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A Qualitative Study of East Asian College Students' Perspectives on Family Messages About Education and Relations with Culture, Ethnic Identity, and Generational Status

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Abstract

As ethnic Asians become a more prominent group in American life, some scholars have focused on exploring both the roles of ethnic Asians in American society and culture, and of how American society and culture impact and transform their lives. This study seeks to understand the types of messages that ethnic East Asian college students studying in the United States report receiving from their parents and other family members about academic success and their college education. It also seeks to understand if and how messages about ethnic identity (being Asian) and immigration timing get integrated into the students' perceptions of their parents' messages about academic success and college education. Moreover, it explores how perceived parental messages are associated with emerging adults' own education experiences in terms of academic motivation and self-efficacy in the context of their college education.

To accomplish this, it pursues three specific aims: understanding the types of messages that ethnic East Asian college students studying in the United States report receiving from their parents about academic success and their college education, understanding if and how participants' ethnic identity and immigration timing get integrated into their perceptions of their parents' messages about academic success and college education, and exploring how perceived parental messages are associated with emerging adults' own education experiences in terms of academic motivation and self-efficacy. It also seeks to answer three research questions using a qualitative, semi-structured interview design with college students of ethnic East Asian descent. First, how do ethnic East Asian college students perceive the role of their ethnic identity in their academic lives? Second, what messages about academic expectations and post-study success do ethnic East Asian college and university students receive from family members, and how do

these messages affect students' educational decision-making? Third, how do ethnic East Asian college students describe how messages from their families relate to their own educational motivation, experiences of academic self-efficacy, and educational decision-making? It resulted in seven key findings. First, filial piety generally impacted both overseas-born and U.S.-born ethnic East Asian participants both negatively and positively. Second, American social and cultural values were generally external motivators on both first-generation and later-generation ethnic East Asian participants. Third, cultural expectations of family root culture and of American culture shaped both overseas-born and U.S.-born students' orientation toward school, major choice, and expectation about grades and career success. Fourth, both overseas-born and U.S.-born participants had general flexibility in choice of college major. Fifth, the standard concept of academic self-efficacy was not present among either participant group, although three students negotiated in some way to harmonize personal academic interests with parents' expected major choice. Sixth, satisfaction with choice of major was mixed but neither origin specific nor generation specific. Seventh, the sense that students had lived up to their parents' or family's expectations was also mixed but not origin specific.

Introduction

Educational researchers who study ethnic Asian students, and particularly ethnic East Asian students, in the United States often label them as constituting a "model minority" because of their academic achievements in comparison with those of other racial and ethnic minority groups (e.g., Kiang, 2013; Tran & Birman, 2010). The ethnic Asian population of the United States has grown threefold since 1980 and was the fastest-growing demographic group in the nation by the start of the 2020s (Cauce et al., 1998; Kiang et al., 2016; Tran & Bittman, 2017). As ethnic Asians become a more prominent group in American life, some scholars have focused on exploring both the roles of ethnic Asians in American society and culture, and of how American society and culture impact and transform their lives (Kiang et al., 2016).

The National Center for Education Statistics (2019) shows that in 2016, 67% of ethnic Asians in the United States between 18 and 24 years of age were enrolled in college. However, that figure glosses over a great diversity and variation in Asian enrollment by region and subgroup. Ethnic East Asians featured a rate of enrollment—70% each for ethnic Japanese and Korean, and 78 percent for ethnic Chinese (including Taiwanese)—about equal to certain South Asian ethnic groups (70 percent of Asian Indians and 66 percent of ethnic Pakistani-origin students) but much higher than most Southeast Asian-origin ethnic groups (57 percent overall, with, for example, 23 percent of ethnic Burmese and 43 percent of ethnic Laotians on one end and 68 percent of ethnic Vietnamese at the other). Moreover, the average enrollment rate for female ethnic East Asians in this age group was 68 percent, slightly higher than the average enrollment rate for male ethnic East Asians. These enrollment statistics are significant because

they indicate that there is a high proportion of emerging adults of ethnic East Asian descent in the United States who pursue college and university degrees, which is the focus on this study.

Educational researchers have become increasingly interested since the 1980s in the influence of contextual factors on student achievement, academic motivation, and future educational and career aspirations (Shirley, 2010). The developmental context that has received the most attention by such scholars is the family (Arslan, 2021; Jeynes, 2008), and educational research specific to ethnic Asian families, especially in the United States, has followed suit (Kiang et al., 2013; Pail et al., 2017; Sy, 2006). Research findings suggest that ethnic Asian parents yield a greater influence upon the educational and vocational experiences and trajectories of their children (Mun & Hertzog, 2019; Shen, 2015; Tang et al., 1999) compared to their non-Asian peers. This work has been framed around a discussion of the unique family values and practices among Asian families, including a strong work ethic, high expectations, parental and elder control, and the centrality of family obligation in the lives of children (Kasinitz, 2010). The current qualitative study focuses on understanding how Asian American college students experience their parents' messages about academic success and career expectations, and how those perceptions relate to their own academic motivation and self-efficacy in the context of their college education.

Although there is a broad literature examining Asian Americans' academic experiences and career aspirations, the extant literature is missing research that takes a more personalized approach to understand how individual young people navigate messages from family and their own academic investments. This qualitative and exploratory study begins to address this limitation as well as some others. First, much of the existing research has used the broad category of "Asian" with little attention to how country of origin, nationality, generational status,

and reason for immigration interact with parental messages and parental influence on academic achievement. The current study includes participants who identify ethnic origins from East Asia, and also includes a focus on ethnic identity and generational status to explore how ethnic Asian students' own ethnic identity may interact with perception of parental messages, influences of parental messages. Second, the study integrates concepts of individual motivation and self-efficacy in the context navigating family messages.

Third, existing research has been limited in exploring the broader impacts that the model minority stereotype has on ethnic Asian students or *how* these messages impact students beyond their achievement. Existing research on Asian and Asian American students generally focuses on *overall* academic achievement, rather than other individual-level concepts relevant to educational success like academic motivation and self-efficacy, which are key concepts explored in the current study. Finally, research has been limited by methodological designs that may reinforce stereotypes based on the questions asked (Okazaki & Sue, 2016). The qualitative design of this study provides the opportunity to hear the participants' lived experiences. Thus, this dissertation project draws from contemporary research in educational psychology and human development to contribute to the understanding of the experiences of ethnic Asian and Asian American emerging adults in the context of higher education and academics.

This study was organized around three specific aims. First, the study sought to understand the types of messages that ethnic East Asian college students studying in the United States report receiving from their parents about academic success and their college education. Second, the study sought to understand if and how participants' ethnic identity (being Asian) and immigration timing get integrated into their perceptions of their parents' messages about academic success and college education. Third, the study explored how perceived parental

messages are associated with emerging adults' own education experiences in terms of academic motivation and self-efficacy. Specifically, this study examined the following three research questions using a qualitative, semi-structured interview design with college students of ethnic East Asian descent:

(1) How do ethnic East Asian college students perceive the role of their ethnic identity in their academic lives?

(2) What messages about academic expectations and post-study success do ethnic East Asian college and university students receive from family members, and how do these messages affect students' educational decision-making?

(3) How do ethnic East Asian college students describe how messages from their families relate to their own educational motivation, experiences of academic self-efficacy, and educational decision-making?

This study's findings will extend the current literature on academic achievement and parenting among ethnic Asian emerging adults by illuminating the interaction between parental messaging, academic motivation, family dynamics, and ethnic identity. The findings have the potential to aid both academic (e.g., teachers and other learning support staff) and applied social science (e.g., mental health counselors and psychiatrists) professionals who work with ethnic Asian adolescents. Such professionals will be better equipped to support ethnic East Asian youths who are preparing for college and exploring both their choices of major and future career paths while also giving attention to individual motivation and self-efficacy.

CHAPTER I: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

Theoretical Frameworks

The design of this study was framed by the *ecological systems theory* (Bronfenbrenner, 1977, 1979), the academic self-efficacy perspective (Bandura, 1997), and ethnic identity theory (Phinney, 1996; Rogers et al., 2020). An overview of these perspectives and how they contributed to the study follows.

Ecological Systems Theory

Ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1977, 1979) focuses on the complex interactions between characteristics of the developing individual and aspects of their social and environmental context. This framework guided the focus of this study on family context and parenting as well as broader cultural influences related to immigrant and generational status and ethnic identity. Bronfenbrenner's description of contexts within the ecological system includes five levels of environmental influences surrounding the individual from most proximal to the developing individual to most distal: *microsystem*, *mesosystem*, *exosystem*, *macrosystem*, and *chronosystem*.

The *microsystem* accounts for those environmental influences experienced directly and regularly by the developing individual. These are the contexts of daily interaction and include the family, peer group, and school community. Bronfenbrenner referred to the settings in the microsystem as providing proximal processes and argued that because of the direct and daily interactions these contexts likely have the strongest impact on development. The *mesosystem* describes the interaction between two or more contexts in the microsystem—for example, a

parent's relationship with a child's school community. The *exosystems* are the contexts that impact a developing individual but with which the individual does not directly interact. For a developing adolescent, this would include settings such as the local school board, state legislature, and a parent's work environment. The *macrosystem* accounts for broader cultural influences in one's developmental environment that impact broad beliefs and values. For example, influences associated with socioeconomic status, religious beliefs, and race and ethnicity. The *chronosystem* accounts for the influences of developmental and historical time upon the individual.

Specifically, this study focuses on three levels of the ecology: that of the microsystem with a focus on family and parenting, the macrosystem with a focus on culture and ethnicity, and the chronosystem with a focus on generation status. Ecological systems theory guides my interest in how various layers of developmental context interact with emerging adults who identify as "Asian" as they think about their academic experiences and goals.

Academic Self-efficacy Theory

Academic self-efficacy theory focuses on the relationship between students' beliefs about their capabilities in terms of a specific task or activity and how this relates to their motivation, commitment, and perseverance related to the task or activity (Bandura, 1997). The theory proposes that individual learners with higher self-efficacy beliefs will invest more in their performance because of a sense that they will be successful with effort, while those with lower self-efficacy beliefs will be more likely to give up easily and potentially avoid engagement in the associated activity because they do not think their efforts will lead to success (Luszczynska et al., 2005). Self-efficacy is also related to how a person responds to stress and challenge (Bandura,

1997). For example, a student with higher self-efficacy is thought to be more capable of managing emotional responses to stress and challenge as they feel more capable of mastering the situation (Bandura, 1997; Luszczynska et al., 2005). Self-efficacy beliefs are thought not only to impact cognitive, motivational, and behavioral aspects related to academic tasks but also to influence a person's actual performance on the task (Bandura, 1997). This is the notion that self-efficacy beliefs can act as self-fulling prophecies. In line with Bandura's social learning perspective, the theory posits that self-efficacy is formed through reciprocal interactions between individuals' personal characteristics and their developmental environment (Tsang et al., 2012). This means that ecological systems theory remains relevant, with self-efficacy as a central individual quality that develops through interactions between the individual and multiple layers of their developmental context.

In terms of individual factors associated with self-efficacy, scholars have focused upon concepts like self-esteem, self-worth, and optimism and how these relate to judgments about the ability to do well on a specific task or activity and effort (Lane et al., 2004; Neroni et al., 2022). For example, research has found positive correlations between self-esteem and self-efficacy and the belief that one has the capability to achieve a goal (Bandura, 1997; Luszczynska et al., 2005). Luszczynkska et al. (2005) have also found that a sense of optimism increases one's ability to feel efficacious. The researchers point out that these individual factors—self-worth, self-esteem, and optimism—are also impacted by social contexts. For example, students have a tendency to look to their peers and make social comparisons as they form impressions of their own abilities.

Educational research based on findings from students in the United States has emphasized self-efficacy as a predictor of academic motivation and achievement. In a review of 59 articles spanning 12 years of research (2003–2015), Honicke and Broadbent (2016) identified

factors such as effort regulation and goal orientation that mediated between and moderated self-efficacy and performance in students. However, this association has not been as clear in research with diverse populations. Research with ethnic Asian students, whether born overseas or born in the United States, for example, has found that ethnic Asian students may have lower academic self-efficacy beliefs even in the context of higher achievement behaviors and outcomes compared to non-Asian American students (Eaton & Dembo, 1997; Yamamoto & Holloway, 2010). Eaton and Dembo (1997) found that Asian American students performed better academically than their non-Asian counterparts despite reporting lower levels of self-efficacy beliefs. The fear of academic failure, rather than a sense of one's competence and abilities, may better explain achievement motivation for Asian Americans. This relates to other work that has identified the power of self-criticism in the achievement of students from Asian countries (Holloway 2010; Lewis 1995).

Scholarship guided by self-efficacy theory has also emphasized the importance of parental academic expectations in shaping their children's academic expectations (Bandura et al. 1996; Goytte & Xie, 1999; Smith, 1991). Bandura et al. (1996) specifically focused on the relationship between the parents who had high expectations for their children and the children's own academic self-efficacy. The researchers found that children whose parents had high academic aspirations for them generally had higher academic self-efficacy compared to children whose parents did not. Smith (1991) explored the relationships between perceived maternal and paternal academic expectations and also found that there was a stronger association of student self-efficacy with mother's academic expectations than with father's academic expectations.

One of the goals of this study is to explore how perceived parental messages are associated with the educational experiences of ethnic Asian emerging adults in terms of

academic motivation and self-efficacy. Self-efficacy theory has informed this approach by providing a lens for revealing the relationship between parental expectations and the educational choices, motivation, and outcomes of ethnic Asians, and of the impact had by the former upon the latter. The value of self-efficacy theory to this study lies in its ability to illuminate how parents' messages about the success that they desire or expect their children to attain and the steps to which they can attain that success through getting a college education influence ethnic Asian students' own judgments and beliefs about their capabilities.

Ethnic Identity Theory

In many ways, the groundwork for the development of ethnic identity theory begins with identity theory, a subfield of developmental psychology that arose from Erikson's (1968) groundbreaking theory of developmental stages. As pointed out by Yip (2014), Erikson's *process*-based theory of individual ego development influenced subsequent scholars to focus on the developmental stage of adolescence and the "progress" of individuals at this stage "through a sequence of identity statuses ranging from low to high levels" of both *exploration* of and *commitment* to their ethnicity (p.6) and psychological adjustment (p.7).

Yip also identified another dominant approach in ethnic identity theory, the *content* approach. This approach focuses more on the "content, meaning, and significance of ethnic identity" at particular points in an individual's life rather than upon the individual's experience of the overall developmental process or progress through the stages of identify development. Yip's own study sought to draw from both the developmental and content theories by focusing upon the *salience* of an individual's ethnic identity at one stage while addressing developmental factors.

Other developments within ethnic identity theory have arisen from attempts at merging these two in some way. Phinney (1992) proposed the Multiethnic Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM), which strove to measure an individual's self-identification with a particular ethnic group. Phinney (1996) strove to explain ethnicity as a "multidimensional" construct incorporating cultural norms and values and involving meanings of "ethnic" identity that are dynamic and have different meanings and significances for different members of a particular ethnic group. In a review article, Umaña-Taylor et al. (2014) argued for the importance in research of eschewing presumptions of homogeneous experiences among individuals among an ethnic group even while accounting for shared similarities.

Rogers et al. (2020) focus on a theoretical approach proposed a "lifespan model" of *ethnic-racial identity* (ERI) theory that seeks to combine aspects of the developmental and content perspectives by focusing upon ethnic identity as something that also involves racial identity and develops over the course of an individual's lifespan. Among other questions, the ERI theory seeks to address and answer problems of the interplay of age and context upon ERI development, multiracialism, multiethnicity, and intersectionality. This model also seeks to consider matters such as social justice and equity, particularly as they play out in various contexts throughout an individual's development.

No one of these theoretical perspectives informed my study more than any other. I mention them here to provide a brief look at a category—*ethnicity*—and a phenomenon—*ethnic identity*—that are persistently problematic to theorize, in part because they are fluid rather than rigid, and also because how they are defined by an individual can change according to a variety of environmental factors including socioeconomic status, acculturation, generational status, and education. Drawing upon the insights of multiple theorists, I was able to view ethnic identity as a

dynamic phenomenon that evolves through the course of one's life but that is particularly crucial during adolescence and emerging adulthood. For this reason, ethnic identity theory also proved amenable to my ecological systems perspective.

