

**Parental Expectations for Asian American Men Who Entered College Early:
Influences on their Academic, Career, and Interpersonal Decision-Making**

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University of Washington

Abstract

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Asian immigrant parents often hold high expectations for their children to excel academically and professionally. Filial piety and the desire to make their parent(s) proud can motivate these children to achieve but can also place undue pressure upon them. This mixed methods dissertation study investigated the perceived influence of parental expectations on academic, career, and interpersonal decision making for Asian American men who graduated from early college entrance programs. Six Asian American men filled out 81-item mixed methods surveys and participated in in-depth follow-up interviews about their experiences. Furthermore, gender differences were critically examined by comparing results with a pilot study of seven Asian American women. Findings indicated that the majority of participants experienced high parental expectations which were influential in academic and career decision making. However, more women expressed specific and rigid career expectations as compared to the men. Parental expectations were often internalized. Several participants also reported parental pressures, conflict with parents regarding expectations, experiences of failures, and depression during their college years. Implications for well-being are discussed.

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Once I thought to write a history of the immigrants in America. Then I discovered that the immigrants were American history.

--Oscar Handlin, 1951 (p.3)

Chapter 1: The Research Problem

Broader Context: Educating Children of Immigrants

The number of United States immigrants has increased remarkably in the last half century. In 1960, approximately one in twenty residents in America were foreign-born and they were mostly of European descent (Grieco et al., 2012b). In 2010, those numbers dramatically increased to one in eight residents being foreign-born, now, mostly of Asian and Latin American descent (Grieco et al., 2012b). Close to 40 million people living in the United States, or 13 percent of the general population, were identified as foreign-born according to the 2010 American Community Survey (Grieco et al., 2012a) and children of immigrants comprised nearly one quarter of all U.S. children (Hernandez, Denton, & Macartney, 2007). Due largely to the increasing numbers of immigrants from non-White countries, the minority population is projected to surpass the non-Hispanic White population by 2030, essentially comprising a “New American Majority” (Hernandez, Denton, & Macartney, 2010, p. 8). Therefore, successful adaptation of immigrant children in the schools is a critical societal and educational issue with ramifications for all Americans.

The process of uprooting is not an easy one. Immigration, thus, is a story of adaptation and resilience with education playing a pivotal role. Children of immigrants are more diverse than ever before, hailing from 133 distinct countries of origin with 93

different languages as identified by the 2000 U.S. Census (Hernandez et al., 2010), but also have higher levels of poverty with 23 percent of immigrant households living in poverty compared to 13.5 percent of native-born households in 2010 (Camarota, 2012). One in five public school students are from immigrant households of whom 78 percent speak a language other than English in the home (Camarota, 2012).

Schools serve as the bridge to transition immigrant children into the new society. In the era of 21st century globalization and high stakes schooling, children who flourish academically are well positioned to succeed in the quickly expanding “knowledge intensive sector” (Suarez-Orozco, 2001, p. 345) of the world economy while children who do not, are essentially locked out of critical opportunities in more appealing sectors. Immigrant students will rely extensively on teachers, counselors, and administrators to help them in the path to complete their schooling. Forging positive relationships with school personnel will be an important part of that process (Suarez-Orozco, Suarez-Orozco, & Todorova, 2008). Therefore, educators must be more fully informed of the nature and workings of immigrant families to ensure the success of these children who will become important contributors of society. Given the right tools, the immigrant children of today will become the political leaders, scientists, artists, entrepreneurs, and educators of the future. Also, their ability to successfully adapt will impact all Americans. Many children of immigrants will comprise working-age adults in 2030 and will provide necessary social, economic, and health resources to baby boomers during their retirement years, 72 percent of whom are projected to be non-Hispanic Whites (Hernandez et al., 2010).

Rapid Growth: The Rise of Asian Americans

Of the rapidly growing immigrant groups, the Asian population was the fastest growing racial group between 2000 and 2010 comprising 14.7 million, or nearly 5 percent of the total American population (U.S. Census, 2010). Eighty-three percent trace their roots to China, India, Japan, Korea, the Philippines and Vietnam (Pew Research, 2013). Asian Americans, also interchangeably referred to as Asian American/Pacific Islander (AAPI), may account for a small, albeit, growing percentage of students in the United States but have captured the public attention for their high levels of academic achievement as demonstrated by exemplary GPAs and standardized test scores, great numbers of inclusion in gifted programs, and admission into the most prestigious colleges and universities of the nation (Chen & Stevenson, 1995; Lew, 2006; Yoon & Gentry, 2009), and socioeconomic statuses on par or superior to that of European Americans using measures such as degree outcomes, jobs, and income (Sakamoto & Furuichi, 2002; Xie & Goyette, 2003).

Different explanations have been offered to understand the remarkable achievements of Asian Americans as a group. Some popular explanations have focused on the cultural values and work ethic of Asian families stemming from Confucianism and other religious and/or philosophical influences (Lew, 2006; Portes & Rumbaut, 2001; Salili, Chiu, & Lai, 2001; Xie & Goyette, 2003). Others have focused on the characteristics of selective immigrants and the influence of immigration itself (Hirschman & Wong, 1986; Xie & Goyette, 2003). What is clear is that parent educational beliefs and values can greatly influence the academic and professional accomplishments of their children (Lew, 2006).

Asian Immigrant Parental Expectations and the Structural Perspective

Xie and Goyette (2003) referred to viewing Asian Americans in context of the larger economic and social backdrop of American society as a “structural perspective” (p. 470). To understand Asian American parental expectations, it is necessary to examine the recent history of Asian immigrants starting with the passage of key immigrant policies. Foremost, the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 substantially affected the pattern and development of U.S. immigration from Asian countries by removing the discriminatory national origins quota system and replacing it with a preference system that favored family reunification and employment related skills (Chan, 1991; Lee, 2014; Min, 1995). This law led to a significant influx of Asian immigrants who had previously been restricted, especially Chinese, Korean, Filipino, and South Asian Indians, to the United States (Min, 1995). Since implementation of the Act, however, immigrants from Asian countries more than doubled every decade, and transformed the current Asian American population from largely native-born to a mostly foreign-born population (Lee, 2014).

The Vietnam War was a war between North Vietnam, supported by communist countries, and South Vietnam, supported by America and anti-communist countries, which lasted from 1954 until the *Fall of Saigon*, or the capture of the capital city of South Vietnam by North Vietnamese forces on April 30, 1975 (Chan 1991; Lee, 2014). Following the capture of the city was a mass evacuation of American military and civilians, both American and Vietnamese who supported the South Vietnamese regime, by sea and air. The Indochina Migration and Refugee Assistance Act of 1975 and the subsequent Refugee Act of 1980 which were created in response to the Southeast Asian

refugee crisis in the 1970s, resulted in a large influx of Vietnamese, Laotians, Lao minorities, and Cambodian refugees into the United States totaling approximately a million individuals by the end of the twentieth century (Hune, 2002; Lee, 2014). The Refugee admission programs were terminated by the early 1990s, but many Southeast Asians still immigrated through post-1965 immigration processes such as family reunification.

The greatest difference between immigrants and refugees were in their motivation and surrounding circumstances before departure (Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2001; McBrien & Ford, 2012). By definition, asylum seekers or refugees are unwillingly transplanted due to persecution or fear of persecution whereas immigrants may have time to plan their move, prepare their children, and even learn about the new culture. Also, refugee children may have a host of traumatic experiences during any three of the possible migration phases: “preflight, flight, and postflight” (McBrien & Ford, 2012, p. 110). During preflight and flight, they may have experienced fear, been under violent attacks or observed violence to others, and/or lost loved ones. During flight they may have been separated by force to become child soldiers or sex slaves (McBrien & Ford, 2012) or they may become stuck in Immigration and Naturalization (INS) detention camps (Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2001). Many later suffer from post-traumatic stress syndrome as a result of their troubling experiences (Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2001). Some children of refugees demonstrate remarkable resilience and go on to college in disproportionately high numbers while others become high school drop outs and join gangs (Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2001).

The Model Minority Stereotype

Due to the overall perception of Asian Americans as high-achievers, successful in school and work, mentally healthy, and with relatively few problems, they have been stereotyped as *model minorities* (Lee et al., 2009; Lund, Chan, & Liang, 2014; Okubo, Yeh, Lin, Fujita, & Shea, 2007). Even Asian youth with “uneducated, low-skilled and impoverished” parents are expected to excel academically despite inter-Asian differences (Dundes, Cho, & Kwak, p. 136). However, the statistics used to support the model minority stereotype are misleading (Hune, 2002; Museus & Kiang, 2009) because they group Asian Americans together without regard for nationality or ethnic group differences. Disaggregated data reveal stark differences in educational performance, college degrees, income, and job prestige for certain ethnic groups including Southeast Asian Americans and Pacific Islander groups (Hune, 2002; Lee, 2014). Also, the model minority stereotype is harmful because it masks from view the problems that even high achieving Asian American students’ face such as family conflict, struggles with career decision-making, psychological distress, social isolation, and racial discrimination (Henfield, Woo, Lin, & Rausch, 2014; Lee et al., 2009). Furthermore, the stereotype is damaging to other minorities because it is also an “implicit critique of other minorities, especially African Americans, who did not enjoy the postwar mobility and media adulation that Asian Americans did” (Lee, 2014, p. 263). Children of new Asian immigrants who come from middle class backgrounds with parents in professional occupations have advantages that other minority students may not have.

For these reasons and more, Asian American scholars have debunked and rejected the model minority stereotype as harmful to all Asian Americans and to other minorities

(Chan, 1991; Hune, 2011; Lee, 2014; Museus & Kiang, 2009). Museus & Kiang (2009) identified five major misconceptions of Asian and Pacific American students that resulted from the model minority stereotype: Asian Americans are a homogenous group, are not really a minority group, do not experience race-related challenges, do not need extra resources or support, and are considered successful because they have a college degree. Asian Americans in actuality comprise a wide variety of nationalities ethnicities, languages, religions, and “significantly varied levels of success” (Yoo, Burrola, & Steger, 2010, p. 115). The 1965 Immigration Act favored family reunification, but it also favored skilled workers, which brought in well-educated, professional Asian immigrants from higher socioeconomic backgrounds. The socioeconomic statuses of some Asian Americans is correlated with their children’s academic and social success just like with many other Americans (Yoo et al., 2010). Also, while many East and South Asian Americans, such as Chinese and Asian Indians attained high levels of educational attainment, most Southeast Asian American groups such as Cambodians, Laotians, and Hmong have not found the same success. Many South East Asians first immigrated as refugees following the Refugee Act of 1980 and as a group have attained fewer high school and bachelor degrees compared to East and South Asian American groups (Chan, 1991; Hune & Takeuchi, 2008; Teranishi, 2010; Yoo et al., 2010). Furthermore, Southeast Asians earned the lowest per capita income compared to the US general population (Ngo & Lee, 2007).

Students who internalize the model minority myth may not seek the help they need for academic struggles and mental health problems due to shame of not living up to the high expectations (Lee et al., 2009; Yoo et al., 2010). To exacerbate the potential

problem, teachers overlooked low performing or struggling Asian American students unless challenging behaviors arose (Hui-Michael & Garcia, 2009). Depression and suicide rates are among the highest for Asian American female adolescents (15-24) of any racial/ethnic or gender group in America (Lee, et al, 2009; Qin, Way, & Mukherjee, 2008). Despite these disturbing trends, the issue of mental health is mostly ignored in the general Asian American population, and a cultural stigma related to seeking professional counseling discourages Asian Americans from receiving mental health services (Lee, et al, 2009). Asian Americans underutilize services or tend to seek help when they become severely disturbed (Meyer, Dhindsa, Gabriel, & Sue, 2009).

In the field of gifted education where certain Asian American groups are considered to be overrepresented (Yoon & Gentry, 2009), there is a noticeable and surprising lack of research (Henfield et al., 2014). Kitano & DiJiosia (2000) asked “Why would as many as 17.6 percent of Asian students (NELS data) participate in programs for the gifted? Moreover, why is there so little interest in this question?” (p. 76) in response to the lack of scholarly attention to the phenomenon. Asian Americans seem to inhabit an invisible space in the educational discourse – often times lumped into the discussion with White Americans despite the unique challenges that they face as children of immigrants and refugees. Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders as a group are tremendously heterogeneous with a wide variety of races, ethnic backgrounds, languages, religions, customs, class differences and values (Henfield et al., 2014; Okubo et al., 2007) and consequently different educational attainment and occupations. Within-group differences for Asian Americans must be acknowledged and data disaggregated to better understand their career development processes.

In some extent due to the preponderance of the model minority stereotype, very little K-12 and postsecondary educational scholarship presently exists on gifted Asian American students despite their rapid population growth (Henfield et al., 2014; Kitano & DiJiosia, 2000). Of the few studies that have been conducted, a fair number have focused on Asian parents' and the positive results (i.e. academic success) (Dundes et al., 2009; Li, 2003). Li (2003) noted that more studies on parental expectations needed to examine the feelings, needs, and experiences of Asian American children, both positive and negative. Also, more light needs to be shed on how parental expectations influence academic and career decision making (Okubo et al., 2007), the differences by gender, and the experiences of Asian American students in gifted and honors programs despite overrepresentation in these programs (Henfield et al., 2014; Yoon & Gentry, 2009).

Dissertation Purpose: Expansion of Pilot Study of Asian American Women to Focus on Asian American Men

To better understand the influence of Asian immigrant parental expectations for high achieving Asian American students, I embarked upon a pilot study in the summer of 2014. In this qualitative study, I explored the influence of perceived parental expectations on academic and career decision making processes for seven Asian American women (Chung, 2014) who were already a part of a larger 35 year alumni study of the early college entrance programs at the University of Washington (UW) Robinson Center for Young Scholars (Hertzog & Chung, 2015).

The alumni of the early college entrance programs were my participants of focus because they were academically talented and even represented one extreme of achievement by choosing to enter college two to four years earlier than same aged peers.

To be considered for these specialized programs, they had to demonstrate potential for academic success in college through standardized test scores and school grades, in addition to other considerations. In fact, more than 85 percent of the program participants had been identified in gifted programs, called *Highly Capable* programs in Washington State, prior to college entrance (Hertzog & Chung, 2015). Moreover, a high number of immigrants or children of immigrants (approximately 42% of the total 192 participants) were represented in the sample, many of whom were of Asian descent (Hertzog & Chung, 2015). My role as a close collaborator on the alumni study since its inception also provided me with additional insight throughout all the steps of the research process. For more context on the larger study, **See Alumni Study of Early College Entrance Programs (p. 37).**

The seven Asian American women were purposefully selected from a pool of those participants who had filled out a survey for the alumni study and were willing to be interviewed about their experiences. I conducted in-depth phone interviews with them using a semi-structured interview protocol, probing for the influence of parental expectations on academic and career decision-making in particular. For more details on the study, **See The Pilot Study of Asian American Women (p. 40).**

The main results of the pilot study indicated that parents had high, specific academic and career expectations ascribed somewhat to Asian cultural values and immigration experiences and that “academic and career decision making starting with the decision to enter the early entrance program, to choice of first major, careers and possibly even choice of graduates schools were influenced by parental expectations” (Chung,

2014, p. 20). However, key questions were raised at the end of the study that related to process and gender:

What is still not clear is the process by which parental expectations influence children. Isolating that process can help researchers understand what works and what doesn't. For example, are parental expectations conveyed explicitly or implicitly? How does acculturation and gender influence parental expectations for their children? (p. 44)

Another question related to well-being:

One interesting finding was the importance of identity for the alumnae in this sample. The college transition challenged their sense of self, for better or for worse. How does perfectionism, achievement, and identity interact and with what impact to well-being? (p. 44)

Thus, the purpose of this dissertation study is twofold: 1) to explore in more depth the influence of Asian immigrant parental expectations on academic and career decision-making processes for Asian Americans who graduated from early college entrance and 2) to consider the role of gender in how parental expectations were perceived by purposefully interviewing *male* Asian Americans, thereby expanding on the findings of the pilot study. The following research questions guided this present study of the influence of parental expectations on Asian American men who graduated from early college entrance programs.

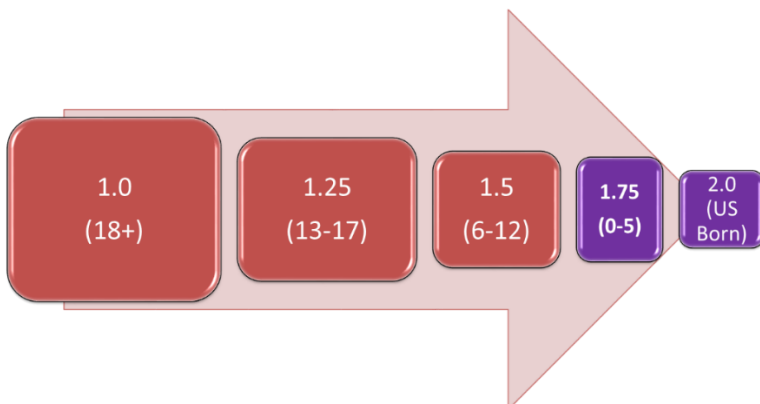
Research Questions

1. How do Asian American men who graduated from early college entrance programs perceive their parents' expectations of them? What attributions do these participants make about why their parents had or did not have these expectations for them?
2. How did parental expectations influence participants' academic, career, and interpersonal decisions if at all, and with what implications for their well-being?
3. Are there differences in themes by gender? If so, in what ways?

Terminology – Immigrant Generations

Social scientists have adopted specific terminology to define immigrant and refugee families and I refer to them as being relevant to understand the demographics of my participants. Immigrants who came to the United States as adults (18+) are considered *first or 1.0 generation immigrants* and their U.S. born children are considered *second or 2.0 generation immigrants* (Rumbaut, 2004). For children of immigrants who were not U.S. born, their generational status can be viewed along a spectrum (see Fig. 1.1) based on the timing of immigration.

Figure 1.1 Immigrant Generations (Rumbaut, 2004)



According to Rumbaut (2004) children who immigrated at preschool age or early childhood (0-5) are the *1.75 generation immigrant*, children who immigrated at middle childhood (6-12) are “*the classic 1.5 generation*” (p.1167), and children who immigrated in adolescence (13-17) are the *1.25 generation immigrant*. The third generation immigrants, although not pictured in this diagram represent children of second generation immigrant parents. The idea here is that depending on the life stage at timing of migration, the process of adaption is experienced differently due to differing social contexts. Furthermore, Rumbaut (2004) suggested that the 1.75 generation are more similar in their experiences and outcomes with the 2.0 generation because almost all of their schooling and socialization have occurred in the United States, just as the 1.25 generation share more similarities with the first generation due to timing of migration (Rumbaut, 2004). In the present study, all of the participants were either 2.0 or 1.75 generation immigrations.

Researcher Background

I am a female Asian American doctoral candidate enrolled in an Educational Psychology program in a large research university located in the Pacific Northwest. I was born in South Korea and immigrated to America at the age of four before any formal schooling and so consider myself a 1.75 generation immigrant using Rumbaut’s (2004) definition. Having grown up as a child of Asian immigrant parents offers me special insights into the general experience of Asian American immigrants, and I share additional similarities with the participants of this sample. For example, I was identified for gifted programming in elementary school, achieved top marks in school, and graduated from college 1.5 years earlier than my same aged college peers. However, I graduated early

due to an abundance of Advanced Placement and other testing credits, not due to early college entrance. And, although my father had high expectations for me to do my best academically, he never pressured me into pursuing any particular career path. In fact, it was quite the opposite. He encouraged me to pursue what I loved and excelled at, such as writing and teaching others, but that I should be mindful to use my talents for bettering society. Ultimately, he had faith that I would find the best vocation for myself.

One concern when a researcher shares many similarities with the participants is the possible loss of objectivity due to bias and qualitative researchers should strive for transparency by addressing those biases from the beginning (Hill, Thompson, & Williams, 1997). To reduce such bias and increase trustworthiness of my research, I practiced reflexivity through interview notes and journaling and conducted member checks to make sure I accurately summarized participant experiences (Merriam, 2009; Watt, 2007).

Chapter 2: Conceptual and Theoretical Framework

My study is framed in three different bodies of literature. I draw from 1) self-fulfilling prophecy theories from psychology, 2) Asian immigrant parental expectations literature, and 3) radical acceleration literature from gifted education. These bodies of literature inform my examination of the process of parental expectations and their influence on career pathways for high-achieving Asian Americans.

Self-fulfilling Prophecy and the Pygmalion Effect

High expectations can powerfully influence academic and life outcomes for individuals and groups. *Self-fulfilling prophecy* from psychology is a concept where erroneous individual and group beliefs, by dint of the belief and positive feedback reinforcing the belief, transform into reality. Robert Merton (1948) is credited with coining the phrase of self-fulfilling prophecy and his concept stemmed from the *Thomas Theorem*: “If men define situations as real, they are real in their consequences” (p. 173). He further explained how the beliefs and meaning ascribed to the situation could become more influential than the objective reality:

...men respond not only to the objective features of a situation, but also, and at times primarily, to the meaning this situation has for them. And once they have assigned some meaning to the situation, their consequent behavior and some of the consequences of that behavior are determined by the ascribed meaning (Merton, 1948, p.174).

In a controversial and much contested study, Rosenthal and Jacobson (1968) examined the effect of teacher expectations on student performance in what was called

the *Pygmalion Effect*. They found that if teachers were led to believe and thus expect high performance from certain students, they would act in ways that led to such performance and intellectual growth. The opposite was also true found to be true, where low expectations led to subsequent low performance. The teachers' academic expectations ended up becoming a self-fulfilling prophecy of their students, regardless of the actual ability of the students. Cronbach (1975) in a review of the controversy discussed how the methodology and findings of the study were criticized in technical reviews for its "crude experimental design and improper statistical analysis" (p.7) but did not discount the possible influence of teacher expectations, adding as an aside that "no doubt there are expectancy effects in the classroom" (p.7).

Other studies have validated the effect of teacher expectations on student academic outcomes. In a meta-analysis of 35 years of empirical studies on teacher expectations, Jussim & Harber (2005) found that self-fulfilling prophecies did occur in schools, but the effect size tended to be small. However, students from a "stigmatized group" could be more vulnerable to self-fulfilling prophecy effects, such as students with a history of low achievement (effect size of .26), students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds (effect sizes of .2 to .3), and African-American students (effect sizes of .4 to .6). Other researchers also found that there was a relationship between teacher expectations and student characteristics (Bergh, Denessen, Hornstra, Voeten, & Holland, 2010; Huss-Keeler, 1997) and that there was an effect of bias on student performance over time (Boer, Bosker, & P.C. van der Werf, 2010). Tenenbaum & Ruck (2007) conducted four quantitative meta-analyses that examined the research literature on teacher expectations, teacher referral rates for special programs (i.e. gifted, disciplinary,

and special education) and teacher speech, whether positive, neutral, or negative, looking specifically for differences in results by ethnicity. They found that teachers' expectations were highest for Asian American students ($d = -.17$) and more positive for European American students when compared with African American ($d = .25$) and Latino/a students ($d = .46$).

In a review of literature on parental expectations and their influences on academic achievement for different racial/ethnic groups, Yamamoto & Holloway (2010) found that high parental expectations were linked to a host of positive student outcomes including higher grades, higher standardized test scores, higher achievement motivation and academic self-efficacy, persistence at task for students, and college aspirations. They also found evidence to suggest Asian Americans had the highest levels of parental expectation compared to other racial/ethnic groups and this was still true even after controlling for the socioeconomic status of the parents (Yamamoto & Holloway, 2010).

Asian Immigrant Parental Expectations

Research literature on talent development suggest that families play vital roles in the cultivation and fulfillment of student potential by having high expectations and valuing academic achievement, helping build social networks, and modeling personality traits such as resilience despite setbacks (Olszewski-Kubilius, 2002). Parental expectations, defined by many scholars as “realistic beliefs or judgments that parents have about their children's future achievement” (Yamamoto & Holloway, 2010, p. 191) is different from parental aspirations, which reflect wishes and hopes that parents have for their children. Mau (1997) found that Asian American high school students spent more time on homework and perceived higher parental expectations as compared to White

American students, with no difference found for acculturation levels of the participants. In a qualitative study of twelve Asian-American adults who were interviewed about their career decision-making processes, Fouad et al. (2008) reported that parental expectations regarding choice of career, pursuit of advanced education or attainment of status or prestige, were “a pervasive and salient influence on the career choices for these participants” (p. 54).

Cultural Influences

Asian parental expectations may be connected with cultural and ethnic beliefs. In some Asian immigrant households, the goals and needs of the family may take precedence above the individual’s goals and needs (Kitano, 1997) reflecting the cultural value of collectivism (Yee, Su, Kim, & Yancura, 2009). According to Shum (1996), “one family member’s failures and/or successes are often seen as reflecting upon or affecting an entire family’s sense of success and honor” (p. 181). Filial piety and the desire to make one’s parents and family proud, often motivated individuals to strive for academic excellence (Salili et al., 2001). For many children of immigrants, this desire is experienced most intensely because they see how much their parents have sacrificed for them for the hope of a better life. Asian parents view education as the great equalizer for their children, and the children tend to internalize these beliefs. In other words, the educational beliefs, values, and expectations of the parents greatly influence the educational aspirations and achievement of their children (Lew, 2006).

In a review of research on parental expectations, Yamamoto and Holloway (2010) found that attributions about the causes of academic success in school were likely to affect the relation between students past performance and parents’ belief about the

students' future performance. If parents believed ability or intelligence were more fixed or stable entities, then they expected performance to remain stable (Weiner, 2005).

However, if parents attributed achievement to student effort, then they were more likely to believe that future performance could change or improve if students worked harder in school (Yamamoto & Holloway, 2010). There were clear ethnic and cultural differences in these attributions with the prior performance of students' being "one of the strongest predictors of parental expectations among European American families" but not particularly strong for "racial/ethnic minority families" (Yamamoto & Holloway, 2010, p. 206).

Achievement motivation theories in Western contexts typically have focused on the individual's ability more so than effort whereas theories in East Asian contexts emphasize effort over ability (Yeung & Yeung, 2008). According to Wu (2005), the reasons can be traced back to the Platonic tradition in Western education that emphasizes innate ability, and the Confucian tradition in Eastern education that emphasizes effort. Confucianism is an ethical and philosophical system of thought that developed in China in the second century B.C., spread to Korea, and then to Japan. Educational proverbs such as *Being diligent in study means devoting one's effort to it for a long time* and *At the end of hardship comes happiness* reflect the value of effort ingrained in the Eastern culture (Grant & Dweck, 2001). In Korea there is a saying *sugohaseyo* which is literally translated as *keep working hard*. The phrase is often used in academic and work settings after one has worked diligently on a task and succeeded due to one's effort (Grant & Dweck, 2001). Encapsulated in this phrase is the idea that one can always work harder. As part of working harder, students typically attend cram schools, or extracurricular

academies in East Asian countries and increasingly in America as well (Byun & Park, 2012). In East Asian countries such as Korea and China, parents are willing to take on heavy financial burden for private tutors and extracurricular studies in these cram schools.

