AN ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION OF

Jennie Ju for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Counseling presented on April 28, 2016.

Title: An Exploratory Study of How Southeast Asian American Female College Students Experience Family Dynamics

Abstract approved: _____
Deborah J. Rubel

The purpose of the dissertation was to gain an understanding of variables that influence the psychosocial health of Asian American college students. There is sufficient literature support indicating this population experience greater levels of intrapersonal and interpersonal distress compared to non-Asian peers, and the significant role of family in their well-being. The investigation this phenomenon was accomplished through systematic review of literature and implementation of a qualitative exploration of the experience of family dynamics of a defined subpopulaton – Southeast Asian American (SEAA) female college students. Literature review revealed four themes that influenced Asian American students' psychosocial health, namely, *intergenerational conflict, family acculturative stress, family obligation and expectations*, and *family support*. The result of the review revealed that few research studies attempted to understand this population from their subjective experience. Therefore, this study utilized grounded theory to gain a deeper understanding of how 12 SEAA female college students experienced family relationship patterns, and the resulting impact to their well-being. Three rounds of semi-structured interviews were completed, audio recorded and transcribed, and member check was conducted in the third round. Through the coding process, three categories emerged; *family dynamics, finding own voice and experiencing college*. Finding own voice

comprising of three development stages of *feeling trapped*, *negotiating dual goals*, and *going for it*, developed as the central category because of its essential relationship to how the participants experience family dynamics. Experiencing college proved to be significant in providing the context that adds tension to family dynamics in a way that led participants to feeling trapped, while challenging them to negotiate dual goals of personal desires vs. family expectations. When participants strongly believe in a personal goal, they confidently go for it, thus finding their own voice in the process. This study provides a narrative of how SEAA female young adults experience family dynamics. These findings as well as those from the literature review are relevant to the counseling profession in general, academic program development, counselor educators, and have implications for future research.

An Exploratory Study of How Southeast Asian American Female College Students Experience Family Dynamics

by
Jennie Ju

A DISSERTATION

submitted to

Oregon State University

in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the
degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Presented April 28, 2016
Commencement June 2016

Doctor of Philosophy dissertation of Jennie Ju presented on April 28, 2016.

APPROVED:

Major Professor, Representing Counseling

Dean of the College of Education

Dean of the Graduate School

I understand that my dissertation will become part of the permanent collection of Oregon State University libraries. My signature below authorizes release of my dissertation to any reader upon request.

Jennie Ju, Author

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

For a person who suffers from ADD throughout her life and struggles with multiple autoimmune problems to get to the end of this journey, require a community of friends, family, faculty and counselor educator colleagues who have generously provided the much needed support along the way. I would like to take this opportunity to extend my deepest gratitude to these extraordinary individuals.

I would like to express the deepest appreciation to my advisor and dissertation committee chair, Dr. Deborah Rubel. Your exceptional passion for grounded theory and your skillful guidance of this process both inspire and enable me to create a meaningful piece of qualitative research. You gently redirected me when I got lost in the process. You caringly provided reality check when I got stuck in illogical mode. You had faith in me when I struggled with health issues. You patiently pushed me when my job kept me from making progress on the dissertation.

I would like to thank the faculty who have graciously agreed to be on my dissertation committee and guided me to completion. I have been fortunate to have the support of Dr. Mary Aguilera, Dr. Amy Ford, Dr. Kok-Mun Ng, and Dr. Janet Nishihara—you have each given me insightful feedback, encouragement and time in this dissertation process. I would also like to further thank Dr. Ng, for offering numerous sage advice regarding my professional development. Dr. Ng, I am indebted to you for educating me about Narrative Practice, as it has made me a better clinician and liberated me from oppressive narratives in my personal life.

I would like to thank my friends at CECV, who always know when and how to support us physically, spiritually, and relationally. You prepared delicious, healthy meals

and cared for me whenever my symptoms become serious. You looked after my family when I was too busy to attend to them. You lift my spirit with your encouragement, prayer and friendship.

I would like to thank two tireless cheerleading colleagues who believed in me, mentored me and never failed to brighten my day with your humor - Dr. Norm Thiesen, my former clinical supervisor and Dr. Liz Wosley-George, my counselor educator friend who taught me much about multicultural issues in our profession.

To my husband, Jeremy, who made countless sacrifices in order to support me through this seemingly irrational journey. You faithfully accompanied me through my numerous health scares. Your unconditional love, your deep understanding of my struggles, your laughter and crazy sense of optimism, they all sustained me during the many discouraging moments of the past few years.

Finally, I want to express sincere appreciation to the twelve incredible young women who shared your rich stories of resilience and determination. Thank you for sharing your life experiences and trusted me to be a worthy caretaker.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS (continued)

TABLE OF CONTENTS (continued)

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF APPENDICES

LIST OF APPENDIX FIGURES

Chapter 1: General Introduction

Dissertation Overview

As Asian Americans are the fastest growing minority group in the United States, college campuses are experiencing increases in the enrollment of students of Asian descent (Pew Research Center, 2012). Due to Asian Americans' demonstration of academic achievement and economic success, they have been labeled a *model minority* (Sue, Sue, & Takeuchi, 1995). Although college enrollment can be a stressful time for any student, it is a particularly challenging time for Asian American students. In the recent two decades, empirical studies and news of high profile suicides among Asian American college students have brought into question the stereotypic image. The literature presented concern for the mental health of this population and the influence of family dynamics rooted in cultural norms.

This dissertation is a demonstration of scholarly work that uses the Manuscript Document Dissertation Format, as outlined by the Oregon State University Counselor Education Ph.D. Program Manual. Based on this format, Chapter 1 provides an introduction to the two journal manuscripts, and Chapters 2 and 3 address a single, common theme regarding the effect of family dynamics on Asian American college students. Chapter 2 is a literature review entitled, "The Influence of Family Dynamics on the Psychosocial Health of Asian American College Students," and Chapter 3 presents qualitative research in a manuscript titled, "How Southeast Asian American Female College Students Experience Family Dynamics." Chapter 4 links all manuscripts thematically to develop research conclusions that inform the clinical work with Asian American female college students on higher education campuses.

Asian American students present a higher risk of psychosocial distress; as they are becoming a significant presence on college campuses, a need exists for college counselors and student services staff to understand the influence of family dynamics on their well-being during college matriculation. This focus ties both manuscripts thematically on the topic of exploring how Asian American college students experience family dynamics. The first manuscript (Chapter 2) is a literature review on the theoretical and research literature on Asian American college students' experience of family dynamics over the past 15 years. The manuscript defines and describes the current population of Asian American college students, and provides theoretical and research backgrounds on the constructs related to family dynamics that impact the mental health of this population.

Family dynamics refer to the complex network of emotionally interdependent relationships, characterized by patterns of communication and behavior between family members and in relation to the family as a whole (Goldenberg, & Goldenberg, 2004). Family dynamics is a complex and multifaceted process. Through this literature review, the researcher identified four interrelated constructs as key influences to the psychosocial well-being of Asian American college students. These family dynamics constructs are: (a) intergenerational conflict, (b) family acculturative stress, (c) family obligations and expectations, and (d) family support. By identifying the main themes existent within the body of literature, this manuscript also serves multiple purposes for college administrators and student services personnel. First, it serves as a position paper that highlights the need to develop an understanding of the factors that may positively or negatively affect Asian American students' college adjustment. Second, identification of

these themes is significant in gaining in-depth knowledge of Asian Americans that will contribute to the development of multicultural knowledge and competence. Finally, this manuscript provides conclusions that highlight the need for further research, and presents culturally suitable recommendations that help to improve campus clinicians and student services personnel's work with Asian American female students.

The second manuscript (Chapter 3) describes the qualitative research methodology used to complete a study on the experiences of family dynamics among Southeast Asian American women enrolled in college. The reason for the gendered attention was to present a narrower focus on this phenomenon and because of the higher risk factors for psychosocial maladjustment among Asian American women (Berkel & Constantine, 2005; Cheng, Fancher, Ratanasen, Conner, Duberstein, Sue and Takeuchi, 2010; Chung, 2001). A grounded theory approach was utilized to gain a deeper understanding of how Southeast Asian American female college students articulate and experience family dynamics. The purpose of this approach was to discover an emerging theory that informs clinical work with this growing, yet underserved, population.

Importance to the Profession of Counseling

These two manuscripts are potentially significant to the professional counseling literature for several reasons. First, demographic statistics indicate that there are a significant number of Asian Americans on college campuses, and demographers anticipate that this trend will continue. The Higher Education Research Institute (2007) reported that of the ethnic groups attending college in the United States, Asian Americans are the fastest growing group. Furthermore, the American Council on Higher Education reported a 37.4% increase in Asian Americans enrolling in college between 1998 and

2008 (Kim, 2011). Approximately 65% of the Asian immigrants who were 18 years old or older and who arrived between 2007 and 2010 are enrolled in college or graduate school or hold a college degree (Pew Research Center, 2012).

Second, as the Asian American college population continues to grow, there is an increasing need to understand the mental health situation of this demographic. Individuals of Asian ancestry may express mental health concerns and symptoms differently (Cheng et al., 2010; Lin, Inui, Kleinman, & Womack, 1982; Meyer, Dhindsa, Gabriel, & Sue, 2009; Morrison & Downey, 2000; Okazaki, 1997). Researchers have found that compared to non-Asians, Asian American college students are at a higher risk of psychosocial distress, such as mood disorders, suicidal ideation, and interpersonal conflict (Abe & Zane, 1990; Choi & Rogers, 2010; Kearney, Draper, & Baron, 2005; Leong, Leach, & Gupta, 2008; Wong, Uhm, & Li, 2012; Young, Fang, & Zisook, 2010). For Asian American college students, parent-child conflicts are among the most common presenting problems in the mental health setting (Constantine, Chen, & Ceesay, 1997). Researchers have identified family conflict as a significant risk factor for Asian American college students, increasing the likelihood of depressive symptoms and other forms of psychological distress (Lee & Liu, 2001); poor academic performance (Bahrassa, Syed, Su, & Lee, 2011; Wong, Brownson, & Schwing, 2011); and serious consideration of suicide (Wong et al., 2011). However, the Asian American family unit also serves as a protective factor against external threats (Chhuon & Hudley, 2008; Maramba, 2008; Wong et al., 2011; Wong et al., 2012).

Third, few empirical studies exist that focused on the phenomenon of Asian American college students' inner experiences regarding family dynamics. In particular,

there are limited gendered studies and qualitative research with the Asian American college population. Therefore, this study will address the gap in literature and provide a voice to the Asian American female college population regarding their relational experiences within the family context.

In addition to the growing need for support and the underutilization of mental health services on college campuses among Asian American college students, further concerns have arisen regarding the lack of preparation among student support personnel in providing services to this population. The likelihood of counselors on college campuses seeing Asian American college students who are experiencing distressing family dynamics is high. Therefore, this population needs more guidance—in terms of developing awareness, gaining knowledge, and developing skills related to the experiences of this population—in order to provide quality academic support services. It is important for college counselors to understand how Asian American female college students experience family dynamics in order to help address their specific psychological needs and enhance support service delivery in a more ethically and culturally competent manner.

Manuscript One

The purpose of the first manuscript, titled "The Influence of Family Dynamics on the Psychosocial Health of Asian American College Students," is to review and thematically characterize current scholarly research on the family dynamics of college students of Asian ancestry. This review aims to provide answers to the following questions:

1. How do Asian American college students experience adjustment to college life?
2. What are the variables that make college enrollment a particularly challenging time for Asian Americans?
3. What is the impact of this life stage on Asian Americans?
4. What role do family dynamics play on the psychosocial adjustment of Asian American college students?
5. How do Asian American college students experience family dynamics?

In seeking to answer these questions, two themes emerged from the empirical research on Asian American college students and their mental health. First, transition to college is a challenging time for Asian American young adults, as demonstrated by a noticeable decline in academic performance between high school and college matriculation and evidence of greater psychological distress compared to non-Asian peers (Abe & Zane, 1990; Bahrassa et al., 2011; Castillo, Zahn, & Cano, 2012; Okazaki, 1997). Second, family dynamics represent an important source of psychosocial stress for Asian American college students (Greenberger & Chen, 1996; Lee & Liu, 2001; Maramba, 2008; Wong et al., 2011) as evidenced by parent-child conflicts being among the most common presenting problems within this population (Constantine et al., 1997).

Through this literature review, risk factors related to family dynamics that are present during college years for Asian Americans were identified as intergenerational conflict, family acculturative stress, and family obligation and expectations. These variables are interconnected and overlapping, and found to be related to both

psychological distress and poor academic performance among this population (Bahrassa et al., 2011; Wong et al., 2011).

This review is aimed toward publication in order to add to the body of knowledge found within college education and college counseling journals. Specifically, the manuscript seeks to better inform the counseling and student services fields of practice and training implications when working with Asian American college students. The literature review concludes with implications and recommendations for future research.

Manuscript Two

Manuscript Two titled, "An Exploratory Study of How Southeast Asian American Female College Students Experience Family Dynamics," presents a grounded theory study of the family dynamics experience of Southeast Asian American female college students. As discussed in the previous section, the first manuscript's literature review illuminated the significance of family relational patterns on the psychosocial health of Asian American college students. However, little is known about the level of impact or the process of how family dynamics influence depressed mood, interpersonal relations, college adjustment, and suicidal behavior. Therefore, the research question guiding this study was, "How do Southeast Asian American female college students experience family dynamics?" In addressing this question, the researcher aimed to increase an understanding of the process through which this population experiences family-related dynamics.

Given the complexity and the multifaceted nature of family dynamics among Southeast Asian American families, the researchers deemed it imperative to base the study on a qualitative research approach to help make sense of the students' experiences.

The scarcity of qualitative research literature representing Southeast Asian American female college students' experience related to family dynamics warrant a methodology that would give prominence to the shared experience of this population. The intent of this study was to explore: (a) what is the lived experiences of Southeast Asian American young adults, in the context of family dynamics and college adjustment; and (b) how these experiences have impacted their well-being.

Grounded theory is a methodology that builds theoretical constructs through the systematic and progressive gathering and analysis of data that emerges from the perceptions and experiences of participants (Charmaz, 2006; Corbin & Strauss, 2008). It focuses on identifying themes related to social interaction and behavior in order to enhance comprehension and explanation of social phenomena. Themes are a way to explore and establish common parameters among individuals or groups with the aim to generate or discover a theory (Creswell, 2007).

Purposeful sampling (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Patton, 1990) was employed by selecting twelve female university students who meet specific, predefined characteristics in order to maximize information. The gender criteria served to narrow the scope of the study and address the higher risks associated with female Asian American college population. With the exception of gender, the researcher selected interviewees that represented a cross-section of demographic categories, including class, age, nativity, and ethnicity, in adherence to the principle of purposeful sampling. Two additional criteria were included: having some awareness of their family's influence on their college experience, and their ability to reflect on and articulate their experiences.

The researcher made initial contact with and referrals to participants through campus-based student clubs and organizations and those who know and/or work with currently enrolled Asian American female college students. With the goals of respectful treatment of participants and protecting their rights (Morrow, 2005), the researcher adopted the ethical guidelines based on the suggestions of Denzin and Lincoln (2005)—specifically, informed consent, confidentiality, and privacy—in all stages of the research process. The researcher committed to ensuring trustworthiness, and adhered to the framework of grounded theory in the data collection and analysis processes, as discussed in the second manuscript.

During the first round of interviews, participants were asked the following questions:

1. Describe what it is like to be a Southeast Asian American on a college campus.
2. Describe the experience of being a member of a Southeast Asian American family.
3. How has the process of you starting college affected your family's relations?
4. What do you perceive as the source of difficulties you are experiencing with your family?
5. What thoughts and feelings did you experience related to difficult family dynamics?
6. What are some ways in which your family provides support for your college education?
7. Describe what all of the family dynamics you are experiencing mean to you.

Through the interviews, the researchers explored the phenomenon of Southeast Asian American college students' inner experiences surrounding family issues. Along with allowing participants a voice regarding their lived experiences, the purpose of the study is to use a grounded theory qualitative approach to develop a theory that will provide a framework for further research within this population. As with Manuscript One, the researcher also has a goal of publication within college counseling journals for the second manuscript.

Organization

Both the first manuscript (Chapter 2) and the second manuscript (Chapter 3) are thematically linked to the importance of adding to scientific inquiry on the subject of Asian American college students' experience of family dynamics. Chapter 2 provides a literature review on scholarly work regarding family-related issues faced by Asian American students as they adjust to college life. Given the lack of current theoretical understanding and existing literature regarding specific experiences and issues faced by Asian Americans in the college setting, the researcher provides the rationale for a qualitative study on the experiences of female Asian American college students in Chapter 3. Chapter 3 also describes the processes of data collection and analysis and the steps to ensuring trustworthiness of sound research and results. In Chapter 4, the researcher links all of the manuscripts thematically to develop research conclusions that inform clinical work with Southeast Asian American female college students on higher education campuses.

Chapter 2

A Review of the Literature on Influence of Family Dynamics on the Psychosocial Health of Asian American College Students

Jennie Ju
Oregon State University
Deborah J. Rubel, Ph.D.
Oregon State University

Abstract

The authors reviewed the literature on Asian American college students and their family dynamics. Family dynamics consist of communication and interactive patterns among family members. Researchers have found that Asian American college students are at risk of psychosocial distress (e.g., mood disorders, suicidal ideation, and interpersonal conflict), and that family dynamics may influence their mental health as well as their academic performance. Family dynamic variables that may impact the psychosocial well-being of Asian American college students are intergenerational conflict, family acculturative stress, family obligations and expectations, and family support. The manuscript provides conclusions and implications for practice, training, and research from available evidence.

Keywords: Asian American, college students, family dynamics, mental health

Introduction

There are currently 18.9 million Asian Americans, which represents over six percent of the population in the United States (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012). This demographic is the fastest growing racial or ethnic group in the nation, making up the largest share of recent immigrants, with approximately 11 million born abroad (Pew Research Center, 2012). Census demographers have projected that by the year 2050, there will be 41-42 million residents of Asian descent; this group will comprise 11% of the United States population (Passel & Cohn, 2008; U.S. Census Bureau, 2014).

The demographics of college enrollment follow a similar trend to that in the United States, with Asian Americans comprising six percent of the total enrollment in higher education (Kim, 2011; Liang & Sedlacek, 2003). The Higher Education Research Institute reported that of the ethnic groups attending college in the United States, Asian Americans are the fastest growing group (Ruzek, Nguyen, & Herzog, 2011). Further, the American Council on Higher Education reported a 37.4% increase in Asian Americans enrolling in college between 1998 and 2008 (Kim, 2011). Of the Asian immigrants who were 18 years old or older and who arrived between 2007 and 2010, approximately two thirds (65%) were enrolled in college or graduate school or held a college degree (Pew Research Center, 2012). These statistics indicate a significant presence of Asian Americans on college campuses, and researchers anticipate this trend to continue.

Despite the increased visibility of Asian American students on college campuses, a review of research literature yielded only a handful of studies on their psychological adjustment (i.e., distress, mood disorders, interpersonal conflicts). Additionally, the existing literature indicated several causes for concern. Ying, Lee, Tsai, Lee, and Tsang

(2001) found a lack of support for the model minority image among Asian American college students beyond the academic realm. Empirical researchers have found that compared to Euro-Americans, Asian American college students exhibited elevated levels of depression (Young et al., 2010), scored significantly higher on measures of depression and social anxiety (Okazaki, 1997), and experienced increased levels of intrapersonal and interpersonal distress (Abe & Zane, 1990). Kearney, Draper, and Baron (2005) investigated college students from 40 universities across the United States and found that Asian American students had the highest levels of psychological distress of all ethnic groups. This distress relates to higher prevalence of suicidal ideation (Choi & Rogers, 2010; Wong et al., 2012) and higher rates of attempted suicide among Asian American college students compared to Euro-American students (Leong et al., 2008).

However, there is a perception that Asian Americans have few psychological or education problems (Kim, Omizo, & Salvador, 1996) due to their academic achievement and economic success (Pew Research Center, 2012; Sue & Sue, 1972). This image derives from references to low rates of criminal activity, juvenile delinquency, and divorce, as well as better physical health and longer life expectancies (Sue, Sue, Sue, & Takeuchi, 1995). Scholars have argued that this stereotypical view of Asian Americans, along with cultural or familial practices, often mask mental health and adjustment problems (Meyer et al., 2009) and contribute to the scarcity of research on Asian American college students' psychological adjustment (Castillo et al., 2012).

Another factor that reinforces the stereotype of Asian Americans' well-being and is of concern is the cultural practice of underutilizing psychological services (Abe-Kim, Takeuchi, & Hwang, 2002; Chang & Sue, 2003; Ruzek et al., 2011; Sue et al., 1995;

Takeuchi & Zane, 1991). In addition to culture-bound barriers to help-seeking such as lower level of acculturation, misconceptions about mental health, and fear of loss of face (Leong, Kim & Gupta, 2011), Asian Americans are more likely than Euro-Americans to have delayed recognition of mental health symptoms (Lin et al., 1982), resulting in these individuals seeking help only when they exhibit greater levels of disturbance (Meyer et al., 2009; Okazaki, 1997). This population is also considered *hidden suicidal ideators*, because they are less likely to self-disclose suicidal thoughts (Morrison & Downey, 2000). Additionally, Okazaki (1997) stated that Asian American college students' peers often underestimate their expressions of distress.

In examining the influence of family dynamics on the psychosocial health of Asian American college students, it is essential to understand that the Asian family unit holds a place of significance. In Asian families, each individual has a clearly-defined role and position in the family hierarchy, as determined by age, gender, and social class (Kramer, Kwong, Lee, & Chung, 2002). Asian American families highly value children, and the children's primary role is to excel academically. The Pew study (2012) found that nearly four in 10 Asian American immigrant parents want their children to do well in school. Children are socialized with emphasis on traditional values and conformity to societal and parental expectations (Qin, 2008), and failure to meet the family's expectations brings shame to the entire family.

Abe-Kim et al. (2002) found that family conflict precipitated Chinese Americans' seeking medical and mental health services. The Asian cultural norms of interdependency and defining the self in relation to, rather than separately from, others could contribute to

Asian Americans finding family conflict distressing (Ying, Coombs, & Lee, 1999) and explain the significance of family conflict on suicide (Leong et al., 2008).

Researchers utilizing the National Latino and Asian American Study (NLAAS, 2004) have found that family-related variables play central roles in Asian Americans' mental health (Cheng et al., 2010; Masood, Okazaki, & Takeuchi, 2009; Wong et al., 2012). Higher numbers of negative interactions with relatives were associated with increased likelihood of 12-month major depressive disorder (MDD), whereas supportive interactions significantly lowered this risk among Asian Americans (Chae, Lee, Lincoln, & Ihara, 2011). NLAAS data related to South Asian Americans revealed that family dynamics, such as family support and family cultural conflict, do influence psychological health (Masood et al., 2009). Furthermore, women with high amounts of family conflict were more likely to have suicidal ideation and attempts than men or individuals with low amounts of family conflict (Cheng et al., 2010).

For college students of Asian descent, researchers have identified family conflict as a significant risk factor that increases the likelihood of depressive symptoms and other forms of psychological distress (Lee & Liu, 2001) and poor academic performance (Bahrassa et al., 2011; Wong et al., 2011). Family conflicts also led to serious consideration of suicide in the previous 12 months (Wong et al., 2011). Compared to Euro-American college students, Asian American college students consistently present less favorable pictures of their family relationships (i.e., less parental warmth and acceptance, more parental criticism, more conflict with both parents; Greenberger & Chen, 1996), including "strained relationships" among Filipina American female college students (Maramba, 2008).

Family dynamics refer to the complex network of emotionally interdependent relationships among family members within a multigenerational and historical framework (Goldenberg & Goldenberg, 2004). They consist of patterns of communication and behavior between family members and in relation to the family as a whole. Past researchers have indicated that family dynamics in the Asian American population involve a complex and multi-dimensional process that occurs during young adults' college matriculation. The current study investigates the interaction between family dynamics and psychosocial well-being among Asian American college students, with the aim to provide helpful information and implications to the counseling community in general and to college counselors and administrators in particular. The scope of this review is limited to empirical studies in peer-reviewed journals found through electronic databases, specifically, *Academic Search Premier, PsycInfo,* and *EBSCOhost*. The search title words that were entered for selection were limited to *Asian American, college, intergenerational, family,* and *mental health*. The researchers included articles published between 1995 and 2012, and literature that provide contextual information relevant to the topic.

The purpose of this literature review is to examine Asian American college students' psychosocial health in the context of family relations and identify culturally-appropriate therapeutic interventions for working with this population. Given that parent-child conflicts are among the most common presenting problems in mental health settings, it is essential for college counselors to be familiar with research on how this demographic is impacted by their family backgrounds. Therefore, this review aims to provide answers to the following questions:

1. What are the key variables that contribute to college adjustments among Asian Americans?
2. What is the role of family in Asian Americans' adjustment to college?
3. How do Asian American young adults experience college?
4. How do Asian American young adults experience family dynamics?

Other goals of this review include highlighting avenues for future research and training specific to working with the Asian American college population. The literature review concludes with such implications and limitationsof the existing literature, and recommendations for future research.

Family Dynamics and the Psychosocial Health of Asian American College Students

The transition to college may be a particularly challenging one for Asian American young adults. This population demonstrates a decline in academic performance between high school and college matriculation, as well as evidence of greater psychological distress compared to their Euro-American peers (Abe & Zane, 1990; Bahrassa et al., 2011; Castillo et al., 2012; Okazaki, 1997). Reports of suicide by Asian American college students who were high-achieving and appeared to be well-adjusted (Guzman, 2012; Lam 2009; Ramanujan, 2006) result in increasing concern regarding the psychological well-being of this population in recent years. Suicide rates in Asian American youths and young adults are higher than those of the same-age groups in the general population (Duldulao, Takeuchi, & Hong, 2009), and suicide is the second leading cause of death among Asian American women ages 20 to 24, with unintentional injuries ranking first (Center for Disease Control, 2002; 2007).

Current literature has indicated that key sources of psychosocial stress that are relevant to Asian Americans young adults occur in family contexts. This review revealed four inter-connected family-related constructs that influence the psychosocial health of Asian American college students: (a) intergenerational conflict, (b) family acculturative stress, (c) family obligations and expectations, and (d) family support. In this review, the researchers discuss the relationship between each of these constructs and the psychosocial health of Asian American college students.

Intergenerational Conflict

Family dynamics that lead to conflict have been associated with adolescent emotional distress (Chung, Flook, & Fuligni, 2009). As Euro-American children reach adolescence, they are encouraged to differentiate from their parents to pursue their own interests (Ying et al., 1999). This begins the process of conflict over issues of autonomy and independence (Lee & Liu, 2001) and typically declines in late adolescence and young adulthood when individuals enter college, with no detrimental impact on psychosocial health (Han & Lee, 2011; Lee, Su & Yoshida, 2005). However, intergenerational conflict in the Asian American community is complicated by challenges of delayed autonomy, parenting style, and acculturative stress.