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

Literature Review

Contemporary Asian American Population

Before the end of the 20th century, research on the impact of ethnicity and race with respect to the academic achievement of ethnic Asians in the United States, whether immigrant or native born, was generally nonexistent. Cauce et al. (1998) called for developmental researchers to sharpen their focus upon experiences of ethnic and racial minorities in the United States. Cauce et al. also acknowledged difficulties in doing this research, including the common practice of confounding socioeconomic status (SES) with race and ethnicity, the lack of prior research with diverse samples to guide measurement and research design, and research studies not accounting for the heterogeneity within racial and ethnic categories. Since Cauce et al. (1998), the overall population of ethnic and racial minorities in the United States has increased significantly, including the Asian American population (PEW, 2021). However, the overall number of studies focusing on adjustment by ethnic Asians in America since then has been disproportionately small (Kiang, 2018). Further research on this topic is deeply needed, especially as the ethnic Asian population continues to grow both in size and as an overall share of the American population. As ethnic Asians become a greater proportion of all Americans, whether by immigration or by birth, it will be important for developmental researchers and education researchers to understand the factors that affect and influence their adjustment to American life, including American secondary and postsecondary education.

The Model Minority Myth and Developmental Research on Ethnic Asians in America

One reason for this lack of focus in developmental research on ethnic Asians and Asian Americans, largely before the second decade of the 21st century, is because ethnic Asians in the United States have been considered together as constituting a "model minority" viewed as having universal success and the ability to overcome or be unaffected by discrimination (Chow, 2017). This perspective not only limited research that could increase scholarly understanding of diversity of developmental experiences; it may have also limited recognition of unique needs among ethnic Asian and Asian American adolescents and emerging adults. The model minority myth emerged from evidence of success and high academic achievement among Asians in America (Kiang & Luu, 2013). This stereotype is particularly evident in the literatures on parenting and achievement in ethnic Asian families and has profoundly influenced the ways that scholars' approach not only the academic lives but also the social and psychological lives of ethnic Asians in America (Kiang & Luu, 2013; Kiang et al., 2017; Kiang et al., 2019; Tran & Birman, 2010).

The immigration acts that emerged in the United States in the late-19th century—beginning with the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1890—and up through the 1920s sharply curtailed immigration outside of Western Europe. Not until the Immigration Act of 1965, which overturned many of the most stringent racial quotas limiting immigration, did immigration from Asia, and particularly from East and Southeast Asia, increase in the United States. The term *Asian American* emerged largely during the time of the Civil Rights Movement in the 1950s and 1960s (Espiritu, 1992; Kitano & Daniels, 2000; Lee & Zhou, 2004; Lien et al., 2003; Lowe, 1991; Park, 2008; Wei, 1993). This time period had an impact mainly on college-age Chinese and Japanese American students, who mobilized in order to raise awareness of racism and

discrimination through their protests of the Vietnam War, to develop mutual support across racial and ethnic minority groups, and to promote services for vulnerable populations within the United States (Espiritu, 1992; Lien, et al., 2003; Park, 2008; Wei, 1993).

As a scholarly concept, the model minority stereotype relates to the history of Asian immigration to the United States and to the emergence of Asian Americans as a sizable demographic. Both the phrase and its association in scholarship with Asian Americans emerged when Petersen (1966) used the term to indicate the ways that one particular group of Asian Americans—Japanese Americans—had worked to attain economic success in the United States despite facing discrimination. The passage of the 1965 Immigration Act removed previous legal barriers to immigration to the United States for ethnic Asians. Also, more trained specialists, particularly in science, left Asian countries for the United States. Thus, the number of ethnic Asians in the United States began to increase greatly after 1965, and the popular press began adopting *Asian American* as a term broadly referring to ethnic Asians living in America. As some ethnic Asians began enjoying particular material, professional, and academic success, popular explanations for this success often highlighted such purportedly "Asian" values as a strong work ethic, a primacy upon family obligation, and parenting for achievement (Kasinitz, 2010). Thus, the notion that ethnic Asians constitute a model minority is one variant of the "Asian family values" argument (see, for example, Kiang et al., 2016; Thompson & Kiang, 2010) that has profoundly influenced the ways that scholars approach studying the academic lives of ethnic Asians in America. This popular perspective—which gave rise to the stereotypes of Asian Americans as inherently industrious, successful, and well adjusted (Ngo & Lee, 2007)—also raised controversy, culminating five decades later in American media attention devoted to the so-called ethnic Asian "tiger mothers" who imparted such traditional Asian values

to their American-born children to ensure their success in school and beyond (Chua, 2011). A landmark study by the PEW Research Center (2012) further promoted the notion that ethnic Asians in the United States were generally well-adjusted economically, socially, and academically. Kiang et al. (2013) noted that these beliefs extended to include academic success.

In the 1960s, Chinese and Japanese Americans were the dominant Asian ethnic groups in the United States. By the 2000 Census, however, these two groups together constituted just under 32 percent of all Asian-originated ethnic groups in the United States. Further, in the 2000 Census, 88 percent of Asian Americans fell into six ethnic categories: Chinese, Filipino, Indian, Japanese, Korean, and Vietnamese (Barnes & Bennett, 2002; Park, 2008; Zhou & Siong, 2005). Park (2008) identifies two major cultural discourses for social change that emerged along with these demographic changes and transformed the meaning and definition of *Asian American*. The first discourse discussed race in ways that tended to efface or erase cultural, historical, and even ethnic distinctions among people descended from various national groups, subsuming them under one general "Asian" category. The second discourse focused on understanding the term *Asian American* in a way that somehow acknowledged the "variety of cultures encompassed by this term" even as it effaced markers of that variety. As these two discourses occurred concurrently, scholars regarded multiple Asian-originated ethnicities as participating in "a racialized similarity" (p. 542).

Many researchers have mentioned that the model minority concept emerged during the Civil Rights Movement, a period of American history that featured growing discontent among African American and other racial minorities about structures of racism and discrimination (Hurh & Kim, 1989; Kiang, 2016; S. Lee, 1996; Ngo & Lee, 2007; Osajima, 1987; Suzuki, 1995). Considering the history of Asian immigration to the United States, and the concept of the model

minority, researchers perpetuated a model minority stereotype that included both "implicit and explicit" acknowledgments that Asian Americans are uniquely situated more than other ethnic or racial groups within the American context and equipped with social practices and cultural values enabling them to attain not only success but also the mythic "American Dream" (p. 415).

This position has spurred a component of the discourse that puts forth that, by comparison to Asian Americans, African Americans and other minorities are perceived as "failures" blamed for a lack of industry and "good" family and achievement values and not because of the structural racism present in American society (Ngo & Lee, 2007; Osajima, 1987). Positive stereotypes of Asian Americans are therefore used to dismiss calls to recognize the harmful impact of institutionalized racism in the United States (Chow, 2017). Whaley and Noel (2013) dismiss the model minority and "inferior minority" stereotypes in a comparative study of academic performance and mental health among African Americans and Asian Americans. Also, presumptions by educators and support staff that Asian American students are better adjusted may both lead these educators and staff to "overlook or underestimate problems" affecting Asian American students' lives and result in Asian American students forgoing necessary academic and mental health assistance "help that they need because of the expectations of teachers and counselors" (p. 38).

Kiang et al. (2016) point out that the model minority stereotype "silence[s] and contain[s] Asian Americans" by putting out a persistent narrative of inherent industriousness that portrays success for all members of the overall group, despite real differences associated with socioeconomic status, generational timing, and country of origin, as generally inevitable. In addition, Park (2008) observes how beginning in the 1980s the model minority stereotype led to associations within American culture of the term *Asian American* with a perceived general

"socioeconomic prosperity and success" (p. 544). Following Wu (2002), Park (2008) points out that since 2000, poor and working-class Asian Americans had been excluded from the dominant narrative of Asian Americans' success, while middle-class Asian Americans faced "problematic expectations" when encountering workplace discrimination (Park, 2008, p. 544). Atkin et al. (2018) point out that Asian American students who internalize the model minority myth and study at a predominantly ethnic Asian school experienced an "exacerbated" relationship between the myth and both depression and anxiety (p. 7). Moreover, they note that ethnic Asian American students displaying "obedience, conformity" and other purportedly "Asian" characteristics may experience both discrimination in the post-school workplace and diminished mental health and well-being (p. 8).

The notion that Asian Americans constitute a model minority is visible in social science research. The PEW Forum (2012) study on Asian Americans and Asian immigrants in the United States was initially looked upon favorably because it filled a gap in scholarship and in policy. Yet it was soon rejected by many Asian immigrant and Asian American groups who claimed it failed to account accurately in its methodology for disparities among the various ethnic groups that together constitute the "Asian" category, particularly sociodemographic and contextual differences among Asian American, while perpetuating stereotypes of Asian Americans that had limited inquiry into the challenges faced by Asian immigrants (PEW, 2013).

Critics also argued both that the PEW study failed to account for generational gaps and sociocultural adjustment, and that particular aspects of the Asian American experience were disregarded (e.g., family dynamics). Instead, the study relied upon and perpetuated stereotypes of Asian Americans as inherently industrious and successful. Kiang et al. (2013) noted the persistence of a "general misconception" of being economically well adjusted "carried over" into

academics and educational research (p. 838). Kiang et al. and other critics produced an evaluation of the model minority stereotype that resonated with an earlier study by Lee and colleagues (2009), who emphasized how the purportedly positive stereotype of ethnic Asians as a well-adjusted, successful group may actually place external pressures on Asian American young adults to meet societal expectations of high academic achievement. Lee et al., which predated the PEW study, and Kiang et al. (2013), which criticized the PEW study, still seemed to be voicing a less regarded perspective that there exist challenges faced by Asian Americans that are important to study and understand. Tran and Birman (2010) pointed out in a review of scholarship on Asian American academic performance that scholars tended to uphold the model minority stereotype through a focus upon culture and a disregard for other factors such as social and economic elements. The PEW study was later expanded (2013) with some effort to respond to criticisms of the earlier study; however, criticism remained. Researchers challenging the model minority stereotype have acknowledged that a sizable number of Asian Americans view the model minority image as a positive phenomenon, and that having positive stereotypes about one's ethnic group can increase adaptive outcomes (Atkin et al., 2018; Kiang et al., 2016; Shih et al. 1999; Thompson & Kiang, 2010; Whaley & Noel, 2013).

Generational differences constitute one of the important facets for the model minority stereotype. One of the most prominent hurdles that second- and third-generation Asian American students face is that the reality of their academic and socio-emotional outcomes often does not match the theorized model minority image (Sue & Okazaki, 1990). The model minority idea inspired the "immigrant paradox" model (Hu-Dehart & Garcia-Coll, 2010; Marks et al., 2014), which highlights differences in social adjustment and academic achievement between the first (foreign-born) generation of immigrants and the second (U.S.-born) generation of immigrants.

The immigrant paradox model proposed that the first generation of immigrant children outperform both American-born non-immigrant children and later generations of U.S.-born children of immigrants. Outcomes become increasingly less optimal for the second and later generations of immigrant children, who feel increased pressure to succeed when compared to both newer generations of immigrant children and native-born non-immigrant generations. This decline in outcomes arises as second-and-later-generation immigrants become increasingly acculturated to the dominant American culture and lose some connections with their families' traditional cultures. The second, American-born generation of immigrants is confronted both with the need to consider lower academic performance while needing always to ask themselves "Who am I?" with respect to their ethnic and cultural identities as they navigate both their family's traditional culture and the mainstream American culture they have been raised in (Marks et al., 2014, p. 59).

This dissertation study focuses on the perceptions had by ethnic Asian college students studying in America of the messages they received from their parents about academic success and the association between those messages and their own academic motivation, sense of self-efficacy, and education experiences. This study relied on qualitative interviews in order to allow the students to describe their own lived experiences. This qualitative research approach was important to try to limit biases in research questions due to the pervasiveness of the model minority stereotype. This study focused on individuals who are of East Asian ethnic heritage and who pursued higher education in the United States. The rationale is that focusing on emerging adults from only one region will reduce some of the confounding of experiences among individuals from different regional and geographical backgrounds. This study also included an equal number of first-generation and second- or third-generation university students of East

Asian heritage in order to begin to explore associations with generational status. It also sought to explore the possible transmission and continuation from one generation to the next of social and cultural values and practices that are associated with the experiences of emerging adults of East Asian ethnic heritage.

Education and Academic Experiences Among Ethnic Asians in America

Contextual Factors: Parenting and Family

Even in adolescence and emerging adulthood, parents remain primary socializing agents for their children, providing guidance about values, social skills, and behavioral expectations (Maccoby & Martin, 1983). Parental academic socialization includes the processes by which parents help shape their children's values, beliefs, and attitudes about education and academic success (Taylor et al., 2004). Research on parent academic socialization processes within ethnic Asian and Asian American families has focused mainly on the following dimensions: family obligation (Fuligni et al.,1999; Fuligni & Pedersen, 2002; Kiang et al., 2019; Park, 2008; Tsai-Chae & Nagata, 2000), parenting style (Salazar et al., 2000; Dwairy & Menshar, 2006; Rudy & Grusec, 2006; Mousavi et al., 2016), and parental expectations (Leung et al., 2011; Park, 2008; Wang & Hepper 2002).

Studies on ethnic Asian and Asian American families in these areas have generally been framed around the perspective that Asian families hold cultural values that are markedly different from American values, and that these values result in parenting that is more authoritarian, strict, and focused on children doing what is in the best interest of family rather than the individual. This alleged dichotomy that privileges collectivism over individualism—in this case, the desires and will of the family against the individual youth's desires—in fact masks a complex phenomenon. One primary factor that complicates the matter is the cultural and social

system of practices and values that is often called *Confucianism*. In this study, *Confucianism* is assumed to constitute a broader cultural ethos that influences notions about and attitudes toward family relationships, children's attitudes and obligations toward their parents and other family members, and about the role and value of education in personal development and decision-making about careers. The term *Confucianism* derives its name from the ancient Chinese philosopher and teacher Confucius (a Latinization of Kong Fuzi, or "Grand Master Kong"), who emphasized the importance in life of social harmony, family relationships, and moral self-cultivation, and placed a primacy on one's education as the primary means of preparing oneself for interacting with others. The impact of Confucianism upon not only China but across other countries that were impacted by Chinese cultural influence cannot be understated. Huang and Gove (2015) discuss how Confucianism promotes family hierarchy and harmony while stressing both parental responsiveness and demandingness on one end and a filial sense of obligation from children on the other. Moreover, education in Confucian cultures is a "family business" in which parents expect that their children will pursue and obtain high academic achievement that will ultimately lead toward material success that, it is hoped, will benefit the family.

A core concept of Confucianism is *filial piety*, which is a basic value stressing children's obligations toward parents and in some cases the broader family, often deferring their own wishes or desires for those of their parents and family harmony (Huang & Gove, 2015; Fuglini et al., 2016). Patel et al. (2022) identifies filial piety as "a key cultural script that dictates parent-child relations for Asian American populations in the United States" (p. 3258). Although filial piety is presented within Confucianism as a virtue and family harmony is presented as both personally and culturally desirable, the concept has also been linked, at least in its extremes, with an authoritarian parenting style that discourages critical and creative thought among children and

inhibits rather than promotes success and well-being (see Dong & Xu, 2016; Dundes et al., 2009; Huang & Gove, 2015; Ngo & Lee, 2007). However, the authoritarian stereotype is not the only version of the family-centeredness that is at the heart of Confucian cultures. Patel et al. (2022) identified *familial pride* as an important value in ethnic Asian families. Whereas filial piety is often stereotyped a top-down imposition of parental expectations and desires upon their children, familial pride is a "reciprocal" dynamic in which "fulfilling obligations to bring pride to the family" motivates children (p. 3260). Rather than the more conservative, restrictive force that places the parents' will over that of their children, familial pride can accentuate the family-centered obligation at the heart of filial piety by investing youths, adolescents, and emerging adults with a sense of "joy and happiness" that may reinforce a positive sense of "accomplishment" in having fulfilled obligations to their families (p. 3260).

The studies discussed above provide context for thinking about a feature of the lives of ethnic Asians in general and particularly of ethnic East Asians in America that can often distort educational research. The notion of ethnic East Asian families being authoritarian and collective can often lead to perceptions of such families as staunchly conservative, and while my dissertation did not necessarily set out to refute or confirm this perception, it does need to grapple with the question of whether, to the degree that they may exist, any authoritarian or collectivist features may exist within families that may influence or guide the educational choices and motivation of ethnic East Asian students, particularly as they prepare to enter higher education and develop longer-term career goals.