Indian Americans in the United States represent one of the most highly educated groups with 70 percent of adults aged 25 or older holding a college degree in 2014 (Desilver, 2014). According to this research, about half of Indian Americans in America are Hindu, 18 percent are Christians, and 10 percent were Muslim, and many immigrants come with professional qualifications. In Asian Indian cultural belief systems, the self is not seen as separate from the family but collectivist and children are expected to obey, exhibit appropriate behavior, perform well academically, and contribute to the overall well-being of the family (Farver, Narang, & Bhadha, 2002).

The influence of culture on educational attainment has been more mixed for South East Asian immigrants, many who initially arrived as refugees and children of refugees after 1975. Although Confucian ethics was often referred to as one of the reasons for the academic success of Asian students, the majority of South East Asian families in this sample were not Confucian (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001). The Vietnamese were mostly Mahayana Buddhist with some Roman Catholics; Cambodian and Lao immigrants were mostly Theravada Buddhists; and the Hmong were mostly animists, although many joined Mormon and Christian churches in the United States. Portes & Rumbaut (2001) eventually interpreted the academic success as a result of the character of the strong ethnic communities that positively influenced children's behavior in school and ultimately their performance.

Vietnamese Americans comprise the majority of the South East Asian American population in the US, and their academic success are highlighted by academic researchers. Various researchers pointed to cultural based values of hard work, achievement, education, as well as the mix of Buddhism and Confucian values that Vietnamese families brought with them to explain their educational achievements (Ngo & Lee, 2007). The more connected the students were to the culture of their family and ethnic networks, they were more likely to experience academic success. However, there were also tensions, problems, and darker stories of Vietnamese American youth who become alienated from school and drawn into gangs. These youth tended to be U.S. born, and disconnected from families and ethnic supportive networks.

The Cambodian, Laotian, and Hmong immigrant experiences have not reflected as much academic success and rather, have been beset with challenges such as failure and high drop-out rates. The Hmong reported the greatest discrepancy between aspiration and expectation with 54.0 percent aspiring to advanced degrees, but only 6.0 percent expected it. The roots of Cambodian culture stem from Theravada Buddhism, of which doctrine includes a strong belief in destiny. This may lead to a “laissez-faire approach to children’s education” and less parental involvement in the child’s education (Ngo & Lee, 2007, p. 433). This is quite different from the conceptualization of effort and ability in East Asian cultures, where there is more belief in the ability to change the future.

Structural Influences

Immigrant scholars have noted the high educational aspirations and expectations of immigrant parents for their children, involvement in education, and the value placed on achievement (Chung, 2014; Fuligni, 1998; Kao & Tienda, 1995; Mau, 1997; Portes &

Rumbaut, 2001; Suarez-Orozco et al., 2008; Tseng, 2006). In 1992, 2,442 immigrant parents were surveyed as part of the second wave of the Children of Immigrants Longitudinal Study (CILS) (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001). Of those parents, 73.9 percent expected their children to graduate from college, and close to half expected them to earn a postgraduate degree (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001). More recently, Child Trends (2012) in an analysis of 2007 National Household Education Survey (NHES) data found that immigrant parents had higher expectations for their children's educational attainment compared to native-born parents, and they were higher still if their own children were native-born.

Immigrants also share other characteristics as well, much of it related to their motivation to come to America. Sociologist Lee (1966) propounded a theory of migration where he discussed the push-pull factors involved. Less than ideal economic, social, and political/religious factors may encourage or push migrants to leave, whereas the perceived opportunities are considered pull or attractive forces that draw them into the destination country (Daniels, 1990; Lee, 1966). For individuals and families who intentionally choose this path, the varied motivations and pathways for choosing immigration can be complex and contextual, but generally the decision is made to ensure a better life and to "maximize family well-being" (Trask, Brady, Qui, & Radnai-Griffin, 2009, p. 56).

The structural perspective provides a lens to examine Asian Americans within the broader context of American society and the economic and social forces at play (Xie & Goyette, 2003). To understand the complexity of the Asian American educational experience, it is important to examine the streams of Asian immigration. The first Asian

immigrants filled a need for low-cost labor in industry, transportation, and agriculture (Chan, 1991; Xie & Goyette, 2003). Asian immigration began in the early 1800s when immigrants, mostly male, came as laborers in agriculture and construction (Lee, 2014; Pew Research, 2013). Due to laws that limited the flow of immigration from Asia such as the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, the Immigration Act of 1917, and the National Origins Act of 1924, the Asian population grew slowly until the passage of several key immigration policies (Pew Research, 2013). As mentioned, the passage of the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 and the legislation in response to the refugee crisis in Southeast Asia opened up new streams of immigration by eliminating the prior quota system, and using a new process that favored family reunification and the entry of skilled workers into the United States, as well as admitting refugees and asylum-seekers looking for sanctuary.

Post 1965 Asian immigrants can be seen as highly motivated economic migrants who were willing to make the sacrifice of immigration for the dream of a higher standard of living and improved educational opportunities for their children. The majority of these immigrants anticipated racial discrimination to a degree and expected long term gains over short term (Kitano & Daniels, 1995). They understood it was not going to be an easy path with instant rewards but they believed that their hard work and efforts would eventually lead to success. In short, they were seeking the American dream. High proportions of new Asian immigrants came from large, urban backgrounds and were generally well educated with white-collar and professional positions in the country of origin (Lee, 2014). There were those who entered the United States under the category of professional and technical workers like many South Asian Indian immigrants from 1966-

1977, representing an impressive “twenty thousand scientists with Ph.D.s, forty thousand engineers, and twenty-five thousand doctors” (Lee, 2014, p. 320). However, for many immigrants, due to language and cultural barriers, they had to take on menial jobs that were not commensurate with skills and education or turn to small businesses (Min, 1995).

Social Capital. Structural explanations also emphasize family class, resources, and social capital in understanding the educational achievement of immigrant students (Ngo & Lee, 2007; Noguera, 2004). According to Coleman (1988) family background could be separated into three different types of capital that could influence children’s achievement in school: 1) financial capital as measured by family wealth and access to physical resources, 2) human capital as measured by parent education level and the potential to provide for a “cognitive environment” (p.S109), and 3) social capital, as measured by social relationships.

Coleman (1988) defined social capital by its function and stated that it was a “variety of different entities, with two elements in common: they all consist of some aspect of social structures, and they facilitate certain actions of actors—whether persons or corporate actors—within the structure” (p. S98). Within this concept is the idea that social involvements can lead to positive consequences for individuals and communities and is especially relevant to immigrants (Noguera, 2004; Portes, 1998). Certainly, social capital can be enhanced by high levels of financial and human capital in the family, as often seen in middle-class families who have access to more social networks as compared to working-class families. However, social capital alone can also be influential.

To illustrate the strength of social capital as applied to immigrants, Coleman (1988) used an example of an Asian immigrant family who purchased two class

textbooks, one for the child and one for the mother to study, so that the mother, who was not necessarily well-educated, could still help her child succeed in school. In this scenario, the impact of social capital was high due to the strong social relations between parents and their children, despite low human capital (i.e. levels of parent schooling). Furthermore, according to the social capital explanation, “parents who have access to social networks (e.g., community members, friends who are teachers) are able to assist one another and help their children succeed in school” (Ngo & Lee, 2007, p. 418). The social capital of Vietnamese American children in terms of their relationships with their families and communities have been found to positively support their education despite low income and refugee backgrounds (Ngo & Lee, 2007).

Parenting Styles

Parenting styles and their influence on the behavior of children have been extensively examined through the three configurations first examined and postulated by Baumrind (1971) of authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive. Baumrind (1971) studied parental authority and their effects on mostly European American preschool children. The different parenting styles have been summarized thusly by Yee et al. (2009):

- *Authoritative* parents are warm and responsive, encourage open communication, set firm boundaries and respect their child’s individuality.
- *Authoritarian* parents expect obedience and compliance from their children and are described as being strict and rigid.
- *Permissive* parents are warm and sensitive to the child, but do not establish and enforce rules and boundaries. (p. 320)

Results from the parent-child study indicated that authoritative parenting styles were positively associated with “independent, purposive” behavior and high achievement for girls, and higher levels of social responsibility for boys compared to the authoritarian and permissive parenting styles (Baumrind, 1971). Additional results have been found connecting authoritative styles with positive youth outcomes such as improved psychological well-being and academic achievement for European Americans, but there have also been mixed results for ethnic minorities including Asians (Ang, 2006).

The acculturation of the child also matters in how they perceive parent-child roles. For instance, Chao (2000) did not find the positive correlations between authoritative parenting and higher academic achievement for Asian Americans. Ang (2006) found in a sample of 548 Asian adolescents that those who viewed their fathers as authoritative demonstrated more perseverance for academic endeavors and reported higher self-efficacy beliefs when compared to those who viewed their fathers as authoritarian or permissive. In Park, Kim, Chiang, & Ju’s (2010) study examining perceived parenting style and family conflict for Asian American adolescents, the highest reported parenting style was authoritarian, followed by authoritative, and then permissive. Most of the parents were first generation immigrants. No effects were observed for higher authoritative styles in what the authors termed “integrated, separated, and marginalized individuals” (p.76), although lower family conflict was associated with authoritative styles in assimilated Asian Americans. More family conflict was associated with authoritarian parenting styles for acculturated students but less so for permissive styles. However, more family conflict was associated with permissive parenting styles

for non-acculturated students. Park et al. (2010) attributed their findings to beliefs related to acculturation of the student:

These individuals may appreciate the freedom that they are given by their permissive parents to make their own life choices. On the other hand, less acculturated Asian Americans may perceive permissiveness as a sign that parents are being neglectful, in that, parents are failing to fulfill their role of “training” them to work harder, and be more disciplined and obedient (p. 76).

Perceived parenting style can affect whether expectations are accepted, internalized and/or ultimately rejected by children. Asian immigrant parents consistently tend to adopt an authoritarian parenting style (Hayashino & Chopra, 2009) and may employ critical and authoritarian parenting techniques, such as shame, guilt, and concern for saving face in “reinforcing cultural values and disciplining their children” and also to motivate children to achieve (Hayashino & Chopra, 2009, p. 321; Kawamura & Rice, 2009). Yamamoto & Holloway (2010) noted that Asian American parents “may more forcefully articulate their expectations, which may make it more likely that students will understand and internalize them” (p. 207). In a qualitative study of parent and child conflict and communication for high-achieving Chinese American adolescents, a major finding was that conflicts between parents and children occurred not necessarily due to high parental expectations but the manner in which parents communicated expectations to their children with “parental repetition, parental emotional reactions to their occasional failures in school, and parents’ constant comparison of them with students who had even higher levels of achievement” (p.43) causing the most problems (Qin, Chang, Han, & Chee, 2012). If an expectation is conveyed too forcefully and with too much

psychological control, personal and family conflict may ensue. Conversely, if conveyed with zero to low levels of intensity, such as in permissive parenting styles, children may also choose to place less importance on them.

Impact of Gender

Gender is another important consideration in the influence of parental expectations. Depending on the gender of the parent and/or the gender of the child, parental expectations may differ in content, conveyance, and intensity. In traditional Asian culture, there are different expectations for mothers and fathers. The family is set up as a hierarchy with the father as the patriarch of the family. He is the provider, role model, deserving of respect and often viewed as the “stoic disciplinarian” (p.113) while mothers take on more responsibility with child-rearing, take care of the home, and are seen as more kind (Chae & Chae, 2010). From a traditional Asian father’s perspective, love is displayed by fulfillment of family obligations and through sacrifice to ensure opportunities for education and career success for their children, rather than through expressions of affection and emotional nurturance commonly seen in contemporary Western cultures (Chae & Chae, 2010). These beliefs may clash with the beliefs of their acculturated sons and daughters who have absorbed Western cultural values on individuality, autonomy, and self-expression. Although conformity to parental expectations and beliefs may decrease incidences of conflict, children and adolescents may then “delay the process of exploring and committing to their own identities” (p.115) which has negative ramifications for mental health outcomes (Chae & Chae, 2010).

Historically, men have attended college at higher rates and were more likely to finish college but since 1991, those trends have shifted in favor of women (Pollard,

2011). An analysis of U.S. Census Bureau data revealed that recent female high school graduates' college enrollment rates have risen from 63 percent in 1994 to 71 percent in 2012, whereas recent male high school graduates enrollment percentage stayed the same at 61 percent (Lopez & Gonzalez-Barrera, 2014). Contemporary immigrant girls generally have higher educational aspirations and attainment compared to immigrant boys reflecting that trend (Qin-Hilliard, 2003; Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2001). Outside activities are also more strictly controlled, which may lead to unanticipated benefits such as decreased exposure to violence and risky situations involving drugs, alcohol, and sex (Qin-Hilliard, 2003; Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2001). Higher parental expectations for girls, more parental control of activities, and positive support from peers and teachers, may be connected to a gendered academic adjustment for immigrant girls (Qin-Hilliard, 2003). For Asian American women, there may be a potential downside.

The culture of Asian American families can influence perceptions of the self and the development of identity in a different way from that of mainstream American culture (Shum, 1996). There are traditional expectations by gender in Asian culture, with women “encouraged to be submissive, passive, and demure” (Shum, 1996, p.181) and “the family and society continue to reinforce these patterns into adult professional lives” (Kitano, 1997, p.6) where women perform well in the workplace but focus on fulfilling family or group obligations rather than their own potential. The stereotype of submissive Asian women has become widespread to the point that the “struggle for a positive self-identity becomes that much more difficult for Asian American women to attain” (Shum, 1996, p. 182). Other societal stereotypes that negatively impact Asian American women

are that of the *dragon lady*, or the stereotype that Asian women are strong, domineering, and cunning who uses her feminine wiles to get what she wants and the *mysterious, exotic* Asian flower which paints Asian women as attractive, inscrutable, and also hypersexualizes them which increases risk of objectification and sexual violence (Aoki & Mio, 2009). Locating the women of the pilot study in the context of family expectations and then the larger context of societal expectations can illuminate additional stressors to well-being.

Asian American men must also deal with gender specific societal stereotypes that challenge their masculinity and depict them as asexual, sexual deviants, nerds, good at martial arts, and in general, effeminate (Liang, Rivera, Nathwani, Dang, & Douroux, 2010). Part of the conflict stems from differences in Asian and American cultural notions about masculinity. Since their youth, many Asian American men are taught the values of modesty, respect for authority, emotional restraint, humility, and the necessity of upholding the family honor. These values contrast with that of American values of masculinity which emphasize “self-reliance, competitiveness, aggressiveness, and independence” (Liang et al., 2010, p. 70) hence Asian American men may be viewed as passive or too quiet and timid. One of the interesting ways that Asian American men may cope with the stress from this conflict of gendered expectations, is by working hard to achieve academic and career success. Liang et al. (2010) conjectured that “The financial security that comes with academic and occupational achievement may be viewed as a way for them to meet family obligations while also insulating themselves from further experiences with racism” (p. 70). However, the continued “strains of

attempting to be a masculine Asian American man can often have adverse psychological consequences” (Liang et al., 2010, p. 72).

Fulfilling Parental Expectations and Well-Being

Individuals who feel that they have fulfilled their parental expectations reported higher levels of self and life satisfaction as compared to those who have not fulfilled their parental expectations (Oishi & Sullivan, 2005). Problems with well-being may arise when children believe that being accepted as a *good* son or daughter equates maintaining certain high levels of achievement, academically and or career-wise (Lee et al, 2009). Asian American college students from a large mid-western university in the United States and Japanese students from two different private universities in Tokyo reported lower levels of well-being relative to European American students, a result that Oishi & Sullivan (2005) conjectured could be due to lower levels of the perceived parental expectation fulfillment. In another study of college students, Asian American students viewed their parents as more critical and their expectations more difficult to fulfill as compared to European American students (Chang, 1998). The desire to please parents by achieving at higher and higher levels may lead to great pressure on Asian American youth. A theme that emerged from two focus groups of 17 Asian American young adults was that the perceived parental pressure to perform well academically, choose certain career trajectories, and fulfill expectations were potential sources of stress (Lee et al., 2009). As mentioned, Asian American parents generally have much higher educational expectations compared to Caucasian American parents (Mau, 1997; Yamamoto & Holloway, 2010) and may “set unreasonably high standards” for their children (Kao & Hebert, 2006, p. 93). Not being able to fulfill high levels of parental academic

expectations by performing poorly in school can lead to anxiety, depression, and a sense of failure for students (Dundes et al., 2009).

Some children also experienced tremendous parental pressure due to unrealistic expectations leading to issues with self-esteem and well-being (Li, 2003; Qin et al., 2008). Children may be encouraged to choose college majors in more stable and economically rewarding fields such as medicine, law, business, engineering, and the natural sciences. In an online survey of educational and career choices completed by 55 white and 61 Asian American college students, more Asian American students prioritized prestige over happiness and believed that parents would emphasize prestige in college selection compared to white students (Dundes et al., 2009). Also, Asian American students in this study considered happiness secondary to financial independence and material success. For those who did find economic success and occupational prestige, high socioeconomic attainment did not necessarily mean that individuals were satisfied with their careers (Okubo et al, 2007). Dundes et al. (2009) concluded that students who did not live up to parental expectations could feel a sense of failure.

Giftedness, Early College Entrance, and Well-Being

Yoon & Gentry (2009) analyzed Elementary and Secondary School Survey data and Civil Rights Data Collection of the Office for Civil Rights (OCR) and found that Asians and Whites have been overrepresented in United States gifted programs since 1978. How giftedness or identification as gifted is connected to the well-being of Asian Americans specifically is not as well known. In the last half century, there have been two opposing perspectives in the field of gifted education regarding the impact of giftedness on well-being. The first is, that gifted children are psychologically better adjusted than

non-gifted peers due to the protective factor of giftedness (Neihart, 1999). The other view is that gifted children are more at-risk for adjustment problems due to higher sensitivity and experiences of greater levels of isolation, stress, and alienation as compared to non-gifted peers and thus need more special attention (Neihart, 1999; Colangelo, 2002). In a review of the literature, Neihart (1999) found that neither view was conclusive, but rather psychological well-being was associated more with the “type of giftedness, the educational fit, and the child’s personal characteristics such as self perceptions, temperament and life circumstances” (p.15).

Some studies suggest that students in gifted classrooms have a more positive self-concept, specifically, academic self-concept, as compared to those in general education classrooms (Hoge & Renzulli, 1993; Janos & Robinson, 1985), and heightened self-esteem from being selected into gifted programs, as well as from overcoming challenging class material (Hertzog, 2003). Other studies suggest the reverse—negative effects on academic self-concept for students identified for gifted programming (Coleman & Fults, 1982; Marsh, Chessor, Craven & Roche, 1995) that may have to do with the *Big Fish Little Pond Effect* (BFLPE) (Marsh & Hau, 2003; Marsh & Parker, 1984). According to Marsh & Parker (1984), students partly develop their own sense of academic self-concept by comparing their abilities with those of other students in the classroom. When they compare themselves with students of lower ability, their academic self-concept is positively impacted, whereas comparisons with students of higher ability, can result in a negative impact to academic self-concept, hence the BFLPE effect (Marsh et al., 1995; Marsh & Hau, 2003). According to this model, students identified as gifted will have “higher academic self-concepts in mixed ability settings, where they are among the most

able, than in selective settings, where all students are very bright” (Marsh et al., 1995, p. 290).

Colangelo (2002) recommended considering the special needs of gifted students in the context of counseling, particularly *multipotentiality* for career counseling. Multipotentiality refers to an individual’s potential for success in multiple fields due to diverse talents and interests and is one of the most discussed concepts in the gifted education literature (Colangelo, 2002). Multipotentialed students struggle with narrowing down career options, especially since all options may seem equally promising. These same individuals tend to suffer from perfectionism making the narrowing down process even more difficult since they want to find the ideal or perfect job (Colangelo, 2002). Also, the careers of interest for these individuals often require a great investment in education and time meaning that it is difficult to change the career once they have started down a certain path. Counseling is most needed during early adolescence and times of transition into more academically challenging programs (Moon, 2002). It seems then that exceptionally high achieving students with a diverse array of talents would experience the dilemma of narrowing down careers most keenly, especially if they had to make career decisions in early adolescence such as in the case of early college entrants.

Early college entrance is considered one form of radical acceleration, or the process or “combination of procedures” where high-achieving individuals graduate from high school three or more years earlier than their age level peers (Gross, 2004, citing Stanley, 1978, p. 87). Early entrants have been found to adapt well socially with older classmates and academically in college classrooms although there have been cases of individual students who struggled with the adjustment to college (Brody, Muratori, &

Stanley, 2004; Gross, 2004). In a more recent study examining the personal well-being of early college entrance graduates from the Texas Academy of Mathematics and Science (TAMS) one to five years after finishing the program, participants reported more satisfaction with their achievements and higher than average wellbeing as compared to similar aged peers (Boazman & Saylor, 2011). The authors speculated that participation in the early college entrance programs “may have contributed to their positive profiles” (p. 82). In a 35 year follow up study of early entrance alumni, Hertzog & Chung (2015) found that program participation had positively influenced happiness in academics, finances, work, family and friendships for the majority of participants, but that there was more variance in outcomes related to happiness of social and romantic relationships.

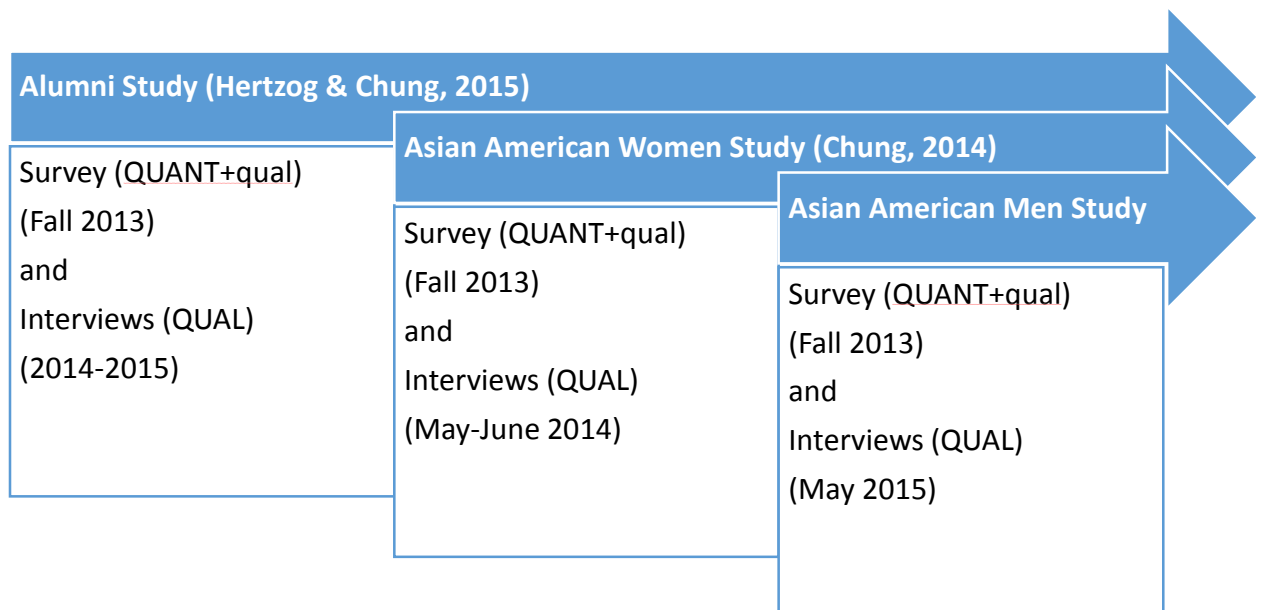
Early entrance programs are still rare and little long-term outcome data exists for graduates as a whole. Furthermore, studies examining the outcomes of Asian American early entrance graduates are practically nonexistent despite the possibility that this population may be participants in above average numbers (Kitano & Dijiosia, 2000; Yoon & Gentry, 2009). Also, demographic data from the 35 year follow up study of early entrance alumni, one of the few early entrance studies to report race/ethnicity data, indicated that 60.4 percent of participants were Caucasian and close to a third, or 30.2 percent, of participants were Asian (Hertzog & Chung, 2015). Previous studies by Noble, Childers, & Vaughan (2008) and Noble et al. (2007) have examined parental perspectives of students and alumni of the early entrance program, but none of them have examined the potential influence of immigrant status or the specific experiences of Asian American participants of the program. Therefore, this study serves to address some of

the gaps in the gifted and radical acceleration literature, in addition to the gaps in the literature on the parental influence of career development for Asian Americans.

Chapter 3: Research Design and Methods

In the following sections, I provide more detailed background information on both the larger alumni study and the pilot study of Asian American women, before launching into the description of the present study of Asian American men. I provide a visual figure that represents the sequential timing and process of the studies (See Fig 3.1). The purpose of this information is to give context and to show how each study built upon the prior study.

Figure 3.1 Sequential Process and Timing of Dissertation Study



Note. Quant = quantitative and Qual = qualitative. Capital letters indicate more emphasis on that methodology.

Alumni Study of Early College Entrance Programs

The Halbert and Nancy Robinson Center for Young Scholars (or RC) at the University of Washington houses two unique early entrance programs, the Early Entrance Program (EEP) (inception 1977) where students enter after seventh or eighth grade into a

cohort of approximately 16 students, and the UW Academy for Young Scholars (UWAcad) (inception 2001) where students enter after tenth grade into a cohort of approximately 35 students (Hertzog & Chung, 2015; Noble & Childers, 2009). These programs were conceived to provide a select group of students the chance to study at the university at a pace more appropriate to their academic abilities. To ensure best fit, admittance to EEP or UWAcad involves a competitive and comprehensive application process. Academically talented youth, who demonstrate potential for success in college, are carefully selected through an examination of standardized test scores, school transcripts, personal statements, letters of recommendation, and personal interviews (Halvorsen, Hertzog & Childers, 2013; Hertzog & Chung, 2015). Students who apply to EEP must first successfully graduate from a year-long, rigorous college preparatory program called Transition School (TS) in order to enter EEP and become fully matriculated UW Freshmen whereas UWAcad students are admitted directly into the university as full time students.

