

The role of an ethnic sporting event in post-COVID-19 recovery: revitalizing minds through promotive factors and resilience

International
Journal of Event
and Festival
Management

Kyu-soo Chung

*WellStar College of Health and Human Services, Kennesaw State University,
Kennesaw, Georgia, USA*

Wonju Lee

Clemson University, Clemson, South Carolina, USA

Wonjun Choi

University of New Hampshire, Durham, New Hampshire, USA

Sungjai Hong

James Madison University, Harrisonburg, Virginia, USA, and

Seonghun Lee

Wagner College, Staten Island, New York, USA

Received 11 June 2025
Revised 4 November 2025
4 March 2026
1 April 2026
Accepted 4 April 2026

Abstract

Purpose – The 2023 Korean American National Sports Festival served as a platform to showcase participants' resilience to the COVID-19 pandemic and its aftermath as well as to promote resilience. Employing the compensatory model of resilience theory, this study aimed to examine how an ethnic sporting event's promotive factors, including ethnic identity and perceived benefits, are associated with participants' resilience to COVID-19 and their mental health.

Design/methodology/approach – Five researchers employed a convenience sampling approach for on-site data collection at the 2023 Korean American National Sports Festival in New York City, held from June 23 to 25, 2023. A self-administered survey resulted in 193 usable responses from Korean Americans, with the data analyzed using structural equation modeling.

Findings – The results indicated that ethnic identity had a positive influence on perceived community resilience, which in turn led to increased subjective well-being. In addition, the physical health benefits of the event enhanced both individual and community resilience and reduced anxiety levels. Community resilience has a mediating role in the relationship between ethnic identity and subjective well-being.

Originality/value – This study demonstrates that ethnic sporting events not only serve as platforms for cultural cohesion but also function as vital tools for promoting mental health within diasporic communities. As small- and medium-scale ethnic sports festivals continue to evolve, ensuring their social inclusivity and expanding collaboration with regional ethnic organizations will be key strategies for enhancing the mobilization of ethnic resources and sustaining community well-being.

Keywords Ethnic sporting events, Resilience theory, Promotive factors, Event benefits, Ethnic identity, Mental health

Paper type Research article

Introduction

Asian Americans living in host societies often face a range of economic, social, and cultural barriers. As they navigate these challenges, many may experience mental health issues,

© Kyu-soo Chung, Wonju Lee, Wonjun Choi, Sungjai Hong and Seonghun Lee. Published by Emerald Publishing Limited. This article is published under the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY 4.0) licence. Anyone may reproduce, distribute, translate and create derivative works of this article (for both commercial and non-commercial purposes), subject to full attribution to the original publication and authors. The full terms of this licence may be seen at <http://creativecommons.org/licences/by/4.0/>



International Journal of Event and
Festival Management
Emerald Publishing Limited
e-ISSN: 1758-2962
p-ISSN: 1758-2954
DOI 10.1108/IJEFM-06-2025-0081

including decreased subjective well-being and heightened levels of anxiety and depression (Alegria *et al.*, 2014; Brance *et al.*, 2023; Yoon and Lee, 2010). Such vulnerability was even further exposed during the COVID-19 pandemic, with Asian American communities being disproportionately affected by economic strain, social isolation, and health-related fears (Krannich and Massey, 2024). In addition, mental health and overall well-being among Asian Americans were significantly undermined by a surge in racist attacks and hate crimes during the pandemic (Findling *et al.*, 2022).

Many individuals within the Asian American population have begun to identify more closely with their specific ethnic groups rather than the broader category of “Asian American” (Ho, 2025). For instance, Korean Americans rarely identify with Japanese Americans due to historical conflicts (Deacon, 2025). Additionally, East Asian Americans often do not consider Middle Eastern Asian Americans as an ethnic group possessing cultural elements similar to their own, and the reverse is also true (Okamoto, 2014). Given this intra-Asian diversity, coping with mental health challenges reflects each ethnic group’s values, lifestyles, and circumstances (Schlossberg, 2023). This claim underscores the need to consider the unique challenges and resources each ethnic group encounters. In this study, we specifically examine how Korean Americans generated unique initiatives to overcome their mental health challenges, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Korean Americans had become more structurally vulnerable to mental health issues (Min *et al.*, 2021). The sharp rise in anti-Asian racism during COVID-19 created a climate of fear and hypervigilance across Asian American communities (Chae *et al.*, 2021). Korean Americans, who share phenotypic characteristics commonly associated with East Asians, were disproportionately targeted and thus faced heightened concerns about physical safety and racial discrimination (Kwon *et al.*, 2025). Despite the vulnerable environment, cultural expectations emphasizing perseverance, emotional restraint, and silence norms discouraged individuals from openly discussing psychological distress or seeking external help, reinforcing internalized pressure to endure stress without support (Jang *et al.*, 2007). Even when Korean Americans wished to use mental health services, persistent language barriers and limited knowledge of where and how to access appropriate mental health resources further restricted their ability to obtain needed care (Zhou *et al.*, 2022).

In response to the challenge, Korean Americans strived to use the community-generated way of becoming resilient to overcome mental health issues (Park *et al.*, 2026). Specifically, ethnic sporting events have been used to celebrate cultural heritage among participants who share cultural norms, values, and beliefs (Choi *et al.*, 2025; Chung, 2022). The events also create an environment where Korean Americans can engage in sport activities with their ethnic peers who speak the same language (Hovey *et al.*, 2006). The events strengthen participants’ social connectedness and provide psychological relief, all of which contribute to their resilience (Chung, 2022; Shin *et al.*, 2025).

In this context, ethnic sporting events have been found to serve as a communal resource that offers promotive factors for resilience-building in the face of adversity (Norris *et al.*, 2008; Shin *et al.*, 2025). Promotive factors offer a theoretical framework for understanding how ethnic sporting events, as culturally meaningful interventions, encompass individuals’ internal strengths as well as external resources that reinforce these strengths (Luthar *et al.*, 2000; Masten, 2021; Zimmerman *et al.*, 2013). In ethnic sporting events, promotive factors, such as ethnic identity and the intrapersonal benefits derived from sport participation and cultural celebration, may be activated to enhance resilience and mitigate the adverse effects of pandemic-related stressors (Fergus and Zimmerman, 2005). Therefore, the Korean American community implements ethnic sporting events as a means of enhancing their resilience and mitigating the adverse psychological effects of anxiety, depression, and reduced well-being (Choi *et al.*, 2025; Chung, 2022; Shin *et al.*, 2025).

Anxiety and depression have a direct impact on individuals’ daily functioning and overall quality of life (Molloy *et al.*, 2006; Spitzer *et al.*, 2006). Subjective well-being is essential for maintaining happiness and life satisfaction (Newman *et al.*, 2014). Despite the utility of ethnic

sporting events for mental health promotion, the current understanding of how they translate into such positive outcomes remains limited. This knowledge gap is critical when designing ethnic sporting events to serve a promotive role in resilience building and mental health promotion. In particular, careful consideration should be given to which aspects of ethnic sporting events (e.g. social, physical, or psychological components) should be emphasized and incorporated into their design. Since ethnic sporting events are not monolithic, their promotive factors can be activated by designing those elements that align with the communal structures, values, and beliefs of the respective ethnic groups. To address this gap, the present study examines the relationship between the promotive factors, individual and community resilience, and three primary mental health outcomes—subjective well-being, depression, and anxiety, generating the following research questions. The research questions are depicted in Figure 1.

- RQ1. How do promotive factors affect individual and community resilience among Korean Americans attending the ethnic sporting event?
- RQ2. How do promotive factors affect mental health outcomes among Korean Americans attending the ethnic sporting event?
- RQ3. How do Korean Americans’ individual and community resilience affect their mental health outcomes in the ethnic sporting event?
- RQ4. How do Korean Americans’ individual and community resilience mediate the relationship between promotive factors and mental health outcomes in the ethnic sporting event?

The study advances theoretical insights into resilience by examining how culturally grounded and community-based sporting events can serve as mechanisms for resilience-building and mental health improvement within ethnic communities. The study reveals a particular ethnic group’s own ability to foster resilience and develop mental health solutions, highlighting ethnic communities’ events for mental health solutions outside formal care systems. Practically, the findings can guide policymakers and public health

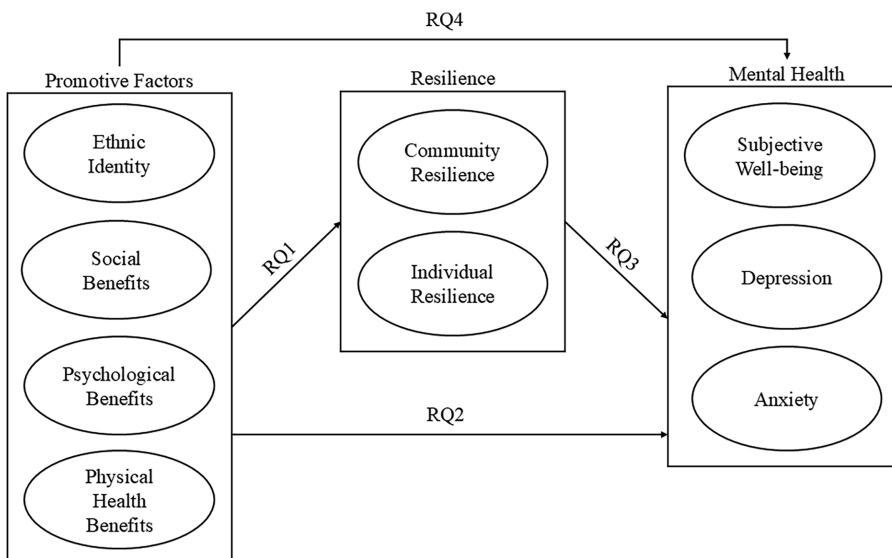


Figure 1. Proposed research model

Literature review

Compensatory model

Resilience theory is grounded in a strengths-based approach (Zimmerman *et al.*, 2013). In resilience theory, the Compensatory Model describes how promotive factors counteract and offset the effects of risk by exerting direct, independent, and opposing influences on mental health outcomes (Fergus and Zimmerman, 2005; Masten, 2021; Zimmerman *et al.*, 2013).