Prior empirical research revealed that Asian American college students experience more intergenerational conflict than non-Asian students. Further, this social phenomenon generally coincides with the developmental stage when Asian American children enter college and pursue autonomy (Greenberger & Chen, 1996; Lee & Liu, 2001; Uba, 1994). Asian American parents' practice of prolonged parenting leads to the persistence (or worsening) of intergenerational conflict, and interferes with college

adjustment and psychological well-being for the younger generation (Lee & Liu; Greenberger & Chen). Han and Lee's (2011) study of Vietnamese American college students found intergenerational conflict to be a major life stressor associated with depressive symptoms. Koh, Shao, and Wang (2009) found that Asian American individuals often respond by delaying the pursuit of personal autonomy in order to maintain family interdependence and cohesion and avoid conflict with parents.

An added dimension of intergenerational conflict among Asian families is related to parenting style, which researchers have found to be a strong predictor of college adjustment (Strage, 2000) and adolescent psychosocial adjustment (Parke & Buriel, 2006). Parenting style is strongly linked to a broad range of indicators of adjustment during the adolescent years, including academic achievement, conduct problems, health and risk behavior, and emotional health (Russell, Chiu, Crockett, & Doan, 2010). In comparison to Euro-American parents, Asian American parents tend to utilize the authoritarian style to a greater extent (Chao, 1994; Park, Kim, Chiang, & Ju, 2010). In the family environment, authoritarian style is characterized by (a) high levels of parental strictness, demands, control, and directiveness; (b) parents' emotional detachment from children; (c) children's unquestioning obedience to parents; and (d) low levels of parental responsiveness (Baumrind, 1968). This description is consistent with both Chinese American adolescents' and parents' perspectives of Chinese parents (Wu & Chao, 2005).

These families perceive the authoritarian style as conducive to training children to be hardworking, self-disciplined, and obedient. At the same time, such parental emotional detachment in which children felt a lack of caring, support, and understanding from their parents leads to poor mental health (Han & Lee, 2011), detrimental academic outcomes

(Chao, 2001), and learned helplessness (Strage, 2000) among Asian American college students. Higher levels of parental protection were related to decreased levels of satisfaction with college and lower GPAs for East Asian Americans (Chang et al., 2010) and heightened levels of distress and psychological symptoms of somatization among Asian Americans ages 12 to 23 (Lim, Yeh, Liang, Lau, & McCabe, 2009).

Asian American college students experience high levels of parental expectations, parental criticism, and parental control (Castro & Rice, 2003; Chang, 1998; Wang & Ratanasiripong, 2010), as well as parent-driven perfectionism—i.e., being raised in a family environment in which parents conditionally base love on one's performance. Parent-driven perfectionism has been associated with increased depression among Asian American students who generally have stronger relational interdependence with their parents (Yoon & Lau, 2008), and this is accompanied by learned self-criticism, feeling fearful of not attaining their parents' expectations, and decreased self-esteem, as well as increased levels of hopelessness and suicidal potential (Chang, 1998; Wang & Ratanasiripong, 2010).

Perceptions that one's parents are critical or disapproving can create a sense of an unfulfilled need to belong and an unfulfilled need to contribute to the welfare of one's family. In applying Joiner's (2005) interpersonal theory of suicide to study Asian American college students, Wong, Koo, Tran, Chiu, and Mok (2011) found that a desire for suicide results from the joint presence of perceived burdensomeness (i.e., unfulfilled expectations imposed by one's family) and thwarted belongingness (i.e., experiences of isolation and troubled relationships).

However, when students experienced higher levels of parental and peer attachment, as in Han and Lee's (2011) study with Vietnamese American college students, their depressive symptoms declined. Han and Lee surmised that when the students experience emotional closeness, care, and understanding in their interaction with their parents, they feel a sense of control over their own lives, and this improved their mental well-being.

This literature review revealed that parent-child relationship presents a significant factor for the Asian American college students' well-being. On one hand, family conflicts due to intergenerational differences are associated with psychosocial maladjustment and poor academic performance. Culturally-influenced family variables, such as prolonged parenting and parenting style also contribute to intergenerational challenges in the Asian American community. On the other hand, students adjust better when they experience higher levels of parental attachment.

Family Acculturative Stress

Whereas intergenerational conflict is due to developmental challenges relating to negotiating autonomy and independence from parents, family acculturative stress is a consequence of the varying levels of adaptation to the host culture, which lead to conflicts in values and lifestyles between parents and children (Han & Lee, 2011; Rumbaut, 2005). As is common among immigrant populations, the influence of intergenerational conflict is exacerbated by stress due to intercultural conflict. Researchers found that heightened levels of cultural differences between Asian American parents and children were related to increased likelihood of family conflict (Cheng et al., 2010; Choi et al., 2009; Lee & Liu, 2001). Family acculturative stress is more intense in

families in which parents' adherence to Asian values is strong, and there is a tendency to utilize parenting behaviors that are incongruent with children's level of acculturation (Park et al., 2010).

Family acculturative stress originates in early adolescence when children perceive discrepancies between their acculturation and that of their immigrant parents. It intensifies by late adolescence when children enter college (Lee & Liu, 2001; Tsai-Chae & Nagata, 2008) and begin developing their own personal identities, or as the acculturative gap becomes more evident (Ying et al., 2001).

Whereas children of immigrants are quickly acquiring the English language, adopting Western values, and becoming socialized into mainstream American culture, parents often retain traditional values and expectations for their children. While increased levels of values acculturation were found to be associated with improved mental health (Miller, Yang, Hui, Choi, & Lim, 2011), adoption of Euro-American beliefs and behaviors such as independence, individualization, and assertiveness can create familial distancing and conflict (Castillo et al., 2012; Hwang, 2006). Conflicts resulting from family acculturative stress are linked to a breakdown in communication, incongruent cultural values, and feelings of alienation from one another (Castillo et al., 2012; Ying et al., 2001), as well as depressive symptoms for members of both generations (Hwang, Wood, & Fujimoto, 2010). Parents can feel abandoned, isolated, and underappreciated when children fail to meet parental expectations in adhering to traditional values (Hwang, 2006). For Asian American college students, perceptions of large discrepancies in values between themselves and either parent can manifest in familial disconnection, increases in parent-child conflict, and psychosocial problems (Chung, 2001; Dinh & Nguyen, 2006;

Lee et al., 2005; Su et al., 2005) including suicidal behavior (Greenberger & Chen, 1996; Lau et al., 2002; Ying & Han, 2007). Heightened perceptions of gaps between parents' and children's values also relate to the increased intensity of perceived conflicts between Asian American college students and their parents (Ahn, Kim, & Park, 2008).

Furthermore, children's rapid acquisition of English fluency and adaption to the dominant culture often result in role reversal in the parent-child relationship. These changes in roles and status occur because children are called on to act as translators, cultural experts, and family representatives to the outside world (Chung, 2001), causing premature assumption of adult responsibilities and adding stress to family relations (Ying et al., 2001).

Based on this literature review, it appears that the differential pace of acculturation between parents and children in Asian immigrant families is associated with family conflict and psychosocial distress. Asian American college students experience increased family distancing and conflict when parents strongly adhere to traditional values. Perceptions of discrepancies in values generally begin in early adolescence and intensify during early adulthood.

Family Obligations and Expectations

The third family dynamic that influences the psychosocial health of Asian American college students is family obligations - defined as "a collection of values and behaviors related to children's assistance and support to and respect for their parents, siblings, and extended family" (Fuligni, 2007, p. 97). Asian American children are socialized on the importance of bringing honor to one's family (Strage, 2000) and fulfilling their duties to their family, which includes improving parents' reputations and

contributing to the family income (Chhuon & Hudley, 2008). These families often consider academic success the best way to repay parents for their sacrifices and to bring recognition to the family (Koh et al., 2009).

Asian American parents expect that their college-aged children will give priority to family obligations and duties by seeking autonomy at a later age, which creates stress and anxiety for the young adults (Feldman & Rosenthal, 1990; Fuligni & Pedersen, 2?002). Balancing family demands while pursuing educational goals brings frustration, stress, and disruption to Asian American college students' studies (Chhuon, Kyratzis, & Hudley, 2010; Maramba, 2008). These distresses are reinforced by adult children's "self-expectations" to fulfill duties, such as (a) spending time with family; (b) respect for family; (c) following parents' advice about choice of friends, jobs, or college majors; and (d) future assistance, such as providing financial assistance to parents and living close to parents (Leu, Schroth, Obradovic, & Cruz, 2012). Increased self-expectations of helping the family are associated with declines in self-reported frequency of family conflict, whereas inconsistencies between self-expectations and family expectations for assistance may be more predictive of mental health risks for Asian American college students (Oishi & Sullivan, 2005).

Fulfilling family obligations carries different gendered expectations for Asian American college students. Female students reported more parent-child conflicts than their male peers, particularly related to dating and marriage (Chung, 2001), curfews and chores (Maramba, 2008), expectations to live with their families until marriage (Chhuon et al., 2010), and limiting work hours (Sy & Brittain, 2008). Among East Asian American immigrants, Koh et al. (2009) found that daughters experienced gender-related

socialization pressures; consequently, sons and daughters respond differently to parents' Asian-oriented values.

In this literature review, the researchers also found a connection between a sense of family obligations and identity development (Juang & Syed, 2009). Specifically, among Asian American college students, there is a strong relationship between sense of familial obligations and ethnic identity (Juang & Nguyen, 2010). Fuligni (2007) presented two possible explanations: (a) parental emphasis on familial obligations is linked to increased adherence to ethnic culture, which impacts how children are socialized; and (b) close relationships between youths and parents lead the former to strongly identify with their parents' ethnic heritage and, therefore, have increased sense of family obligations. Parental expectations and involvement extend to Asian Americans' educational and career aspirations (Chung, 2001) to choose majors with high potentials for economic mobility (Tang, Fouad, & Smith, 1999). Phinney and Ong (2002) posited that such high level of expectations and control are associated with lower levels of personal goal-setting and higher levels of depression among Vietnamese American college students. The authors added that self-concordant goals require some level of autonomy, independence, and separateness, which characterize Euro-American ideals rather than Asian collectivistic culture.

Asian American students experience stress and interruptions to their academic studies as they are caught between (a) a strong sense of obligation to repay their parents for their sacrifices and (b) their own developmental needs of pursuing autonomy and establishing their own goals. In addition, Asian American students' perceptions that they

have not fulfilled parental expectations are associated with declines in psychosocial health.

Family Support

Based on this literature review, it appears that the three family dynamic variables that were discussed previously (i.e., intergenerational conflict, family acculturative stress, and family obligations and expectations) may be primarily risk factors. A fourth variable, family support, serves as a protective factor that promotes psychological health in Asian American college students, and can be manifested directly and indirectly. In the context of families, direct and active support can come in the forms of providing advice, affection, practical help with schooling, and shared agency. Indirect support is culturally prescribed as family cohesiveness, which provides a sense of belonging, a buffer against external threats, and empathy that is cultivated through shared experiences.

Chhuon and Hudley's (2008) example of indirect family support among Cambodian-American undergraduates takes the form of maintaining bonds with members from their home communities who they perceived as empathetic and understanding of their adjustment struggles. While they experience pressures of minority status and difficulties to access adequate support on campus, receiving emotional support from their home community was essential in their successful adjustment to college. Similarly, Filipina-American interviewees in Maramba's (2008) study perceive family as their greatest support in school, affirmation of their identity, and strong influences on important life decisions. Family support creates a strong protective factor among Asian American college students, so that living with a family member lowered the likelihood of reporting morbid thoughts and serious suicidal ideation (Wong et al., 2011). A related

protective factor against suicidal behavior particularly among low-proficiency Asian Americans is family cohesion, which is an indicator of belongingness (Wong et al., 2012). Conversely, a lack of family cohesion may result in many Asian Americans losing their main sources of social support, which makes this a key risk factor for the onset of suicidal behaviors (Lau et al., 2002) and among Asian American college students (Leong et al., 2008).

Among Asian American college students, direct family support is expressed in various forms. For example, family support through offer of help and advice by family are major factors in coping with stress from racial discrimination and reducing depressive symptoms (Kuo, 1995; Wei, Heppner, Ku, & Liao, 2010). Supportive parental behavior such as verbal and nonverbal affection are protective factors against the negative effects of values gap between parents and their college age Asian American children (Park, Vo, & Tsong, 2009). Another common way that Asian American parents provided practical support was in the area of assistance with educational goals (Wong et al., 2012).

Existing research indicated that compared to Euro-Americans, Asian American college students reported higher levels of non-shared agency with parents (i.e., parental directing and noninvolvement); lower levels of shared agency (i.e., parental accommodation, support, or collaboration); and poorer college adjustment (Chang et al., 2010). Chang et al. posited that although transition to college may be a time to begin exercising their autonomy, Asian American students benefit from collaborative decision-making, discussion, and negotiation with their parents. Collaboration reflects authoritative parenting style through granting of a high degree of autonomy accompanied by warmth and responsiveness. In addition, perceived shared agency in education with

parents was associated with college adjustment for Asians as well as Euro-American research participants (Chang et al., 2010).

While it is important to understand the risks, it is essential to identify protective factors, such as family support, that can promote positive academic outcomes and contribute to the mental well-being among Asian American college students. Researchers have indicated that the results of family support, whether it is provided directly or indirectly, are (a) a buffer against external threats; (b) provide a sense of belonging and identity development; and (c) are associated with better college adjustment, thus reducing depressive symptoms and suicidal behavior.

Summary

The purpose of this literature review was to examine the ways in which Asian American college students' psychosocial health is impacted by family relations. Overall, the results provided support for the importance of family and family dynamics as primary influences on the mental well-being of this population. The review revealed three interrelated risk factors for psychosocial health and college adjustment among Asian American college students, specifically: (a) intergenerational conflict, (b) family acculturative stress, and (c) family obligations and expectations. Interestingly, the review also revealed gendered differences in roles and family expectations in this group. In particular, research has suggested that gender-based demands placed on the Asian American college population by their home communities result in increased prevalence of distress among young women.

Empirical research related to protective family dynamic factors was scarce and, therefore, integrated into one broad category: family support. Protective family variables,

such as advice-giving, empathy, understanding, cohesiveness, and shared agency, promote resilience and provide a buffer against external threats, such as racial discrimination, isolation from the campus community and adjustment to college.

Implications for College Counseling

The results of this review indicated that psychosocial health among Asian American college students is strongly influenced by family dynamics. Intergenerational conflict, family acculturative stress, family obligations and expectations, and family support are interrelated variables that contribute to Asian Americans' well-being and academic performance during college matriculation. The implications for college-based counseling with this population can be conceptualized through three overlapping elements, specifically: (a) clinician awareness, (b) knowledge of the client population, and (c) development of skills for effective therapeutic work. In addition to therapy-oriented implications, there are a number of preventative interventions at the institutional level, particularly as relate to student services that can help moderate the phenomenon of family-related distress among Asian American college students.

Counselors must gain awareness of their personal values and biases that can promote or interfere with culturally-sensitive approaches. Therapists who lack awareness of their own beliefs and reactions to issues that Asian American college students discuss in therapy sessions can end up viewing their patients through the lens of the dominant culture, and this can create potential harm to clients and the therapeutic process.

It is inappropriate to treat college students of Asian descent in the same way that one would treat students from the dominant culture. For this demographic, parent-child conflicts are among the most common presenting problems in mental health counseling

(Constantine et al., 1997). It would be beneficial for counselors on college campus is gain multicultural competency by receiving training on family relational patterns among Asian Americans and have understanding of the cultural nuances of Asian family dynamics. Working collaboratively to examine patterns of interaction among family members is critical to understanding Asian American college students' mental health needs.

In consideration of the fact that a significant number of Asian Americans on colleges campuses are from immigrant families, knowledge of the socio-cultural and familial variables ought to include an understanding of this population's developmental and acculturative challenges. Such knowledge can help therapists employ culturally-appropriate interventions such as normalizing intergenerational conflict as typical developmental experiences, and reframing family acculturative stress as a cultural issue rather than an interpersonal problem. Doing so can help move the distressed student from a blaming mindset toward a collaborative mode against common family challenges. Furthermore, encouraging the client to focus on identifying and celebrating commonalities that are present in the family can help the Asian American college student to (a) feel a greater sense of connection with their parents, and to (b) embrace their own cultural identity while learning to appreciate the traditional Asian values of their parents.

Given that family plays a prominent role in the psychosocial development of Asian American college students, it would appear that a successful therapeutic approach, albeit an unconventional one in college setting, is family therapy. Family counseling on college campuses is not a commonly-accepted practice. However, in the case of Asian Americans, due to the expectations of parents and delayed autonomy, family involvement may be beneficial. Family members' involvement has an added benefit because family

support is a protective factor in adjustment to college life. A small recent body of research has supported involvement of family members in counseling in college settings (Ahmad-Stout & Nath, 2013; Haber & Merck, 2010; Jackson, 2009). Jackson posited that the benefits of family therapy on campuses include a broadening of the lens through which to see individual concerns, and a more nuanced social justice analysis on issues of gender, race, and class is highlighted. It is advisable for college-based therapists to receive training in conducting family counseling and in assessing the suitability of this approach for their Asian American clients. In the absence of adequate training, and given that the campus environment creates tension regarding parental involvement due to students' developmental levels, family therapy is contraindicated (Jackson).

At the institutional level, one preventative approach is in educating the families of Asian American students. Depending on logistics and budgets, freshmen and new student orientation events provide excellent opportunities for outreach to Asian, as well as non-Asian, families. At these events, either staff from the college counseling center or a local community agency that serves Asian populations can provide psycho-education. Relevant and non-threatening educational topics are (a) issues related to college adjustment, (b) possible challenges for incoming students, and (c) the role of family support. The purpose is to raise awareness among students' families on what to expect as young adults enter college, and to suggest ways to provide support to students.

Additional preventative interventions include offering psycho-educational workshops, support groups, connecting students to Asian American faculty, and creating literature resources for students of Asian descent during the academic year. The focus of workshops, group work, and resources would be to help this student population (a) gain

awareness of the roles of cultural and familial dynamics on their college experiences, (b) recognize signs of distress and steps to take when distress occur, (c) to understand family difficulties in the context of socio-cultural influences, and (d) learn ways to cope with family-related difficulties. Workshops and group work—support groups in particular—can facilitate creation of a student community with shared experience. Being able to connect with campus faculty and staff from a familiar cultural background can create a sense of comfort to Asian American college students.

References

Abe, J. S., & Zane, N.W. (1990). Psychological maladjustment among Asian and White American college students: Controlling for confounds. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 37(4), 437-444.

Abe-Kim, J., Takeuchi, D., & Hwang, W. (2002). Predictors of help seeking for emotional distress among Chinese Americans: Family matters. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, *70*(5), 1186-1190.

Ahmad-Stout, D. J., & Sanjay, R. N. (2013). South Asians in college counseling. *Journal of College Student Psychotherapy*, *27*(1), 43-61.

Ahn, A. J., Kim, B. S. K., & Park, Y. S. (2008). Asian cultural values gap, cognitive flexibility, coping strategies, and parent-child conflicts among Korean Americans. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*, *14*(4), 353-363.

Bahrassa, N. F., Syed, M., Su, J., & Lee, R. M. (2011). Family conflict and academic performance of first-year Asian American undergraduates. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*, *17*(4), 415-426.

Baumrind, D. (1968). Authoritarian vs. authoritative parental control. *Adolescence*, *3*(11), 255-272.

Castillo, L. G., Zahn, M. P., & Cano, M. A. (2012). Predictors of familial acculturative stress in Asian American college students. *Journal of College Counseling*, 15(1), 52-64.

Castro, J. R., & Rice, K. G. (2003). Perfectionism and ethnicity: Implications for depressive symptoms and self-reported academic achievement. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*, *9*(1), 64-78.

Center for Disease Control and Prevention. (2002). *Leading causes of death by age group, Asian or Pacific Islander females: United States, 2002.* Retrieved from http://www.cdc.gov/women/lcod/2002/02asian.pdf

Center for Disease Control and Prevention. (2007) *Leading causes of death by age group, Asian or Pacific Islander females: United States, 2007.* Retrieved from http://www.cdc.gov/women/lcod/2007/07asian females.pdf

Chae, D. H., Lee, S., Lincoln, K. D., & Ihara, E. S. (2012). Discrimination, family relationships, and major depression among Asian Americans. *Journal of Immigrant and Minority Health*, *14*(3), 361-370.

Chang, E. C. (1998). Cultural differences, perfectionism, and suicidal risk in a college population: Does social problem solving still matter? *Cognitive Therapy and Research, 22*(3), 237-254.

Chang, E. S., Heckhausen, J., Greenberger, E., & Chen, C. (2010). Shared agency with parents for educational goals: Ethnic differences and implications for college adjustment. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, *39*(11), 1293-1304.

Chang, D. F., & Sue, S. (2003). The effects of race and problem type on teachers' assessments of student behavior. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, *7*(2), 235-242.

Chao, R. K. (1994). Beyond parental control and authoritarian parenting style: Understanding Chinese parenting through the cultural notion of training. *Child Development, 65*(4), 1111-1119.

Chao, R. K. (2001). Extending research on the consequences of parenting style for Chinese Americans and European Americans. *Child Development*, *72*(6), 1832-1843.

Chhuon, V., & Hudley, C. (2008). Factors supporting Cambodian American students' successful adjustment into the university. *Journal of College Student Development, 49*(1), 15-30.

Chhuon, V., Kyratzis, A., & Hudley, C. (2010). Sources of coherence in the life stories of Cambodian American women at the university. *Journal of Language, Identity, and Education*, *9*(5), 347-362.

Choi, J. L., & Rogers, J. R. (2010). Exploring the validity of the College Student Reasons for Living Inventory among Asian American college students. *Archives of Suicide Research*, *14*(3), 222-235.

Choi, J. L., Rogers, J. R., & Werth, J.L. (2009). Suicide risk assessment with Asian American college students: A culturally informed perspective. *The Counseling Psychologist, 37*(2), 186-218.

Chung, G. H., Flook, L., & Fuligni, A. J. (2009). Daily family conflict and emotional distress among adolescents from Latin American, Asian, and European backgrounds. *Developmental Psychology*, *45*(5), 1406-1415.

Chung, R. H. G. (2001). Gender, ethnicity, and acculturation in intergenerational conflict of Asian American college students. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*, *7*(4), 376-386.

Constantine, M., Chen, E. C., & Ceesay, P. (1997). Intake concerns of racial and ethnic minority students at a university counseling center: Implications for

developmental programming and outreach. *Journal of Multicultural Counseling and Development*, 25(3), 210-218.

Dinh, K. T., & Nguyen, H. H. (2006). The effects of acculturative variables on Asian American parent-child relationships. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, *23*(3), 407-426.

Feldman, S. S., & Rosenthal, D. A. (1990). The acculturation of autonomy expectations in Chinese high schoolers residing in two Western nations. *International Journal of Psychology*, *25*(3), 259-281.

Fuligni, A. J. (2007). Family obligation, college enrollment, and emerging adulthood in Asian and Latin American families. *Child Development Perspectives*, *1*(2), 96-100.

Fuligni, A. J., & Pedersen, S. (2002). Family obligation and the transition to young adulthood. *Developmental Psychology*, *38*(5), 856-868.

Goldenberg, I., & Goldenberg H. (2004). *Family therapy: An overview* (6th ed.). Belmont, CA: Thomson Brooks/Cole Publishing Co.

Greenberger, E., & Chen, C. (1996). Perceived family relationships and depressed mood in early and late adolescence: A comparison of European and Asian Americans. *Developmental Psychology*, *32*(4), 707-716.

Guzman, M. A. (2012). Wendy H. Chang '12 Remembered for artistic spirit and infectious laugh. *The Harvard Crimson*. Retrieved from http://www.thecrimson.com/article/2013/5/9/joanna-li-12-dies/

Haber, R., & Merck, R. (2010). Intruder or resource? The family's influence in college counseling centers, *Journal of College Student Psychotherapy*, *24*(3), 162-180.

Han, M., & Lee, M. (2011). Risk and protective factors contributing to depressive symptoms in Vietnamese American college students. *Journal of College Student Development*, *52*(2), 154-166.

Hwang, W. (2006). Acculturative family distancing: Theory, research, and clinical practice. *Psychotherapy Theory, Research, Practice, Training*, *43*(4), 397-409.

Hwang, W., Wood, J. J., & Fujimoto, K. (2010). Acculturative family distancing and depression in Chinese American families. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, *78*(5), 655-667.

Jackson, K. (2009). The use of family therapy within a university counseling center. *Journal of College Student Psychotherapy*, *23*(4), 253-261.

Juang, L. P., & Nguyen, H. H. (2010). Ethnic identity among Chinese-American youth: The role of family obligation and community factors on ethnic engagement, clarity, and pride. *Identity: An International Journal of Theory and Research, 10*(1), 20-38.

Juang, L. P., & Syed, M. (2010). Family cultural socialization practices and ethnic identity in college-going emerging adults. *Journal of Adolescence, 33*(3), 347-354.

Kearney, L. K., Draper, M., & Baron, A. (2005). Counseling utilization by ethnic minority college students. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology, 11*(3), 272-285.

Kim, B.S.K., Omizo, M.M., & Salvador, D.S. (1996). Culturally relevant counseling services for Korean American children: A systematic approach. *Elementary School Guidance and Counseling*, 31, 64-73.

Koh, J. B. K., Shao, Y., & Wang, Q. (2009). Father, mother and me: Parental value orientations and child self-identity in Asian American immigrants. *Sex Roles, 60*(7-8), Apr 2009, 600-610.

Kramer, E. J., Kwong, K., Lee, E., & Chung, H. (2002). Cultural factors influencing the mental health of Asian Americans. *Western Journal of Medicine, 176*(4), 227–231.

Kuo, W. H. (1995). Coping with racial discrimination: The case of Asian Americans. *Ethnic & Racial Studies, 18*(1), 109-127.

Lam, A. (2009). Asian Americans' rising suicide rates: Three students take their lives. *New America Media*. Retrieved from http://news.newamericamedia.org/news/view_article.html?article_id=c2b8f3a43bbe3e0445f23274028d24a7

Lau, A. S., Jernewall, N. M., Zane, N., & Myers, H. F. (2002). Correlates of suicidal behaviors among Asian American outpatient youths. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology, 8*(3), 199-213.

Lee, R. M., & Liu, H. T. (2001). Coping with intergenerational family conflict: Comparison of Asian American, Hispanic, and European American college students. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 48*(4), 410-419.

Lee, R. M., Su, J., & Yoshida, E. (2005). Coping with intergenerational family conflict among Asian American college students. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 52*(3), 389-399.

Leong, F. T. L., Kim, H. H. W., & Gupta, A. (2011). Attitudes toward professional counseling among Asian-American college students: Acculturation, conceptions of mental illness, and loss of face. *Asian American Journal of Psychology*, *2*(2), 140-153.

Leong, F. T. L., Leach, M. M., & Gupta, A. (2008). Suicide among Asian Americans: A critical review with research recommendations. *Suicide among racial and ethnic minority groups: Theory, research, and practice. Series in death, dying, and bereavement* (pp. 117-141). New York, NY: Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group.