In the fall of 2013, Hertzog & Chung (2015) launched a 35 year alumni study of the early college entrance programs, the third study to examine the long-term experiences of EEP, and the first to follow-up with the participants of the UWAcad in the history of the center. In this mixed methods study, the overarching research question was: “How has participation in the Robinson Center EEP or the UWAcad impacted alumni’s personal, academic, and professional life?” (Hertzog & Chung, 2015, p.42) The life outcomes and program experiences of alumni were explored through a two phase study consisting of a self-report electronic survey (Phase 1) and a follow-up interviews (Phase 2). Only the descriptive statistics and some short answer results of the first phase of the

larger study were reported in this article, but more findings from the second phase of the larger study are forthcoming. The survey had a total of 81 items composed of quantitative Likert-Type scale items, demographic questions, and open-ended qualitative questions, organized into sections such as program impact, academic and professional outcomes, and relationships which included a section on parent and personal expectations. The survey was confidential and designed to be completed online only. The semi-structured interviews were designed to follow up on key sections of the survey.

A total of 587 alumni were emailed invitations to participate in the study, of whom 192 responded (119 EEP and 73 UWAcad), representing a 33 percent response rate. The ethnic/racial make-up of the participants were overwhelmingly Caucasian (60 percent) and Asian (30 percent), with less than 10 percent Hispanic/Latino and other. Although the majority of the sample was U.S. born (85 percent), 42 percent of the total participants indicated that they were either an immigrant or child of at least one immigrant parent. A table with a complete breakdown of the demographic characteristics for the larger alumni study can be found in Hertzog & Chung (2015), p. 43. The numbers of Asian Americans and immigrants were particularly surprising to me because although I had anticipated a higher proportion of Asian Americans in this sample due to what I knew about gifted and accelerated programs and from seeing the students at the RC day-in and out as a researcher at the center, I had not quite expected such high percentages. It only confirmed to me the importance of conducting a study with high-achieving Asian Americans at the center, many of whom were children of immigrants.

Survey respondents were generally happy with their academic achievement, employment, and finances, and 94 percent indicated that they were satisfied with their

choices in life (Hertzog & Chung, 2015). Findings included attainment of advanced degrees in great numbers (52 percent) and an overall feeling that jobs were appropriate for level of training and degrees with high individual gross incomes. Hertzog & Chung (2015) concluded that most alumni who responded to the study “lead happy and productive lives according to measures typically used to determine success of university graduates including employment, income, and degree attainment” (p.47). However, some variance was reported in happiness of social relationships, with men indicating less satisfaction in romantic relationships.

Hertzog & Chung (2015) also examined the influence of parental pressure in the decision to enter the early entrance programs, the importance of living up to parental expectations, and whether alumni felt they had fulfilled their parental expectations. While the majority of respondents did not consider parental pressure as an important factor in joining EEP or UWAcad, 22 percent still indicated that it was an important or very important reason for entering the program. Living up to parental expectations was important or very important for 38 percent of the alumni study participants, but living up to personal expectations was important or very important for almost the entire sample (95 percent).

The Pilot Study of Asian American Women

Designing the study of Asian American women began in the fall of 2013, and I spent close to a year in that phase of wrestling with ideas, planning and re-planning, and polishing research proposal drafts before launching into the data collection from May to June of 2014. In that initial design phase, only two years had transpired since the *Wall Street Journal* published Amy Chua’s (2011) article on “Why Chinese Mothers are

Superior” and the term *tiger mom* with all its negative connotations and stereotypes of overly strict, helicopter Asian parents hovering over their children, had become an inescapable fixture in American societal lexicon. Although Chua’s case was extreme, prior literature suggested that Asian parental expectations for academics were high, perhaps even unrealistically so (Kao & Hebert, 2006; Mau, 1997; Yamamoto & Holloway, 2010) and that trying to fulfill those expectations could be stressful for children. My interest was not in perpetuating any stereotypes about Asian parenting, but in deeply understanding how academically talented Asian American women (now in adulthood) perceived their parental expectations, how it influenced their decision-making, how culture and immigration factored into those attributions knowing that many came from immigrant families, and finally probing for implications for well-being. My focus was on how the women themselves interpreted their experiences and the meaning they gave to those experiences. In essence, it was an exploratory study that embodied basic qualitative inquiry with the purpose to “*understand* how people make sense of their lives and their experiences” (Merriam, 2009, p. 23).

In that study, I chose to examine the experiences of women for several reasons. First of all, there is some evidence to suggest that women may struggle more with parental pressures, as some studies suggest that females are more susceptible to parental expectations, particularly mother’s educational expectations for their daughters (Flouri & Hawkes, 2008; Rosen & Aneshensel, 1978), which may also vary by race and ethnicity (Kim, Sherraden, & Clancy, 2012). Asian American women have historically been typecast in American society as quiet and submissive (Harris-Hastick, 1996). Also, Asian cultural values may encourage women to focus on being *good* daughters and fulfill

obligations rather than living up to individual potential (Kitano, 1997) so women may feel more pressure to submit to parental expectations. Perhaps as a result of the combined racial marginalization, gender, and cultural restrictions placed on them, more psychological issues were reported for Asian American women than Asian American men or White women, (Kitano, 1997).

Data Collection: Sampling of Asian American Women

The Robinson Center early college entrance programs, especially EEP where children are radically accelerated three to four years early into college, are unique and rare in the United States with only 21 early university entrance programs nationwide (Hertzog & Chung, 2015). That Asian Americans comprised 30 percent of the total alumni study participants and had successfully completed such a unique, accelerated program provided even more impetus to examine their experiences. I used the following minimum inclusion criteria to identify my initial pool: 1) female, 2) at least one parent immigrated to the US from an Asian country, and 3) identified for gifted/highly capable programming before entering the early entrance programs. The inclusion criteria for identifying immigrants was modeled after what Portes & Rumbaut (2005) used in the Children of Immigrants Longitudinal Study (CILS). In that study, a child was considered an immigrant if foreign-born or if they were U.S. born with at least one foreign-born parent. Twenty-four individuals fit my initial inclusion criteria.

The sample was further narrowed to seven using a modified form of maximum variation sampling (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). Maximum variation sampling allows the researcher to better understand a phenomenon by looking at it from various angles. In

Table 3.1 Asian American Women Study – Family Characteristics by Participant

Pseudonym	Age	Relationship Status	Immigrant Generation	Parent Country of Origin	Raised by Single Mother
Nicole	24	Single	1.75	China	
Aarti	23	Single	2.00	India	Yes
Jaya	27	Engaged	2.00	India	Yes
Elizabeth	22	Single	2.00	Taiwan	
Ying	27	Married	1.75	Taiwan	Yes
Nora	25	Single	1.75	Taiwan	
Jamie	27	Married	1.75	S. Korea	

Note. Adapted from Chung, R.U. (2014). *The Influence of Parental Expectations on Asian American Women who Entered College Early*. Unpublished manuscript, Department of Education, University of Washington, Seattle, WA.

using this method, the researcher selects a small sample that maximizes the diversity related to the research questions, to examine both the common and uncommon experiences of a phenomenon (Merriam, 2009). My final sample had variation in program participation, years of entry into the program, career fields, and romantic relationship statuses (Chung, 2014). Pseudonyms were created to protect the identities of the participants while retaining unique qualities of their name such as those related to race and ethnicity (Chung, 2014). The final participants were immigrants or U.S. born children of immigrants with parent country of origin from Taiwan ($n=3$), India ($n=2$), China ($n=1$), and South Korea ($n=1$). They ranged in ages from 22 to 27 and program entry years from 2002 to 2007 (See Table 3.1).

Participant Summaries – Asian American Women

Nicole, a 24 year old, Chinese American young woman applied and entered the UW Academy program at the age of 16, not of her will but in obedience to her parents’

wishes. Her parent's specific and rigid academic and career expectations were a source of internal conflict for her. Her mother who is a computer science engineer, always wanted to be a doctor and had that dream for her own daughter. Her father, a cardiologist, initially expected her to succeed by becoming a doctor and exceeding his own income. She felt unsure of what she'd be doing career-wise entering college and leaving it because she felt there were so many possibilities. She initially pursued pre-med courses in college but after finding she did not like it, changed her major to English and Public Health. After college, she pursued a law degree and is currently employed as a technical analyst in the field of E-discovery, a job with which she is satisfied.

Nora, a 25 year old, Taiwanese American young woman currently works as an immigration attorney. Similar to Nicole, she had parents who expected her to become a doctor or lawyer since she was young. However, unlike Nicole, she stated that her parental and personal expectations were essentially the same. She entered the Early Entrance Program partly because she was on a fast track to becoming a doctor and hoped to save time. Transition School was very difficult and high-stress for her. She was pre-med in college but could not get into medical school and applied to law school afterwards where she felt that she was not taken as seriously due to physically looking younger. In her work, she was quickly promoted to managing attorney in all of her previous positions.

Aarti, a 23 year old, Sikh Indian American young woman was raised by a single mother who was a survivor of domestic violence. She felt parental pressure in applying for the UW Academy program but felt positive about her decision to enter after going through a summer program at the Robinson Center. She wanted to be a teacher for a while and currently works as a secondary school teacher despite her mother's concerns

about being able to find a stable, financially secure position. In the interview, Aarti expressed a keen desire not to disappoint her mother acknowledging that her mother had made many sacrifices for her education. She is actively involved in her ethnic and religious community and has an arranged marriage.

Jaya, a 27 year old, an Indian American young woman was also raised by a single mother. In her case, her father, a professor in civil engineering, passed away suddenly when she was only nine, leaving just her and her mother. She applied and entered the Early Entrance Program at the age of twelve and found that the program had broad ramifications on her life due to how young she was at entry. She struggled with finding the right major because she did not have a clear idea of what she wanted to do at onset of the program but at the same time, had a strong awareness of the importance of her decision. Her mother wanted her to be a doctor, but Jaya did not feel it suited her personal characteristics. She eventually settled on international relations at the age of 16, pursued both undergraduate and Master's degrees related to the field, and currently works as a program coordinator in the World Bank. At time of interview, she was engaged to be married and feels very satisfied with her life path.

Elizabeth, a Taiwanese American was the youngest participant at 22 years of age. Of all the women interviewed, she was the least satisfied with her current career path, and still not quite sure what she wanted to do. She was socially unhappy in high school and came into the UW Academy thinking it would be a way out. The transition to college was very difficult to her and she reported feeling depressed. In addition, the transition negatively impacted the relationship she had with her family and the few friends she had from high school. For her career path, she struggled to find the right major. Art had

always been a hobby she enjoyed and she briefly majored in it before switching to the more practical field of computer science. Her social relationships improved somewhat after she began working. At time of interview, she was working as a software developer engineer and pursuing her MBA, although she was seriously considering dropping out and searching for her true passions.

Jamie, a married, 27 year old, Korean American young woman was beginning medical school at the time of the interview. Her father was a military interrogator at one point in his life and she described him as very “controlling.” One of her reasons to attend the UW Academy program was to get some distance from him. She felt that the UW Academy program really impacted her through the close friendships formed through the peer group, and pushed her to work hard academically. It also pushed her away from her original goal of becoming a doctor. Before in high school, she was the best student without trying too hard. When she came into UW Academy, she became the little fish in a big pond, where there were many other students who were more successful than her without trying as hard. Her self-concept was negatively impacted at the time. However, through the experience, she realized that academic achievement did not have to define her and she felt free to pursue her true passions. After college, she joined Teach for America, and taught for four years before applying for medical school. Her ultimate goal is to become a physician leader advocating for marginalized communities.

Ying, a married, 27 year old, Taiwanese American young woman was an outlier in this study in the sense that her parent, again a single mom, had much more relaxed academic and career expectations for her. Somewhat ironically, she was the only participant who did not mention that her parent wanted her to be a doctor at some point in

her life. What was the reason for Ying's outlier status? She described herself as being so highly motivated that her mother may not have felt a need to add additional pressure. If anything, Ying's mother was concerned for her daughter's well-being.

She commuted so that she could take care of her younger brother for all five years of college while maintaining a GPA of 3.85, the highest of all the alumnae in this study. She did not elaborate on his condition, but said she provided most of his care. Despite Ying's description of her mother's expectations as "laid back," it was clear from the interview that her mother was very supportive of her education: "...she did do or made an extra effort to make things available for me but if I chose not to do them, you know she wouldn't really worry too much about you know my unfulfilled potential or whatever." Her mother drove her every day to a middle school in a different town just so Ying could attend the school's specialized gifted program and later moved so she could proceed onto the high school. Furthermore, she took the maximum allowed credits as a college student, graduated with a double major, and was later admitted into a top ten MD/PHD program in the nation. She was the only participant to have reported on the questionnaire that she had lived up to *all* of her parental expectations.

Data Sources and Analysis

I analyzed the mixed methods survey data to narrow down my final participants and to generate more specific follow-up interview questions for the sample. I also used the survey data to create tables with information on characteristics and survey responses of the female participants. It was also a source of triangulation to increase the trustworthiness of my research (Merriam, 2009). A faculty member also reviewed the survey data of the Asian American female participants, allowing us to share notes, and

also to generate additional questions relevant to the larger alumni study. In addition, the survey data was used to create tables of demographic information and selected quantitative responses regarding parental expectations.

I contacted all participants by email and conducted approximately hour long interviews over the telephone. Interviews were audio recorded with consent and personally transcribed yielding an average of 40 double-spaced transcript pages (Chung, 2014). After transcription, I reviewed the transcriptions and interview notes multiple times to create member checks in the form of a document with detailed key points organized by the major sections of the interview. Additional questions were added to the end of the member check document to clarify points of confusion or to elicit further understanding of topics discussed in the interview. These documents were emailed out to the seven women and all were returned with either no or minor clarifications needed indicating that my understandings of the interviews were generally accurate.

Using the constant comparative method (CCM) in the grounded theory approach (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), I followed the analytic procedure where I constantly compared data from within and across data sources and refined analyses as deemed necessary. I analyzed data using fixed codes from the larger alumni study, but also looked for emergent codes specific to this data (**See Table 3.2**). A faculty member assisted in the process of analyzing the data and we separately coded and met several times to decide on final codes through the process of consensus.

Table 3.2 Fixed and Emergent Coding

Fixed Codes Alumni Study (Hertzog & Chung, 2015)	Emergent Codes Pilot Study of Asian American Women (Chung, 2014)
Academic Outcomes	Career Exploration
Career Outcomes	Perfectionism
Friendships/Relationships	Immigration and Asian Culture
Parental Expectations	College Transition
Personal Expectations	Social Justice
Happiness	Missed College Experience
Values	Developmental Issues
Program Benefits	On a Fast Track
Program Detriments	Personal Expectations Change Over Time

Major Findings. Nearly all of the female, Asian American early entrance graduates interviewed for this study felt that their parents' expectations for them were high. Academic and career decision making starting with the decision to enter the early entrance program, to choice of first major, careers and possibly even choice of graduate schools may have been influenced by parental expectations based on participant responses (Chung, 2015). Academic achievement in the form of "straight As" and career trajectories as doctors were mentioned repeatedly as an expectation of parents. Some attributed immigration and/or ethnic culture to explain these high academic expectations and specific career expectations. One reported that "I grew up in a very traditional Chinese family so to start off, they had like two choices for me growing up: it's either a doctor or a lawyer" and then "in Chinese culture, the kids really don't have much say in education." Another shared that "like many immigrant parents" her parents wanted her to go to college, become a doctor, and marry a doctor.

Table 3.3 Asian American Women Study – Academic Outcomes by Participant

Pseudonym	Program	Entry Year	Major(s)	GPA	Highest Degree	Highest Field of Study	Degree Sought if Student
Nicole	Acad	2006	English and Public Health	3.59	Law	Law	
Aarti	Acad	2006	Biology	3.64	Masters	Education	
Jaya	EEP	1999	International Studies and Comparative History of Ideas	3.63	Masters	International Affairs	
Elizabeth	Acad	2007	Computer Science	3.38	Bachelo	Computer Science	MBA
Ying	Acad	2002	Biochemistry and Neuroscience	3.85	BA	Biochemistry and Neuroscience	MD/PhD
Nora	EEP	2002	Chemistry and Mathematics	3.29	Law	Law	
Jamie	Acad	2002	Biology and Psychology	3.73	Bachelo	Biology and Psychology	MD/PhD

Note. Adapted from Chung, R.U. (2014). The Influence of Parental Expectations on Asian American Women who Entered College Early. Unpublished manuscript, Department of Education, University of Washington, Seattle, WA.

As college students, more than half of the Asian American women in the study had double majors, reported high cumulative GPAs ($M = 3.71$, $SD = 0.19$), completed undergraduate research, studied abroad, and received a variety of merit-based awards. When asked, 91.2% responded that they would make the choices again to enter the early entrance programs. The seven interviewee participants reported working stable jobs in education, law, public health, or technology. At the time of the study, three had graduate degrees and three were pursuing advanced degrees, two in the field of medicine (See **Table 3.3**).

Several women also said that they had suffered from loneliness, unhappiness, too much pressure, eating disorders and depression at some point in college and beyond. No one mentioned receiving counseling or outside help for their problems. However, at the time of the interview, five of the seven participants indicated satisfaction with their current life trajectory. In adulthood, many, if not all the women, were driven more by their high personal expectations than parental expectations. It is possible that high parental expectations were internalized as children but there were also clear differences between more than half of the women's reported personal and parental expectations for themselves. Success for these women was interpreted differently than their first generation parents. Many of these women wanted to find and pursue their passions and contribute to the larger society (Chung, 2014).

Dissertation Study of Asian American Men

The present study of Asian American men was conceived with the purpose of building and expanding upon the study of Asian American women. As pointed out in Chapter 1 of this dissertation, key questions remained at the end of the pilot study. *How*

do parental expectations influence their children—what does that process look like? Are expectations conveyed explicitly or implicitly? Also, I was still very interested in the influence of gender. How would men perceive their parental expectations and would they be influential? Would parental expectations differ by gender of parent? Did birth order matter? Finally, there was the question about the interaction between achievement, perfectionism, identity, and well-being. Most of the women from the pilot study expressed that they were perfectionists of some sort. Would this be a trend repeated with men? If so, with what implications?

To explore these additional questions in more depth, I designed a *mixed methods* study of Asian American men. It made sense to interview male alumni from the early entrance programs by using the same sampling process to try and tease apart some of those gender differences, and by using the same semi-structured interview protocol, albeit with additional questions.

Mixed Methods Design Rationale

Mixed methods design at its most basic level involves data collection, analysis, integration, and/or interpretation of both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study or set of studies at one or more stages of the research process, hence the “mixed” aspect of the design (Creswell, Plano Clark, Gutmann, & Hanson, 2003). Mixed methods design is most useful when the combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches leads to a more comprehensive understanding of the research problem, than would a single methodological approach alone (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). Also, Teddlie & Tashakkori (2003) suggest that mixed methods are superior to single methods when use of mixed methods lead to stronger inferences and chances to present a greater diversity of

perspectives. In selection of mixed-methods design, several critical decisions must be made about the degree of interaction between the quantitative and qualitative approaches, relative importance of each approach, timing of each approach, and process of combining the approaches (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2011). Also, the rationale for mixing methods rather than using multiple methods must be clear. Mixed methods is distinct from multiple methods which also uses two or more research methods, but involves no “mixing” or integration of the methods at any stage of the process (Morse, 2003).

The mixed methods design was most appropriate for my study because at key stages of the research process, I integrated quantitative and qualitative data to make decisions about sampling, to better understand my study participants, and to more fully analyze and comprehend the results. I designed this study to expand upon my pilot study and to explore my research questions about the perceived influence of parental expectations on the career decision making and experiences of high achieving Asian American men who graduated from early college entrance programs and the potential impact of gender. As recommended by Creswell (2009) and Creswell & Plano-Clark (2011), I considered the degree of interaction between the quantitative and qualitative approaches, timing of data collection procedures and whether data would be collected concurrently or sequentially, and process of combining the approaches.

Data Collection: Sampling of Asian American Men

By concurrently examining the quantitative and qualitative data from the survey, I was able to glean information which helped me narrow down my sample for the in-depth, semi-structured phone interviews with the men. Interviews are necessary when we are trying to understand a world from within someone else’s perspective and when we

“cannot observe behavior, feelings, or how people interpret the world around them” (Merriam, 2009, p.88). First, I followed the same sampling process used to select my female Asian American participants (Chung, 2014) to further narrow down my initial batch of male Asian American participants. The following minimum inclusion criteria included: 1) male, 2) is an Asian immigrant or has at least one parent who immigrated to the US from an Asian country, and 3) identified for gifted/highly capable programming before entering the early entrance programs. Just like in the pilot study, I modeled the inclusion criteria for immigrant status after the one used by Portes & Rumbaut (2005), where at least one parent had to be an immigrant. Of the 58 Asian American participants who filled out the original online survey, 24 of whom were male, 18 participants fit the initial inclusion criteria. However, four of those participants had not indicated that they would be willing to interview, further decreasing my final pool of interview candidates to 14.

From this point, I used purposeful sampling to narrow down my search as was appropriate for my qualitative research questions since my goal was to “discover, understand, and gain insight” (Merriam, 2009, p.77). I used a modified form of maximum variation sampling, as first identified by Glaser and Strauss (1967), to choose a sample based on a diverse range of experiences related to the phenomenon under study. In Table 3.4 are listed these candidates by age, program participation, academic and career outcomes, parent country of origin, and the following statuses: **Prior**=interviewed prior to this study, **Participant**=chosen as a participant and interviewed for this study, **NR**= contacted, but did not get a response, and **NC**=not contacted for this study.

Table 3.4 Initial Asian American Male Participant Pool

Status	Program	*Age	Major(s)	GPA	Highest Degree	Highest Field of Study	Job Title if Employed	Gross Individual Income	Parent Country of Origin
Prior	EEP	35	C.S. and Math	3.86	Doctorate	C.S.	Associate Professor	\$100,000-\$249,999	Taiwan
Prior	EEP	29	C.S.	3.6	Law	Law	CEO	\$75,000-\$99,999	China
Prior	EEP	25	Economics	3.9	Bachelors	Economics	Tutor and Investor	\$50,000-\$74,999	Taiwan and China
Participant	EEP	36	Mechanical Engineering	3.16	Law	Law	Director	\$250,000-\$499,999	China (Mother)
Participant	EEP	28	C.S. and Communications	3.72	Masters	Economics	Business Analyst	\$75,000-\$99,999	South Korea
Participant	EEP	28	Math and Economics	3.8	Doctorate	N/A	N/A	N/A	India
Participant	ACAD	25	C.S.	3.85	Masters	C.S.	Software Development Engineer	\$100,000-\$249,999	Indonesia
Participant	ACAD	25	Political Science	3.11	Bachelors	Political Science	Senior Software Engineer	\$100,000-\$249,999	India
Participant	EEP	23	Computer Engineer and Electrical Engineering	3.73	Masters	C.S. and Engineering	Software Engineer	\$100,000-\$249,999	Thailand
NR	EEP	45	Math	3.55	Doctorate	C.S.	Engineer	\$100,000-\$249,999	China (Hong Kong)
NR	EEP	43	Microbiology	3.2	M.D.	Medicine	Associate Professor	\$100,000-\$249,999	Taiwan and Japan
NC	EEP	28	Biochemistry, Cell & Molecular Biology and Music	3.2	Doctorate	Biochemistry	Postdoctoral Fellow	\$25,000-\$49,999	Taiwan
NC	ACAD	26	C.S.	3.87	Bachelors	CS	Co-Founder & Software Engineer	Less than \$24,999	China
NC	ACAD	25	Computer Engineering	N/A	Bachelors	Computer Engineering	Software Development Engineer	\$100,000-\$249,999	Taiwan

Source: UW Robinson Center, Alumni Study, Survey Data 2013.

Note. *Indicates Age at survey. **C.S.** = Computer Science. **Prior** = interviewed prior as part of larger alumni study. **Participant** = interviewed for this study. **NR** = no response despite being contacted for this study. **NC** = not contacted for this study.

Undergraduate majors (and fields of study) were highly represented in the STEM fields—specifically computer science and engineering ($n=7$), but in my selection process, I made my best attempt to try and contact the few participants who were either in a non-STEM field such as natural sciences and the humanities/social sciences, or had a second major in that field (**See Table 3.4**). I examined additional categories such as programmatic experiences, values, relationship statuses and short answers of interest in addition to those found in Table 3.4.

I sent email invitations for the interviews to eight participants—one did not respond at all and the other responded too late to be included in this study—leaving me with a final sample of six participants from differing years of entry into either a two year (UWAcad) or four year (EEP) accelerated early college entrance program, different countries of origin for parent, differing ages, and with different programmatic experiences (i.e. positive and negative), to obtain more variation in experiences and responses. The idea here was to examine the core and shared experiences of a phenomenon, but also to explore the dissimilar elements. As can be seen in Table 3.4, most of the potential candidates were heavily skewed towards the STEM fields, despite my best efforts to diversify participants by careers. Initially, I considered including participants who fit the initial criteria who were already interviewed as part of the larger study. Ultimately, I decided against that decision because they had been interviewed prior to the insights gathered from the study with Asian American women.

The final six male participants ranged in ages from 23-36 ($M = 27.5$) at time of survey and parent country of origin included India ($n=2$), China ($n=1$), South Korea ($n=1$), Indonesia ($n=1$), and Thailand ($n=1$) (**See Table 3.5**). Pseudonyms were carefully

Table 3.5 Family Characteristics by Participant

Pseudonym	Age	Immigrant Generation	Parent Country of Origin	Mother's Occupation	Father's Occupation	Birth Order
Lucas	37	2.00	China (Mother)	N/A	Engineer	Second of three boys
Arun	29	1.75	India	Physician	Physician	Youngest of two boys
Steven	29	2.00	South Korea	Teacher/Commercial Landlord	Banker/Commercial Landlord	Oldest of two boys
Sanjay	26	1.75	India	Instructor or Professor	Instructor or Professor/IT Consultant	Oldest of boy and girl
John	24	2.00	Thailand	Human Resources/Homemaker	Electrical Engineer	Only child
Timothy	26	2.00	Indonesia	Account/Business/Finance Officer	Software Engineer/Management	Oldest of boy and two girls

Source: UW Robinson Center, Alumni Study, Survey Data 2013, and Dissertation Study on Asian American men, Interview Data 2015.

crafted to protect participant identities while preserving some of the unique qualities of their own name and race/ethnicity. If not born in the United States, the men immigrated before elementary school making them 1.75 generation immigrants. For more detail on the background of the male participants, parental expectations, and their career trajectories, please see **Participant Summaries – Asian American Men, p. 64.**

Data Sources

Mixed Methods Survey Data. By design, the 81-item electronic survey had embedded in it a number of qualitative short answer questions and quantitative questions, such as Likert-type ratings, multiple choice categories, and demographics. Most of the Likert-type ratings were on a 4-point scale “to discourage neutral answers” (Hertzog & Chung, 2015, p. 43). Sample questions included: *How important are the following to you? Living up to parent(s’) expectations:* 1 (Unimportant), 2 (A Little Important), 3 (Important), 4 (Very Important). *How well do you feel you’ve lived up to your parents’ expectations in your life?* 1 (Have not lived up to them), 2 (Have somewhat lived up to them), 3 (Have lived up to many of them, and 4 (Have lived up to all of them). Sample short answer questions included: Have you significantly changed your career path in your lifetime? If so, please explain. What gives your life a sense of meaning and purpose? All survey data was collected in the fall of 2013. More information about the survey instrument can be found in Hertzog & Chung (2015).