Research has identified two types of promotive factors—assets and resources (Fergus and Zimmerman, 2005). Assets refer to individual-level factors that reside within a person and contribute to individual resilience, such as skills (Zimmerman *et al.*, 2013) and self-efficacy (Cherewick *et al.*, 2024). Resources, on the other hand, are external factors that can strengthen community resilience by providing opportunities, such as group cohesiveness (Jewett *et al.*, 2021), social support (Saltzman *et al.*, 2020), and community programs (Hall *et al.*, 2023), to develop assets that help individuals and communities cope with risks.

The Compensatory Model's theoretical strength lies in its capacity to demonstrate how promotive factors at different ecological levels operate in parallel (Fergus and Zimmerman, 2005). Incorporating both personal assets and community resources as promotive factors enables the model to capture their respective effects on individual and community resilience (Zimmerman *et al.*, 2013).

Figure 2 illustrates how promotive factors can offset the adverse effects of risk on mental health. The risks associated with COVID-19 were unprecedented, global, and constituted macro-level disruptions that negatively influenced individuals' mental health. The phenomenological impact of COVID-19 was so explicit and pervasive that Figure 2 conceptualized COVID-19 risk as a shared adversity rather than a discrete, measurable risk (Cusack *et al.*, 2022; Kimhi *et al.*, 2021; Jewett *et al.*, 2021).

Promotive factors: ethnic identity. Ethnic identity, a crucial component of social identity for immigrant groups, is defined as an individual's self-perception of belonging to a specific ethnic group (Phinney, 1992). In the context of an ethnic sporting event, participants socialize and engage in sports with individuals from the same ethnic and cultural background (Chung and Lim, 2016). This ethnicity-exclusive setting provides a safe and comfortable environment, allowing participants to deeply engage with the event. This engagement, in turn, enhances their connection to their ethnic heritage and strengthens their sense of ethnic identity (Chung, 2022). As such, ethnic identity is socially constructed and shaped through cultural meaning-making processes that build upon socio-cultural dynamics, including group cohesiveness, shared norms, and collective values (Phinney, 1992).

Ethnic identity is a critical asset that can counteract risks and promote mental health for ethnic groups. Looking at various racial and ethnic groups, prior studies have examined ethnic

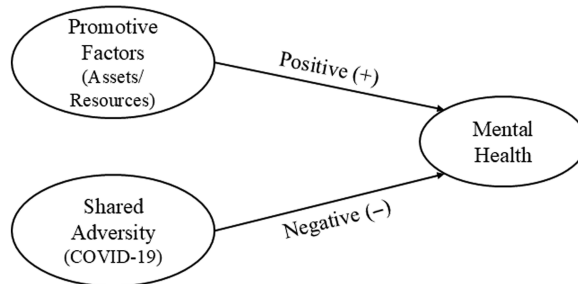


Figure 2. Compensatory model

identity as a factor that facilitates resilience against stressors, including youth from Chinese families in Canada (Costigan *et al.*, 2010), Korean American college students (Lee, 2005), and adolescents of Mexican and/or Native American descents (Romero *et al.*, 2014). For instance, Lee (2005) highlighted partial support for ethnic identity pride as a moderating variable that reduces the effects of discrimination on depressive symptoms, indicating some level of resilience. Due to the potential effects of ethnic identity as a coping mechanism for stress, researchers have also highlighted its possible link to mental health outcomes, such as subjective well-being, depression, and anxiety (Kennedy and Cummins, 2007; Williams *et al.*, 2012).

Promotive factors: intrapersonal benefits. Ethnic sporting events can provide participants with various types of intrapersonal benefits, primarily associated with engaging in sporting games and athletic movements. Prior research has highlighted the social, psychological, and physical benefits of participating in ethnic events, which can function as promotive factors that contribute to both individual and community resilience (Chung, 2022).

First, social benefits are the primary advantage that ethnic sport participants seek to gain from their sporting experience. Participants interact with friends, family, and other individuals who share their ethnic background, thereby strengthening interpersonal connections. Several studies have categorized these types of benefits into social benefits, engendering a sense of belonging, camaraderie, and social capital (Andersen *et al.*, 2019; Heo *et al.*, 2013; Kim *et al.*, 2014).

Second, ethnic sport event participants have been found to seek to obtain psychological benefits (Chung, 2022). Ethnic sporting events offer participants athletic games that provide a means to relieve stress, alleviate depression and anxiety, and experience mood enhancement and a sense of empowerment, while also serving as an escape from daily concerns (Jenkin *et al.*, 2018; Kim *et al.*, 2020). These positive feelings reflect short-term affective outcomes, based on individuals' dispositions, derived from the entertainment, escape, and enjoyment aspects of sport participation, which serve as important assets for enhancing positive psychological functioning (Chung, 2022).

Third, from a physical health perspective, research has identified numerous benefits of physical activity, including improvements in health indicators such as weight control and blood pressure management (Downward and Rasciute, 2015). Enhanced physical fitness can also trigger physiological effects that protect against the adverse impacts of psychological distress (Jeoung, 2020). Therefore, physical health benefits are reflected in improved fitness and overall health outcomes associated with athletic movements.

Chung (2022) empirically examined how these three types of benefits—social, psychological, and physical—affected the well-being of ethnic sport participants through their satisfaction in an ethnic sporting event. Although Chung's research was the first to test the three intrapersonal benefits simultaneously, it focused solely on subjective well-being as a measure of positive mental health, neglecting the interplay between these benefits and potential adverse mental health outcomes.

While several studies have found that the competitiveness of athletic games can be beneficial for participants (Dionigi *et al.*, 2011; Kim *et al.*, 2020), the highly competitive atmosphere of sports can heighten anxiety among sport participants, which may negate the salubrious benefits of sport activities. However, the intrapersonal benefits of ethnic sporting events can help counterbalance the competitive nature of these events, as long as the event's inclusivity is ensured for every level of sport participants. As a result, the current study recognizes the three intrapersonal benefits as promotive factors that can simultaneously help reduce adverse mental outcomes and enhance subjective well-being.

Individual and community resilience

Resilience refers to an individual's capacity to adapt to challenges that threaten their functioning, survival, or development (American Psychology Association, 2020). It involves

strategies and processes that help individuals mitigate vulnerability and avoid related problems. Resilience acts as a buffering mechanism—not by eliminating risks but by enabling individuals to cope with them effectively. As such, resilience is a dynamic process where individuals actively overcome adversity, moving beyond mere survival.

Although resilience is often understood as an individual's ability to cope with stress and challenges, it can also be perceived as a community-level asset (Norris *et al.*, 2008). Community resilience can refer to an individual's perception of their community's ability to effectively respond to, endure, and recover from challenging situations (Kimhi and Shamai, 2004). Community resilience is particularly important to understand because it is both culture- and context-specific, evolving through interactions with various embedded systems that extend beyond individual levels. Cultural values play a crucial role in resilience, shaping how individuals interpret and respond to adversity within collective belief systems (Ungar *et al.*, 2007). Consequently, community resilience reflects the resilience dynamics of a specific ethnic group, which may differ from those of other groups (Masten, 2021).

This study operates on the premise that a heightened sense of ethnic identity, along with the intrapersonal benefits derived from participating in an ethnic sporting event, can serve as promotive factors for both individual and community resilience.

Mental health of ethnic sport participants

World Health Organization (2022) defines mental health as a condition of mental wellness that enables individuals to cope with life's stress, learn effectively, and work productively. Hence, studies have highlighted the link between resilience and mental health indicators such as well-being, depression, and anxiety (To *et al.*, 2022; Tomy and Weinberg, 2016; Zubair *et al.*, 2018). To *et al.* (2022), for instance, found that Australian participants 18 years and older exhibiting normal scores on depression, anxiety, and stress had resilience scores higher than participants experiencing greater psychological distress during the COVID-19 pandemic. Similarly, Zubair *et al.* (2018) demonstrated that resilience was positively associated with subjective well-being and that resilience moderated the relationship between mindfulness and subjective well-being.