Leu, J., Schroth, C., Obradovic, J., & Cruz, R. A. (2012). Family assistance attitudes and family cultural conflict: A comparative study of second-generation Asian American and native-born European American emerging adults. *Asian American Journal of Psychology*, *3*(3), 133-144.

Liang, C. T. H., & Sedlacek, W. E. (2003). Utilizing factor analysis to understand the needs of Asian American students. *Journal of College Student Development*, *44*(2), 260-266.

Lim, S., Yeh, M., Liang, J., Lau, A. S., & McCabe, K. (2009). Acculturation gap, intergenerational conflict, parenting style, and youth distress in immigrant Chinese American families. *Marriage & Family Review*, *45*(1), 84-106.

Lin, K., Inui, T. S., Kleinman, A. & Womack, W. M. (1982). Sociocultural determinants of the help-seeking behavior of patients with mental illness. *Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease, 170*(2), 78-85.

Maramba, D. C. (2008). Immigrant families and the college experience perspectives of Filipina Americans. *Journal of College Student Development,* 49(4), 336-350.

Masood, N., Okazaki, S., & Takeuchi, D. T. (2009). Gender, family, and community correlates of mental health in South Asian Americans. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*, *15*(3), 265-274.

Meyer, O., Dhindsa, M., Gabriel, C., & Sue, S. (2009). Psychopathology and clinical issues with Asian American populations. In N. Tewari, & A. Alvarez (Eds.), *Asian American psychology: Current perspectives*. New York, NY: Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group, 519-536.

Miller, M. J., Yang, M., Hui, K., Choi, N., & Lim, R. H. (2011). Acculturation, enculturation, and Asian American college students' mental health and attitudes toward seeking professional psychological help. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, *58*(3), 346-357.

Morrison, L. L., & Downey, D. L. (2000). Racial differences in self-disclosure of suicidal ideation and reasons for living: Implications for training. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology, 6*(4), 374-386.

Oishi, S., & Sullivan, H. W. (2005). The mediating role of parental expectations in culture and well-being. *Journal of Personality*, *73*(5), 1267-1294.

Okazaki, S. (1997). Sources of ethnic differences between Asian American and White American college students on measures of depression and social anxiety. *Journal of Abnormal Psychology*, *106*(1), 52-60.

Ong, A. D., & Phinney, J. S. (2002). Personal goals and depression among Vietnamese American and European American young adults: A mediational analysis. *The Journal of Social Psychology*, *142*(1), 97-108.

Park, Y. S., Kim, B. S. K., Chiang, J., & Ju, C. M. (2010). Acculturation, enculturation, parental adherence to Asian cultural values, parenting styles, and family conflict among Asian American college students. *Asian American Journal of Psychology*, *1*(1), 67-79.

Park, Y. S., Vo, L. P., & Tsong, Y. (2009). Family affection as a protective factor against the negative effects of perceived Asian values gap on the parent-child relationship for Asian American male and female college students. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*, *15*(1), 18-26.

Parke, R. D., & Buriel, R. (2006). Socialization in the family: Ethnic and ecological perspectives. In N. Eisenberg, W. Damon, & R. M. Lerner (Eds.), *Handbook of child psychology: Vol. 3, Social, emotional, and personality development* (6th ed.; pp. 429-504). Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Passel, J. S., & Cohn, D. (2008). Social and demographic trends: U.S. Population Projections: 2005-2050. Pew Internet & American Life Project. Retrieved from http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/files/2010/10/85.pdf

Pew Research Center. (2012). Social and demographic trends: The rise of Asian Americans, *Pew Internet & American Life Project.* Retrieved from http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2012/06/19/the-rise-of-asian-americans

Qin, D. B., (2008). Doing well vs. feeling well: Understanding family dynamics and the psychological adjustment of Chinese immigrant adolescents. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, *37*(1), 22-35.

Ramanujan, K. (2006). *Health expert explains Asian and Asian-American students' unique pressures to succeed*. Retrieved from http://chinspirations.com/mhsourcepage/wp-content/uploads/Asian-students.pdf

Rumbaut, R. G. (2005). Assimilation, dissimilation, and ethnic identities: The experience of children of immigrants in the United States. In M.T. Rutter (Ed.), *Ethnicity and causal mechanisms. The Jacobs Foundation series on adolescence* (pp. 301-334). New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Russell, S. T., Chu, J. Y., Crockett, L. & Doan, S. N. (2010). The meanings of parent-adolescent relationship quality among Chinese American and Filipino American adolescents. In S. T. Russell, L. J. Crockett, & R. Chao (Eds.), *Asian American parenting and parent–adolescent relationships. Advancing responsible adolescent development* (pp. 79-100). New York, NY: Springer Science, Business Media.

Ruzek, N. A., Nguyen, D. Q., & Herzog, D. C. (2011). Acculturation, enculturation, psychological distress and help-seeking preferences among Asian American college students. *Asian American Journal of Psychology, 2*(3), 181-196.

Su, J., Lee, R. M., & Vang, S. (2005). Intergenerational family conflict and coping among Hmong American college students. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 52*(4), 482-489.

Sue, D. W., & Sue, S. (1972). Ethnic minorities: Resistance to being researched. *Professional Psychology, 3*(1), 11-17.

Sue, D. W. & Sue, D. (2013). *Counseling the culturally diverse: Theory and practice* (6th ed.). Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Sue, S., Sue, D.W., Sue, L., & Takeuchi, D.T. (1995). Psychopathology among Asian Americans: A model minority? *Cultural Diversity and Mental Health, 1*(1), 39-51.

Sy, S. R., & Brittain, A. (2008). The impact of family obligations on young women's decisions during the transition to college: A comparison of Latina, European American, and Asian American students. *Sex Roles, 58*(9-10), 729-737.

Tang, M., Fouad, N. A., & Smith, P. L. (1999). Asian Americans' career choices: A path model to examine factors influencing their career choices. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 54*(1), 142-157.

Tsai-Chae, A. H., & Nagata, D. K. (2008). Asian values and perceptions of intergenerational family conflict among Asian American students. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology, 14*(3), 205-214.

Uba, L. (1994). *Asian Americans: Personality patterns, identity, and mental health.* New York, NY: Guilford Press.

U.S. Census Bureau. (2014) *National population projections: Summary tables*. Retrieved from

http://www.census.gov/population/projections/data/national/2014/summarytables.html.

Wang, C. D. C., & Ratanasiripong, P. (2010). Adult attachment, cultural orientation, and psychosocial functioning of Chinese American college students. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*, *16*(2), 101-109.

Wei, M., Heppner, P. P., Ku, T., & Liao, K. Y. (2010). Racial discrimination stress, coping, and depressive symptoms among Asian Americans: A moderation analysis. *Asian American Journal of Psychology*, *1*(2), 136-150.

Wong, Y. J., Brownson, C., & Schwing, A. E. (2011). Risk and protective factors associated with Asian American students' suicidal ideation: A multicampus national study. *Journal of College Student Development*, *52*(4), 396-408.

Wong, Y. J., Koo, K., Tran, K. K., Chiu, Y., & Mok, Y. (2011). Asian American college students' suicide ideation: A mixed-methods study. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, *58*(2), 197-209.

Wong, A., Wong, Y. J., & Obeng, C. S. (2012). An untold story: A qualitative study of Asian American family strengths. *Asian American Journal of Psychology*, *3*(4), 286-298.

Wong, J. Y., Uhm, S.Y., & Li, P. (2012). Asian Americans' family cohesion and suicide ideation: Moderating and mediating effects. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, *82*(3), 309-318.

Wu, C., & Chao, R. K. (2005). Intergenerational cultural conflicts in norms of parental warmth among Chinese American immigrants. *International Journal of Behavioral Development 29*(6), 516-523.

Ying, Y., Coombs, M., & Lee, P. A. (1999). Family intergenerational relationship of Asian American adolescents. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*, *5*(4), 350-363.

Ying, Y., & Han, M. (2007). The longitudinal effect of intergenerational gap in acculturation on conflict and mental health in Southeast Asian American adolescents. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, *77*(1), 61-66.

Ying, Y., Lee, P. A., Tsai, J. L., Lee, Y. J., & Tsang, M. (2001). Relationship of young adult Chinese Americans with their parents: Variation by migratory status and cultural orientation. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, *71*(3), 342-349.

Yoon, J., & Lau, A. S. (2008). Maladaptive perfectionism and depressive symptoms among Asian American college students: Contributions of interdependence and

parental relations. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*, *14*(2), 92-101.

Young, C. B., Fang, D., & Zisook, S. (2010). Depression in Asian-American and Caucasian undergraduate students. *Journal of Affective Disorders*, *125*(1-3), 379-382.

Chapter 3

An Exploratory Study of how Southeast Asian American Female College Students Experience Family Dynamics

Jennie Ju
Oregon State University
Deborah J. Rubel
Oregon State University

Abstract

Southeast Asian American college students are at risk of psychosocial distress, and researchers have found that family dynamics influence Asian American college students' mental health. However, few researchers have attempted to study Southeast Asian American young adults and their experiences of family dynamics from the emic perspective. In this study, the researchers utilized qualitative research, specifically grounded theory, to gain a deeper understanding of how 12 Southeast Asian American female college students experience family relationship patterns. Through grounded theory methodology, the researchers constructed a theory to describe the process of *finding their own voice* as a response to family dynamics. This involved the experience of *feeling trapped*, *negotiating dual goals,* and *going for it* to pursue personal goals while strengthening family relationships. The emerging theory may inform practice or provide a framework for future research with Southeast Asian American female college students. Additionally, the researchers discussed the implications for clinical work with this population on college campuses.

Keywords: Southeast Asian American, college students, family dynamics, qualitative

Introduction

Demographic statistics indicate that there are an increasing number of Asian American students on college campuses across the United States (Kim, 2011; Liang & Sedlacek, 2003; Ruzek, Nguyen, & Herzog, 2011). In addition, demographers have projected that the Asian American population will double by 2060 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014). Asian Americans represent six percent of the total enrollment in higher education, and the American Council on Higher Education reported a 37.4% increase between 1998 and 2008 (Kim, 2011). Nearly 65% of Asian immigrant adults 18 years old and older who arrived between 2007 and 2010 were enrolled in college or graduate school or held a college degree (Pew Research Center, 2012).

Despite the increased visibility of Asian American students on college campuses, the research on their psychosocial adjustment has been scarce. The existing studies have tended to emphasize the overly favorable stereotype of this population (Castillo, Zahn, & Cano,, 2012), although demonstration of the model minority image is limited to the academics (Ying, Lee, Tsai, Lee, & Tsang, 2001). There is a perception that Asian Americans have few psychological or education problems (Kim, Omizo, & Salvador, 1996) due to this population's demonstration of academic achievement and economic success (Pew Research Center, 2012; Sue, D.W. & Sue, S., 1972; Sue, S., Sue, D.W., Sue, L., & Takeuchi, 1995).Empirical researchers have found that in comparison to Euro-Americans, Asian American college students exhibited elevated levels of distress, particularly with depression and anxiety (Kearney, Draper, & Baron, 2005; Okazaki, 1997; Young, Fang, & Zisook, 2010), and greater levels of intrapersonal and interpersonal pressures (Abe & Zane, 1990). Scholars have indicated that this

psychological distress extends to high prevalence of attempted suicide (Leong, Leach, & Gupta, 2008), and suicidal ideation (Choi & Rogers, 2010; Wong, Uhm, & Li, 2012), including hidden suicidal ideation, because they are unlikely to seek professional help for psychological distress and reluctant to self-disclose suicidal thoughts (Morrison & Downey, 2000). This underutilization of psychological services among Asian American college students can be attributed to a number of factors. The reasons include incongruence between psychotherapy and traditional Asian values, a lack of familiarity with the mental health system, a lack of culturally-competent therapists (Abe-Kim, Takeuchi, & Hwang, 2002), and delays in recognizing mental health symptoms (Choi & Rogers, 2010; Okazaki, 1997; Meyer, Dhinsa, Gabriel, & Sue, 2009; Sue et al., 1995).

When Asian Americans do seek formal medical and mental healthcare services, it is often precipitated by family conflict (Abe-Kim et al., 2002; Cheng et al., 2010; Masood, Okazaki, & Takeuchi, 2009; Wong et al., 2012), with parent-child conflicts among the most common presenting problems among the college population in mental health settings (Constantine, Chen, & Ceesay, 1997). Researchers have suggested that family dynamics for Asian American college students is a set of multi-dimensional processes. Family dynamics is a complex network of emotionally interdependent relationships among family members that operate within a multigenerational and historical framework (Goldenberg & Goldenberg, 2004). These dynamics include patterns of communication and behavior between family members and in relation to the family as a whole.

Empirical studies have suggested that Asian American family dynamics comprises of the following key factors during college matriculation years: (a)

intergenerational conflict; (b) family acculturative stress; (c) family obligations and expectations; and (d) family support. Intergenerational conflict is associated with Asian American adolescent emotional distress (Chung, Flook, & Fuligni, 2009) that worsens during college enrollment and is a significant risk factor for depression, anxiety, other forms of psychological distress (Chae, Lee, Lincoln, & Ihara, 2011; Greenberger & Chen, 1996; Lee & Liu, 2001; Uba, 1994), serious consideration of suicide (Wong, Brownson, & Schwing, 2011), poor academic performance (Bahrassa, Syed, Su, & Lee, 2011; Wong et al., 2011), learned helplessness (Strage, 2000), and maladaptive perfectionism (Castro & Rice, 2003; Yoon & Lau, 2008). Among Asian American college students, distressing family dynamics is exacerbated by family acculturative , which is an intercultural conflict common among immigrant families. This is a consequence of parents' and children's varying levels of adaptation to the host culture and leads to a breakdown in communication, incongruent cultural values, feelings of alienation from one another (Castillo et al., 2012; Hwang, 2006; Ying et al., 2001), and related to increased risk of clinical depression (Hwang, Wood, and Fujimoto, 2010). Family expectations and obligations refer to family desires that Asian American children are to give priority to, and to seek autonomy at a later age (Feldman & Rosenthal, 1990; Fuligni, 2007; Fuligni & Pedersen, 2002). The fourth element of family dynamics present among Asian American college students is family support, characterized by positive interactive provision; this is a protective relational interactions associated with lowering the risk of major depressive disorder (Chae et al., 2011).

Scholars have also indicated that there are gender differences with Asian American females experiencing higher levels of familial distress, negative psychosocial

health, and suicidal ideation and attempts (Cheng et al., 2010), as well as lower life satisfaction in the presence of perceived family conflict as compared to their male peers (Berkel & Constantine, 2005). Female students reported relatively higher levels of intergenerational conflict, particularly as related to dating and marriage (Chung, 2001), chores and curfew (Maramba, 2008), work while in college (Sy & Brittain, 2008), and expectations to live with family until marriage (Chhuon, Kyratzis, & Hudley, 2010).

In this study, the researchers purposefully narrowed the scope of the research by focusing on the less studied segments of the Asian American demographic, (a) the Southeast Asian American subpopulation and (b) female college students, for two reasons. First, the rationale for the selected focus is due to limited research data on the relational dynamics among Southeast Asian American families. Second, as discussed above, research literature and available statistics present female college students of Asian descent to be at greater risk of psychosocial distress as compared to the male students. Therefore, the research question is stated as, "How do Southeast Asian American female college students experience family dynamics?"

Based on the latest decennial census data, Southeast Asian Americans (SEAA) as a subgroup of the general Asian American population, grew at a rapid rate of 31% in the decade between 2000 and 2010 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012). While the term "Asian American" covers 20 nationality groups (Kitano, 1981), SEAA population refers to a community of diverse ethnic groups that originated from 11 nations located at the southeastern region of the Asia continent. These nations are: Burma (aka Myanmar), Brunei, Cambodia, East Timor, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam. SEAA are uniquely different from the larger Asian American

group, in that the former is comprised of war refugees such as the Cambodians, Hmongs, Karennis, Laotians, Mien, and Vietnamese, as well as more recent waves of immigrants (Lee & Mock, 2005). Sue and Sue (2011) stated that given the war-related experience of many Southeast Asian individuals, it is highly likely that they "suffer from serious PTSD and other forms of major affective disorders." Researchers have also surmised that as late arrivals, SEAA families are at the earlier stages of acculturation as compared to Japanese and Chinese Americans who first immigrated a century earlier, or the Koreans, Filipinos, and the second wave of Chinese who immigrated following the 1965 Immigration Act (Kitano, 1981).

Literature on family relational patterns among this segment of the American demography is scant, with only two qualitative studies involving Southeast Asian subgroup to illuminate their college experience. Maramba's (2008) qualitative work with Filipina American students uncovered three themes of (a) family/parent influence, (b) home obligation/gender differences, and (c) importance of maintaining and balancing their Filipina American identity within the context of their home and college experience. Cambodian American students in another study perceived integration into the campus environment and maintaining contact with and receiving support from their home community as essential factors in their successful adjustment to college (Chhuon & Hudley, 2008). In a survey of Vietnamese American college students, Han and Lee (2011) discussed that while perceived racial discrimination and intergenerational conflict serve as life stressors, intergenerational conflict was found to be positively associated with depressive symptoms. In Su, Lee, and Vang's (2005) study of the impact of intergenerational family conflict among Hmong college students, the researchers found

that (a) social support seeking was effective in buffering the distress when family conflict was perceived to be high; and (b) problem solving augmented the distress when there is low perception of control over the conflict. The study also indicated that self-blame moderated the relationship between family conflict and distress whereas blaming the parents did not. Similarly, in a study of Vietnamese American college students, Phinney and Ong (2002) found lower levels of personal goal self-concordance and higher levels of depression in comparison to Euro-American students, and attributed this to the collectivistic ideals which frown upon pursuit of autonomous and individualistic goals.

Although the five studies discussed above illuminated the challenges of SEAA college students, each focused on a single ethnicity, and only two are gendered studies. Furthermore, discussion from the students' emic perspective of their experience and response to distressing family interactions is limited. How the participants as SEAA female college students experience family dynamics is worth understanding in a holistic way, in order to gain a deeper understanding of the impact to the students' psychosocial health and to receive insight into the process of responding to the distressing pattern of family relations.

The social phenomenon being explored relates to Southeast Asian American college students' inner experiences surrounding family issues. The intent was to provide SEAA college students with an opportunity to reflect and explore on the role of their families in the students' academic journey, and to make known their stories. Through their experiential narratives, the researchers gained a deeper understanding of how Southeast Asian family culture and circumstances impact these young adults' psychosocial health.

The research methodology best suited to address the complex and multi-faceted nature of this topic, and to give prominence to the shared experience of a group of SEAA female college students, is grounded theory. Grounded theory is well suited for this purpose due to its strength in creating understanding of processes such as those found in relational dynamics. The researchers recorded and transcribed individual interviews, and then created codes in sequence based on their "relative salience" (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p.67). These strategic and systematic steps enabled creation of more detailed meaning, which led to the final grounded theory.

Methods

Strauss and Corbin (1998) described qualitative research as "any kind of research that produces findings not arrived at by means of statistical procedures or other means of quantification" (p. 17). The nature of the research question should guide one's selection of a research design (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Creswell, 1998; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000) and qualitative research is best suited to answer questions of "how" or "what" (Creswell, 2007). The purposes of this study are to explore: (a) what are the lived experiences of Southeast Asian American college students in the context of family dynamics, and (b) how these experiences impacted students' psychosocial adjustment. The nature of these purposes and the scholarly gap provide the rationale for approaching this topic through a qualitative framework.

Grounded theory is a research method designed to construct a coherent and explanatory narrative from data, while utilizing a systematic and progressive gathering and analysis of data, followed by grounding the concepts in data that accurately describe the participants' own voices (Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

It incorporates both the art and the science aspects, thus allowing the researcher to remain flexible in the use of procedures, while being systematic in developing theoretical constructs related to social interactions; it also allows richer comprehension and explanation of social phenomena such as family relational patterns (Charmaz, 2006; Corbin & Strauss). The tenets and process of grounded theory aligns with the researchers' social constructivist worldview that emphasizes the understanding of human experiences and seeks to respect individual perspectives by allowing space for participants to articulate their experiences (Creswell, 2007). Additionally, through the grounded theory approach, a theory emerged to help explain practice or provide a framework for future research with this population.

The Role of the Researcher

As an observer in the participants' worlds, the qualitative researcher becomes part of the process itself (van Manen, 1990) and influences the intimate relationships between the researcher and what is studied, as well as the situational context that shapes inquiry (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). Ponterotto (2005) asserted that the situational context is comprised of the researchers and participants' experiences and perceptions, the social environment, and the interaction between the participants and researcher. Therefore, qualitative researchers do not ignore their own assumptions or biases, but instead engage in reflexivity, an ongoing process of reflection to increase self-awareness of biases related to the topic being studied (Corbin & Straus, 2008). This requires the researcher to continually examine the potential influence that identified biases may have on the research process. In keeping with the standard of reflexivity, the primary researcher summarized her personal experiences as they relate to the research question.

As a naturalized citizen of the United States, the primary researcher (Ju) immigrated with her family to the United States from Thailand, a Southeast Asian nation, during her senior year of high school. Therefore, this researcher can identify with the acculturative challenges and intergenerational conflict during this critical developmental stage of life. The researcher perceived that her parents were more willing to grant autonomy and were less authoritarian than parents of her Asian peers. Perhaps this was due to the primary researcher's parents having grown up in Myanmar during British rule, and being exposed to Western education and culture. Nevertheless, the researcher did perceive strong parental expectations with regards to social norms and experienced delayed autonomy resulting from prolonged parenting.

However, this researcher's (Ju) interest in the research question comes from her experience in mentoring adolescents. In this role, the researcher had the privilege to observe Asian American youth in their natural setting, specifically the processes of developmental challenges, acculturation, and the pressures from family interactions. She perceived her mentees to experience pressure from parents' singular focus on academic achievement for the purpose of gaining social status in their community. This researcher recognizes the need examine closely her own perception as well as her understanding of her mentees' family experiences. Throughout the study, she diligently memoed as a means of tracking her thoughts and monitoring her emotional responses to the data that she collected and analyzed.

Participants and Setting

Polkinghorne (2005) suggested that participants fulfill the structure and character of the experiences under investigation. This study employed purposeful sampling

(Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Patton, 1990) to allow maximum variation in the selection of individuals who meet the specific, predefined qualities that the researchers deemed useful to the aim of the research.

The researchers sent recruitment emails with electronic flyers to coordinators of student services or organizations specific to Asian-American students at nine public and private universities in the Pacific Northwest. Interested individuals from other universities who had heard about the project also contacted the primary researcher. As a result, 12 SEAA female college students from both coasts and the Midwest were invited to be part of the study. Five students belonged to the same university, and none of the remaining students attended the same college. Their chosen majors varied as follow: Biochemistry, Business, European Environmental studies, Film, International Studies, Mathematics, Medicine, Physical Therapy, Psychology, and Public Administration (see Appendix ??? Participant Demographic Table).

Participants were selected on the basis of their affirmative response to questions on the following criteria as listed on the recruitment flyer: (a) Southeast Asian descent; (b) enrolled in college; (c) female; (d) having awareness of their family's influence on their college experience; (e) having experienced family pressures while in college; and (f) ability to reflect on and articulate their experiences. In order to recruit participants that represent a cross-section of demographic categories including class, age, nativity, and ethnicity, the researchers decided not to add criteria for selection beyond those listed.

The participants represented a diverse mix of Southeast Asian ethnicities as follow: one Burmese, one Cambodian, three Filipinos, one Hmong, two Malaysian, two Malay-Singaporean, one Thai, and one Vietnamese. The researchers noted that many

Southeast Asian nations are heavily populated by people of Chinese ancestry. Therefore, several participants were bi-ethnic and identified themselves as Burmese-Chinese, Filipino-Chinese, or Malay-Chinese. Among the participants were two bi-racial students who self-identified as Southeast Asian American and met the other criteria. They made their bi-racial background known to the researchers during the first interview. The researchers decided to include them for two reasons. First, the researchers consider ethnic and cultural identities as emic constructs. Second, the primary researcher (Ju) had observed inter-racial families to be common among SEAA communities. Therefore, their inclusion provides a more realistic picture of SEAA female college population. Something that could have influenced the researchers on this decision is the fact that there are seven inter-racial marriages in the primary researcher's own extended family, and over 20 such couples in the church she attends.

Half of the participants were native-born, while the other half were born overseas and came to the United States either in childhood or early adolescence. With the exception of the fathers of two bi-racial participants, all parents were first-generation immigrants who arrived in the United States as adults. With respect to religious background, half of the participants reported belonging to the Judeo-Christian faith, while families of two students were Muslim, another two were Buddhists, and one was animist. The remaining participant did not report any faith affiliation.

All of the participants entered college right after graduation from high school. In general, they were upperclassmen during the recruitment process, which occurred during spring of 2014. Four of the students in the study were preparing to graduate from college, one was a graduate student, and another had recently begun her medical residency as part

of her medical training. Therefore, during the first round of interviews in summer 2014, two participants had just begun their full-time jobs and two were seeking employment. One student dropped out of college soon after the second interview and subsequently enrolled in a professional school by the third round.

A total of 12 participants completed round one, while ten completed all three rounds of the interview. Prior to round two, two of the participants dropped out of the study, one due to a family crisis and the other to focus on studying for MCAT exam. The group of participants was composed of 11 single women, two of whom were engaged to be married, and one single mom. Three students lived at home while attending college.

Data Collection

The primary method of data collection was through interviews conducted over the telephone, and the process was consistent with the tenets of grounded theory in that it encouraged dialogue, reciprocity, and equality. To help the students feel at ease, the interview process began with neutral questions such as, "How would you describe your ethnicity?" and "What are you majoring in?" The neutral questions were followed by a semi-structured interview comprised of seven open-ended questions as listed below. Consistent with a constructivist paradigm, the questions are "broad and general" to allow participants to construct meanings of situations (Creswell, 2007, p. 21). The purpose of round one was to uncover common themes experienced by students with regards to their family interactions.

Below are the interview questions asked of all participants in round one:

1. Please describe what it is like to be a Southeast Asian American on a college campus.

2. Please describe the experience of being a member of a Southeast Asian American family.
3. How has the process of you starting college affected your family's relations?
4. What do you perceive as the source of any difficulties that you were or are experiencing with your family?
5. What thoughts and feelings did you experience related to difficult family dynamics?
6. Are there any ways in which your family provides support for your college education?
7. Please describe what all of the family dynamics you are experiencing mean to you.

The second and third rounds of interviews expanded upon the themes uncovered in the data analysis of the previous rounds. To enhance credibility of the study, the researchers conducted member checking following round three of interviews for the purposes of clarifying meaning, authenticating the information gathered, and confirming the developed concepts.

Data Analysis

Data analysis in grounded theory is a process of reducing data related to participants' experience into concepts that are used to build theory (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). The objective is to present participants' experiences in a way that reflects the unique values, perspectives, and understanding of the SEAA female college population, and to allow a theory representing key processes inherent to their experience of family dynamics to emerge from the data.