Interview Data. The interviews represented the *meat* or strongest emphasis of my mixed methods study. The qualitative aspects of this design embodies “basic” interpretive inquiry which makes assumptions that reality is socially constructed and that there are many possible interpretations of an event, rather than one rigid, fixed

understanding (Merriam, 2009). Researchers play a role in constructing knowledge rather than discovering it. The interpretative approach is particularly appropriate for this study because my purpose is to understand the meaning of a phenomena, the influence of parental expectations on participant's lives, through participants' subjective interpretations and experiences, including the influence of gender.

All interviews were conducted by phone and lasted an average of 78 minutes with the shortest interview at 57 minutes and the longest at 106 minutes. With the incorporation of additional questions, each interview lasted approximately 18 minutes longer as compared to the interviews with the Asian American women. A faculty member and I reviewed each survey again to look for areas to probe for more understanding. I followed a general, semi-structured interview protocol from phase 2 of the alumni study (Hertzog & Chung, 2015) but asked additional questions related to my research questions and probed for the influence of parental expectations. Sample open-ended questions about parental influence included: Can you describe your parental expectations for you? How do they differ from your own expectations for yourself? Do they differ by parent? How were those expectations conveyed? Tell me how it would look to live up to all of your parental expectations. Sample open-ended questions about career decision making included: What motivated you to enter the [Early Entrance Program]? How has participation in the [Early Entrance Program] impacted your educational outcomes? Can you tell us more about your career trajectory? How satisfied are you in this job? How are you balancing work and life? **(See Appendix A: Selected Questions from the Semi-Structured Interview Protocol).**

Data Analysis

The quantitative and qualitative survey data was concurrently analyzed to make sampling decisions and to generate follow-up questions for the interviews. I also used Excel to provide tables showing the results of some of the descriptive results that related to this study. Interviews were audio recorded with participant consent and transcribed using a third party transcription company funded by the Robinson Center. The average length of transcript pages, double-spaced was 75 pages, with the shortest transcript at 47 pages and the longest at 116 pages. After interviews were transcribed, I created member checks in the form of detailed key understandings from the transcripts and asked participants by email to clarify any misunderstandings on the form (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Merriam, 2009) (**See Appendix B: Member Check Form – Template and Appendix C: Member Check Form - Sample**). At the bottom of the form, I also asked three to six follow-up questions from our interviews. Five out of six participants returned the forms, answered additional questions, and either checked that the understandings were accurate or clarified minor items (**See Appendix C**). Triangulation of data, which further increases the trustworthiness of research findings (Merriam, 2009), included the aforementioned two major data sources: quantitative and qualitative data from the questionnaire, and qualitative data from the additional set of interviews with male Asian American alumni.

For analyzing the interview data, I followed the constant comparative method (CCM) laid out in the grounded theory approach where I constantly compare and contrast data from within or across data sources to generate new theory that is based in the data (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Merriam, 2009). I referred to the fixed codes which

were a part of the larger study (Hertzog & Chung, 2015) and the emergent codes from the study of Asian American women (Chung, 2014) (See Table 3.2) but new codes emerged as I analyzed this data (see Table 3.6).

Table 3.6 Emergent Coding

Emergent Codes Dissertation Study of Asian American Men
Implicit/Explicit Parental Expectations
Comparison and Competition
Challenges in Dating
Birth Order and Sibling Influence
STEM
Internalized Parental Expectations
Parental Expectations Change Over Time
Chance
Expectations for own children

I compared male interview data with each other and with their questionnaire data and examined emergent themes. Afterwards, I compared my findings with those from the study of Asian American women looking specifically for dissimilar elements. Analysis and interpretation of data occurred concurrently and involved mixing of quantitative data from the surveys, the qualitative data from the interviews and member checks, and data from the findings of the women study (See Fig 3.1). My conceptual framework on parental expectations provided a theoretical basis for all steps of the analysis including the interpretation of the data. I referred to the sociological literature on Asian immigrant families, the achievement motivation literature, the social psychological theories on expectation bias, and also the theories of mental health for gifted.

I also practiced reflexivity through interview notes and journaling to reduce researcher bias and increase the credibility of my research (Hill et al., 1997; Lincoln & Guba, 2000; Merriam, 2009). Lincoln & Guba (2000) referred to reflexivity as “the process of reflecting critically on the self as researcher, the ‘human as instrument’” (p.183). Reflexivity provides “critical subjectivity” by forcing the researcher to reflect on the research problem and the self as well as the “multiple identities that represent the fluid self in the research setting” (Lincoln & Guba, 2000, p.183). Journaling in the form of notes or memos during the research have a number of benefits and allows researchers to “better determine what they know and how they think they came to know it” (Watt, 2007, p.84). I typically hand wrote six to eight pages of notes during the interviews and reflected on my thoughts in an electronic journal throughout the research process. In these journal entries, I made observations in the form of notes and compared findings with those of the Asian American women study and the larger alumni study as well such as in the following excerpt:

Finished 2 interviews today. Both are immigrants from India. They both mentioned that they are laid back. Their parents had high expectations for them, but in the case of one of the participants – he rebelled against that a lot and he actually moved partly because of those expectations. The other one ended up getting a PhD and an additional Master’s, but didn’t end up becoming a doctor like his parents. Both definitely not perfectionists. Dating was harder for them in college.

For self, they want to be happy and enjoy the work they do and give back to the larger community somehow. This is a consistent theme. However, those self

expectations were different in college and in adulthood. Changed over time. This is the same as with the women. (Journal entry, May 5, 2015).

I revisited the idea of perfectionism later again since it was an important theme with the Asian American women that related to mental health as shown in the following journal excerpt:

I have mostly completed 4 interviews. So far, I have noticed that yes, there are still high parental academic expectations, but I am not getting the sense that they are as specific and rigid as they were for the women. Also, far less perfectionism in this group compared to women. (Journal entry, May 31, 2015)

I also jotted notes about ideas that began to emerge from the data. For example, I made notes about birth order in four different entries. Two of those passages are excerpted below:

Birth order also sounds important. Need to examine more experiences and maybe follow up with additional questions about expectations. (Journal entry, May 5, 2015)

All 8 transcripts are done and I have been coding for the last 2 weeks. I am seeing some birth order effects and possible gender differences. Men imply or explicitly talk about competition and comparisons being a motivating factor – but not necessarily in a good way. This is a subtheme to further explore. There is also the idea of parental expectations waning over time and with each sibling. (Journal entry, June 15, 2015)

Participant Summaries – Asian American Men

Lucas, was unique in many ways compared to the other men in this sample. For example, he was the oldest participant at 37, the only middle child, the only one married, and the only one with children (a young boy and girl) at time of interview. He also had only one parent who was a foreign-born immigrant—his mother was a first generation immigrant from China—whereas all the other men had both set of parents who were foreign-born. His father was an “American-born Chinese” and a third generation immigrant.

When I called him, he had an hour of time in-between meetings, but said jokingly that he could be a little late since he was the boss. Lucas was generally good-humored in his recollections about his education-focused parents who often *explicitly stated* how academic success was important to professional success, and in turn, professional success equated general success in life. His father, older brother, and extended family members were all engineers — and the expectation from his parents was fairly clear that he would also become an engineer. Mechanical engineer was his ultimate choice.

Education was highly valued in his family. His parents supported academic related activities and expected that he and his brothers would work on math homework books at home after school. However, he emphasized the point several times in the interview that the education focus was not due to having “stereotypical Asian parents” or “stereotypically Chinese cultural values” or growing up in a “traditional” Chinese family. Rather, that academic focus was due in part to his father’s own positive experiences with getting an electrical engineering degree and acquiring a job as an engineer at a large company right after graduation, and his mother’s personal interest in education and

admirable work ethic, taking care of him and his two brothers during the day and taking Accounting classes at night to get an Associate's degree.

In reflection, attending EEP did not even seem like it was a choice. Lucas felt expected by his parents, but not forced, to take advantage of the opportunity of EEP especially because older brother went in to the program 2 years prior. Interestingly, he noted that his parents' expectations had "waned over time" and they didn't have quite the same expectations for his younger brother who pursued sociology instead of engineering.

The first two years of college, his lack of self-discipline led to poor academic performance in his freshmen and sophomore years. He performed better later on and was able to secure an engineering job right after graduation at the age of 19, where he steadily worked his way up in management while collecting advanced degrees along the way—an MBA, JD, and credits towards a finance certificate. At time of interview, he had title of director for his particular department, an individual gross income ranging from \$250,000-\$499,999, and expressed satisfaction in his work despite extensive travel requirements and 60-69 work hours a week. His expectations for his children were less specific and academics-focused than those of his own parents. He expected them to experience and explore many different things, make their own choices, and develop common sense and apply it in their lives.

Arun, an articulate and reflective 29 year-old, Indian American man was employed as a researcher at a well-known, highly ranked university at the time of the interview. When I spoke with him, he was living and working in New York—a city he had always been "obsessed" with as a child, but which he discovered wasn't nearly as quirky and charming in the daily experience of living in it, especially through the frigid

winters. Growing up, his parents who were both highly educated physicians from India, expected him to succeed in school. His father was more vociferous about academic expectations while his mother was more quietly supportive, a reason he attributed to the background of his parents—his mother came from a highly educated background, while his father less so. Once he entered college, however, his parents became “the exact opposite” and “super hands off” so that they conveyed very few expectations, choosing instead to trust Arun’s judgment.

Like Lucas, Arun had one older brother who had already successfully entered the EEP program ahead of him, and essentially “paved the way” for him. He described his older brother as a hard worker, successful, at times arrogant, and even “legendary” for his academic accomplishments, and that it made him work all that much harder to live up to the standard set by his brother. It was clear that having such an accomplished older brother influenced his parental expectations for himself and his own personal expectations. Initially, he shared how his parents were less sure about him entering EEP because of comparisons to his older brother, but eventually he proved that he was just as capable by performing well as a college student. In reflection, he felt that the competitiveness was a source of motivation for him.

Choosing a career field early was difficult for him and he changed majors, at least in his own mind, multiple times before finally settling on math. This decision to study math was the most important decision he made in college because he then continued on to pursue his PhD in the subject. His fellow EEP peers may have been influential in that regard because many of them were very talented in the math and sciences, and many older graduates of the program were pursuing or had attained PhDs. His older brother

had also obtained a PhD in biophysics. However, it was clear he did not want to study the same thing because of the comparison. As to his parental expectations regarding his career, they encouraged him to study what he wanted as long as it made him happy, although they would tell him on occasion that he would be a “really good doctor.”

The career path seemed linear for Arun after finally deciding on mathematics. He pursued a PhD and then completed a two year postdoctoral appointment in Australia. Then, he experienced what he called an “early life crisis”, not knowing what he wanted to do with his degree and with his life. After considering multiple options, he eventually pursued a fully funded, year-long Master’s degree in urban informatics, and accepted an offer for a faculty research position from the same department after graduation where he was working at the time of the interview. He himself remarked on the unexpected turns of his career trajectory: “So it’s kind of funny. So it’s like PhD, the post doc to master’s to permanent researcher.”

Steven, a 29-year old, Korean American man decided to enter college early because he saw EEP as an opportunity to challenge himself and he felt that he would be successful in the program. His parents did not pressure him to attend. The oldest of two boys, Steven was the “golden child” growing up because he always exceeded the expectations of his parents with his academic success. In fact, the first time his parents explicitly conveyed expectations to him was after college, when he had been out of work for a year. His parents were South Korean immigrants who gave up professional positions as teacher and banker in their country of origin to pursue better opportunities in the United States. In America, they started out owning a convenience store business,

eventually bought motels, sold them, and now were commercial landlords. They valued education and were a team in their academic expectations.

When I reviewed his survey responses, I chose to interview him partly to better understand his negative experiences of the program and partly to learn more about the reasoning for the twists and turns of his career path. In the survey, when asked if he had significantly changed his career path in his life time, he wrote that:

In university, I trained to become a software developer. After graduation, I decided not to pursue this path, and went into business. Eventually, I decided to return to school, and decided to pursue academic economics. After several years in graduate school, I decided to return to the business world.

In our interview, Steven shared that the problem stemmed from having been too young to make the right career decisions, which resulted in lost time spent trying to figure out what he wanted to do with his life. He also felt that he had missed out on the traditional college experience by not being emotionally mature enough – essentially he wasted time being a kid and playing video games which he should have gotten out of his system in high school. The only benefits he derived from entering college early was in cultivating some close friendships and looking “impressive” to others. If he had gone the traditional high school path, he would have been able to go to a more prestigious school, settled on a major that interested him more, and had a better educational foundation for graduate school. In this ideal scenario, he could then have reached his “full potential.”

As mentioned, his parents generally did not have explicit expectations for him except for when he was out of work for a year. At that time they encouraged him to

pursue a PhD in microeconomics, which he did with some reservations. They were disappointed when he dropped out after a year in the program but were ultimately supportive. He dropped out because he realized that to be a successful researcher in microeconomics, he had to be at the apex of his field. However, he did not feel that he could reach that point due in part to his lack of mathematical prowess. Steven ended up in his current job in data science education “almost by accident” after looking for a position where he could apply his skill set and is generally satisfied in his work. As to his parents’ expectations now, they only want him to find his calling in life and get married.

Sanjay, a 26 year old, senior software engineer, had a laid-back and informal demeanor throughout the interview. He was fairly proud of his career achievements as a senior software engineer and happy in his job at the time of interview. He had generally positive experiences of the UWAcad program and felt that some main benefits was the ability to explore a variety of subjects in depth, and having the freedom to “jump start” his career and choose his day-to-day schedule. He was able to gain various work experiences in software engineering as a college student, which helped him get into the career field despite studying Political Science as a college major. It was clear that independence and autonomy were important to him and he expressed that participation actually helped solidify his identity as very independent. Like Arun, he was Indian American and working in New York at the time of our phone call, but his relationship with his parents had been marked with much more strife.

He described the parenting style of his parents as strict and disciplinary in the interview and in the follow-up member checks. His parents had been instructors or

professors in India but they came over for better economic opportunities to the United States. They did not force him to attend UWAcad but they certainly got him to apply. His parents expected him to perform well academically and succeed in a career. Other expectations included being close with his family, participating in culture and the Hindu religion, behaving in certain acceptable ways, and making personal choices to not associate with certain people. Sanjay experienced conflict between his parents' expectations and his own, and rebelled against them. At times, he had "very big fights" with his parents about whether he was being a "bad kid" and due partly to his poor relationship with his parents, he decided to move out of the house early on. He observed that his parents' expectations changed over time and "mellowed" so that they only wanted him and his younger sister to be happy. He noted that his parents employed a more relaxed parenting style with his younger sister who was a much better student and aspired to become a doctor, but he attributed that not to birth order or gender, but more to the his parents becoming more relaxed and open-minded over time.

John, the youngest of the male participants at 24, came across as a very mature, polite, and thoughtful young man through the interview process. Although we ran out of time during the first interview, he was gracious enough to work a second interview into his schedule for the following week resulting in the longest combined interview of all the men. He first learned about EEP through the summer enrichment programs at the Robinson Center. His parents then received flyers about the program and thought it might appeal to him. John eventually decided to attend because the program sounded interesting, there was a built-in peer cohort, and because he could finish college two years early without having to waste time in non-academic high school electives.

As the only child of Thai immigrants, John recollected his parents as having high academic expectations for him and pushing him to do well but never forcing him to make educational decisions he did not want to make. It became clear that John had a great deal of respect for his parents whom he felt were “examples to emulate” and as he put it, “it made me happy to make my parents happy.” His parents were skilled professionals and had successful careers—his mother had worked in human resources before quitting to take care of him, and his father was an electrical engineer. They also served as advocates for him for the school bureaucracies. His parents did not have specific expectations, but they expected him to be successful. On one occasion though, his father explicitly objected to him pursuing the study of history because it would not lead to a viable career. John eventually ended up deciding on a career in computer science, after which his trajectory was fairly linear. He double majored in computer and electrical engineering, went on to receive his Masters in Computer Science and Engineering, and landed a job as a software engineer at a prestigious IT company in the Pacific Northwest. Due to lack of autonomy and freedom to make creative choices in that position, he recently shifted jobs to a smaller tech company in California where he is much happier in his role.

For his personal expectations, John said they were very similar to his parents and that he often pushed himself to do better. At times, the self-criticism could be difficult. Although he has not yet had significant romantic relationships, John shared that he would also like to meet a partner and start a family. As to his own expectations for his future children, he expressed that he would have high academic expectations and would push them beyond their comfort zone, but never force them into making decisions echoing the

approach of his parents. However, he added that he would have to “train himself” not to be disappointed if they did not lived up to his expectations.

Timothy, a 26 year-old, first-born son of Indonesian immigrants, turned out to be one of the most self-reflective, forthcoming and spiritual participants of the sample. We spoke for an hour and forty minutes about his decision to enter the UWAcad program, parental expectations, career trajectory including his foray into entrepreneurship, struggles with depression that were intricately tied in with achievement, feelings of self-worth and sense of identity, and his strong Christian beliefs that imbued the entire conversation with a special energy. He filtered most everything he shared through his religious value and belief system.

The oldest of three with two younger sisters, Timothy felt the responsibility of being the first-born. His parents had emigrated from Indonesia for education, his mother for middle school and his father for college thus the value of education was very important in his family. His parents both had very high expectations for him and his siblings growing up, not just in academics but in other areas such as in orchestra where he was expected to sit near the front. Traditionally, in orchestra, skill is denoted by how close to the front the player sits. Parental expectations may have become internalized, but as he elaborated later in the member check—“I don’t know that [personal expectations] was purely parental—influenced by them, but also my own disposition.”

Timothy had an unusual story for how he entered the UWAcad program. He had a traumatic experience during his high school orchestra program which led to his dreading attending school. Around that time, his mother found out about the Academy program from one of her church friends and suggested he apply. He eventually applied

and was accepted, but only decided to attend after praying and receiving spiritual affirmation which came in the form of “sharing the Gospel with a friend who decided to receive Christ.”

Once in college, he studied Computer Science (CS) mostly due to his own personal interests rather than due to his parents’ expectations, and continued on to the fifth year Master’s program. During that time, he also engaged in undergraduate research and wanted to commercialize that research with his professor but it was too costly an endeavor. His professor encouraged him to find other employment. Although disappointed, he found a position working as a software development engineer and stayed there for three and a half years. At that time, he sensed God calling him to leave to start a company which he now currently runs creating website and mobile apps, and translation technology products. In general he feels very satisfied in his current work but as an entrepreneur, it’s a “rollercoaster emotional journey.” At times, he is full of despair, and he struggles with feelings of depression and inadequacy, but he is very excited and satisfied to do work that is personally meaningful to him.

Chapter 4: Perceived Parental Expectations and Attributions for Them

Multiple themes emerged after analyzing the questionnaire and interview data of the Asian American men (see **Table 4.1**). To enhance clarity, these findings were organized into four different chapters (Ch. 4-Ch.7). In Chapters four, five, and seven, respectively, I reviewed findings related to research questions one through three. In Chapter six, I included a section of findings on the unique challenges of early college that emerged organically from their stories. In this present chapter, I investigated findings that answered research question one, which is made up of two separate but related questions: *Question 1: How do Asian American men who graduated from early college entrance programs perceive their parents' expectations of them? What attributions do these participants make about why their parents had or did not have these expectations for them?* Thus, this chapter is organized into two broad sections that addressed those questions: 1) participants' perceptions of parental expectations for academic, career, and interpersonal outcomes, and 2) attributions for parental expectations, specifically examining Asian culture and the immigrant experience.

Participants' Perceptions of Parental Expectations for Academic, Career, and Interpersonal Outcomes

Participants' Perceptions of High Parental Expectations for Academic Outcomes.

Through my first research question, I wanted to know *how* Asian American men who graduated from early college entrance programs perceived their parental expectations for them in the realm of academic and career outcomes. All the Asian

Table 4.1 Major Findings Table

Parental Expectations	Personal Expectations	Positive Academic and Career Outcomes	Developmental Issues
High academic expectations (<i>n</i> =6) Changed Over Time (<i>n</i> =6)	Living up to own expectations important (<i>n</i> =6) Change Over Time (<i>n</i> =5)	Advanced Degrees (<i>n</i> =5) Job Satisfaction (<i>n</i> =5)	Challenges of dating (<i>n</i> =5)
Many or All Fulfilled (<i>n</i> =6)	Perfectionistic Tendencies (<i>n</i> =3)	High Incomes, 75K+ (<i>n</i> =5)	
Conveyed as a “team” explicitly and implicitly (<i>n</i> =5)	Many or All Fulfilled (<i>n</i> =2)	High GPAs (<i>n</i> = 4)	
Culture and immigration perceived as influential (<i>n</i> =4)			
Internalized (<i>n</i> =3)			
Living up to parental expectations important (<i>n</i> =3)			

American men in this study perceived *high* parental expectations for their academic outcomes. They recollected growing up in homes where education was valued and prioritized and where their parents expected them to work hard and do their best. These parental expectations were expressed in various ways – through explicit, verbal, and at times, repetitive messages about success in school, and also through implicit comments, behaviors, and nonverbal understandings. Parents often acted as advocates for tackling “school bureaucracies,” supplied academic related workbooks, supported extracurricular activities to a degree, and encouraged participants to apply to accelerated opportunities such as the early entrance programs. For almost all participants ($n=5$), both mothers and fathers shared high *academic* expectations and were a united front. According to Steven, the Korean-American young man who had always exceeded his parental expectations throughout college, “they’re a team...they just doesn’t really have any dissent” and as Timothy, the software engineer turned entrepreneur, remarked, “In academics there was never any kind of disunity, academics mattered.” While his parents were uniform in their overall high academic he shared some different, nonacademic expectations by mother and father:

...so my mom probably would not want me to do risky things, right, like maybe sports or whatever where I might get hurt or things like that, obviously to a lesser degree than my dad. My dad was well that’s what he has to do, he has to become a man, feel the pain and would want me to [inaudible] in those things. So they might want me to excel in different things...When it came to music it was driven more by my mom and when it came to sports my dad wanted me to but it didn’t really set...I did karate, I did swimming and I did okay in them. I still would

advance through the classes, even advance through the belts or whatever, but it was never my thing if that makes sense.

Two participants specifically mentioned perfect scores on tests and overall grades as explicit performance expectations, as exemplified in the following comments by Arun, the Indian-American young man with physician parents, and Timothy respectively:

So my parents especially my dad were pretty—they weren't tiger parents but they expected you better basically ace everything you do. And so I still remember that. Like I used to think about my dad--he was like if you got a hundred on test, it meant that it was too easy and if you got a ninety-nine on a test it meant that you didn't study hard enough. **(Arun)**

I grew up in a setting where 4.0 was basically the norm, right, like it was expected, and I expected it of myself. It wasn't just parental pressures; I'd think that I deserved a 4.0 and I'm capable doing a 4.0 and I should get a 4.0.

(Timothy)

Lucas' engineer father and first generation Chinese mother would frequently relay their educational values to him and his older brother through explicit comments such as: "Your inheritance is us paying your tuition to the University of Washington because it's the most valuable thing we can give you." In his youth, he worked afterschool on workbooks, typically math related, with the specific expectation of completing a "page or two a day." Educational expectations were also conveyed through parental support of academic related extracurricular activities, such as computer club, but not for "track and field or any of the arts."

For three participants, the messages were more implicit, and their parents became more vocal only when expectations were not being fulfilled. John and Sanjay, respectively, stated the following regarding explicit/implicit messages:

My parents were never very explicit in what they wanted from me, and after Transition School, they generally did not interfere unless they inferred from my mood that I myself did not feel I was doing well. But when that did happen, they would provide encouragement, telling me that I only had to work harder and on different things, and I would eventually succeed. **(John)**

I think it was implicit; it was never like – very rarely would they just lay it out that these are our expectations; it was more like when I did things that went contrary to their expectations I would be in trouble and then it would be a problem. **(Sanjay)**

For Steven who had always exceeded his parents' unspoken academic expectations by his precocity and early mathematical talent, entry into advanced programs including the Early Entrance Program, and excellent performance in college including graduating with a 3.72 GPA, it was only when he was not working and idle for a sustained period of time, that his parents first became explicit about their expectations:

After working for a couple of years and then leaving my job and in a quarter life crisis and doing nothing for a year, I think that's the first time that I really felt like they expected something out of me. And they were also suggesting that I go back to school at the time and that's a motivating factor. And so that was a turning point where before that I was a golden child and after that they were actually

having to be explicit about something of their desires or expectations for what I would do with my life. And they encouraged me to continue on to a PhD.

Participants' Perceptions of Parental Expectations for Successful Career Outcomes

Although several participants spoke broadly about parental expectations for success in career, there weren't many specific or rigid parental expectations for what those careers would entail. For Arun, his parents wanted him and his older brother to pursue self-interests that made them happy. On occasion, though, his father who was an anesthesiologist and mother who worked as a doctor in internal medicine, mentioned that he would make a good doctor:

I mean the thing is that they were really cool about it. They never forced either of us to do anything that we didn't want to. They were always like study whatever you want, do this or that as long as it makes you happy, we'll support you. And then but they always told me in particular, they said, "We think you would be a really good doctor. You know, it's not that we would want you to be a doctor, but we think that you would be a really good doctor."