In recent years, due to elevated levels of anxiety and depression during the COVID-19 pandemic, many within the Korean American community have needed resources to mitigate the risks. Such resources can serve as a springboard to mitigate the negative mental status (Kormendi and Brown, 2021). Ethnic sporting events are often flexible in their offerings, enabling them to incorporate non-sporting elements that highlight ethnic aspects (e.g. music and culture; Choi *et al.*, 2025; Chung, 2022). This context permits researchers to examine the effectiveness of ethnic sporting events at overcoming mental health difficulties, which focuses on ethnic sport participants' mental health as an outcome of promotive factors and resilience.

Method

Research context

The research was conducted in New York City at the 2023 Korean American National Sports Festival (KANSF), held June 23 to 25, 2023. Attending from various states were approximately 4,000 Korean Americans (Ahn, 2023). The first KANSF was held in Los Angeles in 1981. Since then, the event has occurred biennially in various US metropolitan cities with established Korean American communities and local sport infrastructure. In 2021, however, the event was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Consequently, the 2023 KANSF was the first event held after the pandemic, aiming to serve again as a platform to celebrate Korean Americans' determination to overcome the personal and communal challenges brought on by the pandemic, ultimately enhancing resilience and mental health.

The three-day event began on Friday night with the opening ceremony. The ceremony featured various ethnic performances and a stage performance by Korean (K-pop) singers and

local dance and Taekwondo teams. The sporting tournaments commenced on Saturday morning and continued into Sunday, concluding with the awards ceremony on Sunday afternoon.

The event offered multiple tournaments to accommodate a large body of participants from different age groups. The 2023 KANSF hosted competitions spanning 22 sports, including traditional Korean ethnic sports such as Taekwondo and Ssireum, as well as popular sports like tennis, table tennis, swimming, basketball, baseball, and soccer. The event took place at local municipal sport facilities.

Measures

Our survey assessed the following nine constructs: (1) ethnic identity, (2) psychological benefits, (3) social benefits, (3) physical benefits, (4) individual resilience, (5) community resilience, (7) subjective well-being, (8) depression, and (9) anxiety. Each construct consisted of three items, answered on a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

For participants' ethnic identity, we used an adapted version of the Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM; [Phinney and Ong, 2007](#)). The MEIM assesses participants' sense of belonging, their attachment to Korean American ethnic groups at the event, and what their ethnic background means to them.

To assess the psychological benefits of the event, we first defined these benefits based on existing literature ([Jenkin et al., 2018](#); [Kim et al., 2020](#)). We derived items related to positive emotions and stress relief from Chung's study (2022), while the item concerning feelings of renewal was sourced from [Kim et al. \(2020\)](#). To evaluate the social benefits, we selected three items from [Chung \(2022\)](#) that assessed Korean American participants' opportunities for social interaction, networking, and gathering. To evaluate the physical benefits, we used an adapted version of the Exercise Benefits/Barriers Scale ([Sechrist et al., 1987](#)). Of the 29 items designed to measure perceived health benefits, the study retained participants' perceptions of improved fitness, increased stamina, and maintenance of a healthier lifestyle for measurement.

For participants' individual resilience, we used an adapted version of the Brief Resilience Scale (BRS; [Smith et al., 2008](#)). The BRS asks participants to rate their ability to quickly bounce back from personal challenges, the time it takes them to recover, and the level of difficulty they find in handling an adverse situation. For participants' community resilience, we used an adapted version of the Community Resilience Scale ([Lindberg and Swearingen, 2020](#)). This scale measures the extent to which participants believe Korean Americans can sustain their community, deal with challenges posed by the global pandemic, and recover from the pandemic-induced economic downturns. To adapt the scale to the COVID-19 context, the research team replaced the original wording of "hard times" or "stressful event" with "COVID-19 pandemic."

For participants' subjective well-being, we used three items from [Chung \(2022\)](#), based on the conceptualization of subjective well-being by [Newman et al. \(2014\)](#). The items assessed the degree to which participants felt well and happy. To measure participants' depression, we used an adapted version of the AB Clinician Depression Screen ([Molloy et al., 2006](#)). Finally, to measure participants' anxiety, we used three items drawn from the anxiety scale developed by [Spitzer et al. \(2006\)](#).

All items were developed in both Korean and English. The first author, fluent in both English and Korean, translated the survey from English to Korean and then back-translated it. The other authors, also fluent in both languages, reviewed and validated the translation process (cf. [Chen and Boore, 2010](#)).

All constructs' Cronbach's alphas, ranging from 0.75 to 0.90, were satisfactory. Inter-item correlations were from 0.50 to 0.74. Item-to-total correlations were from 0.46 to 0.85.

Procedures and participants

With approval from the Institutional Review Board at the lead author's institution and permission from the 2023 KANSF organizing committee, five researchers conducted on-site

data collection. To ensure comprehensive coverage of games and tournaments across 22 sports, researchers were strategically deployed at venues representing diverse sports. To ensure a substantial number of players were available for study participation, a convenience sampling approach was used.

Each researcher approached participants who were either waiting for their games to start or resting after playing. Participants were asked about their willingness to take part in the survey. Upon agreement, they were provided with a self-administered survey, along with a clipboard and pencils. The researchers remained nearby to address any questions that arose during the process. The average time to complete the survey was 8–10 min.

For data collection, the researchers prepared 300 surveys. After excluding incomplete surveys and those with substantial missing data, 193 usable responses were available for analysis, resulting in a 64% response rate. The sample size was determined in accordance with Hinkin's (1995) recommendation, which suggests an item-to-response ratio between 1:4 and 1:10 for robust statistical analysis. With 27 items in this study, the resulting ratio of approximately 1:7 falls well within the recommended range, supporting the appropriateness of the sample size.

Of the respondents, 74% completed the survey in Korean, while the remaining 26% did so in English. Independent *T*-tests were performed to examine whether participants' response patterns differed by language on the study's constructs. No significant differences were found in the average scores across the constructs, $-1.18 < t(198) < 1.39$, $0.21 < p < 0.87$. This finding confirms the compatibility between the two language versions.

The participants' average age was 40.1. Of the respondents, 74.7% were male and 25.3% were female. Regarding immigration and residence status, the largest portion was first-generation immigrants (45.3%) and American citizens (62.3%). In terms of sport participation, 70.5% of the participants were members of ethnic sport clubs in their local communities. Additionally, 42.0% participated in sports 1–2 times per week, and 50.9% engaged in less than two hours of sports per session. Table 1 presents the details of the participants' demographics.

Table 1. Survey participants' demographic information

Category		Percentage*
Age		$M = 40.22$
Gender	Male	74.7% ($n = 121$)
	Female	25.3% ($n = 41$)
Education	High School	16.3% ($n = 28$)
	University	58.7% ($n = 101$)
	Graduate School	25.0% ($n = 43$)
Immigration status	1st Generation	45.3% ($n = 72$)
	1.5 Generation	27.7% ($n = 44$)
	2nd Generation	25.2% ($n = 40$)
Residence status	Citizen	62.5% ($n = 105$)
	Permanent	25.0% ($n = 42$)
	Temporary	11.3% ($n = 19$)
Ethnic club membership	Yes	70.5% ($n = 124$)
	No	29.5% ($n = 52$)
Sport participation per week	1–2 times	42.0% ($n = 74$)
	3–4 times	34.1% ($n = 60$)
	5–6 times	15.9% ($n = 28$)
	7 times or more	5.7% ($n = 10$)
Sport duration per participation	Less than 2 h	50.9% ($n = 89$)
	2–4 h	44.0% ($n = 77$)
	4–6 h	2.3% ($n = 4$)
	6–8 h	0.6% ($n = 1$)
	8 h or more	2.3% ($n = 4$)

Note(s): *Missing values are excluded

Data analysis

The researchers used R statistical software to conduct all data analyses. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was first performed to test the measurement construct, based on [Hu and Bentler \(1999\)](#), with four model fit indices—(1) minimum fit function chi-square (<0.05), (2) comparative fit index (CFI >0.90), (3) standardized root mean square residual (SRMR <0.09), and (4) root-mean-square error of approximation (RMSEA <0.10).

Factor loadings and composite reliability (CR) were expected to be higher than 0.5 and 0.7, respectively. Average variance extracted (AVE) was expected to be greater than 0.5 for acceptable convergent validity.

To test discriminant validity, we examined whether the square root of the AVE is greater than inter-construct correlations and whether AVE is greater than maximum shared variance (MSV). To assess common method bias, a Common Latent Factor (CLF) was estimated by adding a single uncorrelated latent factor with equal loadings on all observed indicators and a fixed variance, following the guidelines of [Podsakoff et al. \(2003\)](#). The comparative fit indices (i.e. CFI and RMSEA) were compared between the baseline CFA and the CLF model ([Cheung and Rensvold, 2002](#); [Podsakoff et al., 2003](#)). The proportion of common method variance was calculated and compared against the 50% threshold ([Eichhorn, 2014](#)).

Finally, the structural relationships of the proposed research model were examined. The indirect effects of individual and community resilience were examined based on 95% bias-corrected bootstrapping confidence interval (Iteration = 1,000).

Results

Confirmatory factor analysis

The fit indices of the measurement model were acceptable, $\chi^2(288) = 506.93$, Normed $\chi^2 = 1.76$, $p < 0.001$, RMSEA = 0.063. The model's incremental fit was suggested by a few selected indices, CFI = 0.929, SRMR = 0.058 ([Hu and Bentler, 1999](#)). The factor loadings of the model were greater than 0.5, and the CR of the constructs was higher than 0.7. The convergent validity of the constructs (i.e. AVE) was higher than 0.5, satisfying its threshold. The square root of the AVE was greater than the inter-construct correlations among the constructs, and the AVE was greater than the MSV, supporting discriminant validity. Regarding the common method bias evaluation, we found only small changes in the comparative fit indices (i.e. Δ CFI = 0.018 and Δ RMSEA = 0.006) and the 6.4% of common method variance, indicating no significant common method bias ([Cheung and Rensvold, 2002](#); [Eichhorn, 2014](#); [Podsakoff et al., 2003](#)).

[Table 2](#) presents the factor loadings of the items, while [Table 3](#) shows the correlations, reliability, and validity of the measurement model.

Structural model testing

The fit indices of the structural model were acceptable, $\chi^2(289) = 535.08$, Normed $\chi^2 = 1.85$, $p < 0.001$, RMSEA = 0.066, CFI = 0.920, SRMR = 0.073.

Regarding the direct effects of promotive factors on both individual and community resilience (RQ1), three significant paths were identified. Specifically, ethnic identity was positively associated with community resilience ($\gamma = 0.271$, $p = 0.004$). The physical health benefits were positively associated with individual resilience ($\gamma = 0.290$, $p = 0.029$) and community resilience ($\gamma = 0.261$, $p = 0.039$). On individual resilience, none of the ethnic identity, psychological benefits, or social benefits were significant. For community resilience, psychological and social benefits were not found to be significant.

With regard to the direct effects of promotive factors on mental health outcomes (RQ2), there was only one significant path: the physical health benefits negatively affected anxiety ($\gamma = -0.310$, $p = 0.038$). Ethnic identity, psychological benefits, and social benefits did not significantly affect any of the mental health outcomes.

Table 2. Summary measurement items

Construct	Items (M/SD)	Factor loading
Ethnic identity	I have a strong sense of belonging to Korean Americans and immigrants at this event. (4.17/0.83)	0.828
	I understand well what my Korean ethnic background means to me. (4.36/0.77)	0.780
	I feel a strong attachment to Korean Americans and immigrants at this event. (4.25/0.87)	0.833
Psychological benefits	Having a positive mentality is one benefit of attending this event. (4.38/0.67)	0.664
	Feeling refreshed is one benefit of attending this event. (4.24/0.78)	0.741
	Releasing stress is one benefit of attending this event. (4.12/0.96)	0.745
Social benefits	Having a chance to meet others is one benefit of attending this event. (4.18/0.86)	0.820
	Networking with others is one benefit of attending this event. (4.12/0.91)	0.900
	Attending social gatherings is one benefit of attending this event. (4.20/0.85)	0.843
Physical benefits	Improving health is one benefit of participating in sport activities at this event. (4.29/0.81)	0.809
	A healthy lifestyle is one benefit of participating in sport activities at this event. (4.32/0.74)	0.888
	Improving stamina is one benefit of participating in sport activities at this event. (4.28/0.78)	0.832
Individual resilience	I tend to bounce back quickly from the personal damages of the COVID-19 pandemic. (3.88/0.89)	0.754
	It does not take me long to recover from the personal damages of the COVID-19 pandemic. (3.75/1.01)	0.873
	I usually come through difficult times with little trouble. (4.01/0.85)	0.593
Community resilience	Korean Americans and immigrants are able to sustain their community if there is a pandemic. (4.05/0.84)	0.824
	Korean Americans and immigrants are able to deal with the situations of a pandemic. (3.99/0.86)	0.934
	Korean Americans and immigrants can recover from local economic downturns caused by a pandemic. (3.83/0.93)	0.706
Subjective well-being	I feel good about my physical and mental health. (4.06/0.90)	0.635
	I feel good about my whole life. (4.11/0.80)	0.852
	I feel healthy, happy, and appreciated. (4.21/0.84)	0.794
Depression	I often get bored. (2.66/1.14)	0.635
	I feel that my life is empty. (2.16/1.10)	0.941
	I often feel helpless. (2.21/1.17)	0.942
Anxiety	I worry too much about different things. (2.66/1.14)	0.796
	I become easily annoyed and irritable. (2.16/1.10)	0.812
	I feel nervous and anxious. (2.21/1.17)	0.810

In terms of the direct effects of both individual and community resilience on mental health outcomes (RQ3), there was only one significant path: community resilience positively affected subjective well-being ($\beta = 0.387, p < 0.001$). However, community resilience did not significantly affect depression and anxiety. Also, individual resilience did not significantly affect the subjective well-being, depression, and anxiety.

Lastly, in regard to the mediating effects of both individual and community resilience (RQ4), we found a full mediation effect of community resilience on the relationship between ethnic identity and subjective well-being ($\beta = 0.105, p = 0.017, CI [0.001, 0.366]$). Table 4 displays the details of the structural model, and Figure 3 visualizes the results of the structural paths.

Table 3. Confirmatory factor analysis: Factor correlations, reliability, and validity

	M	SD	EI	PSY	SOC	PHY	IRE	CRE	SWB	DP	ANX	MSV	CR
EI	4.25	0.73	<i>0.82</i>									0.30	0.86
PSY	4.25	0.65	0.55	<i>0.73</i>								0.52	0.76
SOC	4.16	0.79	0.41	0.68	<i>0.86</i>							0.46	0.89
PHY	4.30	0.69	0.41	0.72	0.63	<i>0.84</i>						0.52	0.88
IRE	3.90	0.75	0.24	0.49	0.36	0.48	<i>0.77</i>					0.30	0.80
CRE	3.94	0.76	0.41	0.36	0.34	0.40	0.55	<i>0.82</i>				0.30	0.86
SWB	4.12	0.71	0.31	0.40	0.35	0.39	0.46	0.55	<i>0.76</i>			0.30	0.80
DP	2.35	1.00	-0.08	-0.17	-0.06	-0.16	-0.27	-0.21	-0.45	<i>0.85</i>		0.59	0.89
ANX	2.60	1.00	-0.12	-0.09	-0.15	-0.25	-0.23	-0.19	-0.36	0.77	<i>0.81</i>	0.59	0.85

Note(s): EI = Ethnic identity; PSY = Psychological benefits; SOC = Social benefits; PHY = Physical benefits; IRE = Individual resilience; CRE = Community resilience; SWB = Subjective well-being; DP = Depression; ANX = Anxiety; Numbers in italic on the diagonal represent the square root of average variance extracted; CR = composite reliability; MSV = maximum shared squared variance

Table 4. Structural model

				Direct effect	β	Z-value	
RQ1	EI	→	IRE	-0.02	-0.202		
	PSY			0.29	1.68		
	SOC			-0.03	-0.23		
	PHY			0.29*	2.18		
	EI	→	CRE	0.27**	2.85		
	PSY			0.01	0.06		
	SOC			0.04	0.40		
	PHY			0.26*	2.07		
	RQ2	EI	→	SWB	0.01	0.14	
		PSY			0.11	0.63	
		SOC			0.06	0.51	
		PHY			0.06	0.44	
EI		→	DP	0.04	0.36		
PSY				-0.14	-0.79		
SOC				0.14	1.18		
PHY				-0.03	-0.20		
EI		→	ANX	-0.08	-0.75		
PSY				0.31	1.60		
SOC				-0.07	-0.52		
PHY				-0.31*	-2.07		
RQ3	IRE		SWB	0.15	1.60		
	IRE		DP	-0.18	-1.89		
	IRE		ANX	-0.16	-1.53		
	CRE		SWB	0.39***	4.22		
	CRE		DP	-0.12	-1.40		
	CRE		ANX	-0.05	-0.54		
				Indirect effect	β	CI	
RQ4	EI	→	IRE	→	SWB	0.00	[-0.854, 0.035]
	PSY	→	IRE	→	SWB	0.04	[-0.028, 4.356]
	SOC	→	IRE	→	SWB	0.00	[-0.622, 0.039]
	PHY	→	IRE	→	SWB	0.04	[-0.046, 0.431]
	EI	→	CRE	→	SWB	0.11*	[0.001, 0.366]
	PSY	→	CRE	→	SWB	0.00	[-0.267, 1.062]
	SOC	→	CRE	→	SWB	0.02	[-0.079, 0.153]
	PHY	→	CRE	→	SWB	0.10	[-0.022, 0.742]
	EI	→	IRE	→	DP	0.00	[-0.046, 1.124]
	PSY	→	IRE	→	DP	-0.05	[-5.400, 0.037]
	SOC	→	IRE	→	DP	0.00	[-0.060, 0.623]
	PHY	→	IRE	→	DP	-0.05	[-0.810, 0.030]
	EI	→	CRE	→	DP	-0.03	[-0.290, 0.019]
	PSY	→	CRE	→	DP	0.00	[-0.410, 0.174]
	SOC	→	CRE	→	DP	-0.03	[-1.192, 0.024]
	PHY	→	CRE	→	DP	-0.03	[-0.407, 0.023]
	EI	→	IRE	→	ANX	0.00	[-0.064, 3.856]
	PSY	→	IRE	→	ANX	-0.05	[-16.061, 0.040]
	SOC	→	IRE	→	ANX	0.00	[-0.067, 2.810]
	PHY	→	IRE	→	ANX	0.00	[-0.416, 0.669]
	EI	→	CRE	→	ANX	-0.01	[-0.250, 0.058]
	PSY	→	CRE	→	ANX	0.00	[-1.483, 0.128]
	SOC	→	CRE	→	ANX	0.00	[-0.301, 0.023]
	PHY	→	CRE	→	ANX	0.00	[-0.230, 0.052]