Family Obligation and Asian Families

The study of family obligation in social science research focuses on the expectation that family members are more responsible to each other than to their individual interests and needs

(Finch & Mason, 1990). Values of family obligation are associated with cultures where collectivism is valued over individualism. Young people raised with the value of family obligation are thought to make decisions influenced by a sense of duty and responsibility to the family. Family obligation is a focus of research on Asian culture and this value is thought to persist among ethnic Asian families in the United States.

Tsai et al. (2015) provided a useful approach to family obligation in seeking to determine the dynamics of parental cultural socialization in a study of 428 Mexican American adolescents and their parents. The researchers found that in the process of parental cultural socialization, adolescents' family obligation values and behaviors when parent-child relationships were low in conflict and high in support. In addition, Tsai et al. highlighted the importance not only for parents but also for researchers of considering how parents may deliver cultural values in a way that results in positive parent-child relationships. Tsai et al. (2020) undertook a comparative study of family obligation in Vietnamese American and European American adolescents. This aspect is particularly important for adolescents because successful identity formation also includes developing a sense of belonging and connection to others and the larger cultural context (Adams & Marshall, 1996). Tsai et al. (2015)'s study reinforces this importance of parental socialization as a dimension of adolescents' development by underscoring its importance in ethnic Asian families.

Some researchers have identified a role for children in ethnic Asian families in supporting, assisting, and respecting elders and the family (Fuligni & Pedersen, 2002; Fuligni et al., 1999). Research has found that American high school students from Asian ethnic backgrounds more strongly valued and had greater expectations that they would help their parents and respect their families' wishes than did students from European backgrounds (Fuligni

& Pedersen, 2002; Fuligni et al., 1999). In addition, several scholars have noted that some Asian young adults not only perceive the expectation that they would help their parents as an obligation to their families but also consider it beneficial (Fuligni, 2001; Fuligni & Pedersen, 2002; Fuligni et al., 1999; Tsai-Chae & Nagata 2008). Moreover, some researchers have proposed that the family plays a role in children's academic development. Generally, ethnic Asian families expect children both to perform well in school and to help their family in such ways as helping with the parents' business in the future (Fuligni & Pedersen, 2002). This sense of *obligation* (e.g., doing well in school and performing family roles) is an aspect of the overall cognitive process of parental socialization identified by Bandura and Walters (1963). This obligation complements the parentally conveyed expectation that children pursue desirable goals and become involved in their families (Fuligni, 2001; Fuligni & Pedersen, 2002).

Parenting Style

Parenting style is another dimension of parenting that has been studied among Asian American families. Asian families tend to be characterized as being regulated more by either an *authoritarian* parenting style, exemplified by strict parental control, or an *authoritative* parenting style, exemplified by the mediation of parental strictness with parental warmth. Ang and Goh (2006) conducted a cluster-analytic study of ethnic Asian adolescents whose parents imposed an authoritarian parenting style. The authors did not find "universal association" of authoritarian parenting style with negative social or academic outcomes. Pong et al. (2010) compared parenting styles among European American, Asian American, and Asian families. They found that while ethnic Asian families surveyed tended slightly more toward authoritarian rather than authoritative parenting style, the difference was only about two percent (48% to 46%) in favor of authoritarian parenting style. Choi et al. (2013), meanwhile, in a study of ethnic Korean families

in the United States, suggests that Korean parenting is in fact a blend of both authoritarian and authoritative parenting styles, combining strictness with warmth. Also, as noted in the discussion of Confucianism above, Patel et al. (2022) addressed the notion of filial piety as one of a familial pride that counters the alleged authoritarianism of ethnic Asian parenting practices.

A significant feature of the model minority stereotype is the notion that the successes of ethnic Asian students in America are the result of parents exacting more direct control than parents in non-ethnic Asian families over their children's academic preparation that directly translates into academic achievement. This exertion of parental authority is often perceived as owing to the direct influence of cultural values originating in Asian cultures that are transmitted to an American context (Kiang et al., 2016).

Salazar et al. (2000) explore the role of parental socialization in Filipino adolescents' academic achievement. They found that family reputation (family relations) and internal attribution (student response) were found to mediate the relation between authoritarian parenting (parent involvement, rewards, and freedom) and GPA. This research was conducted in San Francisco and among the Filipino American population there, and except for GPA, the findings are based on self-reports. This study's result is important in large part because it supports the major findings of prior research about parenting styles, particularly how the academic achievement of Asian American adolescents was positively correlated with an authoritarian style (Salazar et al., 2000). Moreover, the researchers emphasized that the relationship between authoritarian parenting and the students' conception of being obligated to maintain their families' reputation by good academic performance is an important aspect of both individual and family values among Asian Americans. The Filipino American adolescents in Salazar et al.'s study valued maintaining a good family reputation.

Further, some researchers also found that family reputation had a direct impact upon academic achievement (Mak, 1988; Salazar et al., 2000; Stevenson & Stigler, 1992). Employing a social learning theory perspective, some scholars suggested that parenting styles and family reputation together indicate well the cognitive process unfolding within a social context, as well as the parents' messages about how to satisfy the parents' expectations and family roles. On this interpretation, ethnic Asian parents employ a stable parenting style, in this case an *authoritarian* parenting style, that instills within the children the message that good educational outcomes are important because they help to bolster the family's reputation and, by extension, well-being. Some researchers have tended to stress that many ethnic Asians fail to recognize or acknowledge a relationship between authoritarian parenting and psychological problems because of the primacy that is generally said to be placed in Asian cultures, and especially in East Asian and Southeast Asian cultures, upon "conformity" and "social harmony" (Dwairy & Menshar, 2006; Mousavi et al., 2016; Rudy & Grusec, 2006). In other words, owing to the deference to parents and elders that is culturally inscribed and socialized, children are encouraged and even pressured to sublimate individual concerns and impulses toward the perceived benefit of the family.

The significance of these studies for my dissertation is that they support the perspective that there are differences in parenting styles and the relationship between parenting styles and academic outcomes associated with culture and ethnic background (Ngo & Lee, 2007).

Parental Expectations

Parents exert a certain level of influence over their children's academic performance and success. Research on ethnic Asian families has focused on parental expectations in relation to education and career domains, because of a belief that parents in Asian families set uniquely high expectations for achievement and success and serve as primary gatekeepers for decisions

concerning their children's academic and career choices (Workman, 2015). Some studies suggest that students from ethnic Asian backgrounds have historically deferred to their parents' wishes that they pursue majors and then careers, often involving STEM fields or business, that result in both material (particularly financial) and social (in terms of prestige) benefits not only for the child but, by extension, for the family (Chao & Tseng, 2002). Dundes et al. (2009) point out that the student's own understanding of the parental messages they receive about academic expectations constitutes a particularly unique aspect of the process by which Asian American adolescents are socialized to academic achievement.

In a study of 392 undergraduates from Taiwan, Wang and Heppner (2002) demonstrated that a student's self-perception that their parents' expectations have been satisfied has a greater impact and generates greater psychological stress than the parental expectations themselves do. The authors connect to research findings that ethnic Asian families are more likely to have an authoritarian parenting style, which can portray parents as not only managing but commanding and even domineering their children's academic lives. The current study focuses on hearing from college students from East Asian ethnic backgrounds about their perspectives on parental expectations and on how perceptions of these parental expectations shape their own academic and career beliefs, motivations, and goals.

Yamamoto and Holloway (2010) articulate the dynamic by which parental expectations affect children's academic performance in ethnic Asian and Asian American sociocultural contexts. One of the mediating processes that applies to Asian Americans and broader ethnic Asian populations is that high parental expectations may influence children's academic trajectories. The researchers found that ethnic Asian students, whether born overseas or born in the United States, had lower academic self-efficacy beliefs but higher achievement behaviors

compared to non-Asian American students (Eaton & Dembo, 1997). Yamamoto and Holloway (2010) also found that Asian American students reported lower levels of self-efficacy beliefs yet performed significantly better than their non-ethnic Asian counterparts on academic tasks. The fear of academic failure better explained achievement motivation for Asian Americans than did self-efficacy beliefs. Further, the researchers identified and explained the sources of Asian American youths' lower level of self-efficacy beliefs. In addition, these cultural patterns of self-criticism had been noted in Asian countries (Holloway 2010; Lewis 1995).

This phenomenon of academic pressure from parents has also been identified and described by Dundes et al. (2009). The researchers explored the factors that influence educational and career choices among ethnic Korean students. One important result is that it is crucial for ethnic Asian parents, and particularly for Korean Asian parents, to have academically successful children because of family honor and pride in academic success by comparing their accomplishments with those of children of family and friends.

Some researchers suggest that this phenomenon not only indicates the *collectivist* orientation of, in this case, East Asian cultures; it particularly suggests the continued influence within ethnic Asian families even outside East Asia and within the more *individualistic* United States of ideas about the primacy of family bonds, the influence of filial piety, and the instrumental as well as intrinsic value of education. Pressure to be successful is an important Confucian trait inscribing the lives of ethnic Asians in America (Dundes et al., 2009; Ngo & Lee, 2007). What is interesting is that, despite this Confucian stress on *self-cultivation* and *self-culture*—which are traditionally grounded in the foundation of study and repeated practice of what one has studied as a means not only of intellectual advancement but of personal, social, and cultural refinement—scholarly studies indicating that high levels of *self-efficacy* lead to success

have not been found to apply to the educational motivation of Asian American adolescents. Instead, the *external* motivations coming from family members by way of messages and other forms of socialization tend to be greater influences upon the academic success of ethnic Asians in America. In terms of being successful academically, these adolescents feel pressure to succeed academically and give their parents a sense of pride. To accomplish these, adolescents have to work particularly hard and carry the weight of these expectations.

A comparison of scholars of the former and scholars of Asian American academic education and parental socialization shows that scholars of Asian American students often overlook and do not acknowledge children's sense of obligation to their parents. Instead, such researchers focus more on "authoritarian" parenting styles rather than considering family obligations of adolescents to their parents and broader family values. Yet academic achievement as a sense of obligation (e.g., to do well in school and to play a role in the family) is an important aspect of Asian American parental socialization. For example, Dundes et al. (2009) mentioned that for Asian Americans, mainly those of Korean background, it is important to have academically successful children because of family honor and pride in academic success by comparing their accomplishments with those of children of family and friends. Thus, one aspect of the stereotype may be said to hold a kernel of truth, as obtaining academic success is one of the children's obligations and is in essence children's job within ethnic Asian families in America.

The research on parental expectations outlined here provided a frame for exploring the degree to which ethnic East Asian college students in the United States may or may not be influenced by more traditional values ascribed to a Confucian cultural context. Again, it is crucial to avoid essentializing East Asian cultures as a rigid set of values and practices. Yet the

ways that parents may convey their desires and expected academic and career outcomes for their children, and how they socialize these desires and anticipated outcomes into their children, has implications for my study. It is important to try to determine how ethnic East Asian emerging adults receive and regard the socialization messages they receive from their parents, particularly if parents are sending those messages and youths are receiving them within a Confucian interpretive frame.

Generational Status

As researchers consider the impact of culture and parental expectations on ethnic Asian students' experiences, they should also consider how generational status interacts with these experiences. For second- or later-generation Asian Americans, does the impact of culture and cultural expectations decrease? According to Park (2008), the term *Asian* became a "pan-ethnic label" reflecting and speaking to shared experiences among second-generation Asian Americans from multiple but distinct ethnicities originating across Asia of being grouped together with the overly general term *Asian.* The result is that the term *Asian American* became an identifier that was pregnant with multiple potential significances for those using it as a self-label.

In addition, some researchers became aware that representation of the relationships in psychological or social adjustment involves self- and ascribed labels (Kiang & Luu, 2013; Kiang et al., 2011). Further, Yoon et al. (2007) point out that researchers had noted the risk of a negative impact upon ethnic Asian students' developmental incomes owing to the ways that the model minority stereotype influenced, among other dimensions of their lives, not only students' ethnic identity development but also how they perceived their experiences of discrimination and the messages they received from mainstream society about cultural expectations. Kiang et al. (2016) identified adolescence as a particularly significant developmental stage for researchers to

focus their exploration of the influence of the model minority stereotype on ethnic Asian students, as American high schools feature multiple "social pressures for youth to both fit in and stand out" and only highlights this developmental risk.

My dissertation study seeks to explore the degree to which an ethnic East Asian emerging adult's generational status as an immigrant student within the United States affects how they receive, interpret, and respond to socialization messages from their parents about which subjects and majors they should pursue in college or university. While it does not specifically challenge the model minority stereotype that also includes some degree of parental pressure, it cannot ignore it. The studies on generational status mentioned above demonstrate that both parental socialization and the model minority myth continue to be influential factors on the lives of ethnic East Asian emerging adults across generational lines.

CHAPTER III: METHODS

Methods

This qualitative study explores how ethnic identity, parental socialization, and academic self-efficacy interact in ethnic East Asian emerging adults. I first conducted interviews with emerging adults studying in the United States and identifying as ethnic East Asians. I then employed Applied Thematic Analysis to interpret the data and identify relevant themes.

Positionality

My approach to the study of ethnic identity, parental socialization, and academic self-efficacy in ethnic East Asian emerging adults arose from my own experience as well as my prior research. I was born in Japan and came to the United States for college, and then I stayed further for two graduate degrees and to start a career in higher education. In my native Japan, I had never thought of myself as being "Asian" in terms of ethnicity or race. I had always thought of myself as Japanese, as opposed to Chinese, Korean, etc. When I began studying in the United States and became acclimated to the dominant culture, I was confronted with a new way of conceiving and perceiving my self-identity--by a general racial designator that also functioned as an ethnic label. I was curious about how and why a broad term that effaces ethnic differences—and, really, is more of a geographic designation—was being used to describe me both ethnically and racially. The term is used in the United States to refer not only to other ethnic and national groups but also to other ethnic, racial, and national groups that themselves are quite diverse—peoples from the Indian Subcontinent, for example, or from parts of the Middle East. As I studied developmental psychology and then human development, family studies, and educational

psychology, I became curious about how this phenomenon of being essentially re-labeled by the dominant White, Western European-influenced American culture with such a broad label may have an impact upon and inform the ethnic identity formation and the academic motivation and outcomes of other students descended from groups originating in East Asia and studying in the United States. This experience has greatly shaped my approach to this study.

Participants

The criteria for inclusion in the study were that participants be between ages 18 and 25 years old and self-identify as first-generation (born overseas) or as second- or third-generation (born in the United States to foreign-born parents) ethnic East Asians pursuing higher education in America. The definition of *generation* employed in this study was formulated by Kiang et al. (2011) and places immigrants into two categories: the *first generation*, or *foreign-born* individuals, and *subsequent generations* (e.g., the second generation, or those born to immigrant parents, and the third generation, or those born to the children of immigrant parents) who are the *native-born individuals* of previous immigrant generations. Kiang et al.'s definition was particularly useful to the current study because I was influenced by Bronfenbrenner's (1977; 1979) ecological systems perspective and considered contextual factors in ethnic labeling and the relationship between ethnic labels and generation status.

For several reasons, only participants with East Asian ethnic identities (the People's Republic of China, Taiwan, Korea, Japan, or parts of Southeast Asia and the Pacific Islands where East Asian ethnic communities have been historically represented, such as Malaysia, Indonesia, the Philippines, and Singapore) were included in the study. First, the ethnic designator "Asian" is a label that suggests homogeneity when a large amount of ethnic and cultural diversity exists within this group. Asia is a large continent comprising a vast diversity of ethnic

groups and cultural traditions. Ethnic groups and cultural traditions originating in East Asia share some cultural aspects that differ from those among groups and traditions originating in, for example, South Asia, Central Asia, or the Middle East. In this study, I recruited participants whose ethnic heritage represented countries that are generally considered to share Confucian social and cultural resources and norms reflecting and reinforcing attitudes about the family, parents' and children's roles, parental expectations for their children's academic performance, and the degree of autonomy that children have over their development, education, career aspirations, and preparation. However, this does not mean to suggest that East Asian traditions in any way constitute a cultural monolith. For example, there are marked distinctions between Chinese ethnicity and culture and Japanese ethnicity and culture. Even the designators "Chinese" and "Japanese" themselves suggest a greater amount of similarity in the country of origin than may exist. However, limiting participants to those who identify as East Asian provided some opportunity to focus on some shared cultural experiences.