His parents, however, also emphasized character and "being a good person". These values profoundly influenced him in his work ethic and his sense of meaning for the present day. As he recalled:

...[My parents] were always like all this stuff doesn't matter and blah-blah-blah degrees are this and that and money is this and that but what matters is like basically not screwing over other people and being a nice person and all that kind of stuff and so I feel like that stuck with me more...they set the foundation for me

to work really hard and then they were like now that you got that you should think about all this other stuff which actually matters a lot more...I mean that's still the way I try and lead my life. You know it's been very influential

In the example of John, an only child whose Thai immigrant parents were skilled professionals, his parents' had expectations that he would succeed in academics and in his career, but no explicit expectations to get straight As, go to certain universities, or pursue particular fields of study. He recalled only one instance early on in college when his electrical engineer father was explicit and that was when he strongly objected to his interest in history because it was "not interesting and won't give you a career." Rather than become upset, John shared that "I mostly ignored him, but in the end I did something entirely different anyway, so it didn't matter." He ended up studying Computer Science and Engineering.

Only Sanjay and Lucas mentioned specific career expectations from their parents. For Sanjay, a laid-back, independent, Indian-American young man who often butted heads with his strict Hindu parents, those expectations were also rigid in terms of what counted as success: "very high academic achievement, leading to financial success" coupled with a parenting style he described as "strict, disciplinarian, and not exactly enlightened. Physical at times." Sanjay's parents also expected him "to be close with my family, to participate in their culture and their religions to a certain degree" but because he did not want to participate in the activities and disagreed with their religious beliefs, it led to considerable friction. He wasn't too keen on fulfilling his parents' expectations in the first place and it involved a negotiation. Similar to John, he did not respond to the

expectation in a very serious manner. He reflected on his experience selecting a major in college thusly:

I was doing my thing and you know when I told [my parents] I was going to try to major in political science they told me that would be fine as long as I also applied for CS (Computer Science) and gave it a try, that's why I applied for a CS major at the point and didn't get in. Partly it was because of my grades and part of it was probably because I didn't make a serious attempt. But you know that was the last – I think that's the last, the very last thing my parents actually expected of me. I was trying to just do it my own way.

Lucas, on the other hand, felt a clear expectation to pursue engineering, not only from his father who was an engineer, but also his extended family of aunts, uncles, and cousins who were all engineers. Ultimately, his older brother became an electrical engineer, and he became a mechanical engineer. In the interview, he did not mention any dissent or conflict on his part regarding this career track and rather, made light of the career expectation:

The joke I always make is my parents gave me all kinds of choices of career; I could be anything I wanted to be, an electrical engineer, a mechanical engineer, a chemical engineer, any kind of engineer I wanted I could be [laughs].

However, when asked about his own expectations for his two young children, he indirectly referred to his parental expectations, shedding more light on the specificity and intensity of those expectations:

The most important is that [my children] have common sense and it would be great if they apply that common sense and have a good amount of intelligence to make good decisions and to be able to explore different things...It's not that I have any strong expectations and I'm certainly not to the level of my parents saying hey you have to do this and you can be any kind of engineer or that you have to go into science and technology.

Participants' Perceptions of Parental Expectations for Interpersonal Outcomes

Parental expectations for interpersonal relationships were only touched upon a few times in the course of the interview and was not delved into deeply for the most part. Participants did not talk about expectations for friendships, except for Sanjay who shared that "they expected me to behave in a certain way and make certain personal choices, like you know not hangout with certain people or like not drink" but in the context of how he rebelled against those expectations and moved out of the house partly to get some distance from his parents.

As for dating and marriage, Steven clarified in the member check how his Korean immigrant parents who now worked as commercial landlords wanted him to get married to someone "highly educated and in a good (high-status), professional career" although that was not important for him personally. For Arun, he talked about the liberal views of his parents who did not have rules about dating and did not expect him to "marry an Indian girl" contrary to other Indian American parents:

So to that extent I sort of feel like...they defied cultural expectations because a lot of my other friends I know who are Indian-American or whose parents were first

generation, their parents were like, “Yo you better bring home like an Indian person.” Or you know whoever they are they better speak Hindi or they better like Indian food or this and that. And that was never there. That was never there with my parents you know.

Only one participant, Timothy, mentioned any restrictions regarding dating—a restriction that was suddenly lifted once he entered college as he recalled:

I felt like the purpose of a school is education; so why am I there? Just to do the classes, to do the work, to grow, to learn and to get a job, you know, and this is again, parental expectations. When I grew up they told me don’t date, don’t date, and don’t date. Why? Because we want – we don’t want you to get distracted from school; we want you to focus and get good grades, right, and then it was funny because the moment I got accepted to UW and in college it was like well okay you can date now.

Parental Expectations Changed Over Time and With Siblings

Parental expectations were not static but observed to change over time, typically lessening in strength. One simple explanation for decreasing parental expectations over time is that as they became fulfilled, there was no longer a need to maintain them. High educational attainment only mattered as long as it allowed participants to become more marketable for competitive universities, internships, and ultimately, stable jobs. As the individuals in this study secured jobs in reputable technology and engineering firms and became financially independent, there was less of a need for parents to hold on to academic or career expectations. In other words, expectations were fulfilled and no

longer necessary. Steven said he himself had always surpassed his parents' expectations, so that they never had to make expectations explicit to him growing up.

Another explanation is that parents recognized that their children were becoming adults, the foundation had been set for them, and now they were acknowledging those boundaries. In a sense, college represents children leaving the nest, becoming independent, and finding their way in adulthood. Typically, children attend college at 18 or older when they are also legally considered adults. For Timothy, his parents lifted the restriction on dating and actually encouraged him to date after he entered college. In these actions were subtle acknowledgements that their children could be trusted on their own with relationships and with navigating school.

Participants experienced that shift positively, such as with Timothy who remarked how now his relationship with his parents were “marked a lot more by grace and not by expectation to drive it; that’s been a beautiful change.” For Arun, he experienced the change in parental expectations right after college, and it was a dramatic one:

I remember that but that was just like in my first year or two of – like that was almost like Early Entrance Program and before and maybe like the first year of college. And after that [my parents] almost became the exact opposite and they were like – we basically trust you, right? So – I feel like once I started college, expectations were basically very little in terms of we want you to do this or we think you should do this. It was kind of like tell us what you want to do and let’s like figure it out. You know if we can give you any insight we’d be happy to.

Parental Expectations for Siblings. While parental expectations were also high for siblings, differences were noted based on different aptitudes, interests, personal characteristics and birth order of self and siblings. Five of the participants in this study had siblings and one was an only child (see **Table 3.5**). Three were the oldest, one was the youngest, and one was the middle child.

Steven, the eldest of two boys, attributed the differences in his parental expectation for his younger brother due to different abilities and proclivities. In answering a follow-up question to the interview on the member check form, he wrote that: “No – [my younger brother] did not display the same level of precociousness (and in particular, early mathematical prowess which sometimes is conflated with general intelligence), so my parents’ academic expectations were always different for him.” Lucas who was a middle child said parental expectations “waned over time” and that “I think it must have been my older brother and I wore them out because I didn’t detect the same model of expectation that they set on my younger brother.” His younger brother ended up going through the traditional route of high school and majoring in sociology in college rather than engineering. Reflecting on the differences in his younger brother, personality-wise and other, but without elaborating further, Lucas mused “...I can’t tell whether that is more nature or nurture and I’m probably not the one qualified to answer that, but he definitely had a very different experience.”

Along a similar line of reasoning, Sanjay talked about how his parents “adopted a lot more relaxed parenting style with [my younger sister]...my parents have really mellowed out though where their expectations for both of us now are just be happy.” In answering follow-up questions after the interview on the member check form, he

responded that the perceived differences in expectations were not due to gender or birth order, but emphasized the change in parenting style over time:

I think it was more due to my parents becoming more relaxed and open-minded over time. For me, they initially had a very rigid idea of success (very high academic achievement, leading to financial success, etc.), whereas for my sister they were more open to her deciding her own parameters.

The irony, he noted, was that compared to him his sister was actually doing better academically, had better self-discipline, and cared more about schoolwork, and perhaps as a result, his parents had higher academic expectations for her: “Yes, I mean she wants to go to med school and they expect that she will too.” It was more about her own talents and career goals though:

...she actually was a very much better academic achiever than me and she had a good idea of what she wanted to do with her career, like she wanted to be in internal medicine and she was applying to the Academy and she determined that it would detract from what she wanted to take to get to med school and become a doctor, so she did not do it.

Arun remembered living under the shadow of his older brother’s remarkable academic and career accomplishments and that it was a difficult standard to live up to. His brother who had entered the Early Entrance Program before him was considered “legendary as somebody who just worked really, really hard and was really good at everything.” To further explain the precedent set by his older brother, he shared the following story to make his point:

You know I think probably [my parents] also had this example of my brother, who they never had to – I mean so actually I’ll to you a funny story about my brother which was – this kinds of illustrates it. So there was one time they were – and my brother was having an argument with my parents and he got really upset and he like stormed out of the house and it was because he was studying too hard and they confiscated his textbooks.

His parents had high expectations for both of them growing up and he did not believe the expectations were different although in answering a follow-up question on the member check form, he indicated that he felt some favoritism of them towards his older brother. However, when he was first considering applying for the Early Entrance Program there was one incident he recalled where there was a difference:

I mean I think it’s kind of amusing actually and my parents told me when I was thinking about doing Transition School they told me, “Oh you know we never had any doubts that your brother would be successful, but we’re not so sure about you”...I was like, “What are you kidding me?” You know I thought well...going to show them but they weren’t trying to be mean or anything. It’s just my brother works really hard and I think my work ethic I think it’s pretty good but it was never quite as phenomenal as my brother and they were like, “You know we know you’re smart enough. We’re just not sure if you’ll have the capacity to do the hard work.

Timothy stated that his parents had high expectations for him and his siblings. Unlike for him, his parents may have had specific career expectation for his younger sister:

Maybe just being trapped into becoming a doctor, but I think that part of that was her own aptitude as well. She wanted to be one, like she would dress up like a doctor when she was a kid and stuff like that.

Timothy further elaborated when he answered follow-up questions on the member check form after the interview on how parental expectations were equally high but different based on the individual aptitudes of each child:

To my perspective, my parents had pretty much equal expectations for all of us, but we are also different and have excelled in different tracks—myself in an engineering world, my next sister in medicine and my youngest in business. Each according to our varied dispositions and competencies developed over time.

The major differences in parental expectations revolved around birth order and being the oldest son. He felt he had certain responsibilities that were not shared by his two younger sisters:

...My younger sisters would often get away with things that I would take the blame for. In any conflicts between us, it was generally assumed that I was likely at fault and they were eased up on (generally, not always). Also, I noticed that my next sister had a competitive streak with me where she would often try to outdo me. Our youngest sister often didn't try to compete with us...So the only real difference I noticed is in the realm of responsibility and blame based on birth order—as the oldest son, I felt like I had to take the brunt of that growing up. My next sister didn't have to, but I felt like she often would want to show that she's just as capable if not better than me at things (which I suppose shows

responsibility/competency are not always linked). Much of this has changed obviously now that we've all reached adulthood.

In summary, we can see that academic and career parental expectations were perceived as generally high for siblings, but that they also evolved and relaxed over time. Parental expectations influenced their children but in turn, children also influenced their parental expectations. Specific expectations may have differed by the personal characteristics and aptitude of each child.

Participant Attributions for Parental Expectations

Perceived Influence of Asian Culture

There were several references to culture influencing parental expectations. For example, Arun referred to the Indian cultural emphasis on the value of a good education, and Steven mentioned how the Korean culture partly influenced his parental expectations. Timothy explained the unique Asian American subculture that also influenced his parents in the development of their specific expectations for him. On the other hand, there were also references to how little the Asian culture influenced parental expectations. Lucas said that he didn't grow up in a traditional home where they spoke Chinese and spent a lot of time with relatives and although his parents were education oriented, they weren't necessarily "stereotypical Asian parents". For Sanjay, although he was expected to participate in some of his parents cultural and Hindu religious activities, his parents also:

...didn't really expect me to assimilate into or preserve their culture as much as a lot of immigrant families did. My mom's explanation of that when I was visiting

here was we loved being here for a reason and we didn't really like that culture either...

Perceived Influence of Immigrant Experience

In this study, there were participants with immigrant parents from East Asia ($n=2$), India ($n=2$), and Southeast Asia ($n=2$) (See **Table 3.5**). All the parents in this study were foreign-born immigrants except for Lucas' father who was a third generation immigrant Chinese. None were refugees. Many of the parents in this study were also educated, skilled professionals (See **Table 3.5**). In the usual immigrant narrative, first generation immigrants give up their higher status positions in the country of origin for higher paying but lower status jobs in America (Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2001). Their sacrifice is to ensure a better and brighter future for their children. This was the case for Steven whose parents gave up jobs as teacher and banker in South Korea and became small business owners in America. He agreed that culture and immigrant status influenced his parental expectations and acknowledged that "they're dramatically turning over their lives and they're giving up their professional credentials in their home country" because they saw that there was more opportunity in America. So, they were motivated to become successful and expected success from their children. Timothy's parents came to the United States from Indonesia, and they studied in the United States. They regarded the opportunity to study and work in the United States as a "huge accomplishment" and a "huge sacrifice" because their parents (Timothy's grandparents) were not that well off. One of the messages his parents shared was about not wasting the opportunity and the sacrifice which is consistent with the immigrant narrative: "For them one of the biggest

things is...we cannot waste our parents' sacrifice to send us to school here; we have to make the most of it.”

Timothy reflected in depth about the greater impact of the immigrant status on his family who originally emigrated from Indonesia and how the values of peers also influenced his parental expectations:

So immigrant status definitely was a big part I think because as I look at the past many times you are working with other immigrant parents too. I mean these immigrant parents have their own subculture and to some degree you might call it the Asian-American subculture because that's the circle that I traveled in, and they have their own values...I'm going to stereotype and generalize alright – but the immigrants have this value that in this new context we have to achieve and we should be near the top, maybe second-best, maybe not the best but you know near the top, and oftentimes I've noticed that yes, they have to be the top in music, sports and academics and those kinds of things, right... So I think my parents kind of subconsciously just imbibed this, imbibed these values right, from their peers and other things like that; it's just the way that it is, the way that it is.

The influence of the immigration experience ranged depending on the experience of and reasons for immigration. About half of the parents continued to work in a professional capacity as engineers and doctors in the States. On the other end of the spectrum, Arun's case illustrated how it was not so much immigration, but the individual characteristics of his parents that influenced their expectations for him. Arun's family immigrated to the United States when he was six from the United Kingdom and India before then. Although he acknowledged that his parents thought of America as a “land of

opportunity...where you can do whatever you wanted” and that the immigrant narrative influenced other families: “there are some immigrant stories, right, where it’s like we came to this country with nothing and we worked for everything”, he felt the traditional immigrant narrative did not apply to him because his parents were both physicians and well off:

... I mean they did come to the States kind of poor but they were physicians and they’ve never had to really worry about having anything less than an upper middle class life. So I don’t think that aspect of the immigrant narrative influenced their expectations of me or my brother.

Rather, Arun attributed his parental expectations to their personal characteristics and context:

I think that their emphasis on education on the value of hard work and on being a good person – that would have still been there even if they hadn’t immigrated. It’s beat into who they are as people and into their families... I think it’s more like who they are as people. They’re pretty driven, they went to top schools. They went to the top medical school in India and like I said, my mom at least comes from a pretty highly academic achieving family. So yeah so those expectations they set for me and my brother would probably have been there anyway.

Summary of Chapter Findings

In summary, all the men experienced high parental expectations for academic outcomes and general expectation for success in careers. Only two mentioned specific or rigid expectations for careers. Five of the six men reported that academic expectations

were conveyed as a “team” (See Table 4.1) both implicitly and explicitly. An interesting finding was that the majority of participants ($n=5$) observed that parental expectations changed over time and/or with younger siblings, typically lessening in intensity. This shift was experienced generally in a positive light by the participants. Interpersonal outcomes were not deeply examined in the context of this study, and there were only a few parental expectations mentioned, notably Timothy who talked about restriction to dating that was lifted in college.

As for attributions for parental expectations, participants perceived that their parents were influenced by Asian culture, immigrant status, other immigrant relatives and peers, as well as by individual upbringing and successful experiences with education. Asian culture was noted as somewhat influential for half of the participants ($n=3$), and the impact of immigration varied. If immigration impacted the family more (i.e. parents gave up jobs and status, financial struggle) participants may have felt that the experience impacted their parental expectations more. In conclusion, it can be gleaned from these stories that parents recognized the importance of education for themselves and strove to pass it down to their own children.

Chapter 5: Influence of Parental Expectations on Participants' Academic, Career, and Interpersonal Outcomes

Question 2. How did parental expectations influence participants' academic, career, and interpersonal decisions if at all, and with what implications for their well-being?

Parental expectations were clearly influential in decision making at different stages of these men's lives – arguably more so up to and through parts of college. The process by which expectations influenced those decisions were not as clear especially because there were so many other factors of potential influence such as personal disposition, peers and other non-family members, instructors, and sheer luck or chance. A critical analysis of all the data sources, however, revealed two major ways in which parental expectations could have been influential: 1) by exerting various degrees of pressure, and 2) by becoming internalized.

Parental Pressure

The subtle or overt pressure that participants felt to fulfill parental expectations influenced their decision making. The very expectation itself was experienced as a pressure that was alleviated through fulfillment as Steven described in this way:

In the past it was more important to me and it was never like, oh my parents want me to do this so I should do this. It's more like they make their expectations known and then in the back of my mind I would feel a sort of pressure to do something. Do that. Not explicitly because they wanted me to but it was sort of an implicit effect I think.

Parental Influence to Enter Early College Entrance Programs

One major area of impact was in the decision to enter the early entrance programs. When asked on the survey: *How important were the following reasons in your decision to come to EEP/ACAD?* on a Likert scale of 1 to 4 with 1 (Very Unimportant), 2 (Unimportant), 3 (Important), and 4 (Very Important), four participants selected that parental pressures were an important reason in their decision to enter the program. The remaining two participants marked very unimportant – although when probed in the interview, one of these participants spoke of his mother’s influence in getting him to apply to the program.

Sanjay, Timothy, John, and Lucas did not feel forced to attend but parent expectations influenced the process to enter. Sanjay had no intention of entering into the Academy for young Scholars program because he wanted to get into the high school where all his childhood friends were and he also didn’t think he had a good chance. His mother still convinced him to apply as he recollected in the following statement:

I remember I’d done a summer stretch at the UW and an instructor there had reached out to her about ACAD so I really personally had no interest at all, but it did with my mom and she kind of took me in to try to get me back to high school but you know on my part I would apply to ACAD, and there was no obligation. It wasn’t like my parents were going to try to force me to go, but they got me to apply at least.

Timothy, said that after a traumatic experience with his high school orchestra violin coach who verbally berated for not being able to attend an out of town ensemble

event, he dreaded going to school. During that time his mother found out about the early entrance program from another mother at church whose daughter was already in the UWAcad program, and suggested he apply for the program:

So that's where she started pushing me to apply. Like there is this program and I think you should apply for this, and you know I was really not so much depressed but just completely undone and intimidated and hated school and everything like that.

John, the 24 year-old software engineer felt that "my parents overall throughout my schooling did pressure me to do well, but they didn't try to force me to make any decisions I didn't want to do" and so the decision to enter Transition School/EEP was "almost entirely my decision". One of the things he did was to try and fulfill certain educational expectations to make them happy:

But I don't think my parents ever forced me to do anything in regard to my education, and to the extent that I did things that made my parents happy and that's probably because it made me happy to make my parents happy, or because I felt my parents were examples to emulate, that's all.

For Lucas, the 37 year-old, Chinese American had grown up in the family of engineers, and Arun, who often tried to live up to his brother's academic accomplishments, their older brothers were already enrolled in the Early Entrance Program and faring well. For one set of parents, that was enough to expect the younger brother to do well. Lucas talked about how his education-oriented parents influenced his entry into the program:

...certainly there was a lot of drive from [my parents] to really say hey this is just expected now, right, your brother went through this, we think it's great for you if you go through this, and so the reason I pause a little bit here [interviewer name] is that when I think back it's almost like it didn't even seem like it was a choice... Not that I was forced into it, but anything other than saying yes was going to seem odd given the opportunity.

As mentioned earlier, for Arun's parents, the success of his older brother in the Early Entrance Program, did not automatically translate into beliefs about success for the younger son but had the opposite effect. His parents were unsure and had doubts about how successful he would be in the program. Rather than become discouraged, Arun took those doubts as a challenge to prove to them that he could successfully navigate the program: "I did pretty well... So in that sense it was also good. I mean – maybe the competitiveness made me work harder because I was living up to the standard that my brother set." He took on a double major in Mathematics and Economics, graduated college with a 3.80 GPA, and later continued his education to obtain a PhD and additional Master's degree.

Parental Influence on Major and Advanced Degree Selection

As reported earlier, Lucas felt a certain amount of expectation to pursue STEM fields, specifically to major in engineering, which he in turn fulfilled. In general, specific expectations that were not accepted internally by the participant were only fulfilled in the short-term or outright rejected for three of the participants. For example, John "mostly ignored" his father's disapproval of history as a major, not that it mattered ultimately because he ended up in computer science "mainly by accident" and not due to his parents.

Steven also applied to a PhD in the economics field at the encouragement of his parents despite his own doubts, but eventually dropped out after a year in the program.

The only participant who actively fought against his parental expectations was Sanjay, a Political Science major, who still ended up in the field of software engineering through getting a jump start on work experiences as a college student. He may have applied for CS due to his parents, but didn't get in partly "because I didn't make a serious attempt" and he remembered it as the last expectation his parents had for him. Growing up, he experienced considerable conflict due to differences in expectations and "rebelled very hard" against them as he recounted:

We would have very big fights about...whether I was being a bad kid or not; I can't really remember the specifics, but I do remember one really big fight when they were like – I must have done something to disrespect their will and beliefs, but I don't remember exactly, but I remember that blew up into a huge fight.

He moved out after the first year of college and "we were not on the best terms...my parents and I have a relationship but we're not super-close and never really have been, so after moving out I didn't really know a lot of their expectations..." Part of the reason for moving out was to create some physical distance with his parents. The strict and authoritarian style of his parents may have contributed to that friction—a style that softened over time and with his younger sister.

Internalized Parental Expectations

In many ways the explicit and implicit messages about working hard, doing their best, and the importance of doing well academically were internalized growing up and

motivated the men to succeed. Half of the participants spoke explicitly about that process, such as Timothy who recognized that the parental expectations became internalized at one point: “Yeah, I think this is a big thing because although the parental expectations probably started me off, eventually it became ingrained in myself, and I expect a lot of myself.” However, the desire to achieve also came from within himself. Sanjay also talked about that process in this way: “I feel like I internalized a lot of expectations of others or maybe I also had the expectation that I was going to have some stellar degree of achievement.” There were positive consequences of having high academic and career self expectations such as entering college early, getting a “jump-start” into careers, graduating with fair to high undergraduate GPAs, and landing well-paying, competitive jobs at nationally recognized companies’ right after college.

John and Timothy, also reported the downside of high personal expectations—self-doubt, self-criticism, dissatisfaction, and depression that were typically related to perfectionist tendencies. John accepted and shared the same high academic and career expectations that his parents held for him:

Yes, I do think that part of my expectations for myself come from my parents’ expectations for me. I don’t think of this as a bad thing. I think I learned from my parents a model of correct behavior which I think will put me on a path to a fulfilling life.

Parental expectations became internalized messages that were replayed repeatedly in his mind:

I think I had the same views as my parents...I was always saying okay you have to do better than you are now; you have to do more than you are now, and so I did push myself to do better

In retrospect, Timothy preferred the relationship he had now with his parents which were no longer underscored by the need to fulfill such high expectations. Although he believed that the high expectations had some positive impact on his performance, he wondered about alternative ways to bring out children's potential:

I do value the high expectations because in some ways it did force me to achieve but as I look back as well I think there are other ways that could have happened a bit healthier where kids can really be unleashed to do what they're best, what they love to do and growing that and going through the hardships of honing that without having to do it through a system of you know expectation and achievement.

Perfectionism

One sub-theme that emerged was that of perfectionism. Lucas, John, and Timothy admitted to having perfectionist inclinations but did not label themselves as perfectionists, while Arun and Sanjay clearly stated that they were not. According to Lucas, who typically worked 60-69 hours in a work-week as a director in an engineering department, perfectionism was more of a value in how he approached work:

I would say as much as I hate to deny it, I'm a little bit of a perfectionist and have been, but that's not really a value per se, but it affects how I perceive things, so I

value getting things right. I would say – let’s see here – that I value doing things the right way...

Sanjay and Arun, both Indian-Americans living in New York, were both adamant about not being perfectionists but similar to Lucas, they believed in doing a “good job where it counts” or getting work done “the right way.” To Arun, who had a PhD in mathematics, did not put as much value in paper credentials after he realized that “I thought I was really smart too and then I realized that there was a whole lot I didn’t know,” valued the integrity of the work, rather than the pursuit of perfection:

I wouldn’t say that I’m a perfectionist but I would say the integrity is very important... to me perfection implies that you’re interested in perfection for its own sake. Like you want to get a hundred percent just because it’s nice to get a hundred percent. And so I don’t think that I’m a perfectionist at all in that sense. What I would say is if there’s an important decision to be made or an important paper that you’re writing or something then it’s important to do the best job you possibly can. So I would say no I’m not a perfectionist.

John and Timothy spoke about the negative impact to well-being due to the perfectionist tendencies. John mused that:

Perfectionist? I like to be, sometimes I get distressed because oh well I haven’t done a good job...sometimes I can’t do a good job because I don’t have enough time or because other things need my attention, but I do criticize myself sometimes for things other people are comfortable with...

It may have also related to some of the messages about failure he received from his parents:

They also would warn me that if I did fail it would not be something I could live with myself about afterward. Sometimes that would be enough, and sometimes not. In the latter case, my parents could see my disappointment with myself and would usually try to comfort me as well as encourage me to do better.

Timothy, the 26 year-old, Indonesian-American entrepreneur with strong religious beliefs, was very candid, self-aware, and reflective in the interview and in answering follow-up questions regarding the topic of achievement, perfectionism, and well-being. He recognized that the expectations became internalized at some point, but led to some negative consequences for mental well-being. As he shared, “I expect a lot of myself and that makes it easy for me to also beat myself up when I don’t live up to those expectations.” Perfectionist tendencies were used partly as a mechanism to protect himself:

I tend to try to make things as “perfect” as possible so that I might be unassailable, like this is a weird way to put it, but I think that as I’ve looked at my life and personality in the past, intellectually with arguments and explanations and stuff, instead of just teaching people what they need to know as they need to know it or whatever arguing as needed, I tend to try to – before I do that I’m like a bullet-proof case in order to basically be unassailable, and then to force people to my way of thinking because it’s completely right, and every kind of loophole you might find there is really an answer for it. If that makes sense; it’s the education of perfectionism, and it’s not good and it doesn’t work very well as a

communication strategy because people can't learn that way; they need to learn one thing at a time and so I'm learning differently, but I have a tendency of what ifs as almost a self-protection mechanism.

Personal Expectations Changed Over Time

The majority of men ($n=5$) reported that their personal expectations changed over time, typically decreasing in intensity, and some mentioned a shift from the pursuit of extrinsic to more intrinsic goals. In the past, they may have valued getting good grades, getting into competitive graduate schools, achieving at very high levels of financial and career success, and even changing the world for the better, but the expectations have lessened with time, experience, and the realities of their present situation as epitomized by Arun's statement:

...I would say that my expectations since then have become a lot more laid back. Like whatever will be will be when it comes to the career, when it comes to like – I'm not very ambitious you know. Like so I would say that's something which has changed over time, like when I was in college I was very ambitious. Like I want to be a mathematician and I want to be a really good person...I want to change the world or something and do something amazing and now it's just I'm happy to help other people out. I want to be a good person, try and be happy whenever possible and if – I mean I still wouldn't mind doing really well and stuff but I think it – it's just more realistic...

In the present they wanted to do a “good job” at work or “where it counts” ($n=5$) and enjoy life and be happy ($n=3$). Three also explicitly referred to expectations

regarding interpersonal relationships highlighting the importance of these relationships in their lives such as being “well-liked by the people that I care about” or being content “with my partner and to have this joyful, very meaningful friendship.” For a few participants, they also wanted to help others ($n=2$) and be a good person ($n=2$).

John, Sanjay, and Timothy talked about how comparison to others and competition may have motivated them in the past and influenced their prior personal expectations. In Transition School and college, John often compared himself to others which led to feelings of personal failure when he did not measure up:

So I was always comparing myself to other people in TS and I think – so when I did relatively badly to other people in TS I kind of felt that was a personal disappointment, a personal failure on my part...and so I was unhappy sometimes when I thought oh well this person is doing better than me or I’m not doing well in say, TS physics, which was actually quite true.... I didn’t do well in TS physics at all, and I would think oh these other people are doing much better than me and so why – what’s wrong with me that I’m not doing as well. So that sort of thing happened in TS where we were all taking the same classes, so we did compare with each other...

In college, Sanjay remarked on how he felt a pressure to compete with other high-achieving peers and how that made him feel less satisfied with himself:

...then seeing all these other start-ups and all my peers have launched and stuff. [Peer] had like 1.0 and he barely could code when I first met him and he was impressed when I set him up an email account, and now he’s NCO of like a

science and machine learning company and I remember seeing things like that and I'm like oh man I really need to be achieving that level and if I don't do that I'm wasting my life, but I don't feel that way anymore. I'm happy the way I'm doing it.... Yeah, sorry, yeah, I'm not trying to race against other people anymore.

He recognized that the high expectations were not what he wanted from himself, but internalized from his parents, friends outside of the program, relatives and friends of parents:

...why did I accept that for myself or why did I want to do that? It's like I didn't really; I just wanted to have from it rather than wanted to do it and I kind of thought it was the level of achievement that other people expected from me. Or maybe that I expected from myself for some competitive reason, I don't know exactly, but that time I was a very different person than I am now.

Sanjay further elaborated on how a shift in thinking came along several years after college and how some time working abroad helped put things in perspective:

I think the shift for me occurred over the past 3-4 years as I moved away, had to deal with the challenges that come with that, and in doing so had to spend a lot of time thinking about what exactly I was doing with my life and why. Moving to Sweden sight unseen without knowing a soul probably sped that process along.

Timothy discussed the hidden nature of his competitiveness and how he later realized how competitive he was and how that drive led him to only play the games that he could win. He once won an award at church "for being the most competitive Sunday school kid":

I didn't think of it as really a good award to get because competition is not really something people value in the church. But they recognized something that I didn't even recognize about myself and over time that competitive nature got buried though; I didn't want to compete. So I think that somehow I came to this self-doubt that I could never win and so I just wanted playing the game because I didn't think I could win it. So it got kind of buried, but it's still there and I just have to figure out probably what is the right way that it's useful and manifested and what is the right way that it could be manifested.

Competitiveness was not always considered to be bad. If harnessed the right way for the right goals Timothy recognized that it could lead to positive outcomes: "But if we're competing for the right things then I'm all for it and that's what I'm weighing in and learning right now is how to compete for the right things."

Academic, Career, and Interpersonal Outcomes

Academic Outcomes

For undergraduate studies, Lucas, Steven, and John pursued double majors, and all ($n=5$) except for Sanjay chose a STEM field for at least one of their majors (**See Table 5.1**). Despite not studying in a STEM field, Sanjay ended up working as a software engineer for his career. Of the nine majors as a group, five were in computer science or engineering of some kind, three were in the social sciences/humanities (i.e. Economics, Political Science, and Communications), and one was in mathematics. Despite some struggles with the academic and social transition of college, Timothy, Arun, Steven, and John all graduated with high GPAs (higher than 3.7), and the remaining two participants,

Lucas and Sanjay, with fair GPAs (higher than 3.1), representing A-B range. The University of Washington uses a numerical grading system where 4.0-3.9 represents an A, 3.8-3.5 represents an A-, 3.4-3.2 represent a B+, and a 3.0-2.0 represent a B. The majority ($n=5$) except again for Sanjay, continued their education into graduate school and were awarded Master's ($n=3$), Law ($n=1$), and PhD ($n=1$) degrees. Additionally, Arun, Lucas, and Timothy had received merit-based scholarships and fellowships at some point in their educational paths.

Career Outcomes

The majority of men ($n=4$), Lucas, Sanjay, John, and Timothy were in fields related to engineering of some type. Lucas is now in management and Timothy started his own company a year ago. According to the survey income data from two years ago, the majority of participants reported high levels of individual gross income. Steven reported \$75,000 or more, Sanjay, John, and Timothy reported incomes of \$100,000 or more, and Lucas reported an income of \$250,000 or more (**see Table 5.2**). Arun was the only one who did not respond, but since the survey, has started working as a faculty researcher at a prominent research university. Also, Timothy has started up his own business since the survey, so his current salary is unknown. Additional work related accomplishments include publications in peer reviewed journals, contribution as an inventor on a patent, and various awards.

Table 5.1 Academic Outcomes by Participant

Pseudonym	Program	Entry Year	Major(s)	GPA	Highest Degree	Highest Field of Study
Lucas	EEP	1991	Mechanical Engineering	3.16	Law	Law
Arun	EEP	1999	Mathematics and Economics	3.8	Ph.D.	Mathematics
Steven	EEP	1999	C.S. and Communications	3.72	Masters	Economics
Sanjay	ACAD	2003	Political Science	3.11	Bachelors	Political Science
John	EEP	2004	Computer Engineer and Electrical Engineer	3.73	Masters	C.S. and Engineering
Timothy	ACAD	2005	C.S.	3.85	Masters	C.S.

Source: UW Robinson Center, Alumni Study, Survey Data 2013.

Note. C.S. = Computer Science.

Table 5.2 Career Outcomes by Participant

Pseudonym	Job Title if Employed	Gross Individual Income
Lucas	Director	\$250,000-\$499,999
Arun	N/A	N/A
Steven	Business Analyst	\$75,000-\$99,999
Sanjay	Senior Software Engineer	\$100,000-\$249,999
John	Software Engineer	\$100,000-\$249,999
Timothy	Software Development Engineer	\$100,000-\$249,999

Source: UW Robinson Center, Alumni Study, Survey Data 2013.

Autonomy, Creativity, Personal Meaning, and Job Satisfaction. Freedom, autonomy, creative expression, and working on meaningful projects were important for four participants. John indicated that he was much happier in his current position than before, due in part to the freedom and autonomy of his new job:

I actually have much more autonomy now [at new job]. I can choose – within reasonable limits I can choose what I work on. I am learning much more about new technologies and new tools than I did at [prior company]. Typically I am in short, much happier. **(John)**

This importance of having freedom in their jobs, as well as building or creating something meaningful to them, was a sentiment echoed by Sanjay, Steven, and partially by Timothy. Sanjay was very enthusiastic in his response about his enjoyment of his job partly for those reasons:

I love it! I mean I really like this field. I got lucky that it turned out to be a good choice economically as well, but I like this field a lot and I really, really like the position I have now and the job I have now because there is a lot of freedom in it; I feel like I'm building something and I can work on something that is actually fun and it's something my friends can use and stuff...**(Sanjay)**

I asked Steven a follow-up question through the member check form (See Appendix B): *You mentioned not quite having found your calling in life yet. What would your ideal job look like?* Steven wrote back: “The important dimensions for me are high freedom / flexibility, low stress, and involved being in the creation of a finished product that I care about.”

For Timothy who started his own business which was in the process of producing two major apps, one that would allow Christians to pray for others personally, and another that would allow for language translation, talked about the importance of having a flourishing culture in his company. That culture would involve creativity and have people building something together that was meaningful, and would be tied in with his faith:

...the fact that my work is delivering value, not only for helping people's lives but also towards what I believe God desires to see in the world makes it deeply meaningful, makes it deeply satisfying...So being with a creative company where we can have that kind of culture, of people using their power for good to serve one another and also building things that matter for a cause that they believe in...I think that's the bigger picture dream that I hope this company can deliver for the people who work in it.

For three of the other participants, although they did like their jobs, they indicated that they may change their jobs at some point in the future for differing reasons. Steven said that he enjoyed the work but wasn't sure if it was something he wanted to continue for another "forty years." Lucas said that his work as a director had "been a blast" thus far but due to extensive international traveling, it was "tough being away from my family so it's not something I can do for a long time." Arun said that he liked the work he did but there were still longer term questions about where his position would lead:

I get to do work that interests me. I enjoy teaching and I get to teach master students and supervise master students and I get to work on cool projects you so – and my schedule is super flexible. I would say I'm pretty satisfied. I'm definitely

like if somebody were to offer me a really good job, then I would take it but I'm not really looking right now.

Perhaps due to so many of the participants being engaged in work that offered them autonomy and the opportunity to create meaningful projects, almost all participants ($n=5$) explicitly indicated that they either enjoyed or were satisfied in the work they were currently engaged in. John was the only one who did not explicitly state so, but he shared that he was much happier in his new job which aligned more with his values and desire for freedom.

Interpersonal Outcomes

Friendships. All the men agreed that a benefit of the program was the friendships they developed as stated by John, "I think I would have to say that the most lasting benefit that I benefitted from are sort of my circle of friends that I've developed over the years." For Steven, it was the main and possibly sole benefit of the program: "I feel like the only really positive thing that I got out of it was that I've made friends with some of people and it looks impressive when I tell someone." Lucas compared the social development of his younger brother who went to high school with his own and stated that the cohort approach really made up for some of that which he missed:

I kind of even see the wonder of my younger brother's experience just in terms of a lot of, I would say social development. But that being said a little bit of that is made up for in kind of the cohort approach the Early Entrance Program takes because I still have friendships amongst my EEP classmates to this day, even twenty-five years later.

On the questionnaire, five men indicated that they were fairly happy ($n=3$) or very happy ($n=2$) with their friendships and all participants reported that the early entrance programs had a beneficial ($n=5$) or very beneficial ($n=1$) effect on the happiness of those friendships.

Parental Expectations Fulfilled in Adulthood

Two participants expressed that there were no more explicit academic or career expectations now in adulthood. For Steven, his parents just wanted him to find his calling in life and get married. And for John:

Today my mother has no explicit expectations for me, and only one implicit expectation: that I be her caretaker in her old age. I am fine with that. I feel that is my responsibility as I could not exist without her.

Also, in adulthood, many academic and career expectations were now fulfilled, and so it is not surprising that parental expectations have eased over time. On the survey, the participants were asked the following questions: *How important are the following to you? Living up to parent(s') expectations.* 1(Important), 2 (A Little Important), 3 (Important), and 4 (Very Important), **and** *How important are the following to you? Living up to my own expectations.* 1(Important), 2 (A Little Important), 3 (Important), and 4 (Very Important).

Half of the men indicated that it was important ($n=2$) or very important ($n=1$) for them to live up to their parental expectations, whereas the other half indicated that it was a little important ($n=1$) or unimportant ($n=2$) (**See Table 5.2**). This was in contrast to the

Table 5.3 Living up to Personal and Parental Expectations

Pseudonym	Living up to Parent(s)' Expectations	Living up to My Own Expectations	Have Lived up to Parent Expectations	Have Lived up to My Own Expectations
Lucas	4	4	3	2
Arun	3	4	4	2
Steven	1	4	3	2
Sanjay	1	4	3	3
John	2	3	3	2
Timothy	3	4	3	3
Mean Score	2.3	4.5	3.2	2.3

Source: UW Robinson Center, Alumni Study, Survey Data 2013.

Note . Living up to Parent(s)' Expectations and Living up to My Own Expectations (1 = Unimportant, 2 = A Little Important, 3 = Important, 4 = Very Important); Have Lived up to Parent Expectations and Have Lived up to My Own Expectations (1 = Have not lived up to them, 2 = Have somewhat lived up to them, 3 = Have lived up to many of them, 4 = Have lived up to all of them).

importance they placed in living up to personal expectations. All six overwhelmingly believed that living up to their own expectations was important ($n=1$) or very important ($n=5$). All men reported that they had lived up to many of their parent(s') expectations ($n=5$) or all of them ($n=1$) (see **Table 5.3**). Again in contrast, only two participants felt that they had lived up to many of their own expectation, and the remaining four felt that they had only somewhat lived up to their own expectations.

Summary of Chapter Findings

As a whole, parental expectations were influential in the decision-making process. Two possible ways they were influential were by exerting pressure on participants and also by becoming internalized. Four participants mentioned parental influences in the process to enter EEP or UWAcad, two specifically the role of their mothers in getting them to apply. However, none of the participants felt forced to attend despite those influences. Two participants with older brothers who had gone through the program ahead of them, felt that the sibling's participation was influential, but in different ways.

Explicit and implicit messages about the importance of education became internalized for half of the men, and motivated them to succeed. Half of the men spoke about having perfectionist inclinations, while two explicitly said they were not perfectionists. Perfectionist tendencies may have contributed to self-criticism, feelings of dissatisfaction, and depression for two of the participants. Overall a value for the majority of these men ($n=5$) was doing a good job where it mattered, and enjoying life and being happy ($n=3$).

At the time of interview, these men were on the whole confident, secure in their sense of self, accomplished, and satisfied in their jobs with typically one or two advanced degrees under their belt, and high individual gross incomes. In their recollections of younger days, they spoke of high personal expectations and ambitions for achievement, many of which had become tempered with the flow of time and accompanying life experiences. Adulthood, maturity, and financial independence also brought peace and personal expectations that revolved around more intrinsic rewards. However, there had been choppy waters along the way related to entering college early and the process of growing up – necessary challenges related to academics, interpersonal relationships, and career exploration — that contributed to their personal growth. These challenges are explored in more depth in the following chapter.

Chapter 6: Challenges of College at an Early Age

Many people experience challenges associated with navigating academics, exploring careers, and forming romantic relationships in college, but for the participants in this study, they experienced them two to four years earlier than typical. They were adolescents in college, in the process of growing intellectually, physically, emotionally, and spiritually, and the transition to the larger university was not easy. Most of them commuted to school, at least for the first two years, limiting social and extracurricular experiences. Although many of the participants appreciated the peer groups and friendships formed at the Robinson Center, at times it was perceived as limiting. Steven wrote in the survey responses that “the peer group is very strong, and the friendships forged within are deep and long lasting” but it was also “overly insular. Not enough effort is made to get the students to integrate with other UW students.” The themes in this chapter relate to the broader themes of the alumni study of early college entrants (Hertzog & Chung, 2015). I included this section to show that these high-achieving Asian American men had to grapple with developmental issues simultaneously while navigating and negotiating parental and personal expectations, and to shed light on the additional complexity of their experiences.

Lessons from “Failure”

Embedded in the stories of these men were academic struggles, or instances where they did not live up to personal expectations, during the college years that led to important life-changing self-realizations. Three men spoke in depth about a time they struggled academically in the first year or so of college and how they learned from it. Although the experiencing of these “failures” were troubling and stressful for the

participants at the time, they resulted in lessons learned and important, long-lasting shifts in mindset for the better.

Lucas' Story

Lucas loved to learn for the sake of learning and the goal for him was not about getting the best grades, although it was nice to get As. At fourteen, he entered college as a freshman and due partly to lack of emotional maturity and self-discipline, he struggled academically for the first two years, to the point that he had two late class withdrawals and a 2.0 in some of his classes in his sophomore year. His poor performance resulted in an awakening of sorts:

I think it really got to me that I was not doing well in class and it came to a pretty emotional discussion about whether or not I was failing my parents and failing the expectations of the program that had given me this great opportunity, and I remember having a pretty emotional conversation with one of the program leaders at the time...

The experience of that academic struggle was a “tough learning moment” but also very important for his development and growth. The self-realization helped spur him into becoming more disciplined and had a long-lasting impact:

But even having that self-realization I think helped me actually get a lot more disciplined about studying and enjoying learning and that's something that I think I've carried with me since that time in my junior year that I really do enjoy learning, and if I enjoy learning I just naturally do better in class. And so that's something that I've carried with me through my junior and senior years, through

my MBA and my Law Degree. So that's been something that I continue to pursue through time.

John's Story

Initially, John often compared himself and his performance with that of his peers in TS and with others students in the EEP program. Many peers typically took the accelerated first year math sequence, but he had taken the regular math sequence and “felt badly in myself that I hadn't challenged myself as much that way.” His peers encouraged him to take the accelerated sequence for his second year. He started the series and recognized soon enough that he was not doing so well because he hadn't taken the accelerated series for the first year, and because he didn't have much of an aptitude for that coursework. When he received his first mid-term exam in the class, he was “shocked” to discover that he had received a seven out of forty total points, and couldn't believe how “badly” he had done on the test. It was the first class at the university where he felt compelled to use the early withdrawal option. The negative experience came with it an important realization: “So at that point I sort of realized, yeah this is not – trying to do what other people do in the TS is not – it's not really a sustainable strategy in the long-run.” The experience led to an important shift in thinking that lasted throughout college:

Right and I think that big episode was a big reason I started to not – to turn away from that approach of trying to push myself as hard in TS and trying to do everything my fellow TSers were doing. I think – in that new sense I think that was a fairly healthy choice.

Timothy's Story

High achievement had always been a motivator for Timothy throughout primary school. In high school, he talked about how important grades were to him and their hold on him was likened to an “idol.” In college, however, all that changed because he did not get a 4.0 in his first quarter and he experienced an epiphany of sorts that came with “letting go of grades.” He had a spiritual moment where he realized that what was important was the “essence” of knowledge and not so much the grades:

So I was like wow; my mind was opened up and I was like wow! There is an essence here; there is an essence to this knowledge here and that is what I really care about now; not the grades. The grades are a proxy for that; they're kind of a poorer measurement of that, but the more I can get that wisdom, that insight of understanding in any field; it could be medicine, it could be technology, it could be science, it could be literature or whatever, that's what I really crave now. I don't really care about how I'm graded on it. I want to get to that essence because once I have it all of a sudden I have a map of the world and I can go anywhere that I want in that landscape...

As he reflected, he delved even deeper into this topic of letting go of grades and getting to the crux of the matter: “I think at a deeper heart level though I really had built my identity around achievement; that was where my self-worth came from, right, achievement that other people could recognize and acknowledge.” At some point, identity and self-worth had become equated with achievement and it led to negative consequences for mental health such as despair, addiction to pornography, and depression, which he was able to overcome with spiritual help:

...and that's a very painful idol to serve and I didn't want – it let me to all kinds of bad things because I would get depressed or whatever, things like that, and I struggled with pornography and other things like that to try to alleviate the pain...

Timothy sought healing through spiritual help and really felt that God helped him become free of the reliance on achievement for his feelings of self-worth:

...God did some gracious work in my life where He really set me free and it showed me that He loved me and that was enough, and that was kind of what really weaned me off of making grades and achievement, an idol, and to be kind of content. And again, well if God loves me then I haven't [inaudible] and now I'm free and all that I can do I can do by grace; it's no longer driven by a need to get people's approval, to impress people, to win their love for me through my achievement. That's the fundamental, yeah, change.

Challenges in the Career Exploration Process and Path

At the time of interview, all the men were working in a career field that for the most part, they found enjoyable and satisfactory. They had made several important career-related decisions to arrive at this point in their life, some more impactful than others, starting with the decision to enter college early, choosing an undergraduate major(s), pursuing more advanced education, settling into a career, and for some, changing their career trajectories.

Parental expectations were influential at various points of this process, but also important were individual proclivities such as interest and aptitude in the math and sciences for Steven and Timothy. Steven, the 28 year-old Korean American, chose

computer science as one of his double majors because: “I had an aptitude for mathematics and I really liked computers so I just kind of fell into computer science. I don’t really regret that choice.” Although Steven majored in computer science, he did not work as a software engineer because he “didn’t really like the lifestyle.” In answering a follow up question about the lifestyle of the software engineer during the member check, he wrote back:

At the time, my perception of that lifestyle was that there was a lot of working hours, many positions would be working on an unsatisfying application, there was not enough say in the direction of the product, and there was ultimately a ceiling on the financial reward aspect.

Steven spent the three years right after graduating from his Bachelors as a “marketing analyst and a failed entrepreneur”, before pursuing economics for graduate school, and then ultimately ended up working in data science due to having a quantitative background. At the time of the interview, he indicated that he enjoyed his job, but wasn’t sure if he had yet found his calling in life.

Similar to Steven, Timothy also enjoyed playing around with computers and displayed both interest and aptitude in computer science:

...and for me I had a young aptitude for programming where I was like messing around with my dad’s computer, and so I had never felt like my choices were driven, my career choice was driven by their expectations My career choice was actually driven by the fact that I actually loved to program...

However, after three years of working for a tech company, he sensed that “God was calling me to go and leave and to do something different, and so I ended up leaving [company] after three and a half years to start a company” which he was doing at the time of the interview.

Chance and Early Life Crises

Chance, accidental events, and “randomness” also played a role for three of the participants. John ended up in computer science “mainly by accident.” He was initially interested in history not computer science, but his academic peers in TS and first year EEPers encouraged him to take the introductory programming classes. After doing well in those classes, he was directly admitted into the computer science and engineering program as part of pilot program. During college, he landed a summer internship with a large technology company, and got a job with the company right after college. Since then, he has moved onto another technology firm in California, but still counts getting that first job as one of the “great accomplishments” in his life.

Arun who was initially drawn to enter college early due to all the variety of classes he could take, struggled with having to choose a major so early in his life, which he knew would be so influential in directing his future. Feeling “forced” to make career decisions earlier was mentioned as a potential detriment of the program. He was fifteen or sixteen in his sophomore year and realized he did not know what he wanted to do but had to make a choice:

So I think I changed my major at least in my mind several times. I – when I first came I thought I wanted to be like a neurobiology then I thought I wanted

business and then econ and I actually did do econ but then I added math and then I ended up doing econ and math. So that was one potentially detrimental thing. Alright. So it's like I don't think that that's impacted me negatively but I remember it being like at –I think about it like a downside to the program that you're putting people in decision- in positions where they have to make big life decisions –At earlier stages where they would otherwise have, then they would otherwise have to.

He continued to pursue mathematics through advanced degrees but he still struggled with his career path which led to an “early life crisis”:

So I did my PhD in math and I graduated in 2011. And I decided I want to give the whole academic career thing a shot. So I did a post doc for two years in Australia. And at the time, so – so then toward the end of that I realized that you know what? I don't really don't want to do this and I want – I don't know what I want to do with my life. I had this early life crisis I guess.

Arun ended up getting a Master's in a new field and was hired with the school after graduation as a non-tenure track permanent researcher. There was also chance involved as he noted: “I became a master student in this program because I was randomly browsing the [university] list of master's program and they caught my eye. So to that extent it's like there's probably a great deal of randomness involved right?” In reflection, he found the humor in the unexpected twists of his career path: “So it's kind of funny. So it's like PhD, the post doc to master's to permanent researcher.”

Steven, who experienced multiple shifts in his career trajectory from computer science to economics to statistical data analysis, also felt that choosing a major so early was detrimental as he wrote on the questionnaire: “Being forced to choose to start down a path in life so early (i.e. choosing a major in university) was too big of a decision to make at that age.” He experienced an early life crisis, or as he termed it, “quarter life crisis,” after working for a couple of years and then leaving his job. Although he ended up going a PhD program, he decided ultimately not to finish it and got a job in his current career field also by chance:

I’m into my career by almost by accident. I work in data science and it was kind of – okay so I got a degree in computer science. After that I worked for a couple years but not as a software engineer, and by choice, and then I kind of did nothing for a year before deciding to go back to school. I didn’t want to go back to school in computer science and so I tried to just go back to school in some subject that interested me, which was economics. So I did that – I did a Master’s for two years and then I decided to find a PhD program and see how it went...And in – in the end I just – I didn’t want to do it.

On a Fast Track

While several of the men talked about the challenges of their career path related to early entrance, Lucas and Sanjay both experienced benefits of getting an early start. Lucas, who studied engineering and began work in the field at age 19 right after college and moved his way up in the same company ever since, noted:

But in the end I would say that it really helped kind of get me a jump-start in terms of continuing to develop, continuing to be challenged because I think the environment, you know in terms of how I've learned about myself over the last you know twenty or thirty years is that ability to be in a more challenging environment.”

Sanjay was able to get a lot more career experiences as a student which benefitted him afterwards in the job market: “it was a jump-start for me that like the start working impact which I really wanted to do, or start pursuing it more and making more contacts after that.” He mentioned again how much he appreciated the early start which gave him a necessary advantage in his competitive career field of software engineering:

Like I said I was able to kick-start my career and I worked as a software engineer – that's the actual title, software engineer – for like a year or two and that was just like when my friends were still in high school, you know, and in this industry that I work in it's also job experience and it's really, really critical.