Note(s): EI = Ethnic identity; PSY = Psychological benefits; SOC = Social benefits; PHY = Physical benefits; IRE = Individual resilience; CRE = Community resilience; SWB = Subjective well-being; DP = Depression; ANX = Anxiety; * denotes $p < 0.05$; ** denotes $p < 0.01$; *** denotes $p < 0.001$

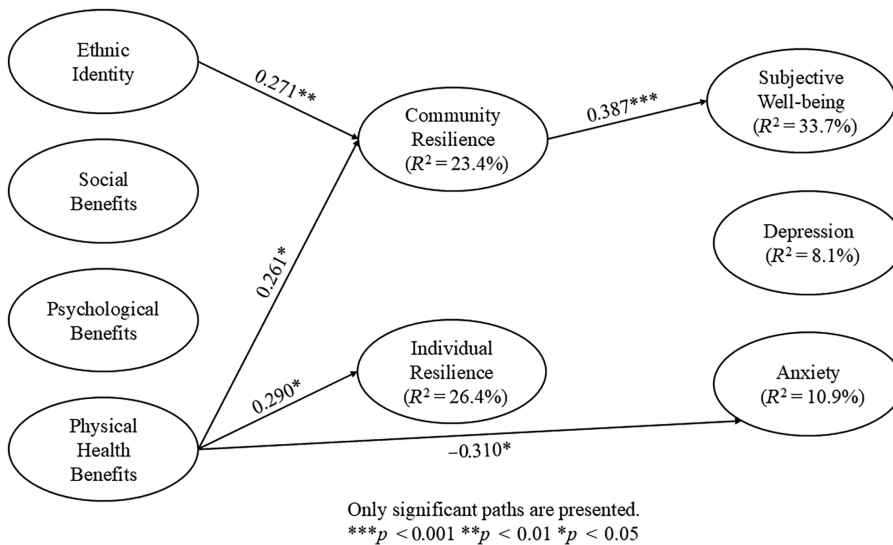


Figure 3. Visualized results of structural model

Discussion

To address the need for community resources to enhance resilience and mental health among Korean Americans in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, this study examined how promotive factors fostered during an ethnic sporting event were associated with resilience and a positive mental outlook. The compensatory effect of ethnic identity on community resilience was evident. The model further indicates that physical health benefits functioned as an additional compensatory factor, directly reducing anxiety. Although physical health benefits influenced both individual and community resilience, only community resilience transmitted these effects to subjective well-being. Community resilience mediated the effects of ethnic identity on subjective well-being. Social and psychological health benefits did not demonstrate significant effects on either individual or community resilience. Subjective well-being, depression, and anxiety were not significantly affected by individual resilience.

In addressing the first research question, we found that ethnic identity has a positive impact on community resilience. This finding aligns with the Compensatory Model, which suggests that promotive factors directly influence resilience (Fergus and Zimmerman, 2005; Masten, 2021; Zimmerman *et al.*, 2013). Previous research emphasizes the importance of community engagement opportunities, such as sharing participants' cultural customs, languages, and values, as vital resources for ethnic sporting events, thereby enhancing ethnic identity (Choi *et al.*, 2025; Chung, 2022). Similarly, the 2023 KANSF served as a community resource, where participants felt safe engaging in social and cultural activities with peers of the same ethnicity. Such social and environmental resources compensate environmental risk factors (e.g. targeted anti-Asian discrimination and violence) prevalent during the COVID-19 pandemic (Kwon *et al.*, 2025; Zimmerman *et al.*, 2013).

The results indicated a lack of association between ethnic identity and individual resilience (Nguyen and Wong, 2013). Individual resilience may be more closely linked to personal circumstances, such as economic hardship or health issues, that arose during the pandemic (Alhenawi and Yazdanparast, 2022; Kimhi, 2016). In other words, under the Compensatory Model, ethnic identity offered limited promotive value for individual resilience because it was not functionally aligned with individuals' material and situational stressors (Fergus and Zimmerman, 2005). During the pandemic, economic hardship, health concerns, and

caregiving burdens demanded tangible and instrumental resources rather than symbolic identity-based support, reducing ethnic identity's compensatory capacity for individual resilience (Fergus and Zimmerman, 2005; Taylor *et al.*, 2022).

Among intrapersonal health benefits, only physical health benefits were positively associated with individual and community resilience. Numerous studies have highlighted that maintaining physical fitness boosts overall resilience by producing physiological effects that help mitigate the potentially harmful impacts of stressful situations (e.g. Neumann *et al.*, 2022; Silverman and Deuster, 2014). Consistently, the findings of this study highlight the particular significance of physical health benefits, a pattern that is likely attributable to the COVID-19 pandemic during which opportunities for organized sport participation were substantially reduced (Staley *et al.*, 2024). Given that the 2023 KANSF offered structured sport participation, participants were especially likely to perceive the event as a valuable resource for offsetting the physical health risks associated with prolonged reductions in organized sport and physical activities during the pandemic.

It is essential to note that the psychological and social health benefits were not linked to any resilience outcomes. The results may be attributed to the inherently competitive nature of sporting events, which often involves increased pressure and anxiety related to winning (Mellalieu *et al.*, 2009; Schlenker *et al.*, 2011). While previous research found numerous psychological and social benefits of organized sport participation in ethnic sporting events (e.g. Chung, 2022), it highlights the importance of intentional design and implementation to regulate the competitive aspects of sport events when these are leveraged for social goods (Schlenker *et al.*, 2011). Particularly, participants in the 2023 KANSF were selected as representative athletes for their respective cities and states. The competitive environment may have created a zero-sum atmosphere that undermines the psychological and social pathways through which resilience might otherwise develop (Zimmerman *et al.*, 2013).

Additionally, the study measured psychological and social health benefits as exogenous variables, conceptualizing them as stable, individual-level traits. Whereas physical health benefits focus on individual health promotion, psychological and social health benefits are understood to emerge from interactions with the broader environment. This distinction is particularly salient in ethnic sporting events, where ethnic contexts are complex and multifaceted. Treating these context-oriented benefits as exogenous variables in the research design may oversimplify contextual influences, which could contribute to the observed insignificant effect of psychological and social health benefits on resilience.

In the second research question, the findings indicate that only perceived physical health benefits were significantly associated with reduced anxiety. In contrast, other promotive factors did not demonstrate direct effects on subjective well-being, depression, or anxiety. This result may reflect the specific context of the COVID-19 pandemic, during which the pronounced impact on physical health was amplified by the tangible health threats posed by the global pandemic. The role of physical health benefits underscores the potential of ethnic sporting events to serve as important avenues for reducing negative mental health symptoms among Korean Americans.

In addressing the third research question, the findings revealed that only community resilience had a significant positive effect on subjective well-being. The ethnic sporting event in this study highlighted the collectivist values inherent in Korean culture, where individuals often derive a sense of identity and pride from their ethnic group affiliations (Kim, 2003). The salience of these collective experiences was likely intensified by the shared adversities faced during the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, participants may have viewed community resilience as a more relevant and meaningful construct than individual resilience when evaluating their own well-being. This finding recognizes that resilience is deeply embedded within the sociocultural and environmental contexts in which individuals are situated (Ungar *et al.*, 2007).

The study addresses the fourth research question by highlighting the mediating role of community resilience in the relationship between ethnic identity and subjective well-being.

The event's communal activities are significant within the context of collectivist cultural norms, which emphasize group cohesion and interdependence (Choi *et al.*, 2025). This finding highlights the significance of ethnic sporting events as a source of community resilience for Korean Americans, enabling them to recover from crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic and ultimately improving their subjective well-being.

Theoretical implications

This study provides theoretical implications for the Compensatory Model in resilience theory. First, this study provides a view of understanding ethnic sporting events as promotive factors. The findings suggest that the event's promotive impact does not stem from the event as a single, unified factor; instead, it arises from the distinct components of the event experience. The results indicate that ethnic identity and the physical benefits derived from the event were associated with resilience, whereas the psychological and social benefits were not. Accordingly, the multidimensional nature of events and festivals should be recognized (Pettersen and Getz, 2009), particularly when applying the Compensatory Model, as attendees engage with events' multiple dimensions that may either foster or hinder the compensatory mechanism. This perspective highlights the need to conceptualize promotive factors at multiple levels within the event experience, rather than presuming uniform effects across the event as a whole.