The decision to include participants ages 18 to 25 was based on the study's interest in college student experiences and followed the definition of the developmental period of *emerging adulthood*. Arnett's (1996, 2000) classic definition of emerging adulthood indicated a stage of life between ages 18 and 25. He later (2014) extended the boundary of this range to age 29. However, as my target age range is 18 and 25, this study addresses only a portion of the developmental stage of emerging adulthood. Emerging adults were a particularly appropriate population to study because they have the cognitive maturity as well as the increasing autonomy to reflect meaningfully on the way they were parented (Arnett, 2004). The goal was to recruit at least 10 ethnic East Asians studying in America who fit the established criteria of this exploratory, qualitative study. As one purpose of this study was to explore how ethnic identity

and generation status relate to parental socialization and academic motivation in the lives of ethnic Asians studying in America, the goal was for the final sample to include an equal representation of first-generation and second- or third-generation college students.

Participants were recruited into this study using several methods. Fliers describing the study and inviting participation were posted in the libraries, student union buildings, and within offices of multicultural student affairs at two eastern New England universities: one in southern New Hampshire and one in downtown Boston, Massachusetts. Fliers were also posted on community bulletin boards in coffee houses and restaurants in the towns surrounding these two institutions. I also reached out to several academic departments at the two universities and requested that the flier be shared with undergraduate students. This study also relied on the snowball sampling method. I asked each study participant to share the flier with individuals who might be interested in participating in the study. Participants were ultimately drawn from two elite universities in New York State, a public university in Eastern Massachusetts, and a private university in Southern California. Finally, my dissertation co-chairs shared recruitment materials on social media.

The final sample included ten emerging adults who were currently attending college or pursuing an advanced degree. One additional participant (originally numbered Participant 7) completed the survey but declined to participate in the interview; their data was not used in the study and is not counted in the final sample of ten emerging adults. Participant 11 was renumbered Participant 7 to avoid confusion about numbering. The participants were 22 years old, on average, and the final sample was divided equally by gender and roughly by country of origin. Five participants identified as male (Participants 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9), and five participants identified as female (1, 2, 3, 4, 10). Six were born in Asia (Participants 1, 3, 6, 7, 9, and 10); one

of these, Participant 1, immigrated to the United States while young. Four participants were born in the United States (Participants 2, 4, 5, 8). Both parents of Participants 2 and 5 were born overseas; one of Participant 4's parents was born overseas, and both of Participant 8's parents were born in the United States. Participant 10 was born in China but adopted by American parents while very young and completely raised in the U.S. Before conducting interviews, I screened potential participants by giving each a short, online survey (please see Table 1).

Participant 1, aged 23 years at the time of the interview, was born in China but immigrated to the United States as a young child. Her parents left China to escape poverty; neither parent pursued higher education. Participant 1 was raised in Connecticut and went to a competitive high school. Her brother became an engineer after college. She originally majored in education, which she described as her "passion," but changed her major to business at her parents' insistence that she pursue a degree with which she could obtain a high-paying job. She was planning on graduate study in marketing after completing her bachelor's degree. She self-identified on the survey as "Asian" and in the study as Asian American, Chinese American, and American.

Participant 2, aged 21 years at the time of the interview, was born in the United States to immigrants from China. Neither of her parents pursued higher education. Participant 2 was raised in the New York City area and went to a competitive high school. She majored in psychology and minored in Asian studies. She had not settled on a post-graduation career or education path. She self-identified on the survey as "Chinese" and in the interview as Chinese, American, and Chinese American.

Participant 3, aged 24 years at the time of the interview, was born in Taiwan and raised by her mother. Her mother did not pursue higher education. She was raised in Taiwan, where she

earned a bachelor's in human development and family studies before coming to the United States for graduate study in the same field. She had planned to find work related to her field in the United States following graduation. She self-identified on the survey as "Taiwanese American" and in the interview as Taiwanese and Asian.

Participant 4, aged 19 years at the time of the interview, was born in the United States to an Asian American father and a mother born and raised in Hong Kong. Her parents were both of lower socioeconomic status, and neither pursued higher education. She was raised in the New York City area and enrolled in a university in Massachusetts, where she pursued a degree in Management and Information Science. She self-identified in the survey as "Chinese" and in the interview as Asian American.

Participant 5, aged 25 years at the time of the interview, was born in the United States to Taiwanese immigrants. Both of his parents held master's degrees in computer science, worked in the field, and attained material and professional success. His brother also attended college in computer science. Participant 5 was raised in Maryland, where he attended a "diverse" high school and then went to college for a bachelor's degree in materials engineering. At the time of interview, he was pursuing a doctorate in the same field. He self-identified in the survey as "Chinese American" and in the interview as "Taiwanese American," "American Born Taiwanese," "American Born Chinese," and "Asian."

Participant 6, aged 21 years at the time of the interview, was born in Japan to parents of Taiwanese and Japanese descent, and was raised in Taiwan. Neither of his parents completed a higher education degree, and both experienced financial hardships. He attended an American high school in Taiwan and was influenced to attend college in the United States by his uncles. He studied finance and minored in psychology at a university in New York City and had been

hoping to pursue career opportunities in the United States following graduation before the advent of the 2020 COVID pandemic. He self-identified in the survey as “Chinese” and in the interview as Asian, Japanese, and Taiwanese.

Participant 7, aged 19 years at the time of the interview, was born and raised in Indonesia of mixed Japanese, Chinese, and Indonesian heritage parents. Neither his father nor his stepmother completed a bachelor’s degree. His parents and extended family suggested he pursue potentially lucrative majors in business or STEM, but he chose to study international politics. He self-identified as “East Asian” on the survey and as Indonesian, Japanese, Chinese, and Asian in the interview.

Participant 8, aged 22 years at the time of the interview, was born in the United States to a U.S.-born father of Japanese descent and a U.S.-born mother of mixed European descent. He had a younger sister who was adopted from China. Both of his parents completed at least an undergraduate degree; his mother held a law degree. Participant 8 studied biology at a university in California and expressed his interest in becoming a marine biologist after graduation. He self-identified in the survey as “Japanese American” and in the interview as Asian American and Japanese American.

Participant 9, aged 23 years at time of interview, was born in South Korea to Korean parents. Neither of his parents pursued a college education. His brother studied medicine and became a doctor. Participant 9 moved to the United States for undergraduate study in psychology and had not decided on a career or further educational path following graduation at the time of his interview. He self-identified in the survey as “Korean” and in the interview as Asian and Korean.

Table 1

Online Survey Results

Participant	Gender	Age	Ethnicity	Country of Birth	Generation	College Level	Memo
1	Female	23	Asian	China	1st	Undergraduate	Born in Asia; immigrated to U.S. while young
2	Female	21	Chinese	U.S.	1st	Undergraduate	Born and raised in the U.S. of Asian-born parents
3	Female	24	Taiwanese American	Taiwan	2nd	Graduate	Born and raised in Asia
4	Female	24	Chinese	U.S.	2ns	Undergraduate	Born and raised in the U.S. of one Asian-born parent and one U.S.-born parent
5	Male	25	Chinese	U.S.	2nd	Graduate	Born and raised in the U.S. of Asian-born parents
6	Male	21	Chinese	Japan	1st	Undergraduate	Born and raised in Asia
7	Male	19	East Asian	Indonesia	1st	Undergraduate	Born and raised in Asia
8	Male	22	Japanese American	U.S.	3rd	Undergraduate	Born and raised in the U.S. of U.S. born parents
9	Male	23.	Korean	Korea	1st	Undergraduate	Born and raised in Asia
10	Female	23	Asian–Chinese	China	N/A	Graduate	Adopted from Asia while young; raised in the U.S.

Note: All participants' ages at the time of their interview.

Participant 10, aged 23 years at time of interview, was adopted from China by American parents as a baby. She attended a largely White high school in Texas and then went on to earn bachelor's and master's degrees in psychology. She self-identified as "Asian—Chinese" in the survey and as Asian American in the interview.

Procedure

Prior to data collection, the study was approved by the University of New Hampshire's Institutional Review Board. Data collection included completion of an online survey questionnaire in Qualtrics that took participants about 15 minutes to complete and then a semi-structured interview conducted either in person or virtually. The originally intended time expected for this interview was 30 to 40 minutes. The interviews averaged 26 minutes in length. The shortest interview was 14.5 minutes (Participant 10), and the longest was 39 minutes (Participant 7). The reasons for varying length included participant willingness to discuss matters that were personal, the substance of the participant's responses to questions, technical issues that occasionally disrupted phone or virtual conversations, and, in one case, the participant's limited spoken English ability or understanding of the questions (Participant 3). Participants were given the option of where they wanted to be interviewed, but with the advent of the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic, in-person interviews were rendered impossible. These factors resulted in seven interviews conducted online through video conferencing software, two interviews conducted in person, and one interview conducted on the phone.

Because this study focused on students of East Asian backgrounds studying in the United States, the questionnaire and interview protocol were prepared and presented in English. During measurement development, the screening survey and interview items were piloted with two university students who were native Chinese speakers. The goal of this pilot work was to modify

terminology that was confusing and to make clarifying edits prior to the formal data collection. Data from one of these two interviewees (Participant 3) was incorporated into the study's findings. Data from the other interviewee was not included both because she did not self-identify as "East Asian" and because she was outside the target participant group.

After the pilot interviews, I made several changes to the interview protocol. First, a genogram activity was added at the beginning of the interview to help me determine who the participants considered to be influential family members. I used this when asking each participant questions about their family structure in order to organize my information and data. The pilot interviews indicated that participants spoke not only about their parents but also about other relatives who influenced decision-making about academics. Adding the genogram also enabled opportunities for building rapport with the participants before moving into the more open-ended parts of the interview. Second, I added a question about the community where they went to high school. The study was framed, in part, by Ecological Systems Theory. At the microsystem level, questioning participants about the community in which their high schools were located as well as about the schools they attended allowed a richer understanding of the environment in which the participant was raised. Third, questions were added concerning the participants' decision-making processes and discussions with parents about where to attend college. Finally, after the pilot interviews, I added specific probes, or follow-up questions, for use while asking the interview questions. These probes were used when participants did not provide sufficiently complete responses to general questions in order to collect richer data.

Survey Questionnaire

The questionnaire included questions and items from existing measures of ethnic identity, acculturation, and parental expectations. The questionnaire was given to participants online prior

to their interviews as a method for screening for study inclusion (see Appendix A for the full survey questionnaire). Questions included participant age, gender, racial/ethnic identity, current college/university enrollment, year of undergraduate study, academic major, self-reported grade point average, whether the participant was born in the U.S., age of immigration, current living arrangement, length of parents' residency in the U.S., the reason for the immigration, parents' occupation, and parents' highest level of education. This survey questionnaire was used both as a screening measure for participants and also as an aid in interpreting the data gathered from participant interviews.

Ethnic Identity and Acculturation

Participants completed the Suinn-Lew Asian Self-Identity Acculturation (SL-ASIA) questionnaire (Suinn et al., 1992), which assesses the degree to which participants self-identify as "Asian." Responses on this survey helped contextualize participants' interview responses in terms of whether they reported a "stronger" or a "weaker" Asian identity in the SL-ASIA. The measure included 26 of items (the first 21 regarding culture, the next four on values, and the final question on self-identity), and sample items included "Do you write only an Asian language?" and "Rate yourself on how much you believe in Asian values (e.g., about marriage, families, education, work)." The items were measured on a 5-point ascending scale between "1" (low acculturation) and "5" (high acculturation). Responses provided an anchor to consider interview data in terms of belief in values considered "traditional" and characteristically "Asian."

Parental Expectations

Wang and Hepper (2002)'s Living up to Parental Expectation Inventory (LPEI) questionnaire measures the degree to which children endorse meeting their parents' expectations. The survey includes 32 items measured on an ascending 5-point Likert-type scale from 1 to 5.

The items were related to the participants' personal maturity (e.g., "Parents expect me not to do the kind of things that may disappoint them") and academic achievement (e.g., "Parents expect me to have excellent academic performance" and "Parents expect me to pursue their ideal careers"). I adapted 27 of the items and revised many for an audience studying in the United States. Items asked participants questions about parental expectations about academic and personal values such as "receiving straight A's in my classes," "studying a major my parents consider prestigious (e.g., engineering, pre-medicine)," and "running errands that the family needs done." Responses provided an anchor to consider the interview data in terms of perceived parental expectations.

Semi-structured Interviews

The semi-structured interview questions were designed to explore participants' perceptions of the types of messages they received from their parents about education, academic success, college decision-making, how their own and their parents' ethnic identity and generation-status were related to these messages, and how parental messages related to the emerging adults' academic motivation, self-efficacy, and academic planning (see Appendix B for full interview protocol). Interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim for data analysis either directly by a transcriber or first transcribed by Otter.ai and then corrected by a transcriber with reference to the original recordings.

Analysis

Applied Thematic Analysis (ATA) was used to analyze the qualitative data. ATA is an approach that uses techniques from both grounded theory and phenomenology (Guest et al., 2012). Grounded theory is an approach that seeks to identify, code, and classify themes that emerge from qualitative data. Phenomenology is an approach that seeks to identify the reality

perceived and experienced by the subjects of a study. The purpose of ATA is to help guide researchers to identify and deconstruct the themes within qualitative data systematically. ATA is "a rigorous, yet inductive, set of procedures designed to identify and examine themes from textual data in a way that is transparent and credible" (Guest et al., 2012, p. 14). An ATA approach provides a process of organizing the data, reflecting on the data, and developing a set of codes for interpreting the data that evolved as interpretations of the data evolved.

My approach involved eight main steps that generally reflected an ATA approach guided by the research questions. In the first step, after the interviews were transcribed, I read the interview transcripts carefully to familiarize myself with the interview data. In ATA, this process is intended to provide the researcher with the general contours of what is contained in the data and begin identifying overarching themes that may answer the research questions. At the second step, I identified meaningful data, sorted those passages first into themes and then into categories under each, and assigned them codes that comprised names and descriptions that I used to organize my findings. At this step, I employed the five stages of defining a code according to Guest et al. (2012): (1) creating a *code label*, or a brief (four to twelve characters) and descriptive aid for identifying distinguishing aspects for each code; (2) developing a "short definition" to identify the themes and descriptive phases that help to give meaning to data; (3) composing a "full definition," or a short descriptive paragraph (10–12 sentences) explaining the key concepts and themes that go along with each code; (4) identifying a term called "When to use" that regards "contextual cues" that will help to connect emerging codes to a working hypothesis (p.54); and (5) selecting a term called "When not to use" that concerns the codes that distinguish themes and avoids both potential overlap with the existing themes and confusion about the code being defined. I followed these steps when I first reviewed and interpreted the

participant interviews and began using the codes to help identify emerging themes. Describing the codes was beneficial for becoming deeply familiar with the data and allowed me to begin identifying how the data fit into the main aims of the study through outlining and writing. I employed the following codes across the research questions and themes:

Positive: This code indicated participants who viewed their ethnic identity as constituting an important factor in their lives.

Neutral: This code indicated participants who either did not state that their ethnic identity constituted an important factor in their lives or who did not take a definitive statement about it.

Academic Plus: This code indicated participants who viewed their ethnic identity as constituting an important factor in their academic performance.

Academic Minus: This code indicated participants who did not view their ethnic identity as constituting an important factor in their academic performance.

Grades: This code indicated participants who mentioned that getting good grades was an indicator of academic success or were expected and promoted by their parents or family members.

STEM: This code indicated participants whose family members encouraged or pressured them to enroll in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) majors or pursue STEM careers.

Model: This code indicated participants who referred to the model minority myth in the interviews. Participants who invoked the particularly extreme “tiger mom” aspect of the stereotype were indicated by this as well.

Internalize: This code indicated participants who explicitly mentioned that they had internalized the model minority myth in their education.

Struggle: This code indicated participants who mentioned that their parents had experienced economic struggle and hardship when the participants were growing up.

*Financial***:** This code indicated participants who indicated that their parents urged or pressured them to pursue careers that would provide high salaries and financial stability.

Social: This code indicated participants whose parents had urged or pressured them to pursue careers that would provide elevated social status for the students themselves and for the parents or broader family.

Job: This code indicated participants whose parents had urged or pressured them to obtain a "good job"—i.e., one that offered financial stability, social status, and long-term employment.

Don't Finish: This code indicated participants whose parents did not finish their college or university study.

Major: This code indicated participants whose parents had urged or pressured them to enroll in a major that they believed would result in a job that would provide financial stability and social status.

Prestige: This code indicated participants whose parents or family members urged or pressured them to enroll at colleges and universities that they believed both had high prestige and renown and would also bring them a job that would provide financial stability and social status after graduation.

Filial: This code indicated participants who indicated a particular link between the stress on children's filiality and deference to their parents' wishes that is often connected with the practices and values of the so-called Confucian cultures of East Asia.

Expect Plus: This code indicated students who indicated that they felt they had lived up to their parents' or broader family's expectations.

Expect Minus: This code indicated students who indicated that they did not feel they had lived up to their parents' or broader family's expectations.

Competitive: This code indicated students whose parents or other extended family members compared their children's academic accomplishments with those of others, including those within the family.

Strict Family: This code indicated students who indicated that their parents or family members determined their courses of study.

Self: This code indicated students who indicated that they chose their majors on their own and that their parents or family members did not determine their courses of study.

Negotiate: This code indicated students who were able to negotiate some self-choice or pursuit of their academic interests when parents or family members determined their academic majors.

Satisfied: This code indicated participants who attained some degree of satisfaction with their major course of study.

Unsatisfied: This code indicated participants who expressed at least some degree of dissatisfaction with their major course of study. In this case, ambivalence about major choice is considered dissatisfaction.

My third step was to organize examples from these data around the major themes within the interviews, particularly those pertaining to the study aims. The major themes were revised over the course of analysis, but they were ultimately: (1) the perceived role of their ethnic identity in participants' academic lives; (2) family messages about academic expectations and

post-study success; and (3) how family messages related to their educational motivation, academic self-efficacy, and educational decision-making. I used these themes as an organizing tool for the next stage of the analysis, in which I returned to the raw data to identify exemplar quotes that yielded insight about the main themes. By organizing direct quotes under each theme, I could clearly see where I had robust data support and where I did not. I used insights from this process to edit the themes for greater specificity, refine the research questions according to the revised themes, and categorize sentences from the interview text by theme with reference to the research questions.

The last stage of the analysis happened through the writing process. In organizing the data and writing about the results of my findings in earlier drafts of these chapters, I reconsidered the way that these data were organized. Moreover, this reorganization of the data as I composed different drafts caused me to reevaluate some of my original assumptions and my research questions. For example, I had originally thought I would see more data indicating self-efficacy among participants than I ultimately did. As I reworked these assumptions and revised the themes, I noticed unexpected connections among data and phenomena that I had previously overlooked. This enabled me to refine the themes and identify findings that illuminated them.

CHAPTER IV: RESULTS

Results

Research Question One

Research Question 1 asked the following: How do ethnic East Asian college students perceive the role of their ethnic identity in their academic lives?

Importance of Ethnic Identity to Students of East Asian Ethnic Heritage

Positive Ethnic Identity Perspective. My research for this study gave me a greater understanding of how and how much this study's participants identified with their East Asian heritage. This understanding provided an important foundation for analyzing its influence on their academic lives. Seven of this study's ten participants identified their ethnic identity as a significant factor in their individual lives and were coded Positive. For example, Participant 1, a first-generation immigrant and a Chinese-born American who was raised in the United States and identified as "Asian American" "but more Asian," said that this identity was "very important" in her life. Participant 2, a second-generation immigrant who was born and raised in the United States by Chinese immigrants, identified as Chinese American and said that "even though [she] was born" in America, she did not speak English until kindergarten, and Chinese language and culture were major features of her life when she was growing up. "American culture is something that I needed to learn and navigate," and as an emerging adult, she came to "view both parts as equally important in my life." Participant 3, a first-generation immigrant and Taiwan-born international student, self-identified as "Taiwanese American" on the survey and as "Taiwanese" in the interview and said that "nationality" was important to her because where "I grew up… define[s] who I am." Participant 3 saw her background as an influence in the sense

that being raised in Taiwan informed her worldview, and so studying in the United States was different culturally and, once in college, institutionally. Participant 4, a second-generation immigrant who was born in the United States to an American-born ethnic Asian father and a mother who had emigrated from Hong Kong, said that being "Asian American" was "very important" to her life and to her school life, because it is a way of making connections with others, particularly students, who are also Asian American and "share similar beliefs and values." Participant 5, a second-generation immigrant who was born in the United States to Taiwanese immigrant parents, said that being not only "American-born Chinese," or "ABC," but also "American-born Taiwanese," or "ABT," is "pretty important" because it "influences a lot of what I do, I stand for, and who I interact with." Participant 8, a third-generation immigrant born in the United States to an American-born, ethnic Japanese father and a European American mother, said that being "an Asian American of Japanese descent" is something he "takes pride in." Participant 9, a first-generation immigrant who was born in Korea, said that being "Korean" is "pretty important" in his life. These statements suggest that these seven students considered being ethnically "Asian" generally or from a particular Asia-originated background (e.g., Japanese, Chinese) to be noteworthy to some degree in their lives. Four of them (Participants 2, 3, 4, and 5) particularly spoke of their ethnic identity's influence on how they navigated culture (Participant 2), defined a sense of personal identity (Participants 3 and 4), connected with peers who were also of ethnic East Asian heritage (Participant 4), and articulated their own values and interests (Participant 5).

Neutral Ethnic Identity Perspective. Two participants—6 and 10—said that ethnic identity was not important in their lives and were coded Neutral. Participant 6, a first-generation

immigrant and an undergraduate from Taiwan who identified as "Taiwanese" and was of both Japanese and Chinese descent, said that nationality and ethnicity were "not something I take pride in." Participant 10, a first-generation immigrant and transracial and transnational adoptee born in China and adopted by White American parents while very young, said that though she "describe[s] myself as, like, Asian American" and "tr[ies] to keep up with… at least knowing, like, holidays, and stuff like that," she was "not hyphenated" but was "pretty whitewashed." These statements suggest that neither of these participants considered being ethnically "Asian" generally or from a particular Asia-originated background (e.g., Japanese, Chinese) to be particularly noteworthy in their lives. Participant 10's statement suggests that she was more connected to her American upbringing and identity than to her ethnic Chinese heritage.

Participant 7, a first-generation immigrant born in Indonesia, had a "very unique cultural background" and equally unique experience of ethnic identity and nationality as he grew up multiethnic in Indonesia.

> So, whenever people ask me to describe who I am, it really depends on my conversation partner. So, when an Indonesian asks me about my ethnicity, I tell them I'm half-Japanese, and half-Indonesian. I try to leave out the Chinese part because Chinese Indonesians, they don't have a very good--… they have a very negative perception of Chinese Indonesians, so if I say I'm Japanese-Indonesian, it's less negative… And when I'm in Japan, it really depends… [sometimes?] I say I'm Japanese, sometimes I say I'm Chinese Indonesian and I don't mention that I'm Japanese at all, so it really depends… and, um, when I enter the United States, um, I was in Connecticut for about a week for a competition, um, I described myself as an Indonesian, because I knew that explaining half-Japanese, half-this is very complicated, so it really depends, but it is a very important part of my life, um, because, um… even though I'm surrounded by Asians as well, in Indonesia it's very rare to have, and not just in Indonesia, in China and Japan, it's very rare to have such a multi-ethnic, um, I guess if you could say it, I'm technically full Asian, it's just that it's a little mix on the inside, but, yeah… I think my cultural background is very unique, so, I try to embrace that.

Participant 7 did not specifically state whether his "unique" experience was important or unimportant to him. He did mention, however, that his background had made him "a lot more

comfortable talking to Asians" because "we have similar cultures, oh, we can share about strict parents… and, it's very different than when I talk to people of different races [because] it's just that I feel that there's something I can't relate to in their experiences, and there's something they can't relate to in mine as well." His responses were coded Neutral because he did not take a firm stance on whether his ethnic identity was important in his life.

Although two of the ten participants rejected the notion that their ethnicity was an important factor in their lives, a large majority (seven out of ten) did regard their ethnicity as important to them. The research for this study began with the assumption that emerging adults of East Asian ethnic heritage who were born outside America would regard their ethnicity as more important to their lives. However, both non-U.S.-born participants (Participants 1 and 9) and U.S.-born participants (Participants 2, 4, and 5) regarded their East Asian ethnic heritage as important in their lives. Moreover, American-born emerging adults (Participants 2, 4, and 5) regarded their ethnic identity as important to them because it was a way of "navigating" American culture (Participant 2), of sharing "beliefs and values" (Participant 4), and of "interact[ing] with" others (Participant 5). There was no distinction among generational lines. Both first-generation and second-of-later generation students largely regarded ethnicity as personally important.

Ethnic Identity and Academic Life. Yet, even while a majority of participants stated that their respective ethnic identities were important to their lives, fewer of them declared a belief that their ethnic identities were important for their academic lives. Participant 4, who had said that her ethnic identity was "very important" to her personal life, rejected the notion that it bore any importance to her academic life. Participant 6 also rejected this notion. Participant 8 said that his ethnic identity was important to his academic life in that it spurred him to join the

Japanese Students Association in college and to learn Japanese, but "otherwise, I really don't take my race into account" in his studies. Participants 4, 6, and 8 were therefore coded Academic Minus.

Grades and Academic Achievement. Virtually all participants, regardless of generational status, identified how their parents stressed good grades as a measure of academic achievement and success. Participants 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9 all mentioned that high scores—usually As—were expected. Each of these participants' transcripts was coded Grades. In some cases (1, 2, 5, and 6), parents became relatively more lenient and lessened grade pressure when their children reached adolescence. Some participants specifically linked their ethnic identities and their academic lives with reference to their parents' stress of good grades. Participant 1 spoke of a "standard [of earning high grades] that you have to live up to because it looks really bad if you don't." Participant 2 mentioned how "from kindergarten to high school… my academic goals are always 90-plus, like the high 90s." Participant 7 said that he had "been raised to think about academic grades," and while his parents did generally show approval at his high grades, his extended family tended to show more approval for high scores in STEM or business subjects that were purportedly "harder" than his humanities and social science subjects. He ultimately learned to "see academic performance as a way to validate myself" apart from his parents' and extended family's expectations. Participant 7's response was also coded STEM owing to this primacy given to STEM subject grades. Participant 9 said that "in terms of grades… I tend to be a little bit more stricter [sic]" with himself than his non-Asian peers at the American university are, "and I think, that has to do a lot with, like, how I grew up in Korea." Participant 8 said that the "occasional C" was fine, but higher scores were generally expected.

Participants 2, 7, and 9 linked this connection between parents' stress on good grades and ethnic Asian identity with the stereotype of the "tiger mom," articulated in Yale Law School Professor Amy Chua's book *Battle Hymn of the Tiger Mother* (2011), who takes strong control over ensuring that her children study and succeed. Participant 9 said his parents were not "tiger parents," and Participant 7 spoke generally of the stereotypical "tiger households." Participant 2 said that her mother had been "a little bit of a Tiger Mom" by often bringing home new workbooks for her and her sister to do for extra homework. In each case, the tiger mom stereotype was invoked with a bit of apparent humor or irony. However, as this stereotype was a trope associated with the so-called model minority myth, the responses of these three participants were coded Model.

The primacy parents placed on high grades was not shared by all participants. For example, Participant 4 indicated a general lack of support from her parents, who merely underscored the importance of success and high achievement but never showed approval for her accomplishments. Participant 10 said that while her parents did value her achievements, they did not press her to earn good grades or attain accomplishments.

In discussing their ethnic identities, participants emphasized relating to and connecting with others, navigating American culture, and interacting with the world around them more than how their ethnicity influenced their academic lives. These responses came both from participants who were born overseas and from participants who were born in the United States, and not only from participants who were born overseas, where the influence of their parents' traditional values may have been stronger. Those participants who did perceive a link between ethnic identity and academic life pointed to their parents ingraining within them the belief in the necessity of studying hard to attain good grades. This observation also occurred both among participants born

overseas and those born in the United States. Although a majority of participants saw their ethnic identities as an important factor in their personal lives and social connections, there was more variation in whether it shaped their educational experience or academic motivation.

Impact of Social and Cultural Academic Expectations Upon Ethnic East Asian Students

The academic achievement literature focusing on American students emphasizes the importance of internal motivation and independence for success, while the values of family and parental authoritarianism have been associated both with parenting style in ethnic Asian families and academic success in ethnic Asian students. With this research question I sought to understand both how these purported values influenced ethnic Asian college and university students studying in the United States, and whether "American" and "Asian" values and expectations influenced ethnic Asian students differently, particularly across generational lines.

The Model Minority Myth, Internalization, and Expectations. Multiple participants mentioned what Participant 1 characterized as a social and cultural "level of expectation that you have to live up to." Participant 1 mentioned that fellow students, teachers, and others "expec[t] you to do well" but particularly, because of pervasive stereotypes about ethnic East Asians and academic performance. One example she mentioned was the stereotype held by the non-Asian "American counterparts" of ethnic East Asian students that because "[y]ou're Asian, you need to be good at math." This set up a "high standard" that itself included a kind of double standard, Participant 1 observed, as ethnic East Asian students "have to get good grades" and then, should they get good grades, peers and others observe that "It's because you're Asian you got [those] good grades." This finding suggests participants are aware that being ethnically East Asian influences other people's expectations about them as students, and that these stereotyped expectations hold relevance in how they think about their performance.

Participants 5, 6, and 7 specifically mentioned the stereotype of ethnic Asians being experts in math. Participant 5 indicated the expectation of teachers and peers in elementary and middle school that because "he's Asian, he must be good at math." This drove him to make himself "pretty darn good at math" for a time. He identified any ethnic influence upon his success not to any purported aptitude for a particular subject but more a "work ethic and a sort of mentality… to just persevere." Participant 6 joked that this stereotype "made me more confident in math." This suggests that stereotyped expectations may influence study habits and approaches to coursework. Participant 7 connected the stereotype of ethnic Asians being proficient at math with his relatives' obsession about academic performance, particularly good grades:

> I think that part of being Asian… there's always the stereotype that Asians are good in math, and I think that even though my brain recognizes the stereotype is harmful, but I feel very ashamed whenever I can't understand a subject… and whenever I don't do well in a subject, my brain says internally, 'What kind of Asian *are* you?' And so, I think it influences my mental state… even though I know it's a bad stereotype, I should really care about [grades], because I've been raised to think about academic grades [and so] it's a lot of pressure.

Unlike other participants, Participant 7 specifically stated that the stereotype that ethnic East Asians are academically proficient, particularly in math, can cause "harm" to the group it is applied to. In particular, he specifically linked this stereotype to the adverse impact of the pressure for success upon his mental well-being.

Participants 9 and 10 explicitly referenced versions of the "model minority" myth at some point during their interviews. Participant 9 said that after coming from South Korea to study in the United States for college, the "perception of Asians" pervading "American society" caused him to think that he should be a good student. In this view, attaining academic success would grant him access to the "economic success" that, according to the model minority stereotype, he should be able to attain as well. Participant 10 mentioned that "since early on" in

her educational experience she had been "targeted to… go into" advanced educational opportunities, particularly involving math. She recounted how "in first grade" she "started in, like, the advanced math class. But, like, first graders don't really know math. So, it's like, I think I was probably put there because I was Asian." The experience generated this "ongoing expectation that, like, I would do well in math. And, like, people would be like, oh, that's not even going to be any effort for you." This expectation from the prevailing culture spurred Participant 1 to expect better academic performance from herself as well. She said, "I also have, like, kind of tried to live up to the stereotype of working hard and being smart. Even if it's just, like, subconsciously, because I think [people] were telling me all the time I was smart… So, I worked really hard." Participant 10 stated that in "living up to stereotype and the expectations of others," she had been able to actualize the very academic success that those stereotypes and expectations had portrayed by "internaliz[ing] all that."