Challenges of Dating

In the interviews, four of the men shared that they did not date seriously in college. Five of the men indicated on the survey that their first serious relationship occurred at 19 or older (see **Table 6.1**). In the case of John, he had not yet been involved in a serious relationship as disclosed in the interview which is why he had not put down a response. Arun and Sanjay reported on the questionnaire that they had romantic relationships with other EEP/ACAD students. Only two participants were in a relationship with a significant other at time of the interview, Lucas, who was married, and Sanjay, who had a

long-term girlfriend. Entering college early had a detrimental impact on dating for many of them. On the survey, when asked about happiness in romantic relationships, Arun, Steven, Sanjay, and Timothy indicated that they were somewhat unhappy ($n=3$) or very unhappy ($n=1$), and Steven, Sanjay, and Timothy further marked that EEP/ACAD had a detrimental ($n=2$) or very detrimental ($n=1$) effect on that happiness (See Table 6.1).

In the interviews, four of the six participants indicated that they had no serious romantic relationships while in college. As Freshmen, these men were two to four years younger than traditional college peers which made it challenging as men because the “pattern is that typically men are old or slightly older in romantic relationships” and as Arun put it, “it’s kind of hard when you’re like this fourteen year old kid to meet eighteen or nineteen year old or twenty year old girls.” All the participants except for John explicitly talked about how entering college as a younger man typically limited their dating pools and thus, their opportunities for relationships. One alternative was dating other EEP/ACAD students at the Robinson Center, but since the program itself was so small, it was difficult to find a compatible partner. Lucas and Timothy both mentioned how commuting also limited social interaction. Additionally, three men referred to developmental reasons for dating challenges – in brief, they were still emotionally immature. Lucas said that he was a “late bloomer” and didn’t have any serious relationships until working fulltime, and two stated that they felt insecure as exemplified by Sanjay and Timothy’s comments, respectively:

I think another part of it was just that I wasn’t who I was; I was kind of insecure as a kid and out of my element and I didn’t really know what I wanted, and I

Table 6.1 Romantic Relationship Outcomes by Participant

Pseudonym	Relationship Status	Age of First Serious RR	RR in College	RR with EEP/ACAD students	Happiness in RR	Effect of EEP/ACAD on Happiness in RR
Lucas	Married	19 or older			3	3
Arun	Single	19 or older	Yes	Yes	2	3
Steven	Single	19 or older			1	1
Sanjay	In Relationship	19 or older	Yes	Yes	2	2
John	Single	N/A			N/A	N/A
Timothy	Single	19 or older	N/A		2	2
Mean Score					2	2.2

Source: UW Robinson Center, Alumni Study, Survey Data 2013.

Note . RR = Romantic Relationship(s); Happiness in RR (1 = Very Unhappy, 2 = Somewhat Unhappy, 3 = Fairly Happy, 4 = Very Happy); Effect of EEP/ACAD on Happiness in RR (1 = Very Detrimental, 2 = Detrimental, 3 = Beneficial, 4 = Very Beneficial).

didn't know any of who I was and [inaudible] or what other people wanted and then after that I was like poured a lot of time into my career and I couldn't pursue a lot of things outside of that for a while other than just getting drunk with my buddies all weekend, so that's what it was for a while. **(Sanjay)**

...really I already had my own insecurities ...I was just growing and I was learning and I had to experience it and see and understand what was happening, why and what it meant and how these people were inclined, the women that I liked or whatever and seeing over time where I began to understand better who they were and I was like oh okay so that's different. **(Timothy)**

As mentioned earlier, Timothy also struggled with dating partly due to the internalized messages from his parents. He was not allowed to date all the way up until college because romantic relationships would distract him from school. Once he entered college and the dating restriction was lifted, he wasn't sure how to proceed: "Date in college; that's what they told me. But at that point I had nothing, what? Huh? You know what I mean?"

The psychological effect of the "don't date" messages were so firmly engrained, he found it difficult to break that mindset:

So that was a challenge and so my mindset coming into school was very serious, I was like okay I'm here to get the grades, do the work, learn, be able to get a good job and that stuff, and girls are just a distraction; girls just are going to get in the way, and even though I was dissatisfied...I would justify my "sufferings" or whatever it would be, that I'm doing it for a higher purpose, for the grades and so

whatever...So I can see that kind of feeding into some bigger psychological thing going on I'm using to justify my non-pursuit of other people or a wider circle of people because in some ways I've been trained to be, like oh yeah chasing after girls is a lesser endeavor than succeeding academically.

He shared that, "So I had a hard time and I think they regret that now, like they thought they could flip the switch, but it didn't work."

Summary of Chapter Findings

As men entering college two to four years earlier than peers, they discussed various challenges of those experiences. For example, some struggled with their academics in the first year or two of college because they lacked discipline and emotional maturity. Some felt it was too early to choose a career, a decision that would so strongly impact their lives, especially when so many things interested them as a possible result of multipotentiality (Colangelo, 2002). Dating was a challenge mentioned almost unanimously by these men. These were all themes that were reflected in the larger alumni study of early college entrance programs (Hertzog & Chung, 2015). There were also many positive benefits of the program such as getting opportunities to explore many interesting topics in college, getting an early start in a career field, and making friends with like-minded peers.

Chapter 7: Gender Differences

Question 3. Are there differences in themes by gender? If so, in what ways?

When the themes for the sample of six men were examined side by side and compared with that of the seven women, similarities and differences emerged that reflected the complexity of their experiences as Asian Americans, gendered individuals, and early college entrants. Parental expectations were influential in decision-making for the majority of the participants growing up, but the strength of that influence generally decreased over time as participants progressed through and graduated from college.

Comparison of Perceived Parental Expectations

High Parental Expectations

Nearly the entire combined sample ($n=12$) spoke of high parental expectations for academic and career outcomes. Growing up, both men and women heard repeated messages from parents about the importance of academics and about expectations for success in school. However, the specificity and rigidity of academic and career expectations that the Asian American women referred to such as obtaining 4.0 grade point averages or becoming a physician, were only expressed for two of the six men in academics, and again for only two men in terms of careers. Even then, the men did not experience the expectations with quite the same intensity. This was a notably different finding from that of the pilot study with Asian American women in which “Six of the seven participants felt that their parents’ had high, often specific and rigid expectations for their academics and choice of careers” (Chung, 2014, p. 20) such as “doctor, lawyer, or engineer” (p.38), representing a potential gender difference.

For example, only Sanjay and Arun said they were expected to receive 4.0 or perfect grades growing up, but even that expectation eased after the first year of college for Arun who stated that his parents trusted him and “they never asked about my grades or anything.” The only specific career expectation mentioned was engineer for Lucas, and then computer science as a major for Sanjay who did not seem to take the expectation too seriously. Of interest though were specific expectations for female siblings of the men. For Sanjay and Timothy—the only men in the study with female siblings—both of their younger sisters were expected to become medical doctors. At least, this was the case for one of Timothy’s two sisters. Although Sanjay and Timothy attributed that expectation to the academic ability and interest of their sister in question, this may also represent a gender difference in light of the findings from the pilot study. At one point in six of the seven women’s lives, their parents had aspirations for them to become a doctor.

Careers and Personal Characteristics of Participants. For Timothy and Steven, individual characteristics such as interests and aptitude in math and computers, mattered in their choice of college majors and careers. Parental expectation for careers generally revolved around a sense of success, but as mentioned, were not very specific for the majority of participants. As for the women: “Individual characteristics of the participant such as personal interests and abilities were not mentioned as considerations in parental career expectations for five participants” (Chung, 2014, p. 21).

Conflict with Parental Expectations

On the whole, the majority of men ($n=5$) expressed few conflicts with their parental expectations. Even Lucas whose parents had clearly laid out a path for him in engineering—a career path he followed without too much ado and had become quite

successful at in the time of the interview—did not refer to conflict. If anything, he felt bad that he had disappointed his parents during his first two years in college by not performing as well in school. For more than half of the participants ($n=4$), parents were perceived as supportive in their career decisions and provided guidance as needed. Arun said that, “They were always like you know study whatever you want, do this or that as long as it makes you happy, we’ll support you.” Even when making hard decisions like walking away from the PhD program after a year, Steven mentioned that his parents were “somewhat disappointed but ultimately they were supportive of my decision.” Only one male participant, Sanjay, experienced a great deal of conflict with his parents due to differing expectations which led to a strained relationship. However, he continued to pursue what interested him.

Differing parental and personal expectations also resulted in conflict for some of the women, but much of that conflict was internalized. The lack of choice was particularly hard for Nicole who also felt that she couldn’t outwardly disagree with her controlling parents at the time. What ensued was an internal struggle where she would disagree in her own mind and that shaped her own values (Chung, 2014).

Comparison of Academic and Career Outcomes

As a whole, the Asian American men and women graduated with relatively high GPAs, many with double majors, and 12 had either obtained or were in the process of obtaining advanced degrees including but not limited to Master’s, Law, PhD, and Medical degrees. In both sets of interviews, there were themes about struggling with choosing a career so early, and the challenges of settling into a career path. Interest in the arts and humanities were mentioned more so for women than men. The majority of the

men pursued and ended up in STEM related fields, very specifically math or engineering related, whereas there was a stronger trend for women to pursue the natural and social sciences. At time of their interviews, six of the women were working “stable jobs in education, law, public health, or technology” (Chung, 2014, p. 32). The mean age of men was 27.5 and women, 25, at the time they filled out the questionnaires. Though they were similar in age, the men reported higher salaries than the women. The salaries of the men ranged from \$75,000 to \$499,999, with four participants reporting salaries of \$100,000 or higher which was substantially higher than the women whose salaries ranged from \$25,000 to \$74,999, with the midpoint between \$50,000 to \$74,999.

Comparison of Personal Expectations

For eleven of the thirteen Asian American participants, living up to personal expectations was important ($n=2$) or very important ($n=9$). For the women, most reported having high expectations for themselves, and five either explicitly or implicitly implied that they were perfectionists in some way (Chung, 2014). For the men, they reported having more realistic expectations for themselves over time, and while three spoke of perfectionist tendencies, none labeled themselves as perfectionists. On the other hand, men were also more explicit about comparison and competition fueling some of their personal expectations in college, but much of that had decreased over time. Comparison and competition was not referred to as a theme in the pilot study. The differential experiences of perfectionism and competition may also represent a gender difference.

Comparison of Experiences in Early College Entrance

Once again, these thirteen Asian American men and women were navigating college at ages two to four years younger than typical, and many were doing so under the watchful eye of their parent(s) as they commuted an hour or more each day from their homes to campus and back. The Robinson Center was considered a safe base for many of them and participants consistently cited the development of close, long-lasting friendships with other students in the EEP and ACAD programs as beneficial. At times, the base was too safe and “insular” and some participants felt they missed out on the college experience of living in dorm rooms, developing more diverse friendships and romantic relationships, and engaging in social and extracurricular campus activities due to being so young and living at home. Participants spoke of how they started to branch out from the Robinson Center, more so in their third year when prior high school friends joined them in college, and/or they found more friends in their major and clubs.

Romantic Relationships

Interpersonal relationships were not discussed in much depth in the study with Asian American women. Nicole, did not date in college due to having strict parents and shared that it was not unusual for her friends to also have strict parents and be “discouraged from romantic relationships” (Chung, 2014, p. 21). Two women alluded to parental expectations for them to marry. The men of this study spoke about the struggle with dating in college but only Timothy said parental expectations influenced that struggle. Much of the challenge with men came about from being physically younger than college aged women and not feeling developmentally mature enough. This was also a finding for the men from the larger alumni study (Hertzog & Chung, 2015).

Identity and Well-being

Two women explicitly spoke of struggling with eating disorders and depression related to their challenging experiences through the college transition. All five of the women also reported either being perfectionists or having perfectionist tendencies. In this study with men, three stories were shared about incidents that came up during the college transition that resulted in struggles with academic achievement and negative impact to sense of well-being. In the long-run, these were important experiences that the participants as a whole learned and grew from. At the time of the experience, however, the participants struggled with their self-concept and the sense of failure.

Summary of Chapter Findings

From the pilot study with the Asian American women and this expanded study with Asian American men, gender differences emerged, most strikingly with career expectations. Far more women perceived their parents as having rigid and specific career expectations for them, with doctor cited most often as a parental expectation followed closely by lawyer. Why were doctor or lawyer--professions historically pursued by men--mentioned as the primary career expectation for Asian American women but almost never mentioned as an expectation for the men? Why were self-interests and aptitudes mentioned as influences considered for men, but not necessarily for women? Parents may view their daughters as more obedient, passive and thus, there is more potential to mold them into certain careers (Shum, 1996) or it could be that daughters perform better academically than sons (Qin-Hilliard, 2003; Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2001) and are perceived as being better able to withstand the rigor of medical school or law school. Immigration literature suggests that parents control the activities of girls more so than

boys (Qin-Hilliard, 2003). Still, that does not explain the specific careers of doctors or lawyers for daughters. These findings also suggest that traditional gender expectations for men and women are changing, and some of the present statistics with more women than men pursuing academic degrees support that trend (Pollard, 2011). Implications of the relationship with identity, perfectionism, achievement and well-being are explored in the discussion.

Chapter 8: Discussion and Implications

Parental Expectations Matter

Overwhelmingly, all six men expressed that both parents had high academic expectations for them growing up and through college. These findings supported the previous research literature on Asian American parental expectations (Henfield et al., 2014; Kao & Hebert, 2006; Mau, 1997) including my findings from the pilot study with Asian American women (Chung, 2014) and also the larger literature on the educational expectations of children of immigrants (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001; Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2001). Immigrant parents across all nationalities from as diverse countries as India, China, the Philippines, Mexico, and Haiti, and across various personal educational and professional levels have been found to have *high educational expectations* for their children (Fuligni, 1998; Kao & Tienda, 1995; Mau, 1997; Portes & Rumbaut, 2001; Suarez-Orozco et al., 2008; Tseng, 2006). These findings suggest that high parental expectations can positively influence academic outcomes.

Also, their parents had high career expectations in the sense that they generally expected the participants to have professional success and both academic and career expectations were fulfilled in the sense that the men performed fairly well in college, had obtained advanced degrees, were in high-paying, stable jobs in their career field, and personally felt they had lived up to many or all of their parental expectations. In this sense, their parents' expectations may have acted as self-fulfilling prophecies (Merton, 1948). These men were also generally happy, satisfied in their careers, and more assured in their identity in adulthood. This provides some support for the finding of Oishi &

Sullivan (2005) that those who fulfilled parental expectations have self and life satisfaction.

What was unexpected in these interviews was that very few participants mentioned specific career expectations from their parents and if anything, their choice of major and career decisions were fueled by self-interest, aptitude, opportunity and chance. This finding differed from that of Dundes et al. (2009) who suggested that in parental expectations for choice of careers for their children: “happiness is secondary to financial independence and material success.” Only one participant, Sanjay, explicitly talked about parental expectations for “financial success” but that changed over time and now, they only had expectations for him to be happy. Clearly, high parental expectations matter and are influential in academic and career decision making. The findings from this study illuminated more of the process of how expectations were conveyed. Expectations were conveyed typically as a unit, both explicitly and implicitly. It was not clear how much the explicit or implicit nature of the messages mattered, but that parents relayed them as a unit did. Participants understood these expectations were important and many internalized those messages for themselves. There was also an element of pressure involved. Too much pressure can lead to negative outcomes, but just enough, can help motivate children to push themselves to succeed suggesting that balance is necessary.

One interesting theme that emerged was the mutability of expectations. In the stories shared by the men, both perceived parental and personal expectations changed over time—typically lessening in intensity. One possibility to explain this is that parents no longer needed to have such high expectations because their child had already fulfilled

so many expectations. However, that explanation is limited and does not fully explain the situation for Arun nor Sanjay. Another, more promising possibility is that just as the participants were growing, adapting, and solidifying their selves and places in the world, their parents were also in the process of developing and adapting as parents, immigrants, as professionals, and more, in their own varied, complex worlds. The sociological literature tends to frame Asian immigrant parents, whether culturally or structurally influenced, as fixed entities with static beliefs. Findings from this study challenge that assumption and suggest, that both Asian immigrant parents and their children should instead be viewed through a developmental lens. According to the lifespan perspective, development is “highly plastic”, “multidimensional and multidirectional,” is “embedded in multiple contexts”, and occurs across the lifespan (Berk, 2004, p.8). Parents are not fixed entities, but change, evolve, and grow like their children. Their parenting styles are also mutable.

From the findings in this study, it can be inferred that parenting styles matter, although to what degree, it is difficult to say. For one thing, I did not ask specifically about parenting styles, so I can only rely on the descriptions that participants provided as indicators of different parenting techniques utilized. As a whole, it appeared that authoritative parenting techniques were well received. For example, Arun appreciated the warmth, encouragement of discussion, and trust that his parents had in him starting from college. These are all descriptions of authoritative parenting techniques (Yee et al., 2009). However, up until that point, his parents were strict and had high, rigid expectations for his academics, which may have also contributed to success in academics. It is more difficult to assess the impact of authoritarian techniques, because in both the

case of Sanjay and Lucas, parents expected compliance and their expectations were fairly rigid. In Lucas' case, he accepted the expectation to pursue engineering. In Sanjay's case, the parenting style of his parents were experienced as too strict and disciplinarian, in a sense too controlling, and he "rebelled hard" against them. The missing factor here may be acculturation and sense of ethnic identity.

Sanjay's parents took a "more relaxed" approach with his younger sister—and with different results. His sister was more disciplined, achieved at higher academic levels, and was on track to pursue medicine. Other factors to consider though are the individual personalities and characters of the children. A child with a high desire to please, may have reacted differently than a child with lower levels of that desire to the same level of pressure. Prior studies indicate that acculturation may also predict family conflict (Park et al., 2010) due to differing expectations by parent and child. A child who has taken in more Western cultural values, hence is more acculturated, may value self-expression and autonomy whereas, parents who have been socialized with more traditional Asian values, may expect more obedience from their child. When parent-child expectations are not met, conflict may ensue. Results from this study suggest that there needs to be more research on how parenting styles influence academic and career decision making for Asian Americans. Also, the parenting style definitions set out by Baumrind (1971) were based on studies with European American children. Many Asian immigrant parents are considered "authoritarian" using this definition (Hayashino & Chopra, 2009)—but there may be more nuanced understandings of parenting styles by culture that should be explored to further understand how they influence expectations. While Authoritative parenting styles may work well for many European American

children (Baumrind, 1971), Authoritarian parenting styles or a mix of styles may also work equally well or better, depending on the child and the circumstance. This means that we in the American context must reexamine our stereotypes and preconceived notions about what successful parenting should look like.

Asian immigrant parenting styles and expectations have been stereotyped and heavily criticized most recently in the media with depictions of *tiger mothers* who seem too harsh and controlling, even abusive, in their parenting practices of children (Chua, 2011). While the participants in this study described high parental expectations, and at times strict parenting styles, they did not describe extreme methods of training or discipline. Generally, the influence of high parental expectations was related with positive results as reflected in participant outcomes and overall sense of well-being. Another explanation for why Asian immigrant parenting methods may work well is in the cultural emphasis of effort and ability. Many Asian immigrant parents are found to attribute success with effort rather than in-born ability alone (Yeung & Yeung, 2008), displaying a *growth* mindset, or beliefs that hard work and dedication can improve and develop basic abilities (Dweck, 2006). An important takeaway from these findings, is that Asian immigrant parenting represents one successful model on a continuum for parenting models that work well with academically talented students.

Asian Culture and Immigration Matter

Asian culture and immigration matter in the formation of high parental expectations. However, they matter more in how much the experience of the culture and the experience of immigration impacted the parents and hence, the children. There is a strong emphasis on the value of education in East Asian countries due to influences from

Confucian philosophy (Wu, 2008) but that is not necessarily the case in Asian Indian or Southeast Asian countries (Xie & Goyette, 2003; Portes & Rumbaut, 2001). Perhaps that was why, more so than Asian culture, immigration was cited as having a stronger influence in the development of high parental expectations in this study. Immigrants tend to be self-selecting and can be seen as categorically different from nonimmigrants (Hirschman & Wong, 1986; Xie & Goyette, 2003) and the motivation to leave their homeland must be strong enough to warrant the often stressful move and adjustment process. The socioeconomic class background, circumstances in the home country and the United States that prompted the move, and the social capital (Coleman, 1998) of parents in the new country, are all very influential to their successful adaptation.

Many of the parents in this study were described as educated professionals (i.e. instructors, engineers, and doctors) meaning they had more *human* capital in terms of levels of education, very likely more *financial* capital considering their professions, and possibly more *social capital* than typical immigrant families (Coleman, 1998; Ngo & Lee, 2007) raising the questions: could the high parental expectations and/or the participants' successful outcomes be better explained by their socioeconomic backgrounds alone? Or was it a matter of "intergenerational transfers of career-specific human capital" (Lentz & Laband, 1989, p. 397) which can motivate children to choose to follow the career paths of their parents through the transmission of human capital? For example, a doctor could "pass along valuable human capital to his children, the ultimate effect of which would be to (a) motivate them to attempt to also become doctors, and (b) better prepare them to be successful in apply to and completing medical school" (Lentz & Laband, 1989, p. 397). At least two of the participants who were engineers had engineer

fathers which lends some credence to the latter possibility. These are plausible suggestions and invite future exploration, but they are not necessarily confounding explanations. Rather, they strengthen the structural argument by emphasizing the higher human capital and possibly financial capital of selective immigrants from Asian countries, thus explaining the performance of their children. For children of refugees who have performed well academically and professionally, social capital has been used by some researchers to explain their success (Ngo & Lee, 2007).

What is intriguing is the potential role that social relationships and networks may play in parental expectations. Social networks provide positive support for immigrant families and serve as channels of information (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001). For this sample of participants, less known is the social capital of their parents and its influence on participants. Only Timothy referred to the social network of his parents and how they influenced his entering the program, and also influenced the values of his parents. In those networks, parents may compare the achievement of children from comparable parents to gauge the progress of their own children. It can also lead to conflict when parents see their children are not living up to the examples of other children, or if the child himself is the example to follow.

Finally, how the parents experienced immigration mattered in the messages that were transferred to their children. If parents had to give up a lot to immigrate and to provide opportunities for their children, their children could experience that as sacrifice and pressure. However, if parents were already well educated with medical degrees in their country of origin and did not really experience high levels of *acculturative stress* or struggles related to immigration, then the children may not have necessarily interpreted

immigration as impactful. How parents and families experienced immigration, and how parents talked about those stories, mattered in how children interpreted the influence of immigration.

Gender Matters

It is clear from this study and the pilot study, that Asian immigrant parents have high educational and career expectations for both sons and daughters. One challenge for both participants was living at home and commuting. Living at home made parental expectations even more salient and participants talked about missing key experiences in college as a result such as living in the dorms, socializing with more diverse groups of people, engaging in extracurricular clubs, and even involvement in study groups that could have helped them academically. These experiences are not unique to the participants of this study, but reflect a theme in the larger alumni study. Recently, the Robinson Center research staff presented on this experience of missed college experiences as part of findings from the larger alumni study at national and international venues (Hertzog & Chung, 2015b; Hertzog & Chung, 2015c).

An additional topic explored with the Asian American men, was the role of birth order in influencing parental expectations. For these participants who represented a range of birth orders from youngest, middle, oldest, and even only child, no particular differences were detected for parental expectations across participants. Academic and career parental expectations were perceived as similarly high for siblings with a few exceptions. However, there was an interesting finding that could indicate gender differences. Two female siblings were expected to become doctors—again supplying more evidence for this gender related trend. Future studies are recommended to explore

further these gender differences, particular as they relate to career expectations for daughters and sons. Interviewing parents as well as their children is one recommended way to understand this phenomena.

Life Stages Matter

Entering college early was in the backdrop of all of these interviews. For the present study, the early age of the participants during the program are meaningful in how they experienced their relationships with their parents and in making academic and career decisions. They were adolescents going through the program, with insecurities, doubts, and without a lot of experience in romantic relationships. Males in the larger alumni study also “responded as having more awkwardness related to dating while in college because they were 4 years younger than most of the UW class peers” (Hertzog & Chung, 2015, p.47). According to the psychosocial theory of development postulated by Erikson (1950), adolescents are in a stage where they are searching for their identities and must answer the question about who they are. Successful resolution results in the transition to adulthood with self-confidence and strong self-concept. Inability to resolve this issue can result in self-doubt and role confusion.

As adults, participants had resolved many of those issues and had a stronger sense of their own identities. They had also fulfilled many or all of their parental expectations. Now, living up to their own expectations was more important to them, just like with the majority of alumni from the early college entrance programs (Hertzog & Chung, 2015). These men wanted to pursue what interested them, produce quality work, be good people, have meaningful relationships, and help others when possible. All the men agreed that they had much to be proud of and almost all ($n=5$) indicated on the survey that they were

satisfied with their choices in life, and would make the choice to attend the early entrance programs again if given the choice. This is a finding that echoes one from the larger alumni study where 90 percent of the participants agreed or strongly agree that they would choose to attend EEP/ACAD again (Hertzog & Chung, 2015)

Perfectionism, Identity, and Achievement Influence Well-being

In the pilot study, I had raised questions about the process of how parental expectations influenced the outcomes of the women and one possibility was that the expectations were “transferred to children at a young age and shaped behavior” (Chung, 2014, p. 40). Findings from this study support that possibility. The participants in the present study spoke about the internalization of parental expectations. Over time, parental beliefs about education and achievement became absorbed into personal belief systems. High levels of academic and career achievement were some positive consequences of internalizing high parental expectations. Their high personal expectations motivated them towards the goals they desired for themselves.

High personal expectations can lead to problems, however, when they are too high and unrealistic—such as with perfectionist thinking—and when beliefs about achievement become interconnected with beliefs about self-worth. I had raised this issue in the study of women: “The problem with well-being can occur when perfectionism shifts from becoming a goal to becoming part of the individual’s identity and achievement becomes status quo” (Chung, 2014, p. 40). Timothy, in particular, spoke about becoming plagued with self-doubt and experiencing depressive episodes that stemmed from his perfectionist thinking. At some point, his beliefs about achievement, identity and self-worth grew so interwoven, that Timothy felt good about himself only

when was achieving. It may be the story of only one individual in this study, but one in a sample of six, is a noteworthy number. When we combine the Asian American women sample with the men, there are three out of thirteen participants who suffered from negative impacts to mental health.

Social networks, such as peer groups and teachers from gifted and accelerated programs, may also impact this sense of identity especially for children in gifted programs. Generally, peer groups for students in gifted programs are experienced very positively, as was the case for the men in this study and for the women in the pilot study. The importance of the early college entrance peer groups was also one repeatedly mentioned for the larger Alumni Study (Hertzog & Chung, 2015): “Many students commented on the social and academic benefits of having a cohort of talented, highly motivated, and like-minded peers” (p.47). While there were many benefits of the peer group such as the development of friends, mentors, and employment networks, participants may have also experienced the Big Fish Little Pond Effect (Marsh & Parker, 1984) due to comparison and competition with those of higher ability, the experience of which can lead to a negative impact to academic self-concept.