Second, this study extends the utility of the Compensatory Model to the context of community resilience building. The findings of this study demonstrate the potential of ethnic sporting events to function as culturally embedded platforms that foster community-level resilience, which is essential for subjective well-being (Zubair *et al.*, 2018). Collectivist-oriented event components (e.g. expressions of ethnic pride and heritage celebrations) offered by the 2023 KANSF served as meaningful resources to compensate for the risk factors amplified during the COVID-19 pandemic (e.g. anti-Asian racism and mental health challenges) (Ungar *et al.*, 2007). Taken together, these findings suggest that the Compensatory Model can serve not only as an individual-level framework but also as a viable lens for understanding how the event's culturally grounded collective experiences contribute to community resilience.

Practical implications

Event organizers of ethnic sporting events should prioritize strategies that enhance the social experience of participants. Incorporating non-sporting elements, such as socialization opportunities (e.g. entertainment performances) and professional networking resources (e.g. a reception night), can support this initiative. Additionally, it is essential to avoid creating an overly competitive atmosphere to foster a more social vibe at the event. Organizers should ensure that selected athletes understand and embody the spirit of the event, emphasizing collaboration and cultural pride over competition.

The 2023 KANSF has made commendable efforts to create an inclusive sporting environment. It has established multiple leagues based on age groups, allowing both younger and older participants to engage in the event. Another notable initiative is the confirmed organization of a women's soccer match as an exhibition game, marking the first time such an event has been included. Hosting the women's soccer exhibition game is based on the increasing demand for women's soccer among Korean American communities. It is essential to continually foster accessible environments for marginalized populations in sports.

Event organizers should focus on sustainable management practices to ensure lasting benefits for the communities involved. For instance, partnering with non-sport ethnic community organizations, such as the Korean American Association of Greater New York, can help alleviate the management burden of hosting longer and more frequent sporting events while maximizing the use of ethnic resources. These collaborations can engage a broader segment of the community, ultimately increasing the number of participants in events.

Limitations and future research

As this study used a cross-sectional approach to gather on-site data, it is important to acknowledge the limitations of this method. Measuring all variables simultaneously provides only a single-point snapshot, which limits the ability to examine causal relationships between variables of interest. As ethnic communities adapt to the changing landscapes of the post-COVID-19 era, it becomes increasingly crucial for future research to adopt a longitudinal approach, particularly when examining participants of ethnic sporting events.

The context of the current study is Korean American groups participating in ethnic sporting events. As a result, the findings may not be generalizable to the sport behaviors of other ethnic groups. A more comprehensive understanding of both inter-ethnic and intra-ethnic group dynamics will offer insights into how each ethnic group utilizes sport participation to build resilience and positive mentality.

Conclusion

This study examined Korean American participation in the 2023 Korean American National Sports Festival, highlighting the unique ways in which this community has navigated the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. The findings highlight the crucial role of ethnic identity and the physical health benefits of sport in promoting community resilience, enhancing subjective well-being and alleviating anxiety. These results demonstrate that ethnic sporting events not only serve as platforms for cultural cohesion but also function as vital tools for promoting mental health within diasporic communities. Notably, the perceived benefits were more pronounced among individuals who had limited access to sport participation during the pandemic, emphasizing the inclusive potential of such events. As small- and medium-scale sports festivals continue to evolve, ensuring their social inclusivity and expanding collaboration with regional ethnic organizations will be key strategies for enhancing the mobilization of ethnic resources and sustaining community well-being.

References

- Ahn, J.Y. (2023), "See you again in L.A.! Korean American sports festival in New York concludes successfully", available at: <https://hinykorea.com/townnews/230626ny1/> (accessed 4 June 2025).
- Alegria, M., Molina, K.M. and Chen, C.-N. (2014), "Neighborhood characteristics and differential risk for depressive and anxiety disorders across racial/ethnic groups in the United States", *Depression and Anxiety*, Vol. 31 No. 1, pp. 27-37, doi: [10.1002/da.22197](https://doi.org/10.1002/da.22197).
- Alhenawi, Y. and Yazdanparast, A. (2022), "Households' intentions under financial vulnerability conditions: is it likely for the COVID-19 pandemic to leave a permanent scar?", *International Journal of Bank Marketing*, Vol. 40 No. 3, pp. 425-457, doi: [10.1108/ijbm-05-2021-0200](https://doi.org/10.1108/ijbm-05-2021-0200).
- American Psychology Association (2020), "Building your resilience", available at: <https://www.apa.org/topics/resilience/building-your-resilience> (accessed 4 June 2025).
- Andersen, M.H., Ottesen, L. and Thing, L.F. (2019), "The social and psychological health outcomes of team sport participation in adults: an integrative review of research", *Scandinavian Journal of Public Health*, Vol. 47 No. 8, pp. 832-850, doi: [10.1177/1403494818791405](https://doi.org/10.1177/1403494818791405).
- Brance, K., Chatzimpyros, V. and Bentall, R.P. (2023), "Increased social identification is linked with lower depressive and anxiety symptoms among ethnic minorities and migrants: a systematic review and meta-analysis", *Clinical Psychology Review*, Vol. 99, 102216, doi: [10.1016/j.cpr.2022.102216](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cpr.2022.102216).
- Chae, D.H., Yip, T., Martz, C.D., Chung, K., Richeson, J.A., Hajat, A., Curtis, D.S., Rogers, L.O. and LaVeist, T.A. (2021), "Vicarious racism and vigilance during the COVID-19 pandemic: mental health implications among Asian and Black Americans", *Public Health Reports*, Vol. 136 No. 4, pp. 508-517, doi: [10.1177/00333549211018675](https://doi.org/10.1177/00333549211018675).

- Chen, H. and Boore, J.R.P. (2010), "Translation and back-translation in qualitative nursing research: methodological review", *Journal of Clinical Nursing*, Vol. 19 Nos 1-2, pp. 234-239, doi: [10.1111/j.1365-2702.2009.02896.x](https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-2702.2009.02896.x).
- Cherewick, M., Lebu, S., Su, C., Dahal, S. and Stark, L. (2024), "Social support and self-efficacy during early adolescence: dual impact of protective and promotive links to mental health and wellbeing", *PLOS Global Public Health*, Vol. 4 No. 1, e0003124.
- Cheung, G.W. and Rensvold, R.B. (2002), "Evaluating goodness-of-fit indexes for testing measurement invariance", *Structural Equation Modeling*, Vol. 9 No. 2, pp. 233-255, doi: [10.1207/s15328007sem0902_5](https://doi.org/10.1207/s15328007sem0902_5).
- Choi, W., Chung, K.-S. and Min, S.D. (2025), "The social exchange process of sport event participants and the mediating role of ethnic identity: the case of Korean American sports festivals", *Managing Sport and Leisure*, pp. 1-19, available at: <https://org/doi/10.1080/23750472.2025.2494553> (accessed 4 June 2025).
- Chung, K.-S. (2022), "The antecedents and consequences of subjective well-being among sport participants: the case of Korean American Sports Festival", *Event Management*, Vol. 26 No. 2, pp. 335-348, [10.3727/152599521x16106577965134](https://doi.org/10.3727/152599521x16106577965134).
- Chung, K.-S. and Lim, S.Y. (2016), "Sport participation of immigrants: antecedents and consequences of organisational commitment and ethnic identity amongst Koreans in USA", *South African Journal for Research in Sport, Physical Education and Recreation*, Vol. 38 No. 2, pp. 37-48.
- Costigan, C.L., Koryzma, C.M., Hua, J.M. and Chance, L.J. (2010), "Ethnic identity, achievement and psychological adjustment: examining risk and resilience among youth from immigrant Chinese families in Canada", *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*, Vol. 16 No. 2, pp. 264-273, doi: [10.1037/a0017275](https://doi.org/10.1037/a0017275).
- Cusack, S.E., Bountress, K.E., Denckla, C.A., The Spit for Science Working Group, Vassileva, J., Dick, D.M. and Amstadter, A.B. (2022), "A longitudinal investigation of resilience as a protective factor during the COVID-19 pandemic", *Traumatology*, Vol. 28 No. 3, pp. 403-410, doi: [10.1037/trm0000397](https://doi.org/10.1037/trm0000397).
- Deacon, C. (2025), "Enabling international history wars: everyday mnemonic foreign policy in South Korean and Japanese popular culture", *International Political Sociology*, Vol. 19 No. 3, olaf018.
- Dionigi, R., Baker, J. and Horton, S. (2011), "Older athletes' perceived benefits of competition", *International Journal of Sport and Society*, Vol. 2, pp. 17-22, doi: [10.18848/2152-7857/cgp/v02i02/53869](https://doi.org/10.18848/2152-7857/cgp/v02i02/53869).
- Downward, P. and Rasciute, S. (2014), "Exploring the covariates of sport participation for health: an analysis of males and females in England", *Journal of Sports Sciences*, Vol. 33 No. 1, pp. 67-76, doi: [10.1080/02640414.2014.924056](https://doi.org/10.1080/02640414.2014.924056).
- Eichhorn, B.R. (2014), "Common method variance techniques", available at: <https://www.lexjansen.com/mwsug/2014/AA/MWSUG-2014-AA11.pdf> (accessed 23 October 2025).
- Fergus, S. and Zimmerman, M.A. (2005), "Adolescent resilience: a framework for understanding healthy development in the face of risk", *Annual Review of Public Health*, Vol. 26 No. 1, pp. 399-419, doi: [10.1146/annurev.publhealth.26.021304.144357](https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.publhealth.26.021304.144357).
- Findling, M.G., Blendon, R.J., Benson, J. and Koh, H.K. (2022), "COVID-19 has driven racism and violence against Asian Americans: perspectives from 12 national polls", available at: <https://www.healthaffairs.org/doi/10.1377/forefront.20220411.655787/> (accessed 4 June 2025).
- Hall, B.J., Murray, S.M., Galea, S. and Canetti, D. (2023), "Examining the role of community resilience and social capital on mental health in public health emergencies", *International Journal of Disaster Risk Reduction*, Vol. 93, 103778.
- Heo, J., Culp, B., Yamada, N. and Won, Y. (2013), "Promoting successful aging through competitive sports participation: insights from older adults", *Qualitative Health Research*, Vol. 23 No 1, pp.105-113, [10.1177/1049732312457247](https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732312457247).
- Hinkin, T.R. (1995), "A review of scale development practices in the study of organizations", *Journal of Management*, Vol. 21 No. 5, pp. 967-988, doi: [10.1177/014920639502100509](https://doi.org/10.1177/014920639502100509).