These results suggest that participants were influenced in how they approached their studies, particularly in the subjects of math and science, by cultural expectations of ethnic Asian students. The responses of Participants 1, 5, 6, 7, 9, and 10 were coded Model and also Internalize. These participants seemed to be able to live up those expectations, often conveyed via a stereotype of ethnic Asians being especially gifted academically, by putting in the work to succeed. Participants 1, 5, 6, 7, and 10 indicated that internalizing the stereotype of ethnic Asian students having inherent proficiency at STEM subjects, and particularly math, somehow and to some extent spurred them to some degree of success and improved motivation. For Participants 5, 9, and 10, living up to these expectations and attaining success was a generally positive outcome. By contrast, Participants 1, 6, and 7 were less positive about the success. Participant 7 referred to his own experience with an express statement that the expectations were detrimental

to ethnic East Asian college students' well-being. Generational status may have been a factor here. Five of these six students who specifically discussed the model minority myth in the context of academic motivation were born overseas and were first-generation immigrants; two participants (1 and 10) had been raised in the United States while very young. Moreover, Participants 6 and 7 had each been born in a multi-ethnic family and had lived abroad even before coming to the U.S. for college study. As noted previously, Participant 10 had been adopted while very young from her native China by White parents.

Research Question Two

Research Question 2: What messages about academic expectations and post-study success do ethnic East Asian college and university students receive from family members, and how do these messages affect students' educational decision-making?

Parent and Family Messages About Higher Education and Academic Achievement

Higher Education, Post-graduation Jobs, and Financial Stability. Another question motivating this study concerned the influence of family members' messages upon ethnic East Asian college and university students about academic expectations and post-study success. Seven participants mentioned that their parents or, in some cases, their extended families, associated a college degree with material success after graduation. Participant 1 repeated throughout her interview her parents' insistence that higher education is "the ticket out of poverty." Participant 2's parents immigrated to the United States at a time "when China… was still very poor." They insisted that education was important to help one get "a good job" and also "a higher upper hand [over] my peers." Participant 4's parents also identified avoiding poverty as reason for getting an education, telling her that if "I don't study hard enough, I'll be poor, or I wouldn't get a good job or I wouldn't be able to succeed in life." Participant 5 and his brother were told that an education

would give them "skills that are hard to replace [so that they could] be able to have a job for longer." Therefore, a college education would help them "do something that will earn you money and give you a stable life in the future." Participant 6 was instructed by his parents to "get good grades… and then eventually… a good job." Participant 9 was told that "education is what will get you, like, successful [and help you] advance the social ladder." Participant 7 was told by his father and stepmother to "get a major to get you money." The responses of these participants were all coded Financial and Job.

These findings reflect two notions held by parents and conveyed to children. First, participants' parents communicated the message that higher education was an essential, practical component of attaining material success. Second, both first-generation immigrant participants who had been born abroad (Participants 1, 6, 7, and 9) and second-generation participants who had been born in the United States from ethnic East Asian immigrants (Participant 2, 4, and 5) conveyed the notion that pursuing higher education in the United States would provide opportunities to get an education and advance your position in life. The participants reported messages from family members that emphasize how important education is to financial success, and that their own financial success is important for their family more broadly.

Confucianism, Filial Piety, and Family Expectations. Six participants (1, 2, 5, 6, 7, and 9) highlighted family expectations as a reason for their success and also suggested a link between these expectations and their ethnic heritage. These participants' responses were coded Filial because they indicated a particular link between the stress on children's filiality and deference to their parents' wishes that is often connected with the practices and values of the so-called Confucian cultures of East Asia. Participant 1 identified a great deal of "pressure my parents have put onto education" and questioned whether this pressure to meet high expectations "could

just be a cultural thing." Participant 2 stated that being of Asian descent "influenced me from kindergarten to… graduation from high school," and that this pressure also pushed her to go straight into college rather than take the "unimaginable" step of a gap year. Participant 5 did identify his ethnic heritage and his status as the son of Asian immigrants as a factor on his and his parents' attitudes toward education. However, he spoke more broadly about how "the history of the parents, and their history with education" as driving factors. His own parents earned bachelor's and master's degrees and became successful computer scientists, and they stressed the importance of education in attaining similar success. Yet while "education is sort of… central to East Asian thought," Participant 5 said that "no matter what background you come from, if your parents have struggled to get where they are, and used education as their pathway to success," then they'll place a premium on quality education for their children. Participant 6 mentioned his traditional values-focused father's attitude toward the centrality of education and the importance of learning throughout life. Participant 9 identified the "exact," "strict" Korean education system and culture as a factor in his success, influencing his parents to stress educational performance for him and his brother.

Participant 7 mentioned that "it's a very common thing within Asian households [to experience] a pressure to make your elders happy" by giving them "something to quote-unquote brag about." He was not speaking about himself here but about his father, who had not been successful at university and then had to account for his son's decision not to pursue a course of study leading to a career in business or medicine. "I think that besides me not going for a major that they want," he said, "I think that's the only thing they're disappointed with, because I sometimes tutor other kids, and I make money from it, and… my dad is always talking about money, money, money."

While Participants 1 and 2 spoke generally about the connection between their shared ethnic Asian heritage and family expectations, four other participants more specifically discussed the connection in a way that reflected the influence of the social and cultural system often called Confucianism. This system stresses family relationships, particularly the deference owed by children to parents and by younger people to elders as an emanation of filial piety, and places a primacy on education and study both as a means of moral self-cultivation and also as a potential vehicle for social achievement; in fact, the name of the system is a reference to the ancient Chinese philosopher and bureaucrat Confucius, who became a teacher later in life after believing he had failed to effect positive social reform by means of his bureaucratic duties. Within a Confucian framework, one becomes a more cultured and refined individual and also may potentially join an occupation that would provide them and their family with social prestige and material success. Poor educational performance could result in the moral failure of being unable to provide a good life for their families. While all five participants spoke of the connection between education and success that their parents envisioned for them, Participants 5, 6, and 9 made the clearest links to the Confucian filial ideal; Participant 6 specifically used the term *Confucian* in reference to his father's focus on academics.

By contrast, Participant 7 spoke multiple times of his pursuit of academic success as a kind of rejection of "Asian values" including the filial ideal of deferring one's own wishes to please their parents and other elders. "Sometimes I felt myself slipping up because I realized regardless of whether my grades are good or not, they won't really care anyway… so I felt my results dropping," he said. "But then I realized it was affecting *my* own self-esteem… so I decided to study for myself… not for my parents." Although his assessment of filial piety and its impact on his academic life and personal well-being were negative, his interview was coded

Filial as well because of his specific mention of this dynamic of pursuing educational success to obtain financial success and social status that would reflect well upon his family.

The moral self-perfectionism of Confucianism, its linking of education with status, and its family centeredness all combine to encourage parents who did not succeed well in their own studies to emphasize the importance of study in their children's lives. Six participants spoke of their parents' own lack of educational success as a reason for setting high academic expectations for their children. Participants 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, and 7 all noted that their parents, regardless of whether they became materially successful or struggled with finances and careers, either did not finish school or did not perform well in college; their interviews were coded both Struggle and Don't Finish. Participant 5 briefly mentioned that his parents had struggled early in their careers after immigrating to the United States, but he focused more on their apparent successes and noted that both had received master's degrees; his interview was coded Struggle. The apparent hopes of these parents who had struggled both academically and financially was that their children's academic success via obtaining a college education would be the necessary ingredient for their children's financial success.

Academic Success, "Good" Schools, and "Good" Jobs. If educational success is the key ingredient to financial success, participants generally recounted that their parents connected academic success with good grades and then with the ability to find a good (meaning high paying) career after school. Educational completion was not enough; rather, excellence was expected. In several cases, the parents—whether they immigrated to the United States or remained in their countries of origin as their children studied here had, at best, an imperfect understanding of the American higher education system and also of how students found careers following college graduation. Participant 1 joked that she "got away with a lot" because her

parents were unfamiliar with the process of pursuing a major and then starting a post-college career. In terms of her "finding loopholes" in her parents' strict determination that she abandon her passion for education to gain a business degree. Participant 2, who attended an Ivy League university, also stated that her parents held expectations of college and her ability to obtain a career that did not reflect how the system actually "worked":

> Graduating from college basically guarantees you a good life. That would be the assumption that a lot of… lower-middle-class Asian parents would have, like, they don't understand that being in America, graduating from college does not guarantee you to a job and, therefore, a good life.

Participant 3's mother suggested business school as a potential option. Participant 4 repeatedly underscored that her parents stressed academic success in terms of achieving well and ultimately getting a good career while avoiding failure and poverty. Participant 5 mentioned that his parents had instilled in him the importance of higher education to his future career success and had also expected him to study computer science as they had. Participant 6 said that his parents emphasized studying hard and achieving success so he wouldn't end up "a useless human." He also noted that while his father told him the importance of finding a "good" school, he had relatives who had been through the American higher education system and knew the reputations of schools better; therefore, his parents deferred to their knowledge and advice when their son chose a college. His choice to study at a major university in New York City that was considered an "elite" school was basically "all my uncles." Participant 7 noted that his parents and extended family members placed a greater value on success in business or STEM courses. As a humanities and social sciences major who ultimately went to a school that was not considered top tier, he found this frustrating. Participant 9 suggested that his parents had assumed that the system they had understood in South Korea, where "going to… really famous colleges… like top tier universities [so you could] advance your life [and] get into good companies [and then] get a good

job [and] earn a lot of money," did not reflect the reality of life in America. Participants 1, 2, 6, 7, and 9 all mentioned the importance of attending a "good" school, and their transcripts were coded Prestige. All but Participant 10 mentioned that their parents had connected higher education with career success.

Yet not all participants identified *direct* pressure from their parents to get a college education in order to obtain financial success. Although she stated that her mother did recommend more potentially lucrative majors than her chosen field of human development and family studies, Participant 3 said that her mother expected mainly that she choose a field she liked and that made her happy. Participant 8 said that his parents highlighted the opportunities that came with higher education, but they also stressed the importance of studying what he was interested in and being happy. Participant 10 said that while her parents encouraged her to study what she liked, they also never really asked about her major or her grades.

Another common subtheme noted by several participants was the tendency for parents to compare their children's accomplishments with those of others. Participants 1, 2, 5, 7, and 9, particularly identified competitiveness as a fundamental trait of Asian parenting and of their educational experiences; their interviews were coded Competitive. Participant 1 mentioned "constantly comparing myself to classmates and peers." Participant 7 mentioned that he had been constantly compared by his extended family members to cousins, many of whom were successful in medicine, in STEM, or in business. Grades in his humanities and social science classes "lacked value" to them. However, getting a good grade in a difficult math course gave him a sense of particular pride. Participant 9 mentioned that in one sense his brother, being a doctor and so having attained success in a STEM field, set a particular level of success for him.

The messages about academic achievement and post-study success that participants received from parents and other family members skewed largely toward attainment of material economic success after graduation. Students were generally expected to pursue a major that, in theory, would lead them to economic success that would spill over onto their families. Parents and family members often made recommendations or gave more direct advice to students about going to a prestigious school under the presumption that this would directly entail that their children would be granted positions with well-renowned companies and would earn large salaries.

Many of the parents and other relatives who suggested this had expectations not of the participants but of the U.S. higher education system that either reflected their understanding of how the higher education systems in their own native countries operated or were conditioned by their own desire to avoid economic hardship for their children and for a hope that their children's success would reward them as well. In some cases (Participants 1, 5, 6, and 9), a more traditional relationship informed by the expectations of filial piety and family expectations influenced the relationship between parent and child and influenced the latter's academic decision-making. Yet in other cases, parents ultimately deferred to their children's interests. Moreover, in most cases, neither generational status nor birth country and culture appeared to dominate participants' academic decision-making, as most overseas-born participants (3, 7, 9, and 10) had flexibility in choice of school and college major. The two overseas-born participants who had encountered the greatest inflexibility from their parents and broader families did either finally switch to their parents' desired major (Participant 1) or pursued their parents' desired major from the start of their undergraduate study (Participant 6). Participant 5, the one U.S.-born participant who had

begun undergraduate study in his parents' desired major, computer science, later persuaded his parents to accept his change of major to an engineering field.

Research Question Three

Research Question 3 asked the following: How do ethnic East Asian college students describe how messages from their families relate to their own educational motivation, experiences of academic self-efficacy, and educational decision-making?

Decision-making Regarding Majors and Careers

Individual Major Choice. Concern about grades, success, reputation, and both individual and family status was a prevalent factor in the lives of many participants. Moreover, many parents and extended families expected that when their children grew up, they would go on to college to earn degrees that would secure job stability and financial security. Yet despite these expectations, and with a few exceptions, participants generally felt they had freedom in choosing their schools and their majors. Participants 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, and 9 all stated that their parents or other family members might have *suggested* that they choose majors such as business, engineering, medicine, or law, which were perceived as having the potential for high salaries and status. Such recommendations could range from gentle recommendations to "passive-aggressive" (as characterized by Participant 9) suggestions to more pointed statements that certain courses and majors had more "value" than others. Yet each of these participants also declared that their respective families did not force them into any field of study they did not want to pursue. These participants' transcripts were coded Self, because their families gave them more individual latitude in major choice.

This was generally true for both first-generation (born overseas) immigrant participants and second-or-later-generation (born in the U.S.) immigrant participants. Participant 2, who was

U.S. born, and Participant 9, who was born in South Korea, both majored in psychology—a field that their parents did not know much about and that did not offer the immediate financial security and prestige that their parents had expected, although it is sometimes classified among the STEM fields. Participant 3 majored in human development and family studies, a social science related to developmental psychology. Participant 8 majored in biology, but with the goal of becoming a marine biologist rather than a physician, which would be a higher paying and higher prestige career. Participant 7 majored in international relations, although he took many STEM classes and excelled in them. Participant 4 chose a business-related major, management information systems, but she chose it after her own research and without any stated input from her parents. Participant 10, a special case in that she was born in China but adopted by non-ethnic-Asian Americans while very young and raised in the United States, also majored in psychology and then went on to do a master's in the field. She developed an interest in the field while in high school, discovered she liked it, and decided to pursue it further without her parents' knowledge. In reference to her adoptive father, she said, "I don't think [my adoptive father] knew what my major was for a long time."

Negotiating Major Choice Within Strict Families. Three participants, however, mentioned that their parents or extended families had directly determined their majors. Participant 1 had started as an education major and wanted to work with low-income students. "My parents know I wanted to be a teacher," she said. However, her parents forced her to switch her major to something they viewed as more practical:

> In my sophomore year, my mom told me, "You can't be a teacher anymore, because in America, you don't get paid a lot, and we're doing this huge investment in you, we're paying thousands of dollars for you to go to college, but then you come back, and the job that you'll get is not even worth it."

So, she changed her major to business, which made her parents happy enough that they were willing to pay for graduate school as long as it was in a business-related field.

Participant 5 was the son of Taiwanese immigrants who became computer scientists and built stable careers after immigrating to the United States. Both earned master's degrees and expected their sons essentially to follow in the family field. When Participant 5 and his brother both went to college, they originally majored in computer science and took multiple courses in the field.

Participant 6 was born in Japan and raised in Taiwan by parents whose education was interrupted and who had suffered chronic financial hardship. Participant 6's uncles and cousins, however, had a family business established. As the son of a strict, "Confucian" traditional father and the eldest male relative, Participant 6 was expected to help maintain the extended family's business. So, he was told that if he was to go to college, it would need to be at a "good" school and in a practical major. Thus, he enrolled in an elite New York City university with a major in finance.

The transcripts of Participants 1, 5, and 6 were all coded Strict Family. In at least some sense, the respective narratives of Participants 1, 5, and 6 may seem at first to fit the stereotypical pattern of an ethnic East Asian emerging adult deferring to their parents' or extended family's wishes by taking a major that would help them ultimately to get a prestigious degree and lucrative salary. But what is noteworthy here as well is that each participant was able to *negotiate* to some degree for some autonomy in her or his path of study. Participant 1 said that while "I am in [a marketing] major, but at the same time, I'm finding a loophole to get out of it" and pursue her original interest in education:

> Like, even though I have this title, I don't necessarily want it, so that's why—my parents don't know about this—I'm doing research over the summer… I can research whatever I

> want, they'll give you a stipend, it's a really good gig, but the problem is, I know my parents would want me to do more finance, talking about bonds and things like that. But I'm not doing any of that. I'm looking into education.