Placing labels on children have resulted in differential expectations from them, otherwise known as labeling bias and the differential expectations for these children can affect their success in school (Allday, Duhon, Blackburn-Ellis, and Van Dycke, 2011). Perception changes regarding a child identified as gifted have occurred in family members, peers, teachers, and in the identified child (Allday et al., 2011; Gates, 2010) and some negative aspects of the label included increased school work, internal pressure to do well, and parental expectation/pressure (Berlin, 2009). For students of EEP and

UWAcad who had been labeled as “gifted” in their prior schools, who had been accustomed to coasting through school, achieving top marks, and being the best student, they may struggle with maintaining a healthy academic self-concept in the face of setback, such as lower than expected test scores or class grades.

I posed the question in the study of women and in the introduction of this dissertation: “If an identity of *best student* or *gifted* translates to achieving perfect marks in school and getting into the most competitive graduate schools in the country, what happens to the individual when they cannot achieve such high expectations?” (Chung, 2014, p.40). Furthermore, just as high parental expectations may be internalized, the gifted label may also become internalized. If the gifted label is subsumed into the identity of the individual, the individual may feel compelled to continue to achieve at high or *perfect* levels to maintain feelings of self-worth and fulfill personal expectations related to that identity. I call this an *achievement identity* because the individual feels that she must achieve in order to preserve her gifted or high-achieving identity. Not meeting those expectations or the stress from maintaining perfectionist expectations may lead to negative impacts to well-being, such as those mentioned by the participants in both studies, i.e. feelings of isolation, eating disorders, and addiction to pornography, despair, and depression. More attention must be given to this issue which has implications for the broader gifted education community.

Limitations

This is a mixed methods study that drew mostly on qualitative data from interviews, and then from self-reported survey data with both quantitative and qualitative elements. There is always potential for bias and/or inaccuracy in self-reported surveys

that request information about the past. The interviews were transcribed by a third party funded by the Robinson Center, which saves the researcher time, but may also potentially introduce unintended errors into the transcription process due to lack of familiarity with the study and specialized terms/abbreviations used by the participants (i.e. CS (Computer Science) versus TS (Transition School)). Also, I tried my best to maximize variation in the males which led to some variation in parent country of origin and experiences in the program (positive and negative), but despite that, the majority of participants were in their twenties at the time of interview and were in stable careers with high incomes. This may represent some skew, however, there is evidence to suggest from the larger study that male graduates do make on average, higher incomes (Hertzog & Chung, 2015). Future studies should extend the research and examine the same participants over time. As these men enter their thirties, forties, and beyond, it would be interesting to examine their expectations for their own children and whether those expectations differ across the three generations. However, it is also clear from the stories of these men, that the experience of immigration was impactful, so continuing to ask those questions in further studies is recommended.

Implications

What this study and other research (Hune & Takeuchi 2008; Lee, 2014; Xie & Goyette, 2003) tells us about the Asian immigrant experience is that there are complexities and nuances, and we as educators, parents, and researchers, especially in the gifted community where we may work with Asian American children and their families, must be careful in making generalizations. Many of the implications remained the same as for the pilot study with Asian American women, with some notable changes.

First of all, the Asian American community should be better informed about the influence of parental expectations on children's academic and career decision making. Generally, the findings indicate that the high expectations lead to favorable outcomes for their children. However, there are also possible negative outcomes for well-being that must be considered, especially when expectations are too high, specific, and rigid, and do not consider the individual attributes of the child. Participants may experience conflict internally and externally. Also, the community should also understand that high personal expectations, although generally related with positive outcomes, may negatively influence mental health when they are too rigid and high such as with perfectionist thinking. Putting up fliers and hosting information sessions at community centers, worship halls, and language schools, where many immigrant families congregate, may help inform the Asian American community about these important issues.

Educators and academic counselors should also understand that Asian cultural and structural experiences may affect the academic and career decision making of Asian Americans. Women may experience more specific and rigid expectations such as achieving top marks on tests, 4.0 grade point averages, and going into medicine, law, or engineering, and signs of perfectionism. These expectations may also be parental and/or personal. Due to the model minority stereotype, shame, and cultural stigma, Asian American men and women may not seek help until they become severely troubled or not at all (Meyer et al., 2009). Thus, regular check-ins are highly recommended for these students, even if all seems well on the surface. Mental health counselors may also want to assess participants for perfectionist thinking and see what role that may play in feelings of distress.

Programmatically, the transition into college can lead to academic struggles and as a result, sense of failure for early college entrance students. However, that experience of failure may also lead to improved resilience, self-confidence, strength of character and resolve, and overall, important life lessons, as demonstrated in the stories of the men in this study. What is important is that students feel supported through that time of transition through access to advisors, mental health counselors, and program staff. In the past, the Robinson Center has implemented various interventions to address the social and emotional concerns of the community. There are regular social-emotional check-ins with students in the transition programs, a parent support group, and an “Alumni Study Reveal” event where students and parents were invited to learn about the results of the research with early entrance program alumni. Topics covered included understanding social emotional issues, the experience of college early, parental expectations, immigrant experiences, challenges with dating and other experiences related to early college entrance. Programs like these can help spread awareness of the needs and unique challenges faced by this special population.

Directions for Future Research

Parental expectations can powerfully influence the career paths of individuals by acting as self-fulfilling prophecies (Merton, 1948). As mentioned, there are many positive benefits of high parental expectations in the literature as well as from this study, and for immigrant parents who believe that education is the great equalizer, they expect great things from their children. However, there were some interesting findings related to gender differences, parental experiences with immigration, parenting styles and parental

occupations that may have also influenced their expectations and how they were conveyed.

The stories of these men and women tell us their perceptions of parental expectations. I recommend a future study where Asian immigrant parents of high-achieving children are interviewed regarding their expectations and possible attributions for those expectations. To further separate cultural and immigrant influences, it is recommended to have parents representing various immigrant generations including the second and third generation. First generation and 2.0 generation Asian American students tend to perform well academically as measured by scores on tests and grades, however, this achievement may not be sustained in later generations. Yang (2004) discussed a trend observed by researchers where the achievement of the third generation immigrants began to decline, a concept he referred to as “third-generation flattening” (p. 51). It would be interesting to explore that concept in more depth.

Another area of future research is to further explore the connection between personal expectations, perfectionism, achievement, and identity, and whether this is a finding more prevalent in Asian American communities, or if it’s an occurrence that affects the gifted community as a whole. Placing a gifted label on children can influence their sense of identity and self-concept, sometimes for the better and sometimes for worse (Berlin, 2009). What would be interesting is to further explore this concept of a gifted identity or *achievement identity* for students of varying racial and ethnic backgrounds. How do parents and gifted identified students from different racial and ethnic backgrounds perceive the label of gifted? Are parental expectations influential in the development of this identity? Are there higher incidences of mental health problems for

those with this identity and what is the correlation with perfectionism? Also, what role could acculturation play in the parent-child relationship and in the formation of these identities?

Due to the retrospective nature of the interviews, participants were able to share their changing perspectives over time. Most interesting was the change in parental expectations and personal expectations reflecting the developmental processes involved for both the participant and parent. Does achievement identity change over time and across contexts, especially as gifted identified students transition into adulthood (e.g. move into college where they are no longer labeled as such, enter the workplace, marry and have children)? And more broadly, do individuals cling to their earlier identities (e.g. gifted/smart, athlete, drama kids) or do those identities also shift with time and varied experiences? For immigrant parents, how do they navigate their own multiple contexts and make decisions regarding parenting? What developmental processes do they experience and how do their expectations change over time and with each child? Future quantitative and qualitative studies in these areas will provide more insight and contribute to the literature on immigrant communities, mental health, and the broader field of gifted education.

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APPENDIX A

Selection of Relevant Questions from the Semi-Structured Interview Protocol

General Outline with Additional Probing as Necessary

Academic/Career Paths and Outcomes

1. *What motivated you to enter EEP/UWAcad? (Probe for parental pressure)
2. Tell us more about the gifted/highly capable program you were in before entering EEP/UWAcad.
3. How has participation in EEP/UWAcad impacted your educational outcomes? (Probe educational history, choice of major for parental influences)
4. How has participation in EEP/UWAcad impacted your job outcomes?
5. Can you tell us more about your job trajectory? (working continuously, took breaks off, etc.) (Probe parental influences on decision-making)
6. (If working) Can you tell us more about your current job?
7. (If working) How satisfied are you in this job?
8. (If working or in school) How are you balancing your work/school and personal life? Please explain in more detail.

Values

9. Can you share about whether your values have changed over time? If so, which ones and why? Please explain in detail.
10. Can you share about whether your values have stayed the same? If so, which ones and why? Please explain in detail.

Relationships and Identity/Self-Concept

11. Can you share in more detail about the impact of the program on friendships? Romantic relationships?
12. Do you feel that participation in this program influenced how you see yourself? Your identity? If so, in what ways?
13. Because of participation in this program, did you feel that more was expected from you than if you had not participated? Please explain in more detail.
14. *Do you consider yourself a perfectionist? Please explain.

Parental and Personal Expectations

15. Can you tell us more about what you perceived your parents expectations were for you? (Probe change over time)
16. How do they differ from your own expectations for yourself?
17. *Did immigrant status or culture have any impact on the expectations?
18. *Do parental expectations differ by parent?
19. *How were parental expectations conveyed? (Probe implicit/explicit)
20. *Do you have any siblings? (Probe birth order effects) Were your parental expectations the same or different for them?
21. Can you describe your personal expectations for you? (Probe change over time)

Note. The additional questions that were added for this dissertation study are starred.

APPENDIX B

MEMBER CHECK FORM TEMPLATE

ID:	PROGRAM:	ENTRY YEAR:
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Major Understandings:

Are these understandings accurate?

- These main ideas reflect the interview.
- I need to clarify these main ideas.

Please write your clarification:

Question(s) for Participant:

APPENDIX C

MEMBER CHECK FORM SAMPLE

ID: XXXXXXXX	PROGRAM: EEP	ENTRY YEAR: 1999
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MAJOR UNDERSTANDINGS

PROGRAM MOTIVATION

- First received information about program after taking SATs. Then learned more from a close friend who had already enrolled. Applied after eighth grade.
- Entered program because EEP was seen as an opportunity to challenge self and felt would be successful in the program.
- Prior to entering, was identified and placed in gifted programming [program name] in first grade

PROGRAM IMPACT

- **Main benefits:**
 - 1) Life accomplishment and “looked impressive” to others.
 - 2) Gained more time, but also forced career decisions earlier (i.e. choosing major at younger age) which resulted in lost time spent trying to find what he wanted to do.
- **Detrimental aspects:**
 - 1) Delayed development of social skills. Felt program was too insular and that the Robinson Center did not encourage students to integrate with the rest of the university. Took 5-7 years to catch up socially.
 - 2) Negatively impacted academics because wasn't mature enough to take advantage of opportunity. Did not learn material deeply enough.
 - Would not do program again if given choice due to both academic and social reasons.
- Generally not very beneficial, except for cultivating some close friendships from the program and sounding impressive to others.

EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES

- TS fulfilled purpose of preparing for college – getting used to structure of college, thinking critically, improving writing skills.
- Double majored in Computer Science and Communication. Chose computer science because he had math aptitude and liked computers. For second major, mainly chose something easy to stay for another year in college because didn't feel ready to start career.
- In retrospect, felt that he had missed out on the traditional college experience by not being emotionally mature enough – wasted time being a kid and playing video

games. Felt he should have gotten that out of his system in high school. In this scenario, he would have been able to go to a more prestigious school, find a major that he was more interested in, and have a better educational foundation for graduate school. Felt then he could have reached “full potential.”

EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES

- In current career “almost by accident.” Ended up working in data science after a meandering path which involved several years working post BA, going back to get a Master’s in Economics in [Location], and then studying a PhD in Economics for 1 year in [institution name] before dropping out and getting a job in current field.
- EEP influenced this trajectory because where he is now is a result of all these different choices starting with the choice to enter EEP.
- Dropped out of PhD because felt to be a successful researcher in microeconomics, had to be at the very top of the field and did not feel he could be there due in part to lack of mathematical prowess.
- Not sure if he has found calling in life yet.

PARTICIPANT VALUES

- Values close friendships more over time.
- Values financial success less over time – especially due to being around a financially driven peer group in Master’s program that turned him off to that culture.

PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

- **Friendships:** program was too insular, but made some friends from the program.
- **Romantic Relationships:** challenging to date in college being a younger man since traditionally, the men are slightly older. Since he was three years younger than other college students, felt that limited the dating pool, and did not really meet anyone in the RC programs, which was also limited by a small size. Did not really meet anyone in college and is still single. Still feels “behind” in this area.
- **Parental Expectations**
 - Considered “golden child” because always exceeded expectations with academic success. Was not pushed to attend EEP.
 - Valued education. Were a team in their expectations. Believes culture and immigrant status did impact those expectations. Parents gave up professional jobs as teacher and working in bank to pursue economic opportunity in the US—owned a family business.
 - Felt expectation for first time when wasn’t living up to it – out of work for a year. Parents then explicitly encouraged him to pursue a PHD, which he did. They were disappointed when he dropped out but were ultimately supportive. Grandfather was actually more disappointed he did not finish his doctorate.

- In the past, fulfilling parental expectations was more important. Implicit effect.
- Currently, does not feel like parents have explicit expectations. Wants him to find calling in life and get married.
- **Personal Expectations**
 - 1) Be a good person
 - 2) Liked well by people he cares about
 - 3) Try to enjoy life
 - Living up to self expectations very important now. Changed over time. In past, wanted to be more financially successful – now more financial independence to pursue self-interests.
 - Always wants to improve self in some way. Still seeking challenge in life through competitive gaming (i.e. Magic the Gathering) and physical challenges (i.e. power lifting).

IDENTITY

- Core part of identity – distinguishes self as unique from others, and it’s had “profound effects” on life. Proud of the accomplishment. However, feels there were some undesirable effects as mentioned.

ADVICE FOR RC

- Help students integrate more into university life.

Are these understandings accurate?

- x These main ideas reflect the interview.
- I need to clarify these main ideas.

Please write your clarification:

Question(s) for Participant (Please type answer directly under question):

1. Were you challenged academically in the highly capable/gifted program you were enrolled in prior to entering EEP? If so, what made you choose EEP over continuing on in the traditional program?

I would say I never felt too overwhelmed by anything I was ever asked to do in school. EEP seemed like a very unusual challenge, but seeing a peer group that didn’t seem too different from me succeed made me think that it was very doable, and I wanted to pursue it because it was unusual and feasible.

2. What work did you do for three years right after graduating from your Bachelors and before pursuing your Master's?

I was a marketing analyst and a failed entrepreneur.

3. What about the lifestyle of the software engineer did not appeal to you?

At the time, my perception of that lifestyle was that there was a lot of working hours, many positions would be working on an unsatisfying application, there was not enough say in the direction of the product, and there was ultimately a ceiling on the financial reward aspect. As it turns out, the first issue is partially dimension of the individual company rather than the field as a whole, the second is true (but partially predicated on the engineer's choice to work on a "boring" application), and the third and fourth are true except in the case where the engineer starts their own company, which I didn't really explore as a viable option.

4. Were your parental expectations the same for your younger brother? If not, why and how were they different?

No – he did not display the same level of precociousness (and in particular, early mathematical prowess which sometimes is conflated with general intelligence), so my parents' academic expectations were always different for him.

5. Your parents said they would like for you to get married in the future. What expectations do they have for your potential marriage partner?

They want me to find someone highly educated and in a good (high-status), professional career. That is not as important for me.

6. You mentioned not quite having found your calling in life yet. What would your ideal job look like?

The important dimensions for me are high freedom / flexibility, low stress, and involved being in the creation of a finished product that I care about. Financial reward is less important, but money is so important for everything outside of work that I can't say it's not a factor – just not the most important one.

APPENDIX D

Coding Table Sample

Theme Code: Parental Expectations - Asian Culture and Immigrant Experience

ID	Date	Location	Quotes
Steven	6/2/2015	p. 47, l. 17-20	R: So did – do you think immigrant status or culture had any impact on their expectations for you? P: Of course.
Steven	6/2/2015	p. 47, l. 20-23, p. 48, l. 1-5	Partly because of the culture that they came from and partly because the people that immigrate...as a whole they're more motivated to become successful I think. I mean they're dramatically turning over their lives and they're giving up their professional credentials in their home country and pretty much doing something that almost anyone could do theoretically.
Steven	6/2/2015	p. 48, l. 19-22, p. 49, l. 1-2	They saw more opportunity in America to – I mean you know like if at the time – job, career was I mean it was like – it was rising economically, but it was still middle or near where it is now and America was – this is the union so like America was doing extremely well economically.
Lucas	5/27/2015	p. 5, l. 18-23, p. 6, l. 1-3	Certainly my parents, not to say they're stereotypical Asian parents, but since they were very education oriented I guess I'll say, and certainly there was a lot of drive from them to really say hey this is just expected now, right, your brother went through this, we think it's great for you if you go through this, and so I – the reason I pause a little bit here [interviewer name] is that when I think back it's almost like it didn't even seem like it was a choice.
Lucas	5/27/2015	p. 7, l. 22-23, p. 8. L. 1-2	He doesn't speak in Chinese and as a result neither do I [laughs] at least that's my story and I'm sticking to it [laughs]. There have been numerous attempts to learn Mandarin and Cantonese.
Lucas	5/27/2015	6-10p. 9, l. 7	Yeah my mom tried to have – I wouldn't say I went into any really disciplined Chinese schools – I would say I just went to Chinese classes at local community colleges; I took a couple quarters of Mandarin at UW and ten percent of it stuck.
Lucas	5/27/2015	p. 11, l. 7-10	Well that what I found out because I wouldn't say that I'm necessarily what I would say is the

			stereotypically Chinese cultural values that I grew up in; I wasn't in a Chinese-speaking household, right.
Lucas	5/27/2015	p. 11, l. 15-23	But back in the seventies and eighties I was probably one of two Asian students in my elementary school you know and so a lot of my external influences weren't the same I think. I wasn't in a traditional Chinese family because you know we didn't speak Chinese in the home; we didn't spend a lot of time with relatives, but I think from an expectation standpoint they still had instilled in them that education was the way to success.
Lucas	5/27/2015	p. 11, l. 23, p. 12, l. 1-8.	Now my dad has an electrical engineering degree from [institution] and while I was growing up he was working at [company], and so he clearly looked at that education as being extremely valuable to finding a professional job, and then my mom, I think she – well after she immigrated and was raising us she was the primary childcare in the family and she still would go at night to get an Associate Degree in Accounting.
Sanjay	5/5/2015	p. 38, l. 9-11	Yeah, so they and I were all born in Bombay and my dad moved to the States [inaudible] and then my mom and I moved here when I was like four I think.
Sanjay	5/5/2015	p. 38, l. 16-18	So yeah, you know I kind of remember it now; I can remember not having a lot of money as an immigrant kid, at all, and yeah.
Sanjay	5/5/2015	p. 39, l. 1-12	So this was like second, third hand now; I don't know how much of it is true anymore, but like the story kind of evolved, yeah like my mom and dad both worked as instructors or professors; I'm not sure. An ex-employee or one of their peers told my dad like – one of their older peers told my dad like you know you've got to get out of here; it's dead-end and so then he got into IT and then he started working as an IT consultant or whatever, contracts [inaudible] and in the States in various places. I think he worked in Yemen for a while and [inaudible] and then eventually he [inaudible] my mom came.

Sanjay	5/5/2015	p. 42, l. 1-13	Yeah, you know I think when I was younger they had certain expectations of like how – personal expectations - and they expected me to be close with my family, to participate in their culture and their religions to a certain degree, yeah they expected me to behave in a certain way and make certain personal choices, like not hangout with certain people or like not do this or that; they were like – I really rebelled very hard against all of those expectations that they had, and not – that’s the part, you know earlier I said I moved out for various reasons and that was part of it, and I mean – like I also said they’ve mellowed out a lot, so they really pulled back on us...
Sanjay	5/5/2015	p. 44, l. 7-16	No, I guess to a certain degree, especially my mom and I know I rebelled against a lot of those expectations, but in contrast to a lot of other immigrant families, and I felt this at the time too, in contrast to other immigrant families my parents didn’t really expect me to assimilate into or preserve their culture as much as a lot of immigrant families did. My mom’s explanation of that when I was visiting here was you know, we loved being here for a reason and we didn’t really like that culture either...
Sanjay	5/5/2015	p. 44, l. 20-23; p. 45, l. 1-5	Yeah I guess it was like a shock to them that I was – especially when I was a teenager – I was like a very strong atheist, actually I still call myself an atheist but I’m not frothing at the mouth or anything like that; that was a shock to them. It’s not like they were forcing me to participate in religious activities with them every week, but you know I guess they expected me to believe in the same things they did, which I didn’t at all.
John	5/26/2015	p. 43, l. 5-17	Well maybe the fact that they were immigrants had some impact...like many people who come to the U.S. my parents were both skilled professionals themselves and so while my mother quit working when I was born both of my parents had successful careers and so I think that was sort of an example that I wanted to live up to, and they sort of set their expectations for me based on that. But I don’t think if I had chosen not to be a salaried professional I don’t think my parents would have been angry at me in that way... I don’t – I think they would have supported the decision.

Timothy	6/4/2015	p. 75, l. 10-16	Oh well, the thing that – so immigrant status definitely was a big part I think because as I look at the past many times you are working with other immigrant parents too. I mean these immigrant parents have their own subculture and to some degree you might call it the Asian-American subculture because that’s kind of the circle that I traveled in, and they have their own values...
Timothy	6/4/2015	p. 75, l. 17-22; p. 76, l. 2-8	...and actually it’s really funny because it wasn’t until I was dating that person – she was actually an American, born and raised in America, a Caucasian – that I began to realize, I was like wow, Asian-American identity is different than American identity, like really different than American identity. Being Asian-American makes me fluent in some ways with both cultural identities, right, they’re bicultural and I get that, but I never felt how starkly that difference was until I was in that relationship. I was like oh wow, this is very different! The values and the expectations and everything was very different, even though I was born and raised in America.
Timothy	6/4/2015	p. 76, l. 8-15	So the immigrants I think – I’m going to stereotype and generalize alright – but the immigrants have this value that in this new context we have to achieve and we should be near the top, maybe second-best, maybe not the best but you know near the top, and oftentimes I’ve noticed that yes, they have to be the top in music, sports and academics and those kinds of things, right.
Timothy	6/4/2015	p. 76, l. 19-23; p. 77, l. 1-12	So I think my parents kind of subconsciously just imbibed this, imbibed these values right, from their peers and other things like that; it’s just the way that it is, the way that it is. For them it was this huge accomplishment for them to be able to come because of their parents who weren’t the wealthiest, to be able to come to America and be educated here; that was a huge sacrifice and huge accomplishment. For them one of the biggest things is we cannot waste this; we cannot waste our parents’ sacrifice to send us to school here; we have to make the most of it. Now my parents were not nearly as accomplished as we were in terms of academics, right, they still got good enough grades in certain areas or whatever, but my siblings and I who all went through the Academy, we were higher in terms of grades and stuff like that,

			partly, and it makes sense, because of the language and other things like that.
Timothy	6/4/2015	p. 78, l. 3-4	Well my mom came here for middle school and my dad came here for college.
Timothy	6/4/2015	p. 78, l. 8-10	My mom came here initially with her mom but her mom had to go back because of business in Indonesia so she had to keep that running.
Arun	5/5/2015	p. 67, l. 4-9	You know I happened to be born to parents who like moved to the States and this and that and so like you know maybe- maybe like it's – it's sort of incumbent upon me to – to – to like use – use that – use my time and skills to like help people out who weren't as fortunate as me.
Arun	5/5/2015	p. 110, l. 11-23	So basically my brother was born in India, I was born in the U.K. and then I was six I guess. We moved to the States. And one of the reasons why we moved to the States was because there was a lot of racism in the U.K. and there probably still is towards Indians you know like I – I...remember being like called racial slurs like while I was six years old by classmates and stuff. And that was –that was part of the reason for moving.
Arun	5/5/2015	p. 111, l. 7-20	...they kind of thought of America like this land of opportunity and where you know you can do whatever you wanted. I think that their emphasis on education on the value of hard work and on being a good person – that would have still been there even if they hadn't immigrated. It's beat into who they are as people and into their families. But I think it's not clear to me how much being immigrants affected...I don't think that you know for example, there are some immigrant stories, right, where it's like we came to this country with nothing and we worked for everything.
Arun	5/5/2015	p. 112, l. 5-19	I mean they did come to States like kind of poor but they were physicians and they've never had to really worry about having anything less than a sort of upper middle class life. So I don't think that aspect of the immigrant narrative influenced their expectations of me or my brother. I think it's more like who they are as people. They're pretty driven, they went to top schools. They went to the top medical school in India and like I said, my mom at least comes from a pretty highly academic achieving family. So yeah so those expectations they set for me and my brother would probably have been there anyway.

Arun	5/5/2015	p. 113, l. 9-12	You know there's a lot of emphasis in India for example on you know education and the value of a good education so in that sense there's that cultural influence.
Arun	5/5/2015	p. 91, l. 12-23	My parents aren't super conservative, you know in fact I would say they're extremely liberal for western parents but I think part of their attitudes towards dating...they never really had any rules for me or my brother when it came to for example, dating and relationships. They were always just like...don't hurt anybody, don't be frivolous...they never said you need to like marry an Indian girl.
Arun	5/5/2015	p. 114, l. 5-16	Or you know you need to make sure whoever you're with like satisfies criteria x, y and z. So to that extent I feel like...they almost kind of defied cultural expectations because a lot of my other friends I know who are like Indian-American or whose parents were first generation, their parents were like, "Yo you better bring home like an Indian person." Or you know whoever they are they better speak Hindi or they better like Indian food or this and that. And that was never there. That was never there with my parents you know.
Arun	5/5/2015	p. 114, l. 17-23, l. 1; p. 115, l. 1-5	...it's hard to say like exactly how the Indian culture would have influenced them and me through them. But I would say honestly like fairly little...Like whatever you do take it seriously. And I don't think that's so much culture as maybe just like – yeah them as human beings you know. So I would say honestly like in hindsight sort of not that much you know?