- Ho, J. (2025), "How Asian American became a racing grouping – and why many with Asian roots don't identify with the term these days", *The Conversation*, available at: <https://theconversation.com/how-asian-american-became-a-racial-grouping-and-why-many-with-asian-roots-dont-identify-with-the-term-these-days-255578> (accessed 4 June 2025).
- Hovey, J.D., Kim, S.E. and Seligman, L.D. (2006), "The influences of cultural values, ethnic identity and language use on the mental health of Korean American college students", *The Journal of Psychology*, Vol. 140 No. 5, pp. 499-511, doi: [10.3200/jrlp.140.5.499-511](https://doi.org/10.3200/jrlp.140.5.499-511).
- Hu, L. and Bentler, P.M. (1999), "Cutoff criteria for fit indexes in covariance structure analysis: conventional criteria versus new alternatives", *Structural Equation Modeling: A Multidisciplinary Journal*, Vol. 6 No. 1, pp.1-55, doi: [10.1080/10705519909540118](https://doi.org/10.1080/10705519909540118).
- Jang, Y., Kim, G., Hansen, L. and Chiriboga, D.A. (2007), "Attitudes of older Korean Americans toward mental health services", *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society*, Vol. 55 No. 4, pp. 616-620, doi: [10.1111/j.1532-5415.2007.01125.x](https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1532-5415.2007.01125.x).
- Jenkin, C.R., Eime, R.M., Westerbeek, H. and Uffelen, J.G.Z. (2018), "Sports for adults aged 50+ years: participation benefits and barriers", *Journal of Aging and Physical Activity*, Vol. 26 No. 3, pp. 363-371, [10.1123/japa.2017-0092](https://doi.org/10.1123/japa.2017-0092).
- Jeoung, B. (2020), "Correlation of physical fitness with psychological well-being, stress and depression in Korean adults", *Journal of Exercise Rehabilitation*, Vol. 16 No. 4, pp. 351-355, doi: [10.12965/jer.2040454.227](https://doi.org/10.12965/jer.2040454.227).
- Jewett, R., Mah, S.M., Howell, N. and Larsen, M.M. (2021), "Social cohesion and community resilience during COVID-19", *Canadian Journal of Public Health*, Vol. 112 No. 4, pp. 452-464.
- Kennedy, W. and Cummins, R. (2007), "Ethnic identity and subjective wellbeing: connections and possibilities", *The International Journal of Diversity in Organizations, Communities and Nations: Annual Review*, Vol. 7 No. 1, pp. 107-116, doi: [10.18848/1447-9532/cgp/v07i01/39315](https://doi.org/10.18848/1447-9532/cgp/v07i01/39315).
- Kim, S. (2003), "Korean cultural codes and communication", *International Area Review*, Vol. 6 No. 1, pp. 93-114, doi: [10.1177/223386590300600107](https://doi.org/10.1177/223386590300600107).
- Kim, J., Yamada, N., Heo, J. and Han, A. (2014), "Health benefits of serious involvement in leisure activities among older Korean adults", *International Journal of Qualitative Studies on Health and Well-Being*, Vol. 9 No. 1, 24616, doi: [10.3402/qhw.v9.24616](https://doi.org/10.3402/qhw.v9.24616).
- Kim, A.C.H., Park, S.H., Kim, S. and Fontes-Comber, A. (2020), "Psychological and social outcomes of sport participation for older adults: a systematic review", *Ageing and Society*, Vol. 40 No. 7, pp. 1529-1549, [10.1017/s0144686x19000175](https://doi.org/10.1017/s0144686x19000175).
- Kimhi, S. (2016), "Levels of resilience: associations among individual, community and national resilience", *Journal of Health Psychology*, Vol. 21 No. 2, pp. 164-170, doi: [10.1177/1359105314524009](https://doi.org/10.1177/1359105314524009).
- Kimhi, S. and Shamai, M. (2004), "Community resilience and the impact of stress: adult response to Israel's withdrawal from Lebanon", *Journal of Community Psychology*, Vol. 32 No. 4, pp. 439-451, doi: [10.1002/jcop.20012](https://doi.org/10.1002/jcop.20012).
- Kimhi, S., Eshel, Y., Adini, B., Aruta, J.J.B.R., Antazo, B.G., Briones-Diata, A., Reinert, M., da Silva, J.D., Verdu, F.C. and Marciano, H. (2021), "Distress and resilience in days of COVID-19: international study of samples from Israel, Brazil and the Philippines", *Cross-Cultural Research*, Vol. 55 No. 5, pp. 415-437, doi: [10.1177/10693971211026806](https://doi.org/10.1177/10693971211026806).
- Kormendi, N.M. and Brown, A.D. (2021), "Asian American mental health during COVID-19: a call for task-sharing interventions", *SSM - Mental Health*, Vol. 1, 100006, doi: [10.1016/j.ssmmh.2021.100006](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssmmh.2021.100006).
- Krannich, S. and Massey, D.S. (2024), "The effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on immigration and immigrant wellbeing in the United States", *SSM, Population Health*, Vol. 27, 101705, doi: [10.1016/j.ssmph.2024.101705](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssmph.2024.101705).
- Kwon, S., Shin, N. and Hernandez, R.A. (2025), "Qualitative study on older Korean immigrants' experience of anti-Asian racism and coping strategies during the COVID-19 pandemic", *Journal of Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities*. doi: [10.1007/s40615-025-02587-3](https://doi.org/10.1007/s40615-025-02587-3).

- Lee, R.M. (2005), "Resilience against discrimination: ethnic identity and other-group orientation as protective factors for Korean Americans", *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, Vol. 52 No. 1, pp. 36-44, doi: [10.1037/0022-0167.52.1.36](https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-0167.52.1.36).
- Lindberg, K. and Swearingen, T. (2020), "A reflective thrive-oriented community resilience scale", *American Journal of Community Psychology*, Vol. 65 Nos 3-4, pp. 467-478, doi: [10.1002/ajcp.12416](https://doi.org/10.1002/ajcp.12416).
- Luthar, S.S., Cicchetti, D. and Becker, B. (2000), "The construct of resilience: a critical evaluation and guidelines for future work", *Child Development*, Vol. 71 No. 3, pp. 543-562, doi: [10.1111/1467-8624.00164](https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8624.00164).
- Masten, A.S. (2021), "Resilience in developmental systems", in Ungar, M. (Ed.), *Multisystemic Resilience*, Oxford University Press, pp. 113-134.
- Mellalieu, S.D., Neil, R., Hanton, S. and Fletcher, D. (2009), "Competition stress in sport performers: stressors experienced in the competition environment", *Journal of Sports Sciences*, Vol. 27 No. 7, pp. 729-744, doi: [10.1080/02640410902889834](https://doi.org/10.1080/02640410902889834).
- Min, J.J., Choi, S. and Park, H. (2021), "Associations between accessibility to health care service, social support and Korean Americans' mental health status amid the COVID-19 pandemic", *BMC Public Health*, Vol. 21 No. 1, p. 1949, doi: [10.1186/s12889-021-11820-7](https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-021-11820-7).
- Molloy, D.W., Standish, T.I., Dubois, S. and Cunje, A. (2006), "A short screen of depression: the AB Clinician Depression Scale (ABDCD)", *International Psychogeriatrics*, Vol. 18 No. 3, pp. 481-492, [10.1017/s1041610205003078](https://doi.org/10.1017/s1041610205003078).
- Neumann, R.J., Ahrens, K.F., Kollmann, B., Goldbach, N., Chmitorz, A., Weichert, D., Fiebach, C.J., Wessa, M., Kalisch, R., Lieb, K., Tüscher, O., Plichta, M.M., Reif, A. and Matura, S. (2022), "The impact of physical fitness on resilience to modern life stress and the mediating role of general self-efficacy", *European Archives of Psychiatry and Clinical Neuroscience*, Vol. 272 No. 4, pp. 679-692, doi: [10.1007/s00406-021-01338-9](https://doi.org/10.1007/s00406-021-01338-9).
- Newman, D.B., Tay, L. and Diener, E. (2014), "Leisure and subjective well-being: a model of psychological mechanisms as mediating factors", *Journal of Happiness Study*, Vol. 15 No. 3, pp. 555-578, doi: [10.1007/s10902-013-9435-x](https://doi.org/10.1007/s10902-013-9435-x).
- Nguyen, C.P. and Wong, Y.J. (2013), "The influence of ethnic identity on Asian Americans' well-being: a critical review of the literature", in Noehammer, E. (Ed.), *Psychology of Wellbeing: Theory, Perspectives and Practice*, Nova Science, pp. 65-75.
- Norris, F.H., Stevens, S.P., Pfefferbaum, B., Wyche, K.F. and Pfefferbaum, R.L. (2008), "Community resilience as a metaphor, theory, set of capacities and strategy for disaster readiness", *American Journal of Community Psychology*, Vol. 41 Nos 1-2, pp. 127-150, doi: [10.1007/s10464-007-9156-6](https://doi.org/10.1007/s10464-007-9156-6).
- Okamoto, D.G. (2014), *Redefining Race: Asian American Panethnicity and Shifting Ethnic Boundaries*, Russell Sage Foundation.
- Park, M., Jeong, E., Yoo, N., Choi, Y., Cabassa, L., Yasui, M. and Takeuchi, D. (2026), "Mental health service use among Filipino American and Korean American young adults during the COVID-19 pandemic", *American Journal of Community Psychology*, Vol. 77 Nos 3-4, pp. 469-484, doi: [10.1002/ajcp.70043](https://doi.org/10.1002/ajcp.70043).
- Petersson, R. and Getz, D. (2009), "Event experiences in time and space: a study of visitors to the 2007 World Alpine Ski Championships in Åre, Sweden", *Scandinavian Journal of Hospitality and Tourism*, Vol. 9 Nos 2-3, pp. 308-326, doi: [10.1080/15022250903119504](https://doi.org/10.1080/15022250903119504).
- Phinney, J.S. (1992), "The multigroup ethnic identity measure: a new scale for use with diverse groups", *Journal of Adolescent Research*, Vol. 7 No. 2, pp. 156-176, doi: [10.1177/074355489272003](https://doi.org/10.1177/074355489272003).
- Phinney, J.S. and Ong, A.D. (2007), "Ethnic identity development in immigrant families", in Lansford, J.E., Deater-Deckard, K. and Bornstein, M.H. (Eds), *Immigrant Families in Contemporary Society*, The Guilford Press, pp. 51-68.
- Podsakoff, P.M., MacKenzie, S.B., Lee, J.Y. and Podsakoff, N.P. (2003), "Common method biases in behavioral research: a critical review of the literature and recommended remedies", *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 88 No. 5, pp. 879-903, doi: [10.1037/0021-9010.88.5.879](https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.88.5.879).