Participant 5, similarly, started in his parents' desired major, but "I took three years' worth of computer science classes, [and] I didn't fully like it." He chose to switch to engineering instead. He took his parents to an open house at his institution and talked about the degree with the department head of the Materials Engineering Department. "I just said, 'Hey, Mom, Dad, we're gonna go to materials engineering. Sounds like it'll be fun.' And then I really liked [the department head's] presentation. And then I was just like, 'Hey, you know, I could see myself doing this… seems pretty cool.'" Thus, he decided upon the major and then later pursued a master's and a doctorate.

Participant 6 majored in finance rather than either of his interests, psychology and fashion. He remembered that his father had always mentioned that "if I'm interested in anything that's not business, I should still learn it as my minor." Thus, he pursued psychology as a minor.

"It's definitely the balance," Participant 1 said of her way of negotiating between her interests and goals on the one hand and her parents' aspirations and expectations for her on the other. But this way of striking a balance cut across the stereotype of ethnic Asian students, particularly those born overseas, as being inherently deferential to their parents' desires. In her pursuit of the study of "education within marketing," Participant 1 found a way of pursuing her "passion" and "follow[ing] her dreams" even under her parents' influence. She credits this to "being the American that I am and growing up in America." Participant 5 similarly found a way of addressing his parents' desired path of study through a more literal negotiation of trying it out, finding something that he liked more, and making the case to them of why materials engineering

was a better major for him than computer science. Participant 6 was able to pursue and develop interests to a degree by minoring in psychology while majoring in finance.

This finding may offer some support, if superficially, to Iyengar and Lepper's (1999) finding that "having choices made by relevant in-group members" is "more intrinsically motivating" in Asian American children than in the "rugged individualism" of Anglo-American students (p. 363). Yet it could possibly be argued that Participant 1's "finding loopholes" in the educational path chosen by her parents and Participant 5's involving his parents in his decision to switch majors by bringing them to a university function are evidence of a kind of individualistic ingenuity. More research is needed into whether these three respective participants' negotiation in order to stake out a space for pursuit of their own academic interests in the face of their parents' choice of desired major may constitute a form of self-efficacy. Participants 1 and 5 displayed a particular degree of initiative in their negotiation. The former did so by masking the connection of her finance-and-business-related summer project with her desired field of education in order for her parents to assent. The latter incorporated his parents into his decision-making—their participation and assent were crucial for it to work. Participant 6 carved out the space for the pursuit of his own interest with the approval of his father. Each negotiation necessitated its own level of self-confidence to confront each parental objection. The transcripts for these three participants were all coded Negotiate on account of each participant's ability to carve out some space to pursue their particular interests.

Satisfaction or Dissatisfaction With Major Choice. Each participant, regardless of immigration status or of level of parental or family influence, found some way of pursuing their own academic and career interest. This does not speak to success—all of the participants at the time of their interviews were either still in school or about to graduate. Nor does it speak to

satisfaction with their future direction. Participants 4, 5, and 8 expressed the clearest levels of satisfaction with their majors: Participant 4 rated her satisfaction as "8" out of 10, Participant 5 was happy to go on to master's and doctoral study in materials engineering, and Participant 8 mentioned his love of marine biology as being central to his study. Participant 10 also was highly satisfied, particularly as her high achievement in psychology fed her motivation. Participant 3 indicated liking her major. The transcripts for these four participants were coded Satisfied.

Others were more mixed in their satisfaction levels. As stated, Participant 1 did not enjoy her major and was in a program "I don't necessarily want" except to the degree it allowed her a "loophole" to reenter her first love: education. Participants 2 and 9, both psychologists, were ambivalent—on the one hand, they liked the subject greatly, but on the other, they worried about career prospects after graduation and also expressed some concern that they might not be living up to their parents' expectations of academic and career achievement. Participant 7 was also ambivalent, though that was in part because he felt he had already learned much of what the major had to offer through his own study and achievements. Participant 6 was dissatisfied with finance not only because he lacked the "passion" for it but because he was less certain that he'd be able to stay in America after graduation (which coincided with the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic). The transcripts for Participants 1, 2, 6, 7, and 9 were coded Dissatisfied.

As with the findings discussed above for other two research questions, the findings here concerning how ethnic East Asian emerging adults who pursue higher education in the United States challenge the original ideas that motivated this study. As established previously, most participants regardless of whether they were born in the United States or abroad enjoyed flexibility in choosing a college major. Moreover, participant responses related to this third research question revealed two particularly surprising findings. First, even when ethnic East

Asian emerging adults did encounter a more authoritarian parental guidance on major choice, there was some room for negotiating a space for their own academic and career interests. Second, even when granted complete freedom in selecting a college major, satisfaction was not a given. Some participants admitted to a degree of ambivalence about their college major, although for different reasons. This ambivalence did not appear to relate to any particular country of origin, and both a certain number of participants born overseas and a certain number of American-born participants mentioned less satisfaction. Further, negotiation did not always lead to satisfaction, as only one of the three students (Participant 5) who negotiated a space for personal academic and career interests expressed satisfaction with their major choice. Participant 1 showed greater satisfaction for the opportunities to pursue resources related to her dream major, education, within the parameters of the major her parents had chosen for her.

CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION

Discussion

This study used a semi-structured interview format with ten ethnic East Asian college students to explore the types of messages they had received from their parents about academic success, the ways that messages about ethnic identity and immigration timing were integrated into students' perceptions of these parental messages, and the impact of perceived parental messaging upon emerging adults' own academic motivation and self-efficacy. One of the principal ideas guiding this study was that the influence of traditional values and parental messaging would be stronger upon first-generation immigrant emerging adults, or those born overseas and under a stronger influence of their parents' root culture, than upon second- or later-generation immigrants, or those born in the United States of parents who themselves had been under decreasing influence of East Asian traditions. The process of conducting this study illuminated the difficulty of distinguishing between the role played by culture and the role played by parental messaging in students' ethnic identity formation or academic and career decision-making. Parents transmit a degree of root cultural influence to their children. But the dominant mainstream American culture also exerts a strong influence, especially as mediated through American teachers and non-ethnic Asian peers, and particularly through the model minority myth. Neither factor is cleanly cut or amenable to quick analysis.

I had also expected to see evidence of self-efficacy, or a degree of agency and self-confidence in making decisions about college major and field of study. I was struck by the variability among the participants' responses despite the fact that this was a small sample of ten

students. The interviews revealed a great breadth in academic interests but also in many parents' responses to their children's chosen academic paths. Participants showed interests in both STEM and non-STEM majors, in assistance and preparation for college study, and even in ethnic background (all were generally ethnic East Asian, but Participant 10 was a transracial and transnational adoptee, and Participants 4, 7, and 8 were multi-ethnic or even multi-racial).

There were seven key findings that warrant additional discussion. The first finding is that the purportedly filial, Confucian value commonly associated with children helping to ensure family status and stability—i.e., children obtaining an education as a means of getting a good job with high pay—and with parental expectations that children would earn good grades and get into a good college in order to do so, generally affected both overseas-born and U.S.-born students of East Asian ethnic heritage. To an extent, this confirms aspects of the core "Asian values" that Wang and Heppner (2002) identified as external motivators and core concerns that could cause distress among ethnic East Asian college students. The expectation of parents that children would succeed not only in school but also in their careers did cause distress among several participants who were not able to choose their desired major (Participants 1 and 6), who at the time the interviews were conducted reported stress about finding post-college jobs (Participants 2, 6, 7, and 9), or who indicated that their parents' stress on the importance of study and success (Participants 6 and 7), particularly when it came with the absence of parental support (Participant 4), was in some way detrimental to their well-being.

There were more positive views as well. Participant 5 viewed his parents' stress on the importance of school and career as beneficial motivators. Participants 3 and 8 viewed their parents' advice about study as an emanation of parental love. In some sense, these three

participants at least may confirm Patel et al.'s (2022) finding about familial pride reinforcing filial piety, as each participant viewed their obligation positively, if not necessarily with "joy." This finding suggests that while family expectations that students will fulfill a filial obligation to excel academically and then succeed in their careers is a motivator that generates stress, this obligation also can be a positive motivator as well. Further research could explore whether factors exist in the parent-child relationship that may counteract the distress identified in this study.

A second finding is that American social and cultural values were generally external motivators on both first-generation ethnic East Asian participants and second-or-later-generation ethnic East Asian participants. The degree to which American values impacted each participant is, however, difficult to gauge with specificity, but the cultural environment in which one is educated exerts influence. The first-generation immigrant students showed varying degrees of accommodation to and association with American culture even if they declared the importance of their Asian heritage as well. Thus, while Wang and Heppner found that filial piety, for example, remains important to Asian Americans as well as to ethnic Asians born and raised in Asia, "core Asian values" are not the only external motivators. Subsequent research could explore whether particular social and cultural values that are often characterized as "American" may counteract particular values that are often characterized as particularly "traditional" and "Asian," or whether any particular "American" and "traditionally Asian" values may be amenable with each other.

A third finding is that cultural expectations of both participants' respective families' root cultures and of the American culture in which they studied shaped both overseas-born and U.S.-born students' general orientation toward school, choice of major, and expectations about grades and career success. Some participants viewed the influence of "Asian" values, family

expectations, and parental socialization positively; others were ambivalent and in at least some ways negative. Participant 5, for example, saw his parents' insistence upon study as a factor that helped to motivate him to attain success, even if he did negotiate his way out of the major that his parents had chosen for him and into a field that he truly liked. Participant 7, by contrast, viewed his parents' focus on studying to get a prestigious and well-paying job as one factor that compromised his well-being.

The same is true of American culture and of expectations pertaining to stereotypes of ethnic East Asian students including the so-called "model minority" myth. For example, Participants 5 (the American-born son of immigrants), 6 (the son of a Taiwanese father and a Japanese mother and raised in Taiwan before coming to the United States for college), and 10 (the Chinese-born adopted daughter of White American parents) all reported varying degrees of exposure to "Asian" values when growing up but all recounted exposure to the model minority myth and the expectation among American students and teachers that they were innately good at STEM, particularly math. Participant 5 viewed this more positively, Participant 6 viewed it more negatively, and Participant 10 viewed it more ambivalently, and yet each indicated that peer and teacher perception that they must be good at math helped to spur them to become good at math. This study suggests that the dominant cultural expectations and the model minority myth have some impact upon students' identity formation but also that this impact can be either constructive or detrimental to students' well-being. Subsequent research could explore how educational and support institutions (e.g., tutoring or mental health opportunities inside and outside of school) may perpetuate the internalization of the model minority myth upon ethnic Asian adolescent and emerging adults, particularly upon their academic performance and their educational and career choices.

A fourth finding is that both overseas-born and native American-born ethnic Asian students had general flexibility in choice of college major. Asian parents and broader families tended to emphasize more *objective indicators* of success—e.g., good grades during elementary and high school education, high-prestige careers (and in some cases high-prestige schools), and financial success. They tended to de-emphasize *subjective indicators* of success such as passion for one's field and happiness. However, only three participants did not have as much flexibility: Participants 1, 5, and 6. Participant 1 began to study toward her desired major but soon switched under parental pressure. Both Participants 5 and 6 began studying toward the major their parents chose. However, in each case, these participants "negotiated" for some degree of the pursuit of their own academic interests. This finding is unique to this study and, to my knowledge, has not been reported elsewhere in the existing scholarly literature. The three participants who had experienced the strictest parental control over their academic decision-making—Participant 1 left her pursuit of an education career to pursue the finance major her parents insisted upon, Participant 5 started his college study as a computer science major as his parents had done, and Participant 6 majored in finance as his father and uncles desired rather than in psychology—all found their respective ways of carving out a degree of space and autonomy for pursuit of their own academic interests. This finding undermines the notion that emerging adults, whether first-generation immigrants or later-generation immigrants, simply defer to their parents' wishes about their choice of major out of a Confucian notion of obligation. This finding warrants further study, particularly into the question of the timing of such negotiation—i.e., whether college, which normally corresponds with the developmental stage of emerging adulthood, is the most appropriate time for ethnic East Asian students in particular and college students more generally to advocate for and pursue their own academic interests.

A fifth finding is that the standard scholarly notion of academic self-efficacy was not specifically present among my participants as I had hoped. As noted above, much existing scholarship has generally sidestepped the issue of academic self-efficacy among ethnic East Asian emerging adults in favor of a focus upon the model minority notion or upon parental control and the "authoritarian parenting" that is an alleged feature of Confucian cultures. More recent research has explored self-efficacy among ethnic East Asian students (Kiang et al., 2017), Although it is difficult to point to one particular reason that self-efficacy as commonly constructed by scholars was not apparent, I believe that it may more simply owe to my research design, and that my questions and their presuppositions may not have allowed me to probe into the topic as much as I had initially thought.

Another possibility is that some findings of this dissertation may lead to confirmation in later research. In particular, the findings about internalization of the model minority myth possibly boosting confidence and skill in STEM ability (Participants 5, 6, and 10) may bear fruit. Each of these participants illuminated how in one way or another, the expectations of educators and of non-ethnic East Asian students did help to motivate their academic performance in math classes and boost their self-confidence in their math abilities.

There is also the possibility that the finding that some participants (1, 5, and 6) engaged in some degree of *negotiation* with their more "traditional" and "authoritarian" parents may point to a novel way of conceiving of and regarding academic self-efficacy in ethnic Asian emerging adult students as a way of showing agency in harmonizing the messages they had received from their parents or family members with their own interests and of integrating those interests with their parents' expectations. Participant 1 used her parents' chosen major, finance, as a gateway to and a cover for pursuing and building skills in her actual academic interest, education.

Participant 5 explored the major his parents chose for him as a way of building the self-confidence and self-esteem that he needed to articulate the case for why he should transfer from computer science to materials engineering. Participant 6 used his father's recommendation that he take a minor in any non-finance subject he might like to explore his interest in psychology, and that exploration also spurred him to explore a separate interest in fashion. Further study should investigate not only other possible manifestations of such negotiations but also what factors within families, within schools, and within extracurricular activities may influence and inform them.

A sixth finding is that satisfaction with their major was mixed but neither origin-specific (i.e, whether a participant was born outside or within the United States) nor generation-specific. In other words, it is not the case that ethnic East Asian students born overseas and raised more closely in a context in which "Asian" values of filiality and deference predominated would be more satisfied with educational and career outcomes stemming from studying fields that their parents suggested or mandated, while ethnic East Asian students born or raised predominantly in the United States, where more individual choice was valued, would experience lower satisfaction. In fact, with few exceptions, both overseas-born and American-born students reported that their parents displayed a general, if at times grudging or, in the phrase of Participant 7, "passive-aggressive" support for their study regardless of choice of major.

While a common parental preference for academic majors that potentially lead to lucrative careers, such as business or certain STEM majors, existed, most students pursued their own interests. Some of these were interests in STEM fields that their parents did not consider to be directly related to a stable career or financial health after graduation—three participants (2, 9, and 10) majored in psychology (a social science that often draws from both the humanities and

biological sciences). While Participant 10 indicated satisfaction with her choice, the other two were more mixed, echoing concerns about career prospects or about their parents' expectations. Of the three STEM students who mentioned being generally satisfied with their major choice (Participants 4, 5, and 8), two pursued those majors despite a lack of overall parental interest. This finding is significant because it refutes the notion expressed in much existing research that ethnic East Asian emerging adults prefer majors in business or STEM fields such as medicine or engineering. It also shows that deference to parental expectations out of cultural values or family obligation did not overrule or eliminate dissatisfaction with major or career choice.

A seventh finding is that the sense that students had lived up to their parents' or family's expectations was also mixed but not specific to the participant's origin either overseas or within the United States. Only two participants reported that they were living up to their parents' expectations (Participants 5 and 8). Eight of the ten participants reported that they did not feel that they were meeting their parents' expectations. Many were at best ambivalent, stating that they had somehow fallen short of their parents' expectations even when they attained academic success. In some cases, this was also linked to financial stability or the ability to find a job shortly after college graduation. Participants 2 and 9 were both still trying to plan for their post-college lives. Three either were in grad school (Participants 5 and 10) or were planning on graduate school (Participant 1) at the time of the interview. The significance of this finding is that it counters the notions that ethnic East Asian emerging adults are especially adjusted to academic success and defer reflexively to their parents' expectations without regard for their own interests.

