it could still contribute to understanding the role of parent-child communication and parent-child relationships in migrant children's acculturation in China.

## Conclusion

Migrants have become a global issue in many developing countries since the industrial development and China, as the biggest country, is no exception. There are approximately 30 million are migrant children that have moved from the rural to urban areas in the last few decades (National Bureau of Statistics 2015). Empirical studies determined that migrant children face academic and health struggles when they move to a new city (Liu, Holmes, and Albright 2015; Guo 2011; Hu et al. 2018; Peng et al. 2018). Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological

systems theory suggests that the parent, as the closest ecology, could play a significant role in children's social development. However, to date, there have been no studies that examined the role of parents in migrant children's acculturation. Meanwhile, there is evidence that proves that parent-child communication and relationships play a substantial role in migrant children's social development (Khamis 2005; Diab, Palosaari, and Punamäki 2018). Therefore, this study utilized an online survey to determine the role of parent-child relationship and communication in migrant children's acculturation.

Overall, this study recruited sixty-five migrant children as samples in Shenzhen: thirty-one girls and thirty-four boys. Meanwhile, this study ascertained that gender differences play a role in acculturation. Female migrant children are more likely to accept new cultures, while male migrant children prefer to retain their original culture (Tang and Dion 1999). Meanwhile, the study found that both the mother-child communication and their relationship could have an impact on assimilation. It was also surprising to find that fathers play a more significant role in migrant children's acculturation (Kim et al. 2009) since the father is more authoritarian and solution-oriented in comparison to their mother (Fitzpatrick and Vangelisti 1995; Block 1983). Moreover, parent-child relationships had no effect on acculturation since the migrant children's parents spend a limited amount of time with them. In a word, this study suggests that the process of acculturation is a changeable process rather than fixed, which means ageing and other physiological developments during adolescence will influence acculturation.

Although this study has drawbacks, it could still offer a fresh idea reflecting the influencing factors on migrant children's acculturation. For future studies, this paper suggests utilizing mixed quantitative and qualitative studies to examine the role of parents in migrant children's acculturation. Furthermore, future studies could use more samples to generalize the situation of China and utilize interviews to more systematically explore the role of parents in the process of acculturation.

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### Appendix A: Consent Form

Consent to take part in [Migrant children’s acculturation in China: The Roles of Parent-Child Communication and Parent-Child Relationship]

	Add your initials next to the statements you agree with
I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet/ letter explaining the above research project and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the project.	
I agree for the data collected from me to be stored and used in relevant future research in an anonymized form.	
I understand that relevant sections of the data collected during the study, may be looked at by individuals from the University of Leeds or from regulatory authorities where it is relevant to my taking part in this research. I give permission for these individuals to have access to my records.	
I agree to take part in the above research project and will inform the lead researcher should my contact details change.	
I understand that my participation is voluntary and I am free to withdraw from the project at any time without giving any reason. Data provided after withdrawal from the study will be destroyed and will not be used in future studies. Contact number: +(86) 13147092186 Email: ml18y69z@leeds.ac.uk	
Name of participant	
Participant’s signature	
Date	

Note: In the field work, the consent form was given in Chinese.

Once this has been signed by all parties the participant will receive a copy of the signed and dated participant consent form, the letter/ pre-written script/ information sheet and any other written information provided to the participants. A copy of the signed and dated consent form will be kept with the project’s main documents which must be kept in a secure location.

## Appendix B: Acculturation Scale

(1) Strongly disagree (2) Disagree (3) Agree (4) Strongly agree

Integration	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. I am comfortable speaking the dialects of both the city and my hometown.</li> <li>2. I am equally adjusted to the city and my hometown.</li> <li>3. I enjoy the food in the city and my hometown.</li> <li>4. I am familiar with the customs in both the city and my hometown.</li> <li>5. I enjoy spending time with friends from both the city and my hometown.</li> </ol>	
Assimilation	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. I am more comfortable speaking the dialect of the city than my hometown.</li> <li>2. I am more adjusted to the city than my hometown.</li> <li>3. I prefer food in the city than my hometown.</li> <li>4. I am more familiar with customs in the city than my hometown.</li> <li>5. I feel closer to people in the city than my hometown.</li> </ol>	
Separation	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. I am more comfortable speaking the dialect of my hometown.</li> <li>2. I have more close friends and relatives in my hometown.</li> <li>3. I prefer spending time with friends from my hometown.</li> <li>4. I am not used to the food in the city.</li> <li>5. I am more attached to the people from my hometown.</li> </ol>	
Marginalization	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. I feel that I neither belong to the city nor my hometown.</li> <li>2. I dislike the surroundings of the city or my hometown.</li> <li>3. I am not adjusted to the city or my hometown.</li> <li>4. I am not comfortable speaking the dialects of the city or my hometown.</li> <li>5. It is difficult for me to make friends in the city or my hometown.</li> </ol>	

Note: In the field work, the consent form was given in Chinese.

## Appendix C: Parent-Child Communication Scale

Scale: Does your parent usually communicate the following things with you? Would you please indicate how often they communicate with you on each item by entering a number alongside it according to the following code?

1=never; 2=sometimes; 3= often.

Questions	Father	Mother
1. Daily life (e.g. food, clothing, living)		
2. Academics		
3. Interpersonal interaction (e.g. making friends)		
4. Safety (e.g. health, personal safety)		
5. Emotional issues (e.g. happiness, loneliness)		

Note: In the field work, the scale was in given in Chinese.

### Appendix D: Child-Parent Relationship Scale

Please reflect on the degree to which each of the following statements currently applies to your relationship with your parents. Using the scale below, circle the appropriate number for each item.

Definitely does not apply 1	Not really 2	Neutral, not sure 3	Applies somewhat 4	Definitely applies 5				
1.	I share an affectionate, warm relationship with my parents.			1	2	3	4	5
2.	My parents and I always seem to be struggling with each other.			1	2	3	4	5
3.	If upset, my parents will seek comfort from me.			1	2	3	4	5
4.	My parents are uncomfortable with physical affection or touch from me.			1	2	3	4	5
5.	My parents value his/her relationship with me.			1	2	3	4	5
6.	My parents spontaneously share information about himself/herself.			1	2	3	4	5
7.	My parents easily become angry at me.			1	2	3	4	5
8.	It is easy to be in tune with what my parents is feeling.			1	2	3	4	5
9.	Dealing with my parents drains my energy.			1	2	3	4	5
10.	When my parents are in a bad mood, I know we're in for a long and difficult day.			1	2	3	4	5
11.	My parents' feelings toward me can be unpredictable or can change suddenly.			1	2	3	4	5
12.	My parents openly share his/her feelings and experiences with me.			1	2	3	4	5

Note: In the field work, the scale was in given in Chinese.

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