- Romero, A.J., Edwards, L.M., Fryberg, S.A. and Orduña, M. (2014), "Resilience to discrimination stress across ethnic identity stages of development", *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, Vol. 44 No. 1, pp. 1-11, doi: [10.1111/jasp.12192](https://doi.org/10.1111/jasp.12192).
- Saltzman, L.Y., Hansel, T.C. and Bordnick, P.S. (2020), "Loneliness, isolation and social support factors in post-COVID-19 mental health", *Psychological Trauma*, Vol. 12 No. S1, pp. S55-S57, doi: [10.1037/tra0000703](https://doi.org/10.1037/tra0000703).
- Schlossberg, J.A. (2023), "Confronting mental health barriers in the Asian American and Pacific Islander community", *UCLA Health*, available at: <https://www.uclahealth.org/news/article/confronting-mental-health-barriers-asian-american-and-2> (accessed 21 January 2026).
- Schulenkorf, N. (2011), "Sustainable community development through sport and events: a conceptual framework for sport-for-development projects", *Sport Management Review*, Vol. 15 No. 1, pp. 1-12, doi: [10.1016/j.smr.2011.06.001](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.smr.2011.06.001).
- Sechrist, K.R., Walker, S.N. and Pender, N.J. (1987), "Development and psychometric evaluation of the exercise benefits/barriers scale", *Research in Nursing and Health*, Vol. 10 No. 6, pp. 357-365, doi: [10.1002/nur.4770100603](https://doi.org/10.1002/nur.4770100603).
- Shin, N., Park, D.J. and Yu, W. (2025), "It is our space: the formation of diasporic families' community cultural wealth through ethnic sport participation", *Journal of Sport Management*, Vol. 39 No. 4, pp. 246-259, doi: [10.1123/jsm.2024-0092](https://doi.org/10.1123/jsm.2024-0092).
- Silverman, M.N. and Deuster, P.A. (2014), "Biological mechanisms underlying the role of physical fitness in health and resilience", *Interface Focus*, Vol. 4 No. 5, 20140040, doi: [10.1098/rsfs.2014.0040](https://doi.org/10.1098/rsfs.2014.0040).
- Smith, B.W., Dalen, J., Wiggins, K., Tooley, E. Christopher, P. and Bernard, J. (2008), "The brief resilience scale: assessing the ability to bounce back", *International Journal of Behavioral Medicine*, Vol. 15 No. 3, pp. 194-200, doi: [10.1080/10705500802222972](https://doi.org/10.1080/10705500802222972).
- Spitzer, R.L., Kroenke, K., Williams, J.B.W. and Löwe, B. (2006), "A brief measure for assessing generalized anxiety disorder", *Archives of Internal Medicine*, Vol. 166 No. 10, pp. 1092-1097, doi: [10.1001/archinte.166.10.1092](https://doi.org/10.1001/archinte.166.10.1092).
- Staley, K., Randle, E., Donaldson, A., Seal, E., Burnett, D., Thorn, L., Forsdike, K. and Nicholson, M. (2024), "Returning to sport after a COVID-19 shutdown: understanding the challenges facing community sport clubs", *Managing Sport and Leisure*, Vol. 29 No. 1, pp. 107-127, doi: [10.1080/23750472.2021.1991440](https://doi.org/10.1080/23750472.2021.1991440).
- Taylor, M.G., Carr, D.C. and Jason, K. (2022), "Financial hardship and psychological resilience during COVID-19: differences by race/ethnicity", *The Journals of Gerontology: Series B*, Vol. 77 No. 7, pp. e117-e122, doi: [10.1093/geronb/gbab173](https://doi.org/10.1093/geronb/gbab173).
- To, Q.G., Vandelanotte, C., Cope, K., Khalesi, S., Williams, S.L., Alley, S.J., Thwaite, T.L., Fenning, A.S. and Stanton, R. (2022), "The association of resilience with depression, anxiety, stress and physical activity during the COVID-19 pandemic", *BMC Public Health*, Vol. 22 No. 1, p. 491, doi: [10.1186/s12889-022-12911-9](https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-022-12911-9).
- Tomy, A.J. and Weinberg, M.K. (2016), "Resilience and subjective wellbeing: a psychometric evaluation in young Australian adults", *Australian Psychology*, Vol. 53 No. 1, pp. 68-76, doi: [10.1111/ap.12251](https://doi.org/10.1111/ap.12251).
- Ungar, M., Brown, M., Liebenberg, L., Othman, R., Kwong, W.M., Armstrong, M. and Gilgun, J. (2007), "Unique pathway to resilience across cultures", *Adolescence*, Vol. 42 No. 166, pp. 287-310.
- Williams, M.T., Chapman, L.K., Wong, J. and Turkheimer, E. (2012), "The role of ethnic identity in symptoms of anxiety and depression in African Americans", *Psychiatry Research*, Vol. 199 No. 1, pp. 31-36, doi: [10.1016/j.psychres.2012.03.049](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.psychres.2012.03.049).
- World Health Organization (2022), "Mental health", available at: <https://www.who.int/news-room/factsheets/detail/mental-health-strengthening-our-response#:~:text=Mental%20health%20is%20a%20state,Determinants%20of%20mental%20health> (accessed 4 June 2025).

- Yoon, E. and Lee, R.M. (2010), "Importance of social connectedness as a moderator in Korean immigrants' subjective well-being", *Asian American Journal of Psychology*, Vol. 1 No. 2, pp. 93-105, doi: [10.1037/a0019964](https://doi.org/10.1037/a0019964).
- Zhou, E., Kyeong, Y., Cheung, C.S. and Michalska, K.J. (2022), "Shared cultural values influence mental health help-seeking behaviors in Asian and Latinx college students", *Journal of Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities*, Vol. 9 No. 4, pp. 1325-1334, doi: [10.1007/s40615-021-01073-w](https://doi.org/10.1007/s40615-021-01073-w).
- Zimmerman, M.A., Stoddard, S.A., Eisman, A.B., Caldwell, C.H., Aiyer, S.M. and Miller, A. (2013), "Adolescent resilience: promotive factors that inform prevention", *Child Development Perspectives*, Vol. 7 No. 4, pp. 215-220, doi: [10.1111/cdep.12042](https://doi.org/10.1111/cdep.12042).
- Zubair, A., Kamal, A. and Artemeva, V. (2018), "Mindfulness and resilience as predictors of subjective well-being among university students: a cross cultural perspective", *Journal of Behavioural Sciences*, Vol. 28 No. 2, pp. 1-19.

Corresponding author

Kyu-soo Chung can be contacted at: kchung2@kennesaw.edu