Strengths and Limitations

This study provides original research that expands the education and human development literatures on ethnic East Asian emerging adult students. Few existing studies explore the potential connections between parental socialization, academic self-efficacy, academic motivation, and academic decision-making among ethnic East Asian emerging adults studying in the United States or consider how they might be related. Furthermore, this study explores how ethnic identity shapes these factors among a group that continues to be overlooked by some education researchers and educational psychologists.

Another strength is the study's reliance upon qualitative research, as the data were obtained through one-on-one interviews with ten emerging adults of East Asian ethnic heritage. This approach enabled me to obtain insight into each participant's reflections upon and attitudes toward their parents' and broader family members' expectations for their college study and career choice. It also provided insight into complex phenomena such as self-ascription of ethnic and racial labels, as multiple participants self-identified with more than one label, and each participant's reception and interpretation of parental messaging.

One important limitation of this study is its focus on interviews with participants who were at one particular stage of their lives—the developmental stage of emerging adulthood—in order to explore topics such as satisfaction with their college major and feeling that they have lived up to their parents' expectations. Participants were drawn from different undergraduate or graduate levels of study at the time these interviews were recorded. Some participants had completed or were completing their major courses of study at the time of the interview, and one was finishing his PhD. The participants exhibited wide variety in maturity, commitment to their study, and career goals, which may have had an impact on their respective experiences, their responses to the interview questions, and how the data related to my research questions. A study

that focused on participants at the outset of their course of study or after several years of work in their post-graduation careers may have yielded different results, as may a longitudinal study conducted over a period of years in students' lives.

Language constituted another limitation on the study. I conducted interviews in English because it was the one language that both I and the participants had in common, particularly as one criterion for participation was either being enrolled or having studied in an institution of higher education in the United States. I am multilingual—a native Japanese speaker who also speaks English. Multiple participants, whether born overseas or born in the United States, were also multilingual, and several were non-native speakers of English. At least one participant had some difficulty understanding the interview questions. Conducting English-language interviews with a participant sample of varying levels of fluency did impact data collection and analysis in that some interviews were shorter than others. Also, some participants required some brief additional clarification on terms or on portions of the question.

Further, this study focuses on one particular ethnic group, ethnic East Asians. There are two limitations here. First, ethnic East Asians are often defined in social scientific studies and in demographics by the broad category "Asian." Yet "Asian" indicates a diverse array of racial and ethnic groups spanning the Asian continent's borders with Europe and Africa to the South Asian subcontinent, Central Asia, Northern Asia, the Pacific Islands, and Southeast Asia as well as East Asia. East Asia and, to an extent, Southeast Asia, the Pacific Islands, and even parts of Central Asia share some social and cultural traditional elements in certain areas, particularly where China and Confucianism had varying degrees of social, cultural, and intellectual influence. There is great diversity even within this particular area of Asia that, despite the commonalities among the findings and even among the participants, could not be fully accounted for and explored in

this study. The category "ethnic East Asians" has been a necessary generalization that was adopted for this study, but it had consequences for data collection and analysis.

A second limitation of the focus upon "East Asians" is that the participants themselves exhibited a fluidity in defining themselves as "Asian." Some participants focused more on general ethnic or racial origin (e.g., as "Asian" or "Asian American"). Others defined themselves more specifically as "Japanese American" or "Taiwanese," for example, according to their own background. Also, participants experienced different degrees of comfort with or pride in these categories. The positive result of this is a questioning and a challenging of the viability of the category "Asian" as a broad category, but it also raised the question of determining the best way to account for and investigate the relationship of East Asian ethnic heritage (whether that of the region generally or of the individual ethnic groups) to parental socialization, academic self-efficacy, and decision-making about college major.

A third limitation upon this study is that it is a pilot study with a small sample size and with me as the only coder. Eleven participants took the screening survey, but one did not participate in the interview. Thus, ten participants provided all the data for a study that explored a research topic that involved abstract, multifarious topics that may not have been investigated, or, in the case of the finding on negotiation, may not have been noticed by previous researchers. A much larger participant sample could perhaps have further refined the results if not provided different results, particularly concerning the effects of generational timing and status. This is particularly the case for the study's finding about some East Asian emerging adults negotiating for their own academic interests despite their parents' expectations that they pursue undergraduate majors that could lead to high-status, financially lucrative occupations. Only three of the ten participants experienced authoritarian parental control over their major choice. A

larger sample could not only confirm that parents deciding their children's college majors for them was a wider phenomenon than reflected in this sample, but also potentially provide more examples of participants who negotiated with their parents for their own academic interests in this way. Moreover, had there been at least one other coder of the qualitative data, I may have been able to look at inter-rater reliability and other concepts that may have deepened my analysis.

Finally, this dissertation has been limited in that the collection of participant data was adversely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. As the pandemic restrictions disrupted college and university life both in the United States and abroad, both American and foreign participants left their schools and even the country. In some cases, participants were able to be interviewed via video conferencing software, but recruiting more participants beyond the ten interviewed here was difficult.

Implications

One of the major implications of this study is that there is more ground to chart in the study of parental socialization, academic motivation, and academic self-efficacy in ethnic East Asian emerging adults beyond more traditional focuses of scholarship such as adjustment and the model minority stereotype. This study offers evidence for phenomena such as student negotiation over individual academic and career interests that run counter to some received notions that ethnic East Asian students prefer STEM fields and other majors favored by their parents because they ostensibly lead to high-paying careers. Subsequent research will help to close these gaps further. Longitudinal studies would help to illumine the persistence of the influence had by parental socialization and attitudes toward education and career choices upon ethnic Asian students after graduation. Such studies, especially if they are also multi-generational, could also

cast light upon whether and how ethnic Asian students transmit attitudes toward education and career choice that resembled or differed from those of their parents or other family members.

Another implication of this study is that its findings can be helpful for educators, administrators, support staff, and mental health practitioners who interact and work daily with adolescents of ethnic East Asian heritage, as well as for education researchers and educational psychologists. This study identifies domains of ethnic East Asian students' academic and family lives that both researchers and educational or mental health professionals need to be aware of when offering instruction, providing care to enhance their well-being, or helping them to prepare for college or graduate school admissions or make career plans. It is important for such researchers and professionals to understand that ethnic East Asians are not naturally inclined toward STEM majors and careers, while some educators and support staff persist in upholding this bias. Likewise, educators and counselors need to equip themselves with deeper and broader understanding of the particular challenges that ethnic East Asian students may encounter from their families when making decisions about higher education or about careers, especially if they are first or second-generation immigrant students. This study offers an attempt at helping to shape such understandings, and subsequent research can build from here.

This study also makes an important contribution to scholarship by illuminating the variability and diversity in the experiences of the participants. Despite certain similarities experienced by many if not most participants—e.g., parents and family members who emphasize study and high grades or presumptions by educators that participants were somehow adept at math on account of their ethnic heritage—each participant had an experience of being a student of ethnic East Asian descent at a college or university in the United States and also an experience of parental socialization and family dynamics that was individual and unique and should not be

regarded as monolithic. Moreover, this variability and diversity had implications for how each participant perceived, regarded, and constructed their ethnic identity over time and across stages, from childhood through their undergraduate or graduate study, and ultimately beyond higher education. Further research, practice, and even theory need to acknowledge and account for variations in experiences over the course of individual participants' lifespans. I used ecological systems theory to attempt to account for various environmental factors that influenced participants' development and ethnic identity theory to account for the influence of participants' ethnic identity. But no theoretical perspective fits all cases, and theory needs to remain open to variability and change as well in order to be able to contextualize participants' experiences adequately and appropriately.

Finally, this study helps to shed further light on the dynamics of ethnic East Asian adolescent students' identity development, particularly in the first and second generations. It shows that students of this population experience identity development, including ethnic identity development, in a variety of ways and with the influence of multiple factors. Future research can build from this study by investigating participants both beyond second-generation immigrant status and also over time and across developmental stages. A longitudinal study following these participants after their education is complete would allow for deeper understanding of how participants estimated their success. Such a study would also allow for a test of the negotiation theme indicated in the findings and would allow also for some study of whether the phenomenon appeared in any of the other seven participants. This would help to provide a broader, deeper, and richer picture of how ethnic identity changes in ethnic East Asian individuals not only from youth to emerging adulthood but also in later adulthood.

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APPENDIX A: ONLINE VALUES SURVEY

Question1: Beginning the survey indicates your consent to participate in this first stage of the study.

Yes
No

Question 2: What is your current age?

[Fillable blank]

Question 2-1: Are you currently enrolled in a university/college?

Yes
No

Question 2-2: If you chose "No" for Q 2, please describe your occupation.

[Fillable blank]

Question 3: At which level are you in college?

Freshman
Sophomore
Junior
Senior

Question 4: What is your major?

[Fillable blank]

Question 5: What is your GPA?

[Fillable blank]

Question 6: What is your gender?

[Fillable blank]

Question 7: How do you identify your race or ethnicity?

[Fillable blank]

Question 8-1: Were you born in the U.S.?

Yes
No

Question 8-2: If you chose "No" for Q8, how old were you when you immigrate to the U.S.

[Fillable blank]

Question 9: What is your current living arrangement (choose the one that applies to you the majority of the time)?

Living with your parents
Living on college campus
Living off campus with peers or roommates
Other

Question 9-2: If you chose "Other" for Q9, please specify your current living arrangement.

[Fillable blank]

About your parents

Question 10: Approximately how long has your mother lived in the U.S.?

[Fillable blank]

Question 11: Approximately how long has your father lived in the U.S.?

[Fillable blank]

Question 12: Why did your parents move to the U.S.?

[Fillable blank]

Question 13: What was/is your mother's occupation?

[Fillable blank]

Question 14: What was/is your father's occupation?

[Fillable blank]

Question 15: What is the highest level of education that your mother completed?

Completed grade school (Kindergarten-8) or less

Some high school
Completed high school
Some college
Completed college
Graduate or professional school after college
Do not know

Question 16: What is the highest level of education that your father completed?

Completed grade school (Kindergartedn-8) or less
Some high school
Completed high school
Some college
Completed college
Graduate or professional school after college

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

Question 1: What language can you speak?

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

Question 2: What language do you prefer?

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

Question 3: How do you identify yourself?

1. Oriental
2. Asian
3. Asian-American
4. Chinese-American, Japanese-American, Korean-American, etc.
5. American

Question 4: Which identification does (did) your mother use?

1. Oriental

2. Asian
3. Asian-American
4. Chinese-American, Japanese-American, Korean-American, etc.
5. American

Question 5: Which identification does (did) your father use?

1. Oriental
2. Asian
3. Asian-American
4. Chinese-American, Japanese-American, Korean-American, etc.
5. American

Question 6: What was the ethnic origin of the friends and peers you had as a child up to age 6?

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

Question 7: What was the ethnic origin of the friends and peers you had as a child from 6 to 18?

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

Question 8: Whom do you now associate with in the community?

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

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

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

Question 10: What is your music preference?

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

Question 11: What is your movie preference?

1. Asian-language movies only
2. Asian-language movies mostly
3. Equally Asian/English English-language movies
4. Mostly English-language movies only
5. English-language movies only

Question 12: What generation are you? (Circle the generation that best applies to you)

1. 1st generation = I was born in Asia or a country other than the U.S.
2. 2nd generation = I was born in U.S., either parent was born in Asia or country other than the U.S.
3. 3rd generation = I was born in the U.S., both parents were born in the U.S., and all grandparents were born in Asia or country other than the U.S.
4. 4th generation = I was born in U.S., both parents were born in U.S., and at least one grandparent born in Asia or a country other than the U.S. and one grandparent born in the U.S.
5. 5th generation = I was born in the U.S., both parents were born in the U.S., and all grandparents were also born in the U.S.
6. Don't know what generation best fits since I lack some information.

Question 13: Where were you raised?

1. In Asia only
2. Mostly in Asia, some in the U.S.
3. Equally in Asia and the U.S.
4. Mostly in the U.S., some in Asia
5. In the U.S. only.

Question 14: What contact have you had with Asia?

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

Question 15: What is your food preference at home?

1. Exclusively Asian food
2. Mostly Asian food, some American
3. About equally Asian and American
4. Mostly American food
5. Exclusively American food

Question 16: What is your food preference at restaurants?

1. Exclusively Asian food
2. Mostly Asian food, some American
3. About equally Asian and American
4. Mostly American food
5. Exclusively American food

Question 17: Do you

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

Question 18: Do you

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

Question 19: If you consider yourself a member of the Asian group (Oriental, Asian, Asian-American, Chinese-American, etc., whatever term you prefer), how much pride do you have in this group?

1. Extremely proud
2. Moderately proud
3. Little pride
4. No pride but do not feel negative toward the group
5. No pride but do feel negative toward the group

Question 20: How would you rate yourself?

1. Very Asian
2. Mostly Asian
3. Bicultural
4. Mostly Westernized
5. Very Westernized

Question 21: Do you participate in Asian occasions, holidays, traditions, etc.?

1. Nearly all
2. Most of them
3. Some of them
4. A few of them
5. None at all

Please rate yourself on your level of belief in each of the following topics:

	Strongly disbelieve in Asian values	Somewhat disbelieve in Asian values	Neither believe nor disbelieve in Asian values	Somewhat believe in Asian values	Strongly believe in Asian values
22. Rate yourself on how much you believe in Asian values (e.g., about marriage, families, education, work):					
23. Rate yourself on how much you believe in American (Western) values (e.g., about marriage, families, education, work):					
24. Rate yourself on how well you fit when with other Asians of the same ethnicity:					
25. Rate yourself on how well you fit when with other Americans who are non-Asian (Westerners):					

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

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

PERCEPTIONS OF LIVING UP TO PARENTAL EXPECTATIONS INVENTORY

Instructions: Please rate the extent to which you believe you are currently living up to your parents' expectations for each of the following using the rating scale provided:

I believe I am currently living up to my parents' expectations regarding…

	not at all/ never	once in a while/a little	sometimes/ somewhat	frequently/ pretty much	very often/ very much so
1. having excellent academic performance					
2. making others proud of my academic performance					
3. studying hard to get a high-paying job in the future					
4. performing better than others academically					
5. studying at a college/university my parents consider prestigious					
6. pursuing a career my parents consider prestigious (e.g., doctor, lawyer, engineer)					

7. studying a major my parents consider prestigious (e.g., engineering, pre-medicine)					
8. receiving straight A's in my classes					
9. getting a degree in an amount of time my parents consider reasonable (e.g., a bachelor's degree in four years or less)					
10. spending time with my grandparents, cousins, aunts, and uncles					
11. spending time at home with my family					
12. running errands that the family needs done					
13. helping my brothers or sisters with their homework					
14. spending holidays with my family					
15. helping out around the house					
16. spending time with my family on weekends					
17. helping take care of my brothers and sisters					
18. eating meals with my family					
19. helping take care of my grandparents					
20. doing things together with my					

brothers and sisters					
21. treating my parents with great respect					
22. following my parents' advice about choosing friends					
23. doing well for the sake of my family					
24. following my parents' advice about choosing a job or major in college					
25. treating my grandparents with great respect					
26. respecting my older brothers and sisters					
27. making sacrifices for my family					

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29-May-2019

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Education, Morrill Hall
142 Bowden St., #310
Lowell, MA 01852

IRB #: 7020
Study: Exploring the Relationship between Parental Messages about Academic Success and Student Motivation among Ethnic Chinese College Studies in the United States
Study Approval Date: 12-Oct-2018
Modification Approval Date: 29-May-2019
Modification: Expanded recruitment criteria

The Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects in Research (IRB) has reviewed and approved your modification to this study, as indicated above. Further changes in your study must be submitted to the IRB for review and approval prior to implementation.

Researchers who conduct studies involving human subjects have responsibilities as outlined in the document, *Responsibilities of Directors of Research Studies Involving Human Subjects.* This document is available at http://unh.edu/research/irb-application-resources or from me.

Note: IRB approval is separate from UNH Purchasing approval of any proposed methods of paying study participants. Before making any payments to study participants, researchers should consult with their BSC or UNH Purchasing to ensure they are complying with institutional requirements. If such institutional requirements are not consistent with the confidentiality or anonymity assurances in the IRB-approved protocol and consent documents, the researcher may need to request a modification from the IRB.

If you have questions or concerns about your study or this approval, please feel free to contact Melissa McGee at 603-862-2005 or melissa.mcgee@unh.edu. Please refer to the IRB # above in all correspondence related to this study.

For the IRB,

Julie F. Simpson
Director

cc: File
Sharp, Erin