Data analysis as outlined by Corbin and Strauss (2008) employs the techniques of coding interview data to derive and develop concepts. In the initial step of open coding, the primary task was to "break data apart and delineate concepts to stand for blocks of raw data" (p. 197). This step focused on identifying a list of significant participant statements about how individuals experienced family dynamics. The subsequent step of axial coding is the "act of relating concepts and categories to each other" (p. 198). from which the contexts and processes of the phenomena emerge. The researchers then framed emerging themes and concepts to identify higher-level concepts and lower-level properties, as well as delineation of relationships between categories. Furthermore, the themes and concepts were then used to develop the second and third round of interview questions. Subsequently, in the step of selective coding, the researchers engaged in an ongoing process of integrating and refining the theory that emerged from categories and relationships to form one central concept (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

Measures to Promote Trustworthiness of Results

Lincoln and Guba (1985) identified four components that promote trustworthiness when conducting research: Credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Credibility is the presence of congruence between participants' experience and the research finding. A potential threat to study credibility is *participant reactivity*, described as the tendency for participants to be unduly influenced by their relationship to the interviewer; researchers can counteract this by diligence to building rapport and prolonged engagement (Maxwell, 1994). Members of the current research population have a cultural norm of being deferential to individuals who are their elders. The researchers were diligent in building rapport and demonstrated respect toward

participants and the narratives they shared. The researchers explained the confidential nature of the study and provided ample opportunities for potential participants to ask questions. Over a period of several months, the researcher spent approximately 3-4 hours by phone and numerous email exchanges with each participant.

Standards of trustworthiness were achieved by incorporating strategies as outlined by Creswell (2007), which included: (a) triangulation through ongoing literature review to corroborate evidence and broaden perspectives; (b) clarification of researcher bias to illustrate the researchers' position, potential biases, and assumptions that could impact inquiry; (c) peer review via regular meetings with the primary researcher's academic advisor and dissertation committee chair to "keep the researcher honest; ask hard questions about methods, meanings, and interpretations" (p. 208); and (d) member checking "to rely as much as possible on the participants' views of the situation" (p. 208) by providing opportunities to review the draft of the interview transcript and provide feedback on the study's content, analyses, and conclusions. This gives participants direct control over which data are included and how themes are presented.

According to Creswell (2007), transferability can be achieved by the use of "rich, thick description" (p. 209). The study's detail descriptions of participant characteristics, settings and process as well as thorough discussion of the relevant information such as core themes and data analysis do promote transferability.

Results

As these Southeast Asian American (SEAA) female college students entered college, they faced multiple challenges in the transition to this stage of their young adult life. Central to how these students responded to their new life role was the experience of

relational dynamics within their family of origin. From three rounds of data collection and analyses, a theory emerged that describes the evolution of how the participants navigated family dynamics.

Family dynamics is a concept that represents the emotional, behavioral and communication patterns among members of the family. As illustrated in Figure 1, participants experienced socialization to perform based on parents' desires as made known to them either explicitly or complicitly. Gradually, they become aware of and are grateful for their family's financial, material, and emotional support as they pursue academic goals. Two participants described the uniqueness of SEAA family dynamics as follows:

> P04: Parents might not necessarily express love in that sort of warm, fuzzy way like Euro-American families. SEA families are more stoic. I'm paying for your college, I work, I cook for you, I provide for you and that's how I show my love . . . Mom is from the SEA culture so she has different expectations of me to react as a child and to have her cultural standards. Me being very American, I don't have her cultural standards and mom is not used to that.

> P06: Culturally, this is what I want and this is what she expects of me. What they want is complicit, and I'm expected to know versus me as an American and I just expect them to say what they want versus me knowing.

The phenomenon of *finding their own voice* is the central category in describing the process of these young women's developmental experience with family dynamics. It is comprised of three progressive and interconnected subcategories, each with its own

properties and accompanying dimensions. The subcategory *feeling trapped* is characterized by participants experiencing psychosocial distress when they perceive they are not given a choice in the family environment. As *feeling trapped* is very destabilizing, participants seek to alleviate it by *negotiating dual goals*, which involves the evaluation of their parents' and the personal goals that are taking shape as they become immersed in the college environment. They are torn between valuing for the family's well-being and standing up for what they want in life. In *going for it*, the participants are taking risks to pursue what they strongly believe in, while taking initiative to make their voices heard. A diagram of the interaction between *family dynamics* (FD) and *finding own voice* (FOV) that occurs in the context of university campus where the SEAA female college students were studying at, is presented in Figure 1.

Experiencing College

Experiencing college is participants' process of transition into the new life stage on a university campus, in which they encounter *being minority of minorities* and *expanding worldview*, and the way the new context influence their engagement with family dynamics. Against this temporal, socio-cultural, and environmental backdrop, the SEAA female students described being in a unique state where they experience both discouragement and growth.

Being a *minority of minorities* on campus refers to how the participants' unique SEAA background led them to experience feeling different, inferior, stereotyped, misunderstood, isolated, and marginalized, adding stress to their college adjustment. In this new environment and role, the participants perceive lack of shared values and interests with peers on campus, as well as frequent misunderstanding by peers due to

peers' lack of exposure to SEAA people and culture. The following statements by two participants captured their experience:

> P11: It feels like we're minority of minorities. Coz on campus, there are Asian Americans which is already considered a minority group. The SEAs are a smaller group out of that. We're almost invisible. People couldn't tell us apart from other Asians . . . nobody understands me.

> P07: I really felt uncomfortable. I didn't know how to interact with people because I've never interacted with people other than Chinese, Vietnamese, Koreans, mostly all Asians. When I first moved here to go to college, it was a culture shock. I had a really hard time talking to people. And I felt lonely more than anything, and it affected my studies.

At the same time, the college context enabled participants' *expanding worldview*, where they receive exposure to new knowledge, alternate values, and different styles of interpersonal relationship. This broadening of perspective enables growth in gaining self-awareness, shaping of personal goals, as well as providing SEAA college students with resources to act on their personal and family situation. Here are two examples of participants' perceived growth:

> P02: Living under my family, it was a very sheltered, limited life. Finally going to college and being able to explore what I want to do and who I want to be, what interests or activities I want to pursue. I thought that was interesting because it's all new. I had independence, I felt liberated. All these grew during college time.

> P05: (In college), when I was coming into my own identity as being SEA, I became more interested in that more broadly. I guess as I fleshed out my identity, I am more confident in who I am and confident in pursuing goals I want in life.

While the participants perceived personal growth, the college years added challenges to family environment as these women brought home new ideas, behaviors, and values from college. The participants depended on the available resources from the college environment, particularly emotional and psychosocial support from the social and spiritual community to help them negotiate between meeting parental and their own desires, as described here by participants:

> P12: I do have conflicting thoughts within myself in terms of what my family expects of me and what I'm discovering as I go through college, you know, and things I am experiencing outside of my family. There are views that I find are conflicting.

> P06: Coming to college help me see that my parents and I were viewing things in different context . . . I have opportunity to see how my other friends think or how their families think, realizing that the fact that my parents are immigrants really impacted our relationship a lot more than I think it did. When I say something to them and they translate in their head into their Filipino culture, that's different.

Family Dynamics

Family dynamics is participants experiencing relational patterns that lead to psychosocial pressure, as well as interactions that provide significant community and emotional support. The core properties of this phenomenon include *attending to parental*

expectations and obligations and *appreciating family support*. Participants become attuned to parents' desires of them through a number of ways: (a) parents' explicit statements to their children about what they want; (b) things parents give priority to (i.e., things they chose to invest time and energy in); and (c) children's behavior/performance that parents either praise or criticize. Examples of how some participants perceived parental expectations and family obligation are:

> P05: Before I get married, it'll have to be with my parents' approval. They will expect to have a lot of influence. So that's one where beside respect for my parents, I will be expected to include them in my personal life decisions.

> P11: I don't know if it's SEA, but there's this constant pressure by my parents, especially my mom, for us kids to get straight As, get involved in extra-curricular activities so we can get into prestigious colleges.

In addition to *attending to parental expectations*, participants have learned to accept family obligation as the cultural norm and this led them to frequently make choices favored by their family. Although participants described family obligations to be non-negotiable, they are not always perceived as a bad thing, as one participant expressed:

> P09: They are just mandatory because they are good things. They are not negotiable, so things like spending time or spending money and giving any other resources that you have for your family. They're really not an optional thing. Even if there are times the only thing that is motivating you to give of yourself is recognizing it as your duty.

Another property of family dynamics is participants *receiving family support*, where they receive help for felt need in both tangible and intangible ways. Participants recognize and feel grateful for the sacrifices made by their parents in order to financially and materially support their children's college education. The family's emotional support is in providing a grounding place where the participants experience the bond of mutual understanding and acceptance as SEAA individuals, and this is highly valued given their status on campus and in society as a *minority of minorities*. The young women also appreciate and are attracted to many of the cultural and familial values that are being modeled in their family of origin, as stated here:

> P01: My family is what I come back to, they're the ones that keep me grounded. It's like a conundrum. I have an obligation towards them and they have many unstable situations that they throw me into, but ultimately in the end, those roots is what I hold my values in.

> P09: My family went through some difficult times . . . see how strongly they support one another through all those difficult times, and it really encourage me.

Finding Own Voice

The concept of *finding own voice* (see Figure 1), is the central category in the SEAA female college students' experience of family dynamics. It is conceptualized as the participants' growth process, wherein they experience cognitive shifts leading to behavioral changes that empower their pursuit of personal goals while maintaining satisfactory relationship with family. This occurs during the life stage when they are emerging as young adults and experiencing multi-dimensional life transitions. The young

women's internal sense of self changes as they gain perspective and confidence, grow psycho-socially, and begin to practice different ways of interacting with others, especially with their parents. This is a process that is comprised of both "straining and strengthening" as articulated by Participant P02, of family relations, with more of the straining in *feeling trapped* and the strengthening in *going for it*, while the participants may vacillate between strain and strength in *negotiating dual goals.* This process is articulated by two participants as follows:

> P02: Finding my own voice is still straining at times. It can also strengthen family dynamics as well when you feel the support and encouragement. Feeling more empowered and loved, and so, in that sense it can strengthen your relationship as well. I went through quite a bit of strain before the strengthening part.

> P07: It's more recent where I've found my own voice and I really am letting it be heard. It's a little difficult on my parents because they feel I'm being disrespectful and rude and that I'm inconsiderate of them. They've mentioned that they feel like I have no regard for them by standing for what I want. It hurts me that they think that way.

Finding own voice is comprised of three properties with their own properties and accompanying dimensions. The subcategories represent three overlapping processes: *feeling trapped, negotiating dual goals*, and *going for it*. The path of *finding own voice* begins with the influence of being in a new environment (i.e., college) where the participants learn and observe alternate ways of relating and doing things. They begin to evaluate among the styles, values, and goals belonging to their family and those

associated with mainstream America, and may begin to adopt those that carry personal meaning to them as part of their self-identity. Subsequently, participants become aware that their goals do not align with their parents' preferences for them. Some of the misalignments is the result of intergenerational gap, while other differences are cultural and personal in nature. All the parents of participants in the study are first generation SEAA who came to the U.S. as adolescents or adults. Although they had been living in the U.S. for at least a decade, the parents continue to adhere to SEAA cultural values. The participants experience distress and confusion when they perceive differences between their and their parents' values, as one participant shared:

> P06: Do we hold to American ideal or to Filipino ideal? Sometimes expectations are not clear and my parents are like, 'Oh, this is just respect and you're going to be punished for it.' My sister and I would get really confused . . . we never really know how American we're allowed to be in the context of family.

Feeling Trapped

Feeling trapped is the first of three subcategories of *finding own voice*. It is characterized by participants experiencing psychosocial distress, an internal response to perception of being in difficult family dynamics where they are not given a choice. The combination of SEAA style of authoritarian parenting and parent-child pattern of communication creates an atmosphere that lead to the participants' perception of not having a choice other than adherence to her parents' expectations. Here, participants describe how they experience their parents' parenting style.

> P02: A little paternalistic, and can be almost oppressive. Not all SEAA families are like that. But I think you have this strict SEA upbringing. If I can use one

> word to describe Asian parenting and family dynamics . . . 'strict' is the word that comes to mind.

> P07: In SEA culture . . . Parents are very, they're like the authority figure and they're the head of the family. No matter what, they are right. That's very imbedded in my parents. When we have different opinion, the reason they jump into conclusion that I'm just being rude, and that's because it's so important in Asian culture to respect your elders in the way that you just, you just obey.

Furthermore, the complicity of parental desires combined with the high context cultural norm that SEAA families exist in, causes the participants to be on constant alert for possible socio-environmental cues that dictate expected responses. The participants oftentimes perceive that there is only one acceptable way to respond in family and social situation.

> P06: Americans are very low context, everything is very straightforward. Whereas with SEA or most Asian nations are very high context where everything is very cultural. This is the way things are supposed to be.

Here, the participants are becoming aware of the interaction between family relationship and their own identity, values and needs. Initially, the participants perceived misalignment with their parents' desires and this creates some discomfort. However, it is when the participants perceive they have no choice in the matter (that parents' expectations and desires are non-negotiable), that the distress is intensified:

> P06: My parents will remind me, or use the fact that they are financing my education as a way to kind of intimidate me. 'I'm doing this for you so you need to do this for me' which a lot of times it makes me feel very trapped.

> P07: (My father) never said that I was responsible . . . but there was unspoken feeling where I still feel it was my responsibility to do this . . . I have a choice but because of the way I was raised and the way that I grew up, it wasn't really much of a choice.

Ineffective patterns of communication add frustration to the family environment. The state of distress affected the participants' emotional and physical health as well as academic performance, as shared in the following quotes:

> P06: It's hard because there's this expectation that I have to immediately drop everything, and be there for them . . . I actually had anxiety attacks a few times.

> P07: It took a lot of arguing and talking, arguing and talking it out again. Fighting again and talking again . . . for a year or two. I went into depression, my grades were dropping and I lost all motivation. There was nothing that I wanted to do or wanted to accomplish.

Negotiating Dual Goals

As customary practice in SEAA culture, parents continue to be involved in their children's lives as the latter goes off to college, and this interferes with adjustment to college and psychological well-being. As a result, the participants reported delaying the

pursuit of personal goals in order to maintain family relations and avoid conflict with parents.

> P10: My goal is to make myself be more independent, learn more about myself and find out what limits that I am able to go. But I am restraint by things that my parents expect of me. So I cannot meet certain goals that I had set for myself because of my parents.

> P07: I want to be a wedding planner, but it does not require a bachelor's degree per se. But if I just mention that, it would start an all-out fight in the house because my mom doesn't believe in taking breaks from college. But I would like to talk about their opinion and my options . . . she would avoid the topic.

As they entered college, the participants were encouraged by their social community, college courses, campus environment, and observations of interpersonal styles of relating. Empowered by *expanding worldview*, the participants move from *feeling trapped* to *negotiating dual goals. Negotiating dual goals* was the participants' experience of navigating family dynamics while attending to their personal goals in a way that enabled them to maintain relationship with family members without losing sight of their goals.

> P07: My personal goal was looked down upon (by parents) . . . I have this goal right now and the fact that my boyfriend understand that and is very supportive of me wanting that. My friends don't judge me for it, but they really encourage me to pursue it.

> P12: I used to be what my family want me to do, like finish school, finish college, and like especially from my dad. He wants me to get a high paying job. As I grow older, and I got more into my religion . . . so that's what shaped my personal goals now.

In SEAA context, pursuing one's goals that are different from parental preference is often regarded as inconsiderate and disrespectful to one's elders, as shared by these participants:

> P07: Sometimes I don't really know what to do and I get confused. I feel like my parents are hurting. Because I am forming my own opinions and thoughts that don't always go parallel with my parents' opinions and thoughts. I think it just hurts them because they think that I don't need them anymore. Which I can understand and which I want to alleviate that as much as possible."

> P10: I want them to understand that I am choosing this not because I hate them, or that I am choosing this because I want to rebel. I am choosing this for my own personal growth. But it was really difficult talking to them because they don't really understand it. And they think it's an attack on them . . . I choose a goal where we're all collectively happy and feel very successful at the end of it.

Although participants experienced distressing aspects of SEAA family dynamics, they also recognize meaningful benefits of being a part of this family. Relationship with family members is strongly desired, and pursuing personal goals has never been a matter of ignoring parental expectations or neglecting family obligations. Therefore, in negotiating both goals, the young women attempt to attend to the family expectations in a

respectful way that also allow them with options to pursue their personal goals, as explained by these participants:

> P05: (Life decisions) is an area where we don't always line up. Over time, I've made adjustments and my parents have made adjustments. It's hard but it's doable. As long as there is mutual respect, I believe it's doable.

> P12: Balancing respect for dad with pursuing my personal goals mean I defend my views and get assertive, sound natural and listen patiently, take a deep breath and try to discuss in a calm manner . . . be open with each other, and willing to compromise.

Going for It

Going for it is the step beyond *negotiating dual goals* in that participants are beginning to believe in who they are and in their personal goals confidently; they are standing firm and letting their desires be known. These SEAA female college students were choosing not to abandon their important life goals, but were finding ways to voice their desires as well as seek resources to help them implement their desires. Here, two participants describe this process:

> P02: Part of that has to do with pulling away from my family and your upbringing and trying to figure out for yourself who you are and who you want to be . . . you have to come to a point that you want it so bad where the family strain and the risk doesn't matter anymore or matters less.

> P10: I told them that they don't get to make a decision about this. I'm going to do what I feel is best for myself . . . Now is the time to do what I want for myself. I succeeded what they asked for, I now have the confidence to make this decision.

In addition, these SEAA students are *finding their own voice* by practicing help-seeking, assertiveness, risk-taking, and problem-solving behaviors to implement their desires and goals in life. As evident from the participants' quotes below, they are no longer feeling trapped and are able to see that they have the option to go for their dreams without jeopardizing family relations. The above statements are indicative of the experience of these young women's family dynamics as a process in which they are at different points for different life situations. For example, Participant 02 felt empowered to pursue a career choice in medicine, but still felt trapped about relationship choices, a romantic relationship that she had to keep as a secret during her entire college years. In another case, Participant 07, quoted below, was able to negotiate the goal of early marriage but experienced opposition by her parents toward her goal of pursuing a career as a wedding planner. Eventually, when these SEAA college students strongly believe in "the desires that are imbedded in me" as Participant 07 phrased it, they devised a plan to *go for it*.

> P07: I feel like I cannot *not* voice my opinion anymore. Because I've really started to really believe in what I want to do and who I am in general . . . when it comes to matters of my school and my major and what I want to do after I graduate, the future of me with my boyfriend, these are things I cannot give up and those are things that I cannot change. I don't tell them I can still have hope. I can still go for it.

Going for it also translates to participants purposefully and creatively changing the way they interact with their parents. The participants are moving away from passively experiencing distressing family dynamics to becoming more confident and active to change the relational patterns with their parents. While in the past, the participants required parental permission to attend to their needs, they are now capable of being assertive, open, and honest in expressing their own feelings and opinions. Therefore, interpersonal growth at this stage takes on both attitudinal and behavioral characteristics, as explained by two of the participants:

> P04: In high school, I would have just broken down. We'd be really, really crazed. We would get into a stalemate, and shouting match or cold shoulder kind of a thing . . . I am an adult now and I can handle it as an adult. I was able to talk to her and I was able to break things down.

> P07: So it's kind of we give and take a little. Sometimes there's more giving from one side and more taking from the other. But whatever happens I try to see the situation. Coz I feel like I'm also constantly changing and I still have a lot to learn from my parents.

Discussion

By utilizing grounded theory, this study aimed to give voice to 12 Southeast Asian American female college students by honoring their unique narrative related to their family dynamics. The researchers explored these young women's experiences and identified a developmental theme of *finding own voice* in their response to family dynamics and exposure to the college environment. During the process, a substantive

theory emerged to explain the progression in the participants' understanding and approach to address difficult family dynamics. These findings indicate that participants experienced three overlapping and ongoing processes: *feeling trapped, negotiating dual goals,* and *going for it*. These young women may have been experiencing each of the processes at different times about any number of life situations. For example, they could feel empowered to pursue a career choice, but still feel trapped about relationship choices, which they would try to re-negotiate in order to arrive at a more stabilizing state of *going for it*. Together, these processes enabled the young women to achieve dual goals that are significant to the persons they were growing into. The first goal has to do with maintaining relationship with their family, particularly with their parents. The second is the pursuit of life dreams that were personally meaningful to them, but that their family may not understand or approve.

Through college environment, the young SEAA women were exposed to relational styles, values, and customs that are different from their culture of origin. They begin to evaluate and adopt those that are personally meaningful as part of their self-identity. Establishing self-concordant goals requires some level of autonomy, independence, and separateness, which are more characteristic of Euro-American ideals than Asian collectivistic culture (Phinney & Ong, 2002). Therefore, setting personal goals was not possible while the participants were still in high school and living under their parents' roof.

As the SEAA participants began to express desires that differ from parental expectations and met with family resistance, they experience psychosocial distress. A significant part of *feeling trapped* is due to the perception that they have neither voice nor

choice in the matters that impact who they are. Consequently, they experience distress that ranges from irritating pressures to emotional disorders such as depression, anxiety and panic attacks, as well as deterioration of academic performance which impacts their psychosocial well-being. This phenomenon is consistent with research literature implicating mental health issues among Asian Americans difficult family dynamics (Abe-Kim et al., 2002; Chae et al., 2011; Cheng et al., 2010; Masood et al., 2009; Wong et al., 2012). For Asian American college students in particular, family conflicts present risk factors for a range of issues including psychological distress (Greenberger & Chen, 1996; Lee & Liu, 2001), suicidal ideation (Wong et al., 2011), poor academic performance (Bahrassa et al., 2011; Wong et al., 2011), maladaptive perfectionism (Castro & Rice, 2003; Yoon & Lau, 2008), and learned helplessness (Strage, 2000).

Analysis of the participants' narratives shed light on family connectedness and well-being as valued parts of the participants' identity. As they begin to identify goals that are meaningful to the person they are becoming, they make efforts to balance both priorities in *negotiating dual goals.* While they compromised on some things, they stood firm on others. There are certain goals that they strongly believe in, and are confident in *going for it* despite parental concern, thus *finding their own voice* in the process.

The findings of this study reveal that through the stages of finding own voice, the young women's response style to the family dynamics changes. As they change their relational pattern with their family, they perceive that the way their family interacts with them is also changing towards a more open and productive communication patterns. A significant aspect of this change involves identifying and breaking down communication barriers. They are able to do so through access to the resources from the campus

environment, as well as support from their social community while they were enrolled in college.

Implications for College Counseling

The narratives of Southeast Asian American female college students in this research point to the strong influence of family dynamics on their psychosocial adjustment. Family dynamics is a rich blend of challenges such as striving to attend to parental expectations and family obligations as well as the positive aspects of family support. The implications for college-based counseling with this population can be conceptualized through four overlapping elements: (a) clinician awareness, (b) knowledge of the client population, (c) development of skills for effective therapeutic work, and (d) programmatic interventions.

For campus-based clinicians, in addition to developing awareness of their personal values and biases, knowledge of the socio-cultural and familial variables that could potentially impinge upon the psychosocial adjustment of SEAA female college students can help therapists employ culturally-appropriate interventions. Considering that SEAA individuals belong to a relatively recent wave of immigrants, it is essential for the counselor to become knowledgeable about the process of immigration and of acculturation in particular. An understanding of SEAAs' developmental processes, as well as the culturally-based family dynamics, can help counselors normalize family conflict when working with this population.

Based on the emerging theory, counselors working with SEAA female college students would want to collaborate with the client in making sense of the family dynamics she is experiencing. It would be beneficial to help conceptualize

communication style and interaction patterns, particularly between the client and her parents, and explore how this is affecting her. Attributing some of the distressing relational dynamics to cultural norms and differences in intergenerational culture can help to shift the blame for the stress to external sources. In addition, counselors should help the client to slow down the process of responding to family dynamics, rather than going with her immediate reaction.

SEAA female college clients who experience *feeling trapped* perceive that they have no choice. The counselor can take time to help them explore some choices and identify things that they do have control over. When clients from this population struggle with *negotiating dual goals* of personal versus family values, counselors must keep in mind that their family's welfare is also a top priority for them. It is not the student's desire to pursue her personal goals while neglecting family needs. Furthermore, utilizing the protective factors that participants had shared can increase the efficacy of working with this population. For example, many participants expressed receiving support and encouragement through their social peers, spiritual community, and extended family. The client's own family is also a strong source of support.

Given that family plays a prominent role in the successful adjustment to college and the psychosocial development of SEAA female college students, it would appear that a successful therapeutic approach, although an unconventional one in college setting, is family therapy. Family counseling on college campuses is not a commonly-accepted practice. However, in the case of SEAA population, family involvement may be beneficial given the cultural norm of prolonged parenting and the students' desire to maintain strong relationship with their family. A small recent body of research supports

involvement of family members in counseling in college settings (Ahmad-Stout & Nath, 2013; Haber & Merck, 2010; Jackson, 2009). Jackson posited that the benefits of family therapy on campuses include a broadening of the lens through which to see individual concerns, and a more nuanced social justice analysis in which to highlight issues of gender, race, and class. For the Asian American college population, family members' involvement has an added benefit because participants identified family support as a protective factor in adjustment to college life.

It is advisable for college-based therapists to receive training in conducting family counseling and in assessing the suitability of this approach for their SEAA clients. However, in the absence of adequate training, and given that the campus environment creates tension regarding parental involvement due to students' developmental levels, family therapy is contraindicated.

Family involvement can be integrated as a programmatic intervention and a preventative approach in working SEAA students. College administrators can consider collaborating with local social service agencies that work among SEAA population to provide outreach and psychoeducation to families of SEAA students during new student orientation events. Depending on logistical and budgeting issues, staff from the college counseling center or ethnic community mental health service providers can offer psycho-education on (a) issues related to college adjustment, (b) possible challenges for incoming students, and (c) the role of family support. The purpose would be to raise awareness among students' families on what to expect as their young adults enter college and suggest ways to provide support to students.

Additional preventative interventions to be considered include offering psycho-educational workshops, informational brochures, and group therapy during the year, as these can be informative, therapeutic, and can facilitate creation of a student community with shared experiences. The focus of these workshops, group work, and informational resources would be to help SEAA students (a) gain awareness of the roles of cultural and familial dynamics on their college experiences, (b) recognize signs of distress and steps to take when distress occur, (c) to understand family difficulties in the context of socio-cultural influences, and (d) have ways to cope with family-related difficulties. Furthermore, the university can make available a list of Asian American faculty and staff members on campus who are willing to connect with students from similar backgrounds. Being able to connect with campus faculty and staff from a familiar cultural background can create a sense of comfort to Asian American college students.

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

There were several limitations to this study. First, the participants were self-selected. It cannot be assumed that there is randomness in the willingness to participate in the study. Those who decided to take part in the interviews may represent those who have a particular personality characteristic or they could represent either those who experienced greater distress or those who overcame the distress from family dynamics, or any variety of circumstances. Furthermore, one of the specified criteria was the ability to articulate their experience. This most likely discouraged students who did not feel comfortable to talk their experience or those who perceived their English language to be poor.

Second, since the primary researcher is from the SEAA background, her familiarity with the culture could bias the selection of preliminary questions and the choice of follow up questions during the interviews. This researcher's experience with her own extended family did influence the inclusion of two bi-racial participants in the study.

Third, although seven universities were represented in the study, five of the 12 students attended the same university on the east coast. This means that close to half of the students shared an academic environment and were exposed to similar cultural aspects of college life. In addition, the participants' college experiences may be unique to their universities, and situations described may not be transferable to other institutions.

There are variations in the tradition, history, values, and immigration processes among the diverse ethnicities that belong to the Southeast Asian community in the United States. The interviews did not capture aspects of family dynamics specific to an ethnic culture.

One encouraging finding has to do with the students' perception that their parents also changed when the participants altered the way they interacted with their parents. It would be interesting to learn what specifically led to this change in their dynamic, and what about the new way of relating to their parents produced a more favorable response from SEAA parents. Counselors can utilize this knowledge to help SEAA female college students communicate and interact with their parents in ways that minimize distressing family dynamics.

Asian Americans college students seldom engage in help-seeking behavior, and only one out of 12 participants in the study had recently begun seeing a campus

counselor. Further research may be beneficial to examine at what point SEAA female college students become aware of the need seek help, and the ways college student support services can help facilitate this process of help-seeking.

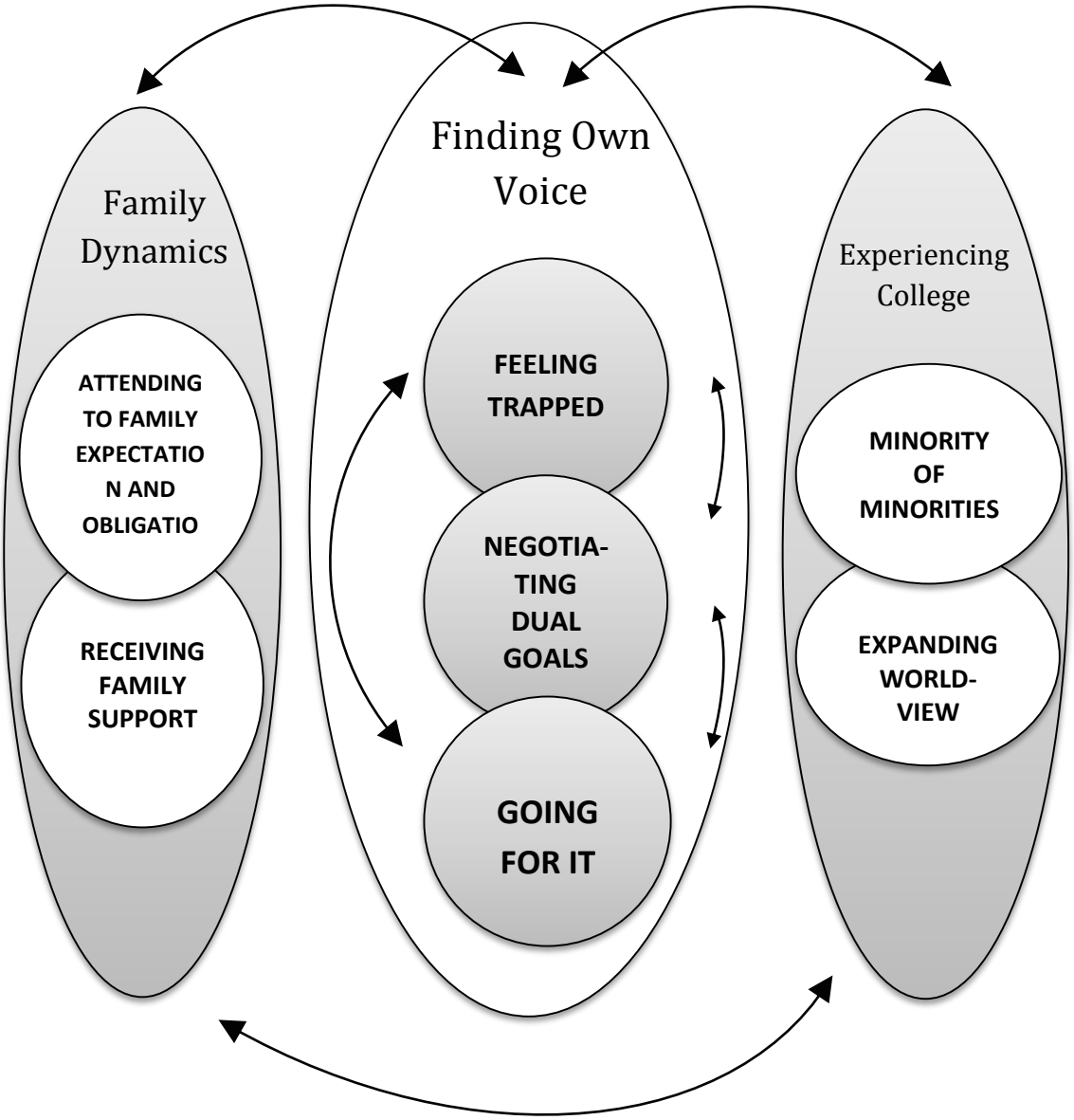

Figure 1. How SEAA female students experience family dynamics.

References

Abe, J. S., & Zane, N.W. (1990). Psychological maladjustment among Asian and White American college students: Controlling for confounds. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 37(4), 437-444.

Abe-Kim, J., Takeuchi, D., & Hwang, W. (2002). Predictors of help seeking for emotional distress among Chinese Americans: Family matters. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, *70*(5), 1186-1190.

Bahrassa, N. F., Syed, M., Su, J., & Lee, R. M. (2011). Family conflict and academic performance of first-year Asian American undergraduates. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*, *17*(4), 415-426.

Berkel, L. A., & Constantine, M. G. (2005). Relational variables and life satisfaction in African American and Asian American college women. *Journal of College Counseling*, *8*(1), 5-13.

Castillo, L. G., Zahn, M. P., & Cano, M. A. (2012). Predictors of familial acculturative stress in Asian American college students. *Journal of College Counseling*, 15(1), 52-64.

Castro, J. R., & Rice, K. G. (2003). Perfectionism and ethnicity: Implications for depressive symptoms and self-reported academic achievement. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*, *9*(1), 64-78.

Center for Disease Control and Prevention. (2002). *Leading causes of death by age group, Asian or Pacific Islander females: United States, 2002.* Retrieved from http://www.cdc.gov/women/lcod/2002/02asian.pdf

Center for Disease Control and Prevention. (2007) *Leading causes of death by age group, Asian or Pacific Islander females: United States, 2007.* Retrieved from http://www.cdc.gov/women/lcod/2007/07asian females.pdf

Chae, D. H., Lee, S., Lincoln, K. D., & Ihara, E. S. (2012). Discrimination, family relationships, and major depression among Asian Americans. *Journal of Immigrant and Minority Health*, *14*(3), 361-370.

Chang, D. F., & Sue, S. (2003). The effects of race and problem type on teachers' assessments of student behavior. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, *7*(2), 235-242.

Charmaz, K. (2006). *Constructing grounded theory: A practical guide through qualitative analysis.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

Cheng, J. K. Y., Fancher, T. L., Ratanasen, M., Conner, K. R., Duberstein, P. R., Sue, S., & Takeuchi, D. (2010). Lifetime suicidal ideation and suicide attempts in Asian Americans. *Asian American Journal of Psychology, 1*(1), 18-30.

Chhuon, V., Kyratzis, A., & Hudley, C. (2010). Sources of coherence in the life stories of Cambodian American women at the university. *Journal of Language, Identity, and Education*, *9*(5), 347-362.

Choi, J. L., & Rogers, J. R. (2010). Exploring the validity of the College Student Reasons for Living Inventory among Asian American college students. *Archives of Suicide Research*, *14*(3), 222-235.

Chung, R. H. G. (2001). Gender, ethnicity, and acculturation in intergenerational conflict of Asian American college students. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*, *7*(4), 376-386.

Chung, G. H., Flook, L., & Fuligni, A. J. (2009). Daily family conflict and emotional distress among adolescents from Latin American, Asian, and European backgrounds. *Developmental Psychology*, *45*(5), 1406-1415.

Constantine, M., Chen, E. C., & Ceesay, P. (1997). Intake concerns of racial and ethnic minority students at a university counseling center: Implications for developmental programming and outreach. *Journal of Multicultural Counseling and Development,* 25(3), 210-218.

Corbin, J., & Strauss, A. (2008). *Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Creswell, J. W. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Creswell, J. W., Hanson, W. E., Plano, C. V. L., & Morales, A. (2007). Qualitative research design: Selection and implementation. *The Counseling Psychologist*, *35*(2), 237–264.

Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2005). Introduction: The discipline and practice of qualitative research. In N. K. Denzin, & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of qualitative research* (3rd ed.; pp. 1-32). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Feldman, S. S., & Rosenthal, D. A. (1990). The acculturation of autonomy expectations in Chinese high schoolers residing in two Western nations. *International Journal of Psychology*, *25*(3), 259-281.

Fuligni, A. J. (2007). Family obligation, college enrollment, and emerging adulthood in Asian and Latin American families. *Child Development Perspectives*, *1*(2), 96-100.

Fuligni, A. J., & Pedersen, S. (2002). Family obligation and the transition to young adulthood. *Developmental Psychology*, *38*(5), 856-868.

Goldenberg, I., & Goldenberg H. (2004). *Family therapy: An overview* (6th ed.). Belmont, CA: Thomson Brooks/Cole Publishing Co.

Greenberger, E., & Chen, C. (1996). Perceived family relationships and depressed mood in early and late adolescence: A comparison of European and Asian Americans. *Developmental Psychology, 32*(4), 707-716.

Hwang, W. (2006). Acculturative family distancing: Theory, research, and clinical practice. *Psychotherapy Theory, Research, Practice, Training*, *43*(4), 397-409.

Hwang, W., Wood, J. J., & Fujimoto, K. (2010). Acculturative family distancing and depression in Chinese American families. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, *78*(5), 655-667.

Kearney, L. K., Draper, M., & Baron, A. (2005). Counseling utilization by ethnic minority college students. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology, 11*(3), 272-285.

Kim, B.S.K., Omizo, M.M., & Salvador, D.S. (1996). Culturally relevant counseling services for Korean American children: A systematic approach. *Elementary School Guidance and Counseling*, *31*, 64-73.

Kramer, E. J., Kwong, K., Lee, E., & Chung, H. (2002). Cultural factors influencing the mental health of Asian Americans. *Western Journal of Medicine, 176*(4), 227–231.

Lee, R. M., & Liu, H. T. (2001). Coping with intergenerational family conflict: Comparison of Asian American, Hispanic, and European American college students. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, *48*(4), 410-419.

Leong, F. T. L., Kim, H. H. W., & Gupta, A. (2011). Attitudes toward professional counseling among Asian-American college students: Acculturation, conceptions of mental illness, and loss of face. *Asian American Journal of Psychology*, *2*(2), 140-153.

Liang, C. T. H., & Sedlacek, W. E. (2003). Utilizing factor analysis to understand the needs of Asian American students. *Journal of College Student Development*, *44*(2), 260-266.

Lincoln, Y.S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic Inquiry*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications.

Maramba, D. C. (2008). Immigrant families and the college experience perspectives of Filipina Americans. *Journal of College Student Development,* 49(4), 336-350.

Masood, N., Okazaki, S., & Takeuchi, D. T. (2009). Gender, family, and community correlates of mental health in South Asian Americans. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*, *15*(3), 265-274.

Maxwell, J. A. (2005). *Qualitative research design: An interactive approach* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Meyer, O., Dhindsa, M., Gabriel, C., & Sue, S. (2009). Psychopathology and clinical issues with Asian American populations. In N. Tewari, & A. Alvarez (Eds.), *Asian American psychology: Current perspectives*. New York, NY: Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group, 519-536.

Morrison, L. L., & Downey, D. L. (2000). Racial differences in self-disclosure of suicidal ideation and reasons for living: Implications for training. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*, *6*(4), 374-386.

Morrow, S. L. (2005). Quality and trustworthiness in qualitative research in counseling psychology. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 52*(2), 250-260.

Moustakas, C. (1994). *Phenomenological research methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Okazaki, S. (1997). Sources of ethnic differences between Asian American and White American college students on measures of depression and social anxiety. *Journal of Abnormal Psychology, 106*(1), 52-60.

Ong, A. D., & Phinney, J. S. (2002). Personal goals and depression among Vietnamese American and European American young adults: A mediational analysis. *The Journal of Social Psychology*, *142*(1), 97-108.

Patton, M. Q. (1990). *Qualitative evaluation and research methods* (2nd ed.). Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

Pew Research Center. (2012). Social and demographic trends: The rise of Asian Americans, *Pew Internet & American Life Project.* Retrieved from http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2012/06/19/the-rise-of-asian-americans

Polkinghorne, D. E. (2005). Language and meaning: Data collection in qualitative research. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, *52*(2), 137-145.

Ponterotto, J. G. (2005). Qualitative research in counseling psychology: A primer on research paradigms and philosophy of science. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 52*(2), 126-136.

Qin, D. B., (2008). Doing well vs. feeling well: Understanding family dynamics and the psychological adjustment of Chinese immigrant adolescents. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, *37*(1), 22-35.

Ruzek, N. A., Nguyen, D. Q., & Herzog, D. C. (2011). Acculturation, enculturation, psychological distress and help-seeking preferences among Asian American college students. *Asian American Journal of Psychology, 2*(3), 181-196.

Strage, A. (2000). Predictors of college adjustment and success: Similarities and differences among Southeast-Asian-American, Hispanic, and White students. *Education*, *120*(4), 731-740.

Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. (1998). *Basics of qualitative research* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Sue, D. W., & Sue, S. (1972). Ethnic minorities: Resistance to being researched. *Professional Psychology*, *3*(1), 11-17.

Sue, S., Sue, D.W., Sue, L., & Takeuchi, D.T. (1995). Psychopathology among Asian Americans: A model minority? *Cultural Diversity and Mental Health*, *1*(1), 39-51.

Sy, S. R., & Brittain, A. (2008). The impact of family obligations on young women's decisions during the transition to college: A comparison of Latina, European American, and Asian American students. *Sex Roles, 58*(9-10), 729-737.

Uba, L. (1994). *Asian Americans: Personality patterns, identity, and mental health.* New York, NY: Guilford Press.

van Manen, M. (1990). *Researching lived experience: Human science for an action sensitive pedagogy*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Wertz, F. J. (2005). Phenomenological research methods for counseling psychology. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 52*(2), 167-177.

Wong, Y. J., Brownson, C., & Schwing, A. E. (2011). Risk and protective factors associated with Asian American students' suicidal ideation: A multicampus national study. *Journal of College Student Development, 52*(4), 396-408.

Wong, J. Y., Uhm, S.Y., & Li, P. (2012). Asian Americans' family cohesion and suicide ideation: Moderating and mediating effects. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 82*(3), 309-318.

Ying, Y., Coombs, M., & Lee, P. A. (1999). Family intergenerational relationship of Asian American adolescents. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*, *5*(4), 350-363.

Ying, Y., Lee, P. A., Tsai, J. L., Lee, Y. J., & Tsang, M. (2001). Relationship of young adult Chinese Americans with their parents: Variation by migratory status and cultural orientation. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, *71*(3), 342-349.

Yoon, J., & Lau, A. S. (2008). Maladaptive perfectionism and depressive symptoms among Asian American college students: Contributions of interdependence and parental relations. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*, *14*(2), 92-101.

Young, C. B., Fang, D., & Zisook, S. (2010). Depression in Asian-American and Caucasian undergraduate students. *Journal of Affective Disorders*, *125*(1-3), 379-382.

Chapter 4

Chapter 4: General Conclusions

This dissertation produced two manuscripts that are thematically linked through their investigation of how female college students of Southeast Asian descent experience family dynamics. Manuscript one (Chapter 2) is a systematic review and metasynthesis of existing literature on issues related to family relational patterns among Asian American young adults for the purpose of developing implications for counselor practice in general, and for college student counseling services in particular. This manuscript discusses the variables that influence the psychosocial health of college students of Asian descent, as identified through review of research literature on this topic. The literature review is essential in increasing the body of knowledge about the role of family and the challenges of adjustment to college for this group of college students, while revealing gaps that researchers must address in order to have a clearer picture of this phenomenon. Scholars who authored the articles that comprise the literature review have encouraged further studies that increase the understanding of Asian American young adults' psychosocial adjustment to college.

The review of research studies led to the identification of three gaps in the literature on Asian American students' psychosocial adjustment to college that warrant further research. First, although articles exist which described research related to family relational patterns among Asian Americans, these studies predominantly utilized quantitative approaches. One underrepresented area was research aimed at understand the experience of college-age young adults from the emic perspective. To date, only two studies (Chhuon & Hudley, 2008; Maramba, 2008) have explored Asian American college students' experience of family dynamics through their personal lenses. Second,

researchers have indicated that Asian American women experience higher prevalence of mental health issues (Center for Disease Control, 2002, 2007; Cheng et al., 2010; Sy & Brittain, 2008), yet there is a lack of gendered studies among this population. Third, existing studies either treated Asian Americans as a homogenous group or focused on a specific ethnicity. Although the U.S. Census Bureau (2010) listed over 20 Asian ethnicities in the U.S., approximately 80% of the research studies related to college students that involved participants from a single Asian subpopulation of Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese, or Filipino ethnic groups.

The identified gaps uncovered through careful review of the literature provided a rationale for the research direction. In response to this void in the literature, the second manuscript is an exploratory qualitative study guided by the need to understand both the process and the underlying complex of experiences related to SEAA female college students' family relational dynamics. This manuscript describes a grounded theory study aimed at constructing the narrative of how this unique population experiences the socio-cultural phenomenon of family dynamics while in college. Guided by the consideration that studying a single ethnicity may provide too narrow of a picture, while including the breadth of Asian ethnicities may result in too broad of a scope, the researcher found a balanced approach. Rather than studying a single ethnicity or an entire race, a research focus on an Asian subpopulation would bring greater benefit to counselor educators' understanding of the experience of family dynamics among an increasingly significant segment of the college population. One understudied subpopulation is Southeast Asian Americans (SEAAs). The researcher considered these gaps in literature and created the research question of, "How do SEAA female college students experience family

dynamics?" The manuscript also includes conclusions and implications, along with recommendations for practice, training, and research from available evidence that resulted from the study.

Both manuscripts point to Asian American family dynamics as a multifaceted phenomenon that has a significant impact on young adults' transition into college. Manuscript one discussed four interconnected themes that emerged through systematic review of the literature. The themes are *Intergenerational conflict, Family acculturative stress, Family obligations and expectations,* and *Family support.* The researcher identified the confluence of multiple familial variables that impinge on this life stage—namely, intergenerational dynamics (Castro & Rice, 2003; Chang, 1998; Greenberger & Chen, 1996; Han and Lee, 2011; Koh et al., 2009; Lee & Liu, 2001; Strage, 2000; Uba, 1994; Wang & Ratanasiripong, 2010); stress associated with differential acculturation rates (Ahn et al., 2008; Chung, 2001; Dinh & Nguyen, 2006; Greenberger & Chen, 1996; Lau, Jernewall, Zane, & Meyers, 2002; Lee, Su, & Yoshida, 2005; Su, Lee, & Vang, 2005; Ying & Han, 2007); family obligations and expectations (Chhuon, Kyratzis, & Hudley, 2010; Feldman & Rosenthal, 1990; Fuligni, 2007; Fuligni & Pedersen, 2002; Leu, Schroth, Obradovic, & Cruz, 2012; Oishi & Sullivan, 2005; Strage, 2000); and family support (Chhuon & Hudley, 2008; Kuo, 1995; Maramba, 2008; Wei et al., 2010).

Manuscript Two described and defined research studies that have highlighted the importance of family relational patterns in maintaining the well-being of Asian American college students. The result of grounded theory confirms existing literature that SEAA college students will likely encounter emotional distress early in their college years, and that this distress relates to relational issues with family. Guided by the grounded theory

principles and techniques utilizing open axial and selective coding (Corbin and Strauss, 2008), the researchers created three categories: *family dynamics*, *experiencing college,* and *finding own voice*. The study indicated that the intersection of family dynamics and experiencing college contributes to psychosocial distress among SEAA female students. At the same time, family relational patterns occurring within the context of college served as a catalyst for the participants' process of finding their own voice.

As SEAA females began college matriculation, the interaction of dual factors influenced their *experiencing college*. First, they became aware of their status as a *minority of minorities* in the campus environment, and this is accompanied by feelings of isolation, disconnect, inferiority, being misunderstood, and lack of community. At the same time, college enrollment enriched these young women's lives through *expanding worldview,* which is the exposure to new knowledge, alternate values, and different style of interpersonal relationship. This broadening of perspective facilitated gains in self-awareness, shaping of personal goals, and provided SEAA college students with resources to act on their personal and family situation.

Family dynamics represented the emotional, behavioral, and communication patterns among members of the family. SEAA female college students experience family dynamics as a combination of two subcategories: *Attending to family expectation and obligation* and *receiving family support.* Attending to family expectation and obligation was both a distressing as well as an encouraging experience. Here, the young women learned to be attuned to their parents' desires, and at times felt they have no choice in the matter, but may also experience this as an aspect of parental support. *Receiving family*

support, on the other hand, was primarily protective in that participants experience receiving help for felt need in both tangible and intangible ways.

Finding own voice emerged as the central category of this theory, as it represents the main theme of the research and is the category that all the other categories are related to in some way. *Finding own voice* is conceptualized as the growth process where participants experienced cognitive shifts, leading to behavioral changes that empower their pursuit of personal goals while maintaining acceptable relationships with their family. *Finding own voice* involves three overlapping subcategories with properties and accompanying dimensions, namely: (a) *feeling trapped*, (b) *negotiating dual goals*, and (c) *going for it*. The path of *finding own voice* began as a result of the women experiencing college and becoming aware that their goals do not align with their parents' expectations of them. *Feeling trapped* is characterized by participants experiencing psychosocial distress, an internal response to perception of family expectations and obligations where they are not give a choice. Through the experience of *expanding worldview*, the participants were empowered to move from *feeling trapped* to *negotiating dual goals. Negotiating dual goals* is the participants' experience of navigating family dynamics while attending to their personal goals in ways that enabled maintenance of family relationship without losing sight of their goals. Although participants experienced distressing aspects of SEAA family dynamics, they also recognized meaningful benefits of being a part of this family. Pursuing personal goals has never been a matter of ignoring parental expectations or neglecting family obligations. *Going for it* is the step beyond *negotiating dual goals*, in that participants began to believe in who they are and their personal goals. The SEAA female college students chose not to abandon their important

life goals, but found ways to voice their desires as well as seek resources to help them implement their desires.

Implications for College Counseling

In reviewing the outcomes of both manuscripts, several implications emerged that impact how counseling is carried out with female college students of Southeast Asian descent. The results of the literature review, Chapter 2, provided insight regarding psychosocial adjustment as this population enters college, as well as the influence of family relational patterns on their mental health and academic performance. The narratives of SEAA female college students presented in Chapter 3 offer key insights into the phenomenon being studied. First, the stories of the participants confirmed the existing knowledge base discussed in Chapter 3 regarding the presence of distressing family dynamics during college matriculation. Second, the narratives helped fill the gap in literature by highlighting SEAA young women's experience from the emic perspective. The narratives of Southeast Asian American female college students in the study demonstrated multifaceted relational dynamics with family, which included distressing as well as encouraging and supportive interactions.

For counselors working with SEAA female college students, it is essential to understand the process and the underlying complex of experiences with family dynamics for this demographic. Based on the emerging theory, it would be beneficial for counselors to take a collaborative approach with the client in making sense of the family dynamics experience and conceptualize relational patterns. Considering that SEAA as a group belongs to a relatively recent wave of immigrants, it is essential for the counselor to become knowledgeable about the process of immigration and of acculturation. An

understanding of SEAAs' developmental processes, as well as the culturally-based family dynamics, can help counselors normalize family conflict and employ culturally-appropriate interventions.

SEAA female college clients who experience *feeling trapped* will need help to explore choices and identify things that they do have control over. When clients from this population struggle with *negotiating dual goals* of personal versus family values, their family's welfare is also a top priority for them. Utilizing human resources such as social peers, spiritual community, and extended family can increase the efficacy of working with this population. The client's own family is also often a strong source of support. Therefore, family therapy may be an important counseling tool.

Although family counseling on college campuses is not a commonly-accepted practice, family involvement may be beneficial given the SEAA cultural norm of prolonged parenting and the students' desire to maintain strong relationship with their family. For the Asian American college population, family members' involvement has an added benefit because participants identified family support as a protective factor in adjustment to college life. It is advisable for college-based therapists to receive training in conducting family counseling and in assessing the suitability of this approach for their SEAA clients.

Family involvement can be integrated as a programmatic intervention where college administrators collaborate with local social service agencies that work among SEAA population to provide outreach and psychoeducation to families of SEAA students during new student orientation events. Staff from college counseling centers or ethnic community mental health service providers can offer psycho-education on (a) issues

related to college adjustment, (b) possible challenges for incoming students, and (c) the role of family support. The purpose would be to raise awareness among students' families on what to expect as their young adults enter college, and to suggest ways to provide support to students. Additional preventative interventions include offering psycho-educational workshops, informational brochures, and group therapy during the year, as these can be informative, therapeutic, and may facilitate the creation of a student community with shared experience.

Implications for Further Research

While the two combined manuscripts of this dissertation provide a foundation for counselors and counselor educators to understand the role of family relationships in the lives of SEAA female college students, there are crucial implications for further research on this topic. Manuscript One presented the key variables that comprise family dynamics, and Manuscript Two provided specific insight into the key experiences of the students and how they respond to family dynamics in an empowered manner. This knowledge is beneficial to student support, and to counseling support services in particular. Manuscript Two discussed the changes in the students and the change they perceived in their parents. One research implication that would be beneficial is to explore what specifically about the new way of relating to parents produced a more favorable response from SEAA parents. Counselors can utilize this knowledge to help SEAA female college students communicate and interact with their parents in ways that minimize distressing family dynamics. Another research opportunity that emerged from this study is the role of family support in helping the students adjust to a campus environment in which they are a minority of minorities. It would be beneficial to know which aspects of family support

contribute, and which aspects hinder the students' ability to thrive in the context of this minority status. Given that Asian Americans college students seldom engage in help-seeking behavior, and only one out of 12 participants in the study began seeing a campus counselor, further research is essential to examine at what point SEAA female college students become aware of the need to seek help.

Conclusions

Through the analysis of the literature review in Chapter 2, four themes emerged as interrelated variables that contribute to Asian Americans' well-being and academic performance during college matriculation: (a) Intergenerational conflict, (b) family acculturative stress, (c) family obligations and expectations, and (d) family support. In Chapter 3, the researcher complemented and built upon Chapter 2 by providing insight into how SEAA young women experience this set of family dynamics at a time when they are transitioning into a new life context. Three categories emerged from the extensive data analysis that describes the evolution of how the participants experienced and responded to relational dynamics with family. This research demonstrated the ability of SEAA female college students to navigate distressing family dynamics while adjusting to college. The study demonstrated that not only are the students able to maintain family relations, but they are able to steer the relational dynamics with parents to a healthier level of communication and interactions than in the past.

There is a need to continue exploring the experiences of family dynamics and college adjustment among Asian American college students. The findings from this current study lend themselves to possible future research opportunities. In particular, it would be beneficial to explore (a) which changes in the students led to decrease in

distressing patterns of interaction with their SEAA parents; (b) the role of family support in helping the students adjust to a campus environment in which they are a minority of minorities; and (c) factors that enable this population to becomes aware of the need to seek help, and encourage them to act on this need.

Bibliography

Abe, J. S., & Zane, N.W. (1990). Psychological maladjustment among Asian and White American college students: Controlling for confounds. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 37(4), 437-444.

Abe-Kim, J., Takeuchi, D., & Hwang, W. (2002). Predictors of help seeking for emotional distress among Chinese Americans: Family matters. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, *70*(5), 1186-1190.

Ahmad-Stout, D. J., & Sanjay, R. N. (2013). South Asians in college counseling. *Journal of College Student Psychotherapy*, *27*(1), 43-61.

Ahn, A. J., Kim, B. S. K., & Park, Y. S. (2008). Asian cultural values gap, cognitive flexibility, coping strategies, and parent-child conflicts among Korean Americans. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*, *14*(4), 353-363.

Bahrassa, N. F., Syed, M., Su, J., & Lee, R. M. (2011). Family conflict and academic performance of first-year Asian American undergraduates. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*, *17*(4), 415-426.

Baumrind, D. (1968). Authoritarian vs. authoritative parental control. *Adolescence*, *3*(11), 255-272.

Berkel, L. A., & Constantine, M. G. (2005). Relational variables and life satisfaction in African American and Asian American college women. *Journal of College Counseling*, *8*(1), 5-13.

Castillo, L. G., Zahn, M. P., & Cano, M. A. (2012). Predictors of familial acculturative stress in Asian American college students. *Journal of College Counseling*, 15(1), 52-64.

Castro, J. R., & Rice, K. G. (2003). Perfectionism and ethnicity: Implications for depressive symptoms and self-reported academic achievement. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*, *9*(1), 64-78.

Center for Disease Control and Prevention. (2002). *Leading causes of death by age group, Asian or Pacific Islander females: United States, 2002.* Retrieved from http://www.cdc.gov/women/lcod/2002/02asian.pdf

Center for Disease Control and Prevention. (2007) *Leading causes of death by age group, Asian or Pacific Islander females: United States, 2007.* Retrieved from http://www.cdc.gov/women/lcod/2007/07asian females.pdf

Chae, D. H., Lee, S., Lincoln, K. D., & Ihara, E. S. (2012). Discrimination, family relationships, and major depression among Asian Americans. *Journal of Immigrant and Minority Health, 14*(3), 361-370.

Chang, E. C. (1998). Cultural differences, perfectionism, and suicidal risk in a college population: Does social problem solving still matter? *Cognitive Therapy and Research, 22*(3), 237-254.

Chang, E. S., Heckhausen, J., Greenberger, E., & Chen, C. (2010). Shared agency with parents for educational goals: Ethnic differences and implications for college adjustment. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, *39*(11), 1293-1304.

Chang, D. F., & Sue, S. (2003). The effects of race and problem type on teachers' assessments of student behavior. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, *7*(2), 235-242.

Chao, R. K. (1994). Beyond parental control and authoritarian parenting style: Understanding Chinese parenting through the cultural notion of training. *Child Development, 65*(4), 1111-1119.

Chao, R. K. (2001). Extending research on the consequences of parenting style for Chinese Americans and European Americans. *Child Development*, *72*(6), 1832-1843.

Charmaz, K. (2006). *Constructing grounded theory: A practical guide through qualitative analysis.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

Cheng, J. K. Y., Fancher, T. L., Ratanasen, M., Conner, K. R., Duberstein, P. R., Sue, S., & Takeuchi, D. (2010). Lifetime suicidal ideation and suicide attempts in Asian Americans. *Asian American Journal of Psychology*, *1*(1), 18-30.

Chhuon, V., & Hudley, C. (2008). Factors supporting Cambodian American students' successful adjustment into the university. *Journal of College Student Development*, *49*(1), 15-30.

Chhuon, V., Kyratzis, A., & Hudley, C. (2010). Sources of coherence in the life stories of Cambodian American women at the university. *Journal of Language, Identity, and Education*, *9*(5), 347-362.

Choi, J. L., & Rogers, J. R. (2010). Exploring the validity of the College Student Reasons for Living Inventory among Asian American college students. *Archives of Suicide Research, 14*(3), 222-235.

Choi, J. L., Rogers, J. R., & Werth, J.L. (2009). Suicide risk assessment with Asian American college students: A culturally informed perspective. *The Counseling Psychologist*, *37*(2), 186-218.

Chung, R. H. G. (2001). Gender, ethnicity, and acculturation in intergenerational conflict of Asian American college students. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology, 7*(4), 376-386.

Chung, G. H., Flook, L., & Fuligni, A. J. (2009). Daily family conflict and emotional distress among adolescents from Latin American, Asian, and European backgrounds. *Developmental Psychology*, *45*(5), 1406-1415.

Constantine, M., Chen, E. C., & Ceesay, P. (1997). Intake concerns of racial and ethnic minority students at a university counseling center: Implications for developmental programming and outreach. *Journal of Multicultural Counseling and Development*, 25(3), 210-218.

Corbin, J., & Strauss, A. (2008). *Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Creswell, J. W. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Creswell, J. W., Hanson, W. E., Plano, C. V. L., & Morales, A. (2007). Qualitative research design: Selection and implementation. *The Counseling Psychologist, 35*(2), 237–264.

Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2005). Introduction: The discipline and practice of qualitative research. In N. K. Denzin, & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of qualitative research* (3rd ed.; pp. 1-32). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Dinh, K. T., & Nguyen, H. H. (2006). The effects of acculturative variables on Asian American parent-child relationships. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, *23*(3), 407-426.

Duldulao, A. A., Takeuchi, D. T., & Hong, S. (2009). Correlates of suicidal behaviors among Asian Americans. *Archives of Suicide Research, 13*(3), 277-290.

Feldman, S. S., & Rosenthal, D. A. (1990). The acculturation of autonomy expectations in Chinese high schoolers residing in two Western nations. *International Journal of Psychology*, *25*(3), 259-281.

Fuligni, A. J. (2007). Family obligation, college enrollment, and emerging adulthood in Asian and Latin American families. *Child Development Perspectives, 1*(2), 96-100.

Fuligni, A. J., & Pedersen, S. (2002). Family obligation and the transition to young adulthood. *Developmental Psychology*, *38*(5), 856-868.

Goldenberg, I., & Goldenberg H. (2004). *Family therapy: An overview* (6th ed.). Belmont, CA: Thomson Brooks/Cole Publishing Co.

Greenberger, E., & Chen, C. (1996). Perceived family relationships and depressed mood in early and late adolescence: A comparison of European and Asian Americans. *Developmental Psychology*, *32*(4), 707-716.

Guzman, M. A. (2012). Wendy H. Chang '12 Remembered for artistic spirit and infectious laugh. *The Harvard Crimson*. Retrieved from http://www.thecrimson.com/article/2013/5/9/joanna-li-12-dies/

Haber, R., & Merck, R. (2010). Intruder or resource? The family's influence in college counseling centers, *Journal of College Student Psychotherapy*, *24*(3), 162-180.

Han, M., & Lee, M. (2011). Risk and protective factors contributing to depressive symptoms in Vietnamese American college students. *Journal of College Student Development*, *52*(2), 154-166.

Higher Education Research Institute. (2007). Beyond myths: The growth and diversity of Asian American college Freshmen: 1971-2005. Los Angeles, CA: University of California, Los Angeles.

Hwang, W. (2006). Acculturative family distancing: Theory, research, and clinical practice. *Psychotherapy Theory, Research, Practice, Training*, *43*(4), 397-409.

Hwang, W., Wood, J. J., & Fujimoto, K. (2010). Acculturative family distancing and depression in Chinese American families. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, *78*(5), 655-667.

Jackson, K. **(**2009). The use of family therapy within a university counseling center. *Journal of College Student Psychotherapy*, *23*(4), 253-261.

Juang, L. P., & Nguyen, H. H. (2010). Ethnic identity among Chinese-American youth: The role of family obligation and community factors on ethnic engagement, clarity, and pride. *Identity: An International Journal of Theory and Research*, *10*(1), 20-38.

Juang, L. P., & Syed, M. (2010). Family cultural socialization practices and ethnic identity in college-going emerging adults. *Journal of Adolescence*, *33*(3), 347-354.

Kearney, L. K., Draper, M., & Baron, A. (2005). Counseling utilization by ethnic minority college students. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*, *11*(3), 272-285.

Kim, B.S.K., Omizo, M.M., & Salvador, D.S. (1996). Culturally relevant counseling services for Korean American children: A systematic approach. *Elementary School Guidance and Counseling, 31,* 64-73.

Kim, Y. M. (2011). Minorities in higher education: Twenty-fourth annual status report, 2011 supplement. Washington D.C.: American Council on Education.

Koh, J. B. K., Shao, Y., & Wang, Q. (2009). Father, mother, and me: Parental value orientations and child self-identity in Asian American immigrants. *Sex Roles, 60*(7-8), 600-610.

Kramer, E. J., Kwong, K., Lee, E., & Chung, H. (2002). Cultural factors influencing the mental health of Asian Americans. *Western Journal of Medicine, 176*(4), 227–231.

Kuo, W. H. (1995). Coping with racial discrimination: The case of Asian Americans. *Ethnic & Racial Studies, 18*(1), 109-127.

Lam, A. (2009). Asian Americans' rising suicide rates: Three students take their lives. *New America Media*. Retrieved from http://news.newamericamedia.org/news/view_article.html?article_id=c2b8f3a43bbe3e0445f23274028d24a7

Lau, A. S., Jernewall, N. M., Zane, N., & Myers, H. F. (2002). Correlates of suicidal behaviors among Asian American outpatient youths. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology, 8*(3), 199-213.

Lee, R. M., & Liu, H. T. (2001). Coping with intergenerational family conflict: Comparison of Asian American, Hispanic, and European American college students. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 48*(4), 410-419.

Lee, R. M., Su, J., & Yoshida, E. (2005). Coping with intergenerational family conflict among Asian American college students. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 52*(3), 389-399.

Leong, F. T. L., Kim, H. H. W., & Gupta, A. (2011). Attitudes toward professional counseling among Asian-American college students: Acculturation, conceptions of mental illness, and loss of face. *Asian American Journal of Psychology, 2*(2), 140-153.

Leong, F. T. L., Leach, M. M., & Gupta, A. (2008). Suicide among Asian Americans: A critical review with research recommendations. *Suicide among racial and ethnic minority groups: Theory, research, and practice. Series in death, dying, and bereavement* (pp. 117-141). New York, NY: Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group.

Leu, J., Schroth, C., Obradovic, J., & Cruz, R. A. (2012). Family assistance attitudes and family cultural conflict: A comparative study of second-generation Asian American and native-born European American emerging adults. *Asian American Journal of Psychology*, *3*(3), 133-144.

Liang, C. T. H., & Sedlacek, W. E. (2003). Utilizing factor analysis to understand the needs of Asian American students. *Journal of College Student Development*, *44*(2), 260-266.

Lim, S., Yeh, M., Liang, J., Lau, A. S., & McCabe, K. (2009). Acculturation gap, intergenerational conflict, parenting style, and youth distress in immigrant Chinese American families. *Marriage & Family Review*, *45*(1), 84-106.

Lin, K., Inui, T. S., Kleinman, A. & Womack, W. M. (1982). Sociocultural determinants of the help-seeking behavior of patients with mental illness. *Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease, 170*(2), 78-85.

Lincoln, Y.S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic Inquiry*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications.

Maramba, D. C. (2008). Immigrant families and the college experience perspectives of Filipina Americans. *Journal of College Student Development*, 49(4), 336-350.

Masood, N., Okazaki, S., & Takeuchi, D. T. (2009). Gender, family, and community correlates of mental health in South Asian Americans. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*, *15*(3), 265-274.

Maxwell, J. A. (2005). *Qualitative research design: An interactive approach* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Meyer, O., Dhindsa, M., Gabriel, C., & Sue, S. (2009). Psychopathology and clinical issues with Asian American populations. In N. Tewari, & A. Alvarez (Eds.), *Asian American psychology: Current perspectives*. New York, NY: Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group, 519-536.

Miller, M. J., Yang, M., Hui, K., Choi, N., & Lim, R. H. (2011). Acculturation, enculturation, and Asian American college students' mental health and attitudes toward seeking professional psychological help. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, *58*(3), 346-357.

Morrison, L. L., & Downey, D. L. (2000). Racial differences in self-disclosure of suicidal ideation and reasons for living: Implications for training. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*, *6*(4), 374-386.

Morrow, S. L. (2005). Quality and trustworthiness in qualitative research in counseling psychology. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, *52*(2), 250-260.

Moustakas, C. (1994). *Phenomenological research methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Oishi, S., & Sullivan, H. W. (2005). The mediating role of parental expectations in culture and well-being. *Journal of Personality, 73*(5), 1267-1294.

Okazaki, S. (1997). Sources of ethnic differences between Asian American and White American college students on measures of depression and social anxiety. *Journal of Abnormal Psychology, 106*(1), 52-60.

Ong, A. D., & Phinney, J. S. (2002). Personal goals and depression among Vietnamese American and European American young adults: A mediational analysis. *The Journal of Social Psychology, 142*(1), 97-108.

Park, Y. S., Kim, B. S. K., Chiang, J., & Ju, C. M. (2010). Acculturation, enculturation, parental adherence to Asian cultural values, parenting styles, and family conflict among Asian American college students. *Asian American Journal of Psychology, 1*(1), 67-79.

Park, Y. S., Vo, L. P., & Tsong, Y. (2009). Family affection as a protective factor against the negative effects of perceived Asian values gap on the parent-child relationship for Asian American male and female college students. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology, 15*(1), 18-26.

Parke, R. D., & Buriel, R. (2006). Socialization in the family: Ethnic and ecological perspectives. In N. Eisenberg, W. Damon, & R. M. Lerner (Eds.), *Handbook of child psychology: Vol. 3, Social, emotional, and personality development* (6th ed.; pp. 429-504). Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Passel, J. S., & Cohn, D. (2008). Social and demographic trends: U.S. Population Projections: 2005-2050. Pew Internet & American Life Project. Retrieved from http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/files/2010/10/85.pdf

Patton, M. Q. (1990). *Qualitative evaluation and research methods* (2nd ed.). Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

Pew Research Center. (2012). Social and demographic trends: The rise of Asian Americans, *Pew Internet & American Life Project.* Retrieved from http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2012/06/19/the-rise-of-asian-americans

Polkinghorne, D. E. (2005). Language and meaning: Data collection in qualitative research. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 52*(2), 137-145.

Ponterotto, J. G. (2005). Qualitative research in counseling psychology: A primer on research paradigms and philosophy of science. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 52*(2), 126-136.

Qin, D. B., (2008). Doing well vs. feeling well: Understanding family dynamics and the psychological adjustment of Chinese immigrant adolescents. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, *37*(1), 22-35.

Ramanujan, K. (2006). *Health expert explains Asian and Asian-American students' unique pressures to succeed.* Retrieved from http://chinspirations.com/mhsourcepage/wp-content/uploads/Asian-students.pdf

Rumbaut, R. G. (2005). Assimilation, dissimilation, and ethnic identities: The experience of children of immigrants in the United States. In M.T. Rutter (Ed.), *Ethnicity and causal mechanisms. The Jacobs Foundation series on adolescence* (pp. 301-334). New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Russell, S. T., Chu, J. Y., Crockett, L. & Doan, S. N. (2010). The meanings of parent-adolescent relationship quality among Chinese American and Filipino American adolescents. In S. T. Russell, L. J. Crockett, & R. Chao (Eds.), *Asian American parenting and parent–adolescent relationships. Advancing responsible adolescent development* (pp. 79-100). New York, NY: Springer Science, Business Media.

Ruzek, N. A., Nguyen, D. Q., & Herzog, D. C. (2011). Acculturation, enculturation, psychological distress and help-seeking preferences among Asian American college students. *Asian American Journal of Psychology*, *2*(3), 181-196.

Su, J., Lee, R. M., & Vang, S. (2005). Intergenerational family conflict and coping among Hmong American college students. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, *52*(4), 482-489.

Sue, D. W., & Sue, S. (1972). Ethnic minorities: Resistance to being researched. *Professional Psychology*, *3*(1), 11-17.

Sue, D. W. & Sue, D. (2013). *Counseling the culturally diverse: Theory and practice* (6th ed.). Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Sue, S., Sue, D.W., Sue, L., & Takeuchi, D.T. (1995). Psychopathology among Asian Americans: A model minority? *Cultural Diversity and Mental Health*, *1*(1), 39-51.

Strage, A. (2000). Predictors of college adjustment and success: Similarities and differences among Southeast-Asian-American, Hispanic, and White students. *Education*, *120*(4), 731-740.

Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. (1998). *Basics of qualitative research* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Sy, S. R., & Brittain, A. (2008). The impact of family obligations on young women's decisions during the transition to college: A comparison of Latina, European American, and Asian American students. *Sex Roles, 58*(9-10), 729-737.

Tang, M., Fouad, N. A., & Smith, P. L. (1999). Asian Americans' career choices: A path model to examine factors influencing their career choices. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 54*(1), 142-157.

Tsai-Chae, A. H., & Nagata, D. K. (2008). Asian values and perceptions of intergenerational family conflict among Asian American students. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology, 14*(3), 205-214.

Uba, L. (1994). *Asian Americans: Personality patterns, identity, and mental health.* New York, NY: Guilford Press.

U.S. Census Bureau. (2014) *National population projections: Summary tables*. Retrieved from http://www.census.gov/population/projections/data/national/2014/summarytables.html.

U.S. Census Bureau. (2012). The Asian population, 2010, Table 6. Asian population by detailed groups 2000 and 2010, generated by Elizabeth M. Hoeffel, Sonya Rastogi, Myoung Ouk Kim, and Hasan Shahid. U.S. Department of Commerce, Washington D.C Retrieved from https://www.census.gov/prod/cen2010/briefs/c2010br-11.pdf

van Manen, M. (1990). *Researching lived experience: Human science for an action sensitive pedagogy*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Wang, C. D. C., & Ratanasiripong, P. (2010). Adult attachment, cultural orientation, and psychosocial functioning of Chinese American college students. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology, 16*(2), 101-109.

Wei, M., Heppner, P. P., Ku, T., & Liao, K. Y. (2010). Racial discrimination stress, coping, and depressive symptoms among Asian Americans: A moderation analysis. *Asian American Journal of Psychology, 1*(2), 136-150.

Wertz, F. J. (2005). *Phenomenological research methods for counseling psychology. Journal of Counseling Psychology, 52*(2), 167-177.

Wong, Y. J., Brownson, C., & Schwing, A. E. (2011). Risk and protective factors associated with Asian American students' suicidal ideation: A multicampus national study. *Journal of College Student Development, 52*(4), 396-408.

Wong, Y. J., Koo, K., Tran, K. K., Chiu, Y., & Mok, Y. (2011). Asian American college students' suicide ideation: A mixed-methods study. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, *58*(2), 197-209.

Wong, A., Wong, Y. J., & Obeng, C. S. (2012). An untold story: A qualitative study of Asian American family strengths. *Asian American Journal of Psychology*, *3*(4), 286-298.

Wong, J. Y., Uhm, S.Y., & Li, P. (2012). Asian Americans' family cohesion and suicide ideation: Moderating and mediating effects. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, *82*(3), 309-318.

Wu, C., & Chao, R. K. (2005). Intergenerational cultural conflicts in norms of parental warmth among Chinese American immigrants. *International Journal of Behavioral Development 29*(6), 516-523.

Ying, Y., Coombs, M., & Lee, P. A. (1999). Family intergenerational relationship of Asian American adolescents. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*, *5*(4), 350-363.

Ying, Y., & Han, M. (2007). The longitudinal effect of intergenerational gap in acculturation on conflict and mental health in Southeast Asian American adolescents. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, *77*(1), 61-66.

Ying, Y., Lee, P. A., Tsai, J. L., Lee, Y. J., & Tsang, M. (2001). Relationship of young adult Chinese Americans with their parents: Variation by migratory status and cultural orientation. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, *71*(3), 342-349.

Yoon, J., & Lau, A. S. (2008). Maladaptive perfectionism and depressive symptoms among Asian American college students: Contributions of interdependence and parental relations. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*, *14*(2), 92-101.

Young, C. B., Fang, D., & Zisook, S. (2010). Depression in Asian-American and Caucasian undergraduate students. *Journal of Affective Disorders*, *125*(1-3), 379-382.

Appendices

Appendix A

Recruitment Letter of Introduction to University Personnel and Campus Student Organizations That Work With Multicultural Population, and With Asian Population in Particular

Office of Institutional Review Board
Office of Research Integrity | Oregon State University
B308 Kerr Administration Building, Corvallis, OR 97331-2140
Telephone (541) 737-8008
Irb@oregonstate.edu | http://oregonstate.edu/irb/

Dear _____

My name is Jennie Ju and I am a Licensed Professional Counselor and a Ph.D. Candidate at Oregon State University in Corvallis, Oregon. I am in the process of recruiting participants for my dissertation research, which has been approved by the Human Subjects Board of Oregon State University and is study number is 6087. This research is an exploratory study investigating the experiences of Southeast Asian American female college students regarding the relational patterns of communication and behavior between them and their family.

Due to your role in working with multicultural student population at the university, I am asking for your help in the recruitment of participants for my study. Specifically, I am asking you to help distribute the information (see attached recruitment flyer) to potential Southeast Asian American students. You may choose to distribute the flyers to the target population however you judge to be appropriate. .

In addition, I am including the recruitment flyer, consent form and initial interview questions for your use. You do not need to pre-screen individuals beyond identifying potential participants of Southeast Asian descent since the recruitment flyer listed the criteria for self-screening purpose. So you are aware of participation requirements, the criteria are listed as follow:

a) college student, b) over 18 years old, c) female, d) Southeast Asian descent, e) are aware of family influence on their college enrollment, f) had experienced family pressures while in college, g) feel comfortable to reflect on your experience, and h) ability to articulate your experience. Southeast Asian descent is described as someone whose parent or parents were from Southeast Asian countries.

I will conduct an informed consent over the 20-minute phone meeting. Following the informed consent, I will assess the participant's comprehension. I will also ask whether they are still interested before we schedule the first interview.

Participation is strictly voluntary and the flyer instructed potential candidates to contact me directly if they are interested. The study will include one 60-minute interview and one or two additional shorter interviews either by phone or by a secure Adobe Connect website. The interviews will be audio-taped and will span less than 6 months. The participant will be compensated $75 when they complete their participation in the interview process.

I appreciate your help in alerting potential participants of this research project which will contribute to the literature on the psychosocial adjustment of Southeast Asian American female college students.

Should you have any questions related to my project or my request, please do not hesitate to contact me. My email address is at juje@onid.oregonstate.edu and my direct phone number is 503-715-6442. This research is conducted under the direction of Dr. Deborah Rubel, Counseling Department, and she can be reached at deborah.rubel@onid.orst.edu or by direct phone at 541-737-5973.

With your permission, I will contact you in one week to see whether you have any questions or concerns regarding my request.

Thank you in advance for your support and assistance.

Sincerely,

Jennie Ju, MA, LPC
Oregon State University PhD Candidate

Appendix B

Invitation Flyer to Participate in the Study

Office of Institutional Review Board
Office of Research Integrity | Oregon State University
B308 Kerr Administration Building, Corvallis, OR 97331-2140
Telephone (541) 737-8008
Irb@oregonstate.edu | http://oregonstate.edu/irb/

Invitation to Southeast Asian American Female Students for Research Study

ARE YOU A FEMALE COLLEGE STUDENT OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN (SEA) DESCENT?

If so, I'd like to invite you to participate in my study. I am looking for SEA students who are over 18 years old, aware of family influence on your college enrollment, had experienced family pressures, and feel comfortable to reflect on, and articulate your experience.

The project: My name is JENNIE JU and I am a doctoral student at the Oregon State University. I am interested in exploring the relational patterns of communication and behavior between the SEA American female students and their family. The information will be used for my dissertation and for future publication. The reason for the study is because there is a lack of literature that provides an understanding of the experiences of SEA Americans and family dynamics.

To participate: Participating in this research study is strictly voluntary and, if you qualify, it is up to you to decide if you would like to participate. Up to 12 participants will be invited to take part in this study.

What is involved: You will be interviewed about your experience with family related pressures and adjustment to college. The main interview will take about an hour, with one or two shorter follow-up interviews. The interviews will be either by phone or on a secure Adobe Connect internet website. The study will span no more than six months and all information will be kept CONFIDENTIAL. There will be an initial phone meeting of 20 minutes where we will review informed consent and you will have the opportunity to ask questions.

You will be compensated $75 at the end of your participation in the interview process. A check will be mailed to the address you provide.

Contact information: Again, my name is JENNIE JU and I can be reached by phone at 503-715-6442 or by email at juje@onid.oregonstate.edu. Please include phone contact information so that I can contact you to set up an initial phone meeting.

This research is conducted under the direction of Dr. Deborah Rubel, Counseling Department, and she can be reached at deborah.rubel@onid.orst.edu or by direct phone at 541-737-5973. This study has been reviewed and approved by the OSU Institutional Review Board.

Appendix C

Verbal Consent Guide

Office of Institutional Review Board
Office of Research Integrity | Oregon State University
B308 Kerr Administration Building, Corvallis, OR 97331-2140
Telephone (541) 737-8008
Irb@oregonstate.edu | http://oregonstate.edu/irb/

Screening Criteria. Have you read the screening criteria listed on the recruitment flyer? (if yes), Do you think you fit the criteria listed? (if yes), In that case, we can go through the informed consent together.

Purpose. The study will explore the experience of Southeast Asian American (SEAA) female college students who are aware of their family's influence on college experience, and they experience family pressures while in college. This study is being conducted by a student in a doctoral program in Counseling. The study will last no longer than six months.

Activities. You will be interviewed about your college experience as well as your experience with family related pressures while in college. The main interview will take 1 hour, with one or two shorter follow-up interviews. The interviews will take place on a secure Adobe Connect website. All interviews will be voice recorded and the recordings will be destroyed upon completion of transcription. The transcripts of the interviews and all information gathered in this study will be stored in a locked file cabinet at the Oregon State University for 3 years after the study is complete. Transcripts of the interviews will be emailed to you for verification.

Risks. There is no physical or economic risk to you. The interviews are confidential and your responses will be stored separate from your name, but there is always a small risk of accidental failure of confidentiality. Emailing transcripts of the interviews to you poses some risk, but I will use anti-virus and other security software on my computer and will include a message of confidentiality on all electronic correspondence. The greatest potential risk will be emotional reaction to reflecting on questions, but distress is very unlikely and I am trained to process such reactions.

Benefits. There are no known direct benefits to you in participating in this research. Indirect benefits include adding to the knowledge about family dynamics and SEAA female college students.

Voluntariness. Participation in this study is voluntary and you can stop participation without a problem. If you choose to stop, I may keep and include your information in my study.

Payment. At the end of the interview process after you have verified the transcript of the interviews, you will be paid $75 in the form of a gift card from a retailer of your choice. The gift card will be mailed to the address you provide. No payment will be made if you withdraw early from the study.

Assess for comprehension. Now that you've read the informed consent guide, I need to ask you a few questions to make sure you understand what you've just read. First of all,

- What questions can I answer for you about the research or the process?
- So that I am sure that you understand what the study involves, would you please tell me what you think we are asking you to do?
- In your own words, can you tell me what the biggest risk to you might be if you enroll in this study?

Agreement to participate. Now that you understand what is involved in your participation in the research, do you agree to participate in the research?

In the event that significant new findings developed during the course of the research which may relate to your willingness to continue participation, I will inform you.

Contact information. If you have any questions about this research project, please contact: Jennie Ju by phone at (503) 715-6442 or by email at juje@onid.orst.edu, or Deborah J. Rubel, Ph.D. by phone at (541) 737-5973 or by email at rubeld@onid.orst.edu. If you have questions about your rights or welfare as a participant, please contact the Oregon State University Institutional Review Board (IRB) Office, at (541) 737-8008 or by email at IRB@oregonstate.edu.

Sponsor. There is no sponsor.

Appendix D

Initial Interview Questions

Office of Institutional Review Board
Office of Research Integrity | Oregon State University
B308 Kerr Administration Building, Corvallis, OR 97331-2140
Telephone (541) 737-8008
Irb@oregonstate.edu | http://oregonstate.edu/irb/

Questions to be asked during the initial interview are:

1. Describe what it is like to be an Asian American on a college campus.
2. Describe the experience of being a member of a Southeast Asian American family.
3. How has the process of you starting college affected your family's relations?
4. What do you perceive as the source of difficulties you are experiencing with your family?
5. What thoughts and feelings did you experience related to difficult family dynamics?
6. What are some ways in which your family provides support for your college education?
7. Describe what all of the family dynamics you are experiencing mean to you.

Appendix E

Participant Demographics

There were a total of twelve participants, each of whom identified as Southeast Asian American, representing a diverse mix of ethnicities as follow: 1 Burmese, 1 Cambodian, 3 Filipinos, 1 Hmong, 2 Malaysian, 2 Malay-Singaporean, 1 Thai, and 1 Vietnamese. Given that many Southeast Asian nations are heavily populated by people of Chinese ancestry, it is not surprising that several participants are bi-ethnic and identified themselves as Burmese-Chinese, Filipino-Chinese or Malay-Chinese. Among the participants were two bi-racial students who had met all the criteria, and self-identified as Southeast Asian American when they contacted the researcher. Their bi-racial background was made known to the researcher during the first interview. The researchers decided to include them in the study for two reasons. First, the researchers consider ethnic and cultural identities as emic constructs. Second, the researcher (Ju) had observed inter-racial families to be common among SEAA communities. Therefore, their inclusion provided a more realistic representation of SEAA female college population. An influencing factor the researcher on this decision is the fact that there are seven inter-racial marriages in the researcher's own extended family and over twenty such couples in the church she attends.

The participants were enrolled in a university at the time of first contact during late spring of 2014. By the first round of interview in summer, four of the students in the study had just graduated. Therefore during the first round of interviews, two participants had just begun their full-time jobs and two were seeking employment. One participant was in graduate school and another had recently begun her medical residency. All the participants entered college right after graduation from high school. One student dropped

out of college soon after the second interview and subsequently enrolled in a professional school by the third round.

A range of academic disciplines was represented among the participants, and their chosen majors were Biochemistry, Business, European Environmental studies, Film, International studies, Mathematics, Medicine, Physical therapy, Psychology/Social Science, and Public administration.

The students who were invited to be part of the study were from different parts of the country. Five students belonged to the same university, and none of the remaining students attended the same college. A total of twelve participants completed round one while ten completed all three rounds of the interview. Prior to round two, two of the participants dropped out of the study; one due to a family crisis and the other to focus on studying for MCAT exam. The group of participants is comprised of eleven single women, two of whom were engaged to be married, and one single mom. Three students lived at home while attending college.

Half of the participants were native-born while the other half were born overseas and came to the United States either in childhood or early adolescence. With the exception of the fathers of two bi-racial participants, all parents are first-generation immigrants who arrived in the United States as adults. With respect to religious background, half of the participants reported belonging to the Judeo-Christian faith, while families of two participants are Muslim, another three are Buddhists and one is animist.

Although this was not a question that was asked of participants, information about parents' occupations were revealed during the course of the interview. It is interesting to note the range of professions that participants' biological fathers are involved in, such as

shamanism, engineer, shoe salesman, minister, medical doctor. The participants rarely discussed their mothers' occupation and when they do, it is in the context of mother's role as homemaker.

TABLE 1. Demographic Information of Participants

SEAA Female College Student Participant Demographic Table				
Participant	Ethnicity	Major	Region of university	Religion of family
P01	Hmong	Public Administration	Northwest	Animism
P02	Cambodian	Medicine	Northwest	Buddhism
P03	Filipino	Mathematics	Northwest	Judeo-Christian
P04	Malay	European Studies/Environment	East coast	Judeo-Christian
P05	Malay - Singaporean	International Studies/Economics	East coast	Moslem
P06	Filipino	Film	East coast	Judeo-Christian
P07	Malay	Business/Event planning	Northwest	Judeo-Christian
P08	Filipino	International relations/Southeast Asian studies	East coast	Judeo-Christian
P09	Malay - Singaporean	International studies/Human rights	East coast	Judeo-Christian
P10	Vietnamese	Psychology/Social Science	Northwest	Judeo-Christian
P11	Thai	Bio-chemistry	Midwest	Buddhism
P12	Burmese	Physical therapy	West coast	Buddhism

Appendix F

First Round of Interviews

Introduction

The initial set of data for this grounded theory study on the experience of Southeast Asian American female college students related to family dynamics. The interview was conducted with 12 participants by phone, ranging from 60-80 minutes in length. With the consent of participants, the interviews were audio taped and then transcribed. Interviews were transcribed by the primary researcher, which allows her to become immersed in the data. The transcriptions were reviewed by participants for accuracy and then de-identified and sent to the respective participants to again check for accuracy. Data analysis did not commence until all transcripts were approved by participants.

Initial interviews were conducted around the seven main research questions that are aimed at gaining understanding of participants' experience of family relational dynamics while adjusting to college. The questions asked during the first round of interviews were:

1. Describe what it is like to be an Asian American on a college campus.
2. Describe the experience of being a member of a Southeast Asian American family.
3. How has the process of you starting college affected your family's relations?
4. What do you perceive as the source of difficulties you are experiencing with your family?

5. What thoughts and feelings did you experience related to difficult family dynamics?
6. What are some ways in which your family provides support for your college education?
7. Describe what all of the family dynamics you are experiencing mean to you.

At the start of the initial interviews, the primary researcher established rapport with participants in a number of ways. First, as ice breaker, the researcher asked non-threatening questions such as "What year are you in?" and "What is your college major?" Second, the researcher diligently listened and attended to each participant's narrative, asking clarifying questions and expressing empathy as appropriate. The semi-structured format of the interview provided flexibility in expanding discussion of both broader and more specific themes. Throughout the interview process, the researcher was mindful to explore the experiences of participants at a deeper level.

Open coding of the first round of interview transcripts gave me dual impressions of how the participants were describing their experience with relational dynamics in their families. First, they expressed an internal struggle to find a balance. Initially it was unclear what they were attempting to balance. Upon careful and in-depth analysis, the data suggested that they felt stuck, being in between their cultural heritage and the culture of the community they currently exist in. Furthermore, they felt stuck between their perception of their families' desire for them and their own personal desires. This perception influenced how they feel about their role in the family and the interactional pattern with their family members, especially with their parents. The second thing that impressed me was the meaningful significance of their family of origin. Even during

times of conflict within the family, accompanied by psychological distress, the participants acknowledge that family "keep me grounded" (as stated by participant P01).

Coding the First Round Interviews

The data analysis phase in the first round of interviews comprised employing the techniques of open and axial coding, constant comparison, and memoing approaches. The goals of the first step of the open coding process were to conceptualize and categorize the data using gerunds. This thematic coding along with constant comparison of the twelve participants' narratives in the first round of interviews identified a group of common gerunds. The gerunds represent categories of participants' experiences as they described the impact of family dynamics on their psychosocial health. Several categories identified were in vivo codes, meaning the exact wording used by the participants was adopted as the initial coding. In order to get a clearer picture of the collective experiences, I created a table of master list of codes where gerunds from the open coding process were organized and ordered according to their relevance to the codes. This was an essential step to organize and color-code the data in a manner that facilitate observation of patterns and prevalence of themes across participants. Throughout the data analysis process, I engaged in memoing as a way to track my reflections of, and reaction to the data.

Subsequent to the task of open coding, axial coding approach combined with constant comparison was applied in analyzing the participants' responses. The purpose of this process was to identify the presence of relationships between categories via their properties and dimensions. The themes and relationships that emerged from both the open and axial coding are diagrammatically illustrated in Figure 1.

The emerging conceptualization of the young women's experience revealed one context category, *being minority of minorities*, and five main categories: *sitting on the fence, experiencing distressing family dynamics, experiencing positive family dynamics, experiencing psychosocial distress* and *finding own voice*. Two of the categories, *experiencing distressing family dynamics* and *experiencing positive family dynamics*, were each further defined by two properties, which are sub-categories of the primary categories. The properties of *experiencing distressing family dynamics* were *attending to family expectations* and *meeting obligation to family*. The properties of *experiencing positive family dynamics* were *appreciating family support* and *experiencing growth*. Among the categories, *sitting on the fence* was found to be the central category because it not only provided crucial insight into participants' experiences of family dynamics, but also afford understanding of the impact of their environmental and situational context factors as Southeast Asian American young women in college setting.

Here are the descriptions of categories and their respective properties, as well as descriptions of dimensions by property. We start with the context category of *being minority of minorities.*

Being Minority of Minorities

As with other categories to be discussed in this section, *being minority of minorities* emerged as a category from the analysis of data generated by the initial interview questions. This is an in vivo phrase from participant P11 to indicate the status of SEAA on campus. She stated that, "Well . . . it feels like we're minority of minorities. Coz on campus, there are Asian Americans which is already considered a minority group. The Southeast Asians are a smaller group out of that. We're almost invisible. People

couldn't tell us apart from other Asians." This is a context category in that *being minority of minorities* is a phenomenon that occurs on university campus for the participants in this study. Participants experienced that among the minority groups on campus, they see very few students from SEAA background, and expressed that they share few common values and interests with non-Asian peers on campus. Participants perceived a lack of understanding by peers due to lack of commonality and their peers' lack of exposure to SEAA people and culture. This led participants to feel uniquely different from their peers, professors and school staff and experienced some challenges in participant's psychosocial adjustment on in college. Certain SEAA cultural practices caused participants to themselves as inferior to their peers.

Being a minority of minorities also represents a time of shifting perspective and growth for the participants because the college environment exposed them to new ideas, new ways of doing things, and fresh lens to view their family dynamics. This happened in a number of ways such as through course contents, classroom interactions, campus activities and new social community. There are three dimensions to being minority of minorities.

Dimension: Feeling sense of disconnect ← → belonging with peers

> P01: Most of (classmates') families come from well-off families - families that have money. Just from the way they talk about it their lives. So I feel like, I have financial barriers, and not only just that, but just coz it's part of the Asian culture that we bear the burden of family members.
>
> P03: (Being SEAA) feels good. I enjoy it. It definitely sets me apart as a minority even more. I am not like Americans, and on top of that, my family is not like most SEAA families, I think.
>
> P05: I identify myself as both as American and SEA. Also at some level I also identify as white. Although I don't present as white, I don't look white. Yeah,

that has affected me. I'm never going to find a group of people who are all the same ethnicity as I am . . . I think that growing up as SEAA has made me very . . . I value diversity a lot, makes me curious and open to other people. I never had the option to fall in with a group that's all SEA.

P06: Coming to college because I was living in the dorm, living with a whole bunch of other people who didn't grow up in the Asian American background that I felt how different or unique that was.

P07: Here, it is majority white people. I really felt uncomfortable. I didn't know how to interact with people because I've never interacted with people other than Chinese, Koreans, Vietnamese, mostly all Asians. When I first moved here, it was a culture shock. I had a really hard time talking to people. And I felt lonely more than anything, and it affected my studies.

P08: I don't know if I can speak for everyone who's SEAA. But for my particular experience, I am a Filipino-American and we're a minority on campus. Asians in general are a minority on campus and Filipinos are even more so. I never felt the need to join the Filipino-American community or campus groups. I didn't really hang out with Filipino-Americans. I hang out mostly with Northeast Asians I think . . . Japanese, Koreans, Chinese. I didn't hang out a lot with Southeast Asians. I do have a best friend though who is Singaporean and I think Singapore shares the SEA culture.

P08: We're definitely a minority on the (name of university) campus. But I felt comfortable because I have made a few friends although not too many friends. This is also due to the fact that I majored in Southeast Asian studies. I actually major in international studies, but I focus on Southeast Asia.

P08: Okay, growing up in a SEAA family. I moved here when I was eight. Knowing that this is my second country. I have recollection of that from an earlier age. We moved here as immigrants. I want to make sure I fit in right away, so I . . . In my attempt to be assimilated, I spoke largely English, and didn't want to speak Tagalog too much which is the native tongue of the Philippines. I speak English with my parents as well. My dad and my mom speak Tagalog to each other, but didn't speak Tagalog to us because one of my brothers did not understand Tagalog.

P10: I struggle a lot, growing up I struggle with the differences - expectations and the American way or the Vietnamese way. I kind of adapted I have a lot of

Caucasian friends or non-Asian friends that sometimes they just don't understand. I experienced a lot of doubt and not enough understanding . . . There are two different aspects with what I have experienced. There are friends who cannot understand the traditional way of living and where I came from. And then I have friends who understand completely what I am going through because they went through the same thing. It's difficult being in college and being Vietnamese American because there are differences in understanding.

P11: So if I tell someone on campus that I'm scared for my friends and family about the military coup that just happened last week, they'd look at me strange . . . they had no clue. I cannot talk to anyone about it, and to expect them to understand. It's not just . . . They had no clue about all the violence, the mass protests, the shootings, the curfew, that we don't even have a government right now.

Dimension: Feeling discomfort ← → proud of their family cultural characteristics/ practices

P03: Basically, my parents are Chinese but they are born in the Philippines, that's where they are from, and I've been there a lot of times. I think what makes family different than other SEAA families, is that we're Christians, and we're not like most, I guess some are Catholics and others are Buddhists. There's a difference between those and being Christians in shifting the dynamics of the family.

P06: Though a lot of times there's this weird mix of expectations. Expectations not to be as independent like all my American friends so like the idea of going home every weekend. It's one of those things where I feel a lot pressure from my friends here at the university like, 'You shouldn't have to go home all the time. Why do you want to see your parents all that time?' And the fact that my parents are paying for my education or supporting that in some way . . . I have a lot of friends who are paying for their own education. They look at me kinda like I'm not really mature.

P08: Whenever we have conversations in school about, 'What did you do over Thanksgiving?' or, 'what did you do for Christmas vacation?' We didn't have typical food, we didn't have turkey. We had Filipino food, we had Filipino parties. It wasn't a typical American food or tradition. So whenever we were asked American culture questions at school, I always lied and told them what they wanted to hear – that I ate turkey over Thanksgiving.

P08: With my family, I quickly learn that certain ways that we live that don't translate well into college life here. I think that's just common among all people, in my opinion. So my family likes sharing food. When I go to college, I find out that people are protective about their food, about sharing. They have an individual approach to food and not communal eating experience. This is one thing that I notice. I don't know whether it's a personality thing or SEAA thing or my family thing. My family is always ready to do share everything.

P10: Sometimes I really feel pressured about stereotypes that always make me feel like I need to perform better. During class discussions, I would feel pressured to always know the answers, always feel the need to participate in discussions, I feel a more sense of pressure than the rest . . . A lot of these classes are related to science and math and there are these stereotypes that Asians are good at math, and they expected me to know . . . But I do embrace my heritage, I embrace who I am. When people are curious about my culture, a person of my traditions, I gladly talk about it. I do feel like a minority, but I do enjoy it.

P12: Like for me, I feel like a lot of people have high expectation, like because I have an Asian American look. A lot of Asian American have the reputation for being very intelligent. They have an arrogant, kind of aura or something like that. They give off the feeling that we are very, very, smart. You don't want to like trying to prove them wrong or anything like that. I feel a lot of that pressure as well being on college campus and being SEAA.

Dimension: Limiting ← → expanding perspective as a result of exposure to new ways of thinking and doing things.

P03: There's a lot of room for me to grow and make my own decisions . . . Starting college has affected our relationship in a way where I am given more freedom to make my own decision.

P06: I guess, there's this common theme of oh, we go to the university with a lot of rich, a lot of rich American students who have no, they just have no concept of the spending ideals that our parents instilled in us, and it's hard when there's this culture of spending, or oh, why don't you have this program on your computer, so you could have these opportunities that I have - opportunities that our parents never had, or our cousins don't have, If that makes any sense. Sometimes, where friends of ours don't have opportunities because of, they weren't able to have money to access the resources for them while we might not have opportunities,

not because we don't have the funds to access the resources, but there's this expectation that maybe those resources are not needed or not treated the same way by our parents

P07: There are communication problems that I see in our family. Because for some of the things that I've been studying (in college) including psychology and human development, and then I studied linguistics which also include they study of culture not just language.

P08: There's another aspect that going to college means being away from my family. That actually improved my relationship with my mom. Less interaction with her allowed me to get along with her. Also, it gave us a deeper appreciation for each other. I think I'm also more mature and have a more holistic and comprehensive ideas of what my parents had to go through. Being an adult has given me a better relationship with my mom, and we were able to communicate better on certain issues.

P08: I also regretted that I've acted unkindly and impatiently with my parents. I'm learning more and more how much they've given up to provide the opportunities for us. How much they've given me. I didn't see that when I was home. But it took college and being away from them help me appreciate them.

P09: Also, (going away to college) I think I've done a little bit of living on my own I can't imagine how drastic it was for her to leave her country and her whole family and move to the United States all on her own. My dad was there for the move, but he hasn't been here since. She's lived this life as a single mom, not financially. My dad provides for her financially. I mean being by her side and her children. So that is a single mom's life, and I feel for her because she has a husband that's there, but also not really there. Just how hard it is for her to come to a new country and to acclimate with just herself and her children without her husband by her side.

P10: I graduated with a degree in social science. The majority of my studies are in psychology too. I'm not saying like I'm an expert in psychology. When (siblings) they do have mental breakdown, or if they have problems with my parents, they can talk to me and I would be level headed enough and understand what they are going through. Knowing what I know through my classes, they trust me

> P12: Yeah, I think (SEAA friends do experience pressure). We did talk about it during breaks. We talked about struggles with grade. Struggles to keep up grades. Pressures from trying to live up to expectations set by stereotypes. That was a little bit of pressure. They told me about the pressure from their family for them to maintain straight A's and everything. I think that really helped me to know that I'm not the only one struggling with this type of feelings.

Sitting on the Fence

Sitting on the fence is another in vivo phrase that is part of a direct statement by a participant. Participant P03 used this phrase to describe her experience of being in between cultures, and not totally belonging to one or the other, and she stated it this way:

> P03: Well, since I've been a minority all my life, (college) doesn't feel any different than the rest of my life. It does feel like you don't necessarily belong with all the people around you. At the same, you also don't belong with the international students who are from SEA. I feel like I'm *sitting on the fence* between American culture and Asian culture.

I noticed a common theme of internal struggle with bicultural identity in participants' stories, so I decided to adopt Participant P03's phrase. Therefore, *sitting on the fence* is participants' experience of navigating the gap between parental culture and their own emerging sense of identity as cultural being. This experience is enmeshed in the navigation shift in young adult roles with parental roles. As they transition to college and are exposed to ideas and norms different from those adopted by their family, they begin to feel discomfort with some of their family's cultural values they had grown up with.

In this bicultural existence, they are confused about their own dual identity, as they become aware of misalignment between their parents' values and their own personal goals. Sitting on the fence reflect the process of the sorting out of values that they are uncomfortable with, and those that they desire to embrace. In college, the participants

had opportunity to try out some of the new thinking and behaving. In the process, they began to have a clearer idea of their personal values, interests and goals. While they experience frustration with some of their family's cultural values and parents' parenting style, participants also expressed appreciation for many aspects of the family's cultural practices.

> P01: It's interesting because I choose to pick which cultural values I value the most. In the Hmong culture, that is not gender based roles. My immediate family, we're pretty close. And because we grew, and we understand the struggle. I'm still Americanized in some ways. And my cultural values . . . it's a challenge juggling them.
>
> P02: I think the biggest difficulty was their strict rules, particularly on dating. One of the biggest thing I had a hard time with when I was in high school, and even in college. I never told them about having a boyfriend in college. It was only recently that I divulged that I'd been dating someone for the last few years, and I'm 27 now.
>
> P03: Socially, we don't tend to express our emotions so much or think through our emotions and be able to identify our feelings as much as people in other cultures can. We tend to be more reserved as a people and less trusting of people which may hinder social development. I think that kind of come with being Asian American . . . As a family, we care for each other in tangible ways rather than care for each other emotionally.
>
> P06: So there's this expectation that I would (come home every weekend). So that was really awkward when people would ask 'Oh, hi, where are you going? Why don't I see you on weekend?' I was kind of embarrassed. 'Oh, I was with my family!' I feel very dependent, not quite mature as my classmates in a way. At the same time, this idea of family is so ingrained in me that I think, "I should be valuing this, I should be valuing my time with my family" Yeah. It's more of, I felt like differences were pointed out or emphasized to me. Part of me is like I'm ashamed of it and part of me also is really angry. I shouldn't be ashamed, I shouldn't feel pain that I'm different. It's very complicated.
>
> P06: And (Mom) will arrive at the university with not only the specific items I asked for, but she'll bring like, 5 more things, and bring them to me which was her way of wanting to also help me. I would be once again be embarrassed in

front of my friends because it's not something any of them had experienced. So I guess, like I said before, there's this combination of wanting to seem independent in front of my friends but also wanting to give value to what my parents are doing for me and want to do for me. That has somewhat strained in some way in my relationship with my family, where right now my family and I would do this weird little dance of 'I'm not going to push to you to contact me, but it would be really great if you come visit at this time'.

P08: Yeah, I do feel like I am are missing out on something because I did not follow traditional American practices. I also thought it was just my family because I thought that other Filipino-Americans that I know did have turkey for Thanksgiving, so I was confused about how come my parents did not serve turkey.

P08: I think it's basically to alleviate the anxieties they had of me. Explain why I was going into international relations because it is not as stable as the sciences, or health sciences or the math. And so, I think whenever I explained my field. I did not talk about the difficulties, as much as I talked about the opportunities. And those opportunities that I talk about would be kind of rose-colored and one sided. I wasn't secure about my career options, but I also I wasn't secure about how my parents would feel about it. Because of that I would exaggerate the possibilities of my major. I think I exaggerate because I don't want them to feel that I was either not being smart about my choices and not, I didn't want them to think I wasn't secure about my decision as well. I want to give them the image that I was positive about my decision, therefore they can't shake my boundaries about what major or career choice I'd made.

P12: So for me, I want to just pursue education as much as I need. I don't want to pursue education as my top priority in life. To (dad), his family is very important to him. How his family views him is very important to him. So I don't want to bring him to feel embarrassed or anything like that because our goals are so different from his family's goals. That's one of the reasons I'm choosing to stay in college and finishing my degree.

Experiencing Distressing Family Dynamics

The category of *experiencing distressing family dynamics* has two properties or subcategories – *attending to family expectations* and *meeting obligation to family* - both

describe family interactional patterns that can create psychosocial and psychosomatic distresses for the participants. However, the experiences comprising these two properties revealed that there are positive aspects to these properties that are not immediately evident, but surfaced upon some reflection by participants.

Property: Attending to Family Expectations

For SEAA female college students in the study, attending to parental expectations refers to the participant recognizing and learning to be attuned to parents' desires and preferences of them. The participants shared that they learn of these expectations in a number of ways: a) parents' explicit statements in teaching their children about what they want; b) things parents give priority to (i.e., things they chose to invest time and energy in); and c) children's behavior/performance that parents either praise or criticize. Once the participants become aware of the parents' expectation, they can either comply or ignore parents' desire. The dimensions of attending to parental expectations are discussed below:

Dimension: Having understanding ← → Clueless about parents' expectations and desires of participant

It appears that participants were typically socialized by parents, family (including extended family) and SEAA community since they were very young about their role in the family and the expectations that come with this role. As they are growing up, sometimes they are explicitly taught how to behave, and at other times, they learn by observing what their parents place priority on. As shared by the participants, the dominant theme in parental expectations was for the children to excel academically. It is in the academic realm that participants shared how they are frequently compared to others by their parents. A secondary theme involved behavior in social situations. There

are times when the participants had no clue that certain behavior is expected until there was a consequence, such as punishment or criticism by parent(s). There is a sub-theme of participants experiencing frequent comparisons to others by their parents. Participants P05, P06, P11, and P12, specifically shared about their parents comparing them to their relatives' or classmates' performance. Here is how a few participants articulated their understanding of school-related parental expectations.

> P01: Make sure we get straight A's. If we get straight A's, that's the only time (dad) would complement us. If we get a B, it's like, oh, okay, you got a B. I think the traditional values living in the SEA family. Your family always want you to be a doctor or something.
>
> P02: I get yelled at . . . not yelled at all the time. But given a lecture on how important grades are. It was emphasized that it was my one job to basically do well in school . . . It was expected that I was going to college
>
> P03: They don't tell me, they don't straight up tell me like some families do, but I know they do expect me to do well in school and finish and get a good job. They are also the same expectations that I have for myself
>
> P05: Oh, it's always a comparison thing. Sometimes, if I got an A-, I would come home and my mom would say, 'Did anyone get an A?' 'Yeah,' 'Then why didn't you get an A?'
>
> P06: my parents want me to focus more on my education. They don't want me to take on a job if it's going to be a distraction to my education while a lot of my friends work part time since high school
>
> P08: I think the biggest thing is not only that I felt secure, but I also felt pressure to feel prepared to go to college. I don't know whether that was largely my personality, or because I feel like I need to please my parents. It might have been a mixture of both to do well for myself and also to do well for my family . . . I always felt I needed to get A's not just for me, but also for my parents to be happy about my grades.
>
> P10: Growing up in a Vietnamese-American family, my family is really traditional. So going to college was not even a question, it was expected. When I

> graduated from college, there was no question what's next. Growing up, I knew what's next . . . When my friend made a decision not going to college after high school, that was scorned upon. That was really foreign to me. That's all I knew is that a bachelor's degree is the minimum . . . if you focus on anything else beside academics, you get into trouble for it. So they don't understand the concept of friends in group and social life. So when I do grow up here, they just don't understand that

> P11: I don't know if it's SEA thing, but yeah. So there's this constant pressure by my parents, especially my mom, for us kids to get straight A's, get involved extra-curricular activities so we can get into prestigious colleges.

> P12: And family too, they're like, you're my daughter, you're my sister, we all have to be smart. We all need to get - Especially from my dad's side, they really push higher education. So that's a lot of pressure.

The above statements from the transcripts are related to parental expectations of participants' academic performance. Below are how a few participants articulated their understanding of parental expectations in social and relational context:

> P02: (My parents) held a lot of strict traditional values and rules, so it's really difficult growing up and trying to reconcile that with typical American customs or things that normal kids and teenagers in America do. I wasn't allowed to talk to boys, go to birthday parties, homecoming or prom or high school dances. I remember that was pretty challenging. It definitely affected social development, looking back on it.

> P05: There is a lot of pressure on us. There was a lot of pressure for me growing up to present myself appropriately. This really carried over to everything from appearance to our behavior to our performance in school. There's too much emphasis on putting on a good front or a good show. There's very high academic expectations, yeah, for grades. There's just a lot of pressure to live up to - my mom is the primary one who has a very, very high expectation of us.

> P06: At the same time, it was very interesting that my sister and I were never sure where the line would be – do we hold to American ideal or to Filipino ideal. Sometimes expectations are not clear and my parents are like, 'Oh, this is just respect and you're going to be punished for it.' My sister and I would get really confused, like, 'But this is something that is normal for our friends, and you never

> told us that this is wrong.' That's really an interesting source of conflict where we never really know how American we're allowed to be in the context of family.
>
> P06: To some extent, yes. To some extent because I understand where they are coming from and what they are placing value in. It wasn't like I was all over them because I understood where they're coming from. Yeah, my parents and I have a pretty good, open communication. It's just that I . . . because I know where their values are in comparison to mine or of their expectations of me here
>
> P10: My parents are really strict about me going out for social time. But the older I got and the more financially independent I got. They know I am able to go out on my own, but I chose not to. So they did ease their grip a little bit in regards to social time. I can go out with friends and do stuff, and not have them be on my case so much. Before, it was forbidden. I had a really, really strict curfew. If I go out too often, even if I came home before the curfew, I would get yelled at. Now (after college graduation) it's a lot looser, and I can do whatever I want.

Dimension: Parents' expectations aligning ← →Conflicting with personal needs

In general, participants understood their parents' and family's desire for them to do well in school because their family want them to have a better life and not suffer as their parents had as first-generation immigrants. They feel their goal for school aligns with their parents' goal. The goals conflict when the participants perceived their parents as having a single focus on school and they have no choice in pursuing interests in addition to academics. Participants also perceived parents to be strict and lacking in understanding about their social needs. In participants' own words, this is how some of them described their struggle with misalignment of goals between their family and themselves:

> P02: I think the biggest difficulty was their strict rules, particularly on dating . . . I think that was the hardest thing with my family was having to lie or cover up. I feel like there was a large part of my life that they weren't involved in, because I wasn't allowed to date.

P05: My mom's family, they value different things. They value test scores over being able to think critically. It's important to me that I be able to speak my mind, and to be able to think critically, be able to read whatever I want, or write whatever I want, and test scores don't really factor into these because they're not a very good judge of a person's worth.

P05: I'm still doing okay by (Mom's) standard. She likes to be able to talk to family that I am doing something prestigious. She . . . yeah, those are her goals. She's a Muslim and she wants me to be a good Muslim girl. She like to have things to be able to share with my family. Oh, my daughter's getting a master's degree, she goes to Harvard, or she's a lawyer. They look at these things as valuable. Yeah, her values are different from mine.

P06: The fact that there are conflicting with obligations that I have here, it's hard. My parents know that it's stressing me out. Trying to manage expectation, trying to have understanding of each other is really, really tricky

P07: "We have a lot of problems. I feel like our family dynamics is a little strange, extreme, very intense and weird . . . a big example right now, I want to be a wedding planner. But it does not require a bachelor's degree per se. So I had been contemplating maybe the choice that I would not finish college, but maybe just get my certificate and get a business degree or something like that. But if I just mention that I want to take a break from college, it would start an all out fight in the house because my mom doesn't believe in taking breaks."

P08: If I get A's, that didn't prompt any questions, but B's, that prompted a lot of questions. Doing well in school also meant that I am prepared for college, doing extracurricular activities. My parents encouraged me to be involved in extracurricular activities.

P09: (Mom) also has high expectations for academic performance. That was something that I didn't struggle with too much. Because I share those same values, so I pushed myself to do well in school .

P10: I think it's (my parents') lack of empathy or understanding for me and my needs in growing. They focus on academics and anything outside of that, they don't agree with it . . . and if I don't agree with them and there will be consequences. That just produce anger. I can't yell at them because they are my parents. But I also don't know what else to do to change it."

> P11 "It feels like so much of our family relationship depends on how well I do with school and career. If I do well, our interactions are positive. Not doing well, well . . . it's really, it's not an option, really, because then our interactions suffer.
>
> P12 described this struggle as "For my sisters and I, we don't really want to go to college, but we'll go so we can get jobs to sustain ourselves. But dad is more in it for the status, reputation and salary."

Property: Meeting Obligation to Family

Meeting obligation to family is participant's way of carrying out what they perceive to be their parents' expectation of them. The participants have been socialized to accept their obligation as the cultural norm and this led them to make choices favored by their family. Consequently, the participants perceived family obligations as something they have no choice in, because it is part of their duty as a member of the family. Accommodating family obligations can involve self-sacrifice, meaning ignoring or delaying one's own need while placing family's desires as priority. This led several participants to feel resentful of family obligations. Four of the participant perceived that being female and eldest child in the family come with additional responsibilities and unfair treatment by parents.

It appears that experiencing parents' expectation of oneself is one thing, but it's another thing to feel obligated to fulfill the expectation. The question is whether participants feel they have a choice on the matter. Although being aware of expectations and accommodating those expectations frequently co-occur in participants' stories, it is clear that they are not referring to the same thing. It appears that being aware of the expectations/duties frequently leads to the act of "bearing the burden of family members", a phrase used by participant P01 to describe meeting obligations to family.

A few of the participants discussed that their parents' support of their college education is accompanied by pressure to "give back" to family. At the same time, many participants acknowledge mutual benefit from their contributing to family needs.

> P01: For me, we're all very close and I have a responsibility towards my family. Part of the discussion, or part of their financial issues too. Oh my gosh, it's been challenging for me because I also have my own son and I'm a single parent too. For me, the academics is important. It's important, but it's like, it's kind of important, but it's not . . . Its likes a conundrum. I have an obligation towards them and they have many unstable situations that they throw me into.
>
> P01: But you, you also want to take care of them too, you know, when they're old. Well, the only way I can take care of them if I go to college and make a lot of money. You kind of have thoughts like that. My dad always say, if your sons don't take care of you, your daughters will. In Hmong culture, your oldest or youngest son will take care of you. If not, the daughters will.
>
> P06: But there seems to be conflicting ideals, with expectations that you need to get out of college as soon as possible, I need to start supporting my family as soon as possible. I need to start supporting myself as soon as possible
>
> P06: But the expectation of my family where they have plans and it's hard because there's this expectation that I have to immediately drop everything, and go back and be there for them . . . That was hard because it comes with their expectation of me.
>
> P07: When (dad) told me he's moving to (name of state) for his job, he said that I have a choice, that I can either stay in (name of state) or move with them. With my younger sister being sick, he would really appreciate if I did decide to move with them and help out with the family. It was like a sense of responsibility. He never said that I was responsible . . . for it. But there was unspoken feeling where I still feel it was my responsibility I'm the oldest child, so . . .
>
> P08: The same communication issues, issues of anger, and resentment that I experienced. I can see very much in my brothers and my sisters. As the eldest child in the family, I get worried about my brothers and my sister going through the same experience that I did (with parents). At the same time, I feel helpless because that's the decision they need to make, and that's something that they get

> used to. They need to repair relationship with my parents. My brothers would call me, and my sister would call to complain about my parents, I can only talk to them and give them comfort. Obviously, they are not going to feel the same thing that I am feeling. And as someone who's looking back, yeah, I feel helpless. I also feel like responsibility to share my experience with my brothers and my sister. But I know that ultimately that's the experience that they have to go through themselves.
>
> P08: I do feel a sense of responsibility. I understand what they are going through. Sometimes I worry that my tone sounds like I am preaching at them. I feel like, largely my issue with my parents and their issue with my parents is like learning how to communicate effectively with each other. I would also do that. I try not to react to every issue that they have with my mom and dad, like when they say that mom and dad just don't get it. Yes, I do feel a responsibility, but I also feel like, ultimately, it's out of my hands.
>
> P12: And the pressure is more for getting good grades and better education. I get the pressure from dad, from his side of the family. He has to compete with his siblings about how their kids are doing. You know, their kids compared to us. What grades they're getting, what school they're going to. What kinds of salary they're going to get when they're gonna get their jobs. It's mostly from him and his side of the family. We're always being compared with them.

Experiencing Psychosocial Distress

Experiencing psychosocial distress is defined as participants experiencing negative psychosocial responses to the pattern of interaction within the family and between family members. The distress can be in the form of emotional or psychosomatic symptoms. Analysis of the participants' data revealed that attending to parental expectations and meeting family obligations can lead to distress when accompanied by one or both of the following: a) participants perceive lack of choice in these expectations and obligations, or b) participants' personal goals are neglected for a lengthy period of time. These two factors are related in that choice allowed participants freedom to attend to personal needs and pursue personal goals.

Family dynamics for this group of participants involve not only relationship with parents, but the interactions with as well as expectations of siblings influence the person's psychosocial health as well. One of the participants, P01 came from a family of twelve children, so siblings play a key role in either adding to the distress or in providing support to the young woman being interviewed. There were no single child in the group of interviewees. Four of the participants were from a family of four children. Three participants each had 2 siblings, and the remaining four had 1 sibling each.

Dimension: Ignoring ← → Attending to personal needs and goals

> P02: School was supposed to be my number 1 priority and dating would be a distraction. It was hard. It was very stressful and a source of resentment for a while, which was unfortunate. It caused me to be withdrawn from family interactions overall. It was stressful and kind of anxiety-provoking as well. Yeah, resentment was one emotion that I definitely felt when things were difficult. Stress and anxiety were some of the other feelings.
>
> P05: I have a family history of depression and anxiety. And in some ways that has manifested in me in biological ways. I don't know what exists on my mom's side. One, we don't have a medical history. They don't have a record of it and they don't talk about it. I guess the last thing might be that there is definitely a stigma against mental health care. I don't know how to say this. There weren't that many outlets - mental health care was definitely not a possible outlet. If I was stressed out at home, I could not go to see a therapist. That would be inappropriate and not being part of the family image.
>
> P05: It's only a few weeks ago that (Dad) said there are resources available in school and on college campus. I finally went. My mom doesn't have to know because I'm now far away and she doesn't need to know since I don't live with her anymore. I decided I should take advantages of these resources while they exist.
>
> P06: I actually had a few anxiety attacks a few times just because of trying to coordinate my family coming over here and me going there . . . My anxiety attacks would occur more frequent, especially during the sophomore year. My anxiety would send me into a panic attack. It causes us to have a conversation

about it. At the same time, we're trying to get to the point of having conversation with me hyperventilating in the car.

P07: Sometimes, I feel like I will go crazy, I really do. It's never for too long, and I always feel like it'll be okay. My family talk about love, we all love each other. A lot of time, I need to get out of the house because it feels like I'm suffocating. At the same time, like I said it never last that long. Even if I feel that way, I feel it will be okay.

P07: Even now, with all the stuff happening. I would feel frustrated and annoyed. There's a lot of holes in our relationship because partly is communication, partly because we all kind of didn't know what to do. So sometimes I feel very stressed out, I just eat and I just kinda stay in my room . . . I don't do anything.

P07: I don't do a lot of things just because I don't want it to reflect badly on my dad. There's always a bad connotation for if I were to go see a counselor, not counselor, but if I go to someone just to talk about my problem If there was someone out there who don't like my dad, or have a problem with the church, then in my mind, I always worried that it could reflect badly on my dad.

P08: My Mom and I didn't talk very much. And I think that was me, that was my way of trying to avoid physical confrontation, not actually physical but more like, if I see her, or hear her nag or argue or complain about something, I get upset. I think our communication was really poor during high school, largely because I wanted to avoid her. I was upset and angry with mom and that affected my communication with her because I want very little to do with her. Also, I think also my mom was angry with me because she thought I was avoiding her, which I was. And then she felt distant with me because I was avoiding her. I think our relationship isn't as honest as it could be. If I wasn't avoiding her, I may not tell her the truth, or exaggerate about some things, or distort some ideas. I just don't think we communicate very well.

P09: I think the most initial reaction is resentment, and lots of anger. Even with, the anger and resentment for the ways I thought that my mom had want me to be.

P11: So the following year after (brother's name)'s graduation, was really rough. I was so stressed out about not being able to live up to my mom's expectations. I would be nauseous, feeling dizzy in the mornings getting ready for school. We didn't know what was going on. At first, my parents thought I had the stomach

> flu. But my dad said the symptoms didn't match. It went on for a couple months. Finally, my figured out that I had anxiety attacks and he prescribed medication for me.
>
> P12: It kind of get me feeling like I'm not good or smart. I'm doing as much as I should be doing or as much as I can to fulfill their needs and to meet their expectations. I know there's certain limits to what I can do. We all have our limits and we all have our different abilities and capabilities. It does hurt me when I think about that.

Experiencing Positive Family Dynamics

Property: Appreciating Family Support

Appreciating family support is participant' experience of receiving help for felt need in both tangible and intangible ways. Here, the participants are becoming aware of, and appreciating the sacrifices made by their parents in order that their children can have a better life. Participants generally discuss tangible family support is terms of their parents' financial assistance for the children's college education, specifically, tuition, rent, and transportation expenses. Intangible family support is articulated as taking multiple forms, such as providing strong values that participants continue to adopt, opportunity for a better life, emotional support and grounding.

Dimension: Acknowledging ← → Ignoring parents' significant support for the participant's education and well-being

> P01: I think my parents, they've never given me money, but they have done a lot in helping me watch my son. In the daytime, if it wasn't for my parents, then I would have to pay for childcare. It is ridiculous now the amount of money you have to pay for childcare. I wouldn't take my son to any childcare. I wouldn't trust that. If I didn't have them - So they helped me watch my son when he was a baby. I went to school until my son was 4.
>
> P03: My parents do provide financial support for my education, not in its entirety but they do contribute so that's support. I also know that they do want me to be here, so that's also support for what I want to do . . . I think that kind of come

with being Asian American. As a family, we care for each other in tangible ways rather than care for each other emotionally.

P05: I have always done well in school. Appreciating mom's pushing me to do well in school. In the long run, I am grateful that my mom pushed me to do well in school. In terms of coping, it's by mostly talking to my dad who is American and he has slightly different priorities. Coping. We did the best we could and try to avoid criticism. We just have to recognize that my mom is from a different culture, has different expectations and leads a completely different life.

P06: My parents are paying for my education or supporting that in some way . . . I have a lot of friends who are paying for their own education . . . What's going on in my head right now is that, sometimes when I call home, my Mom she'd ask do you have this, do you need this? Mostly food. And if I mention that oh no, I don't have that, then she be like, 'Oh, Let me bring you some.'

P08: Well, being in SEAA family, they are very supportive of me pursuing my studies. Because I was given opportunity to just focus on school work, I was encouraged to study well and my parents are very supportive of me to exceed academically. I felt that, I was comfortable preparing myself for college, of having a future, Knowing that I will for sure that I will be able to go to college. I think the biggest thing is not only that I felt secure, but I also felt pressure to feel prepared to go to college.

P08: I didn't ask for money and that's because I felt a lot of pride. I also don't want to burden them because college is already expensive. So I felt asking them for extra money for social, seem extraneous even though it is also practical. So I felt burdened by money issue, but my parents kindly decided to give me rent money. The issue with that is if you live on campus, your financial aid covers that. If you live off campus, financial aid doesn't cover expense. Basically, my parents are paying for college and my living situation. I felt burdened by that. I decided to live off campus. But I did pick up odd jobs to make extra income for the college needs and living expenses.

P09: Yes, so my whole college education has been funded by my mom. She has told me from when I was young that she said that she would take it as her responsibility to put me through college. And recently, from an off-hand comment that she made I learned that actually I had thought that it was a joint venture between her and my dad, that my dad was also helping to pay for my college. Recently, she told me that she's the only one who was the only one

making the loan payments from my bachelor's degree. That was something that I hadn't realized.

P12: So me and my sisters who goes to college as well. Our schedule varies. We don't usually drive to school. We can just take the bus, we take the bus and we get dropped off. The timing is very different. So sometimes when my mom has to drop me off. She's going back and forth, and back and forth. Dropping and picking up me and my sisters. So my mom has to drive us and my brother in high school.

Dimension: Receiving ← → Providing support to family in both tangible and intangible ways

P01: My family is what I come back to, they're the ones that keep me grounded. Its likes a conundrum. I have an obligation towards them and they have many unstable situations that they throw me into but ultimately in the end, those roots is what I hold my values in.

P02: I was fortunate, they paid for my college education, my room and board as well. Basically, they provided complete financial support for me . . . and my car insurance . . . everything. I got a part-time job in a research lab, but that was more for the experience than for monetary reason. They completely supported me for undergraduate, then for medical school. They also paid for my sister's college as well, so I took out loans to help pay for medical school on my own since they were paying for her.

P06: So I really appreciate that my family, that they instill this in me and my sister this drive in me to do the absolute best that we can.

P08: My parents are Christians and I am a Christian too, so they prayed with me about my job search. I never felt like they make me feel like I have no value, or not worthwhile because I am interning. Because our communication improved so significantly, I am able to express my feelings about unemployment with my mom, and she was very kind and respectful about it.

P09: What made me more appreciative of (Mom) is that she did not have opportunity as I have had. She grew up as a Chinese-Malaysian in (name of city). They didn't have enough money for her and my aunt to go to school. So when my grandparents work, and they used up all their finances to send their younger brother, my uncle, to school. Now, she has done that for me. I understand the

> cost of that better now. I am very grateful for that. What it means to support somebody through university especially because my college tuition is so high.
>
> P10: I really don't think I will be able to be where I am without my experience with family. There are challenges, but without challenges, I won't be able to learn. My mom definitely likes to push my buttons. It makes me think, it makes me see the situation in a different light. If I weren't living with her, I wouldn't have someone who challenge me on my values. If I grew up in a different type of household, I wouldn't have such strong moral values and be able to stick to them. I wouldn't have anyone who challenge me on my values. And I do have people who challenge me on my values. But with my mom, with my family, we have strong values, very strong beliefs. That help to guide me to be able to say no, or to be able to say stop, or be able to help other people who need help.
>
> P12: Like food, resources, and everything. (Parents) made sure they have enough to supply us with so we that don't have to worry about it. There's definitely constraint because there are 3 of us in college. My brother who is now in high school. He's another one who's going to be in college. Even though we get financial aid, my dad has to work more to support all 4 of us in college. We'll all have to work more to be able to support each other in college. We help each other with topics or papers, projects, coming up with topics. We are in similar fields, so we do talk to each other sometimes. Another thing that we've learned is that we can ask each other. Can you help me think about what I can write about in my paper or in my assignment? . . . It means a lot to me because I'm really bad in dealing with stress. So having them there really helped me out with all my stress.

Property: Growing Together

Growing together is participants experiencing that there is a change in the pattern of interaction within the family, and that it is becoming healthier and more productive than in the past. In some instances, participants observed that their own thinking has matured. In other instances, participants initiate the change themselves. Several participants observed that they are not the only ones in the family who have made change. They observed that family members particularly their parents' interactional style towards them have changed as well. The participants attributed this healthier relationship to a number of reasons: a) maturing; b) gaining perspectives; c) living apart; d) learning

different way of interacting with family, especially with parents; e) growing spiritually; f) learning to seek help; g) developing and exercising personal agency; h) adjusting own thinking.

Dimension: Lacking ← → Gaining perspective related to family dynamics

> P01: Sometimes, I am frustrated a lot by that, and (Mom's) mental health issue. I'm angry, not angry at my parents for wanting to separate. I can understand that. He's done that for so long that he couldn't do it anymore in supporting her. He's just . . . like, kids are grown up. I know that they are very loving too, my siblings. I know that even though I have to tell my siblings to do stuff, I know they will be there for me if something happen.
>
> P03: Most Asian American families still operate the way they've always operated. The culture doesn't seem to change them. I personally think it's the shift in values and beliefs I think. I think (my family) will continue to grow closer as each of us grow older. Also, as my parents get older and wiser, our relationship will probably change a little bit, maybe not as a child anymore, but as an adult and maybe as an equal.
>
> P05: There are a few things. For one, the culture clash. My mom is Asian and my siblings and I are all American. And that affects a bunch of different things . . . everything from the hemline. She would want longer shorts. To her, focus on school. I think too there is also the generation gap. She grew up in a very different generation. She was born in 1965, so the year Singapore gained independence. She grew up when Singapore was still a 3rd world country. So they're just from the generation where people are more prim and proper. I recognize more why our family dynamics were that way and why she was that way. She didn't leave Singapore until she was in her 20's and she carried over the cultural traditions and beliefs.
>
> P08: It's not necessarily in thinking that (parents) are perfect people now. But acknowledging their imperfection and acknowledging that they have made mistakes, and that's okay. Instead of thinking that they didn't make mistakes at all. And also acknowledging that I make mistakes.
>
> P09: I think it's that we are learning to relate to each other differently. I think the distance and being away also helped the change to happen for me to relate to (mom) better. As I get older, I understand more deeply the hardship that she had gone through and that helped me to be kinder to her. Also as I grow older, she

treats me accordingly. Also the way that we talk to each other is a lot more constructive, I feel she doesn't personally attack me so much anymore.

Dimension: Lacking ← → Gaining skills to navigate distressing family dynamics

P01: It can be very lonely at times. In the past 2 years I have dealt with a lot of family issues (mom's schizophrenia, parents' divorce, and younger sister's suicide attempt). I think as my younger siblings are mature and responsible and I can see that they can help out. So it's somewhat overwhelming, but hoping that it will be less. It is stressful at times because we were having issues with mom at home. She's now mellowed out. We now take turns to check on my mom to make sure she's okay. It's like, whose turn is it . . . it's your turn to see if she's okay.

P02: As far as relations go, I think my family relations with my parents and my sister got a bit better after I had moved away. I mean initially, they didn't want me to live in the dorm. They would have probably preferred that I commute from home. But I eventually convinced them that it would be better for me to live up there. But I think just having the time apart, made the time when we're together more valued. And I think just getting older as well . . . I don't know, I think communication overall improved with my family. That's an ongoing process, I think, that lasted throughout college and not just the start of college. It's like a gradual transitioning.

P06: It's gotten a lot better. I actually went to counseling in my sophomore year . . . On my mom's request actually. It was good because I was able to talk out my stresses and that also opened up a lot of lines of communication between me and my family. I'm having much less anxiety attacks. In the past, I was tiptoeing around. On my parent's side, where they want to spend time with me and they want me to value family as much as they do but at the same time they don't want to send me into another panic attack. So I think we're still trying to find that balance.

P09: So when you have two people with hot temper clashing, nothing good ever come of it. And as I got older, I learned, from my mom I learned that it's not important to always have the last say in the argument. It's okay to sometimes to just forgive another person even if they haven't apologize to you. And so I've been trying to practice that and I grow older too. And so far, it's going well

P12: I don't know whether it's because of the classes we've taken in colleges or whether it is because we have matured. We're able to have a more open mind.

> We can talk to family members, we can set up time to talk about problems or issues that arise. We've always tried to encourage one another, tell each other about different solutions or anything that help each other solve problems.

Finding Own Voice

Finding own voice represents a shift from past family relational patterns that brought distress to the participants. While in the past, they passively experience distressing family dynamics, here, they are learning to respond to distressing interactional patterns in the family in ways that bring desired outcomes. This shift of *finding own voice* occurs to a large extent because the participants were experiencing gain in their awareness of their own identity, their values and needs. These young women are becoming more willing and confident to express their desires and stepping out in pursuit of them.

Whereas in the past, the participants might avoid the problems with family, they are now gradually learning to address their problems in an active manner. Basically, they are becoming more assertive. This is evidenced in a departure from past pattern of asking parental permission to engage in activities of interest. Now, they are learning to make independent choices and decisions and gaining confidence to pursue personal desires and goals. They are also developing a sense of agency to do something about their situation, including seeking help both from their social community and professionally.

> P01: I am able to deal with stressful situations and handled them better than most people would because I've experienced it so much when we were growing up. For me, I've learned to cope with those. I am a survivalist. My historical struggles and stresses helped me navigate my life. And only I know how to do that under stressful events.

> P02: I tried to keep as much of a social life as I could. Unfortunately, I had to lie about (social life and dating) a lot. Once I had a car, there was more freedom.

Sometimes, I would just lie about where I was, or what I was doing. I would just say I was at a girlfriend's house.

P05: Just learn to be not too hard on myself. Eventually, I had to recognize that there were more important things to me than getting straight A's most of the time. Also, try not to compare myself to other people and recognize that success comes in different forms, and for me that means not going to Harvard, and that's okay. Someday, I want to get married and start a family. That kinds of things like building relationship with family and friends are more important than the prestige of the school I go to, or making a ton of money. I want to be happy. Seems to be a strange goal.

P05: If I was stressed out at home, I could not go to see a therapist. That would be inappropriate and not being part of the family image. It's only a few weeks ago that (Dad) said there are resources available in school and on college campus. I finally went. My mom doesn't have to know because I'm now far away and she doesn't need to know since I don't live with her anymore. I decided I should take advantages of these resources while they exist.

P06: I would say that for me not verbalizing what I was experiencing or feeling internally . . . but when I started having more of the panic attack, I start going to counseling, I start addressing why I was having these panic attacks . . . that's when I was verbalizing exactly what was causing me stress, what was exactly the trigger, what made my family sometimes be the trigger. That's when I was able to verbalize that to my family.

P06: I had tried before, but often in the heat of the moment, then I'm overwhelmed with emotion, I wasn't really understanding what I was feeling completely so I wasn't able to communicate it yet to my family . . . that sometimes would be more frustrating for them and for me. But once I started being able to talk it out more I guess and that's when I was able to communicate a little more effectively with my parents and listen to their thoughts, and how best to present to them in consideration for those feelings, and we're able to avoid misunderstanding.

P09: Yeah, definitely, I grew spiritually and emotionally. And I think that's all thanks to my friends. And also I'm part of the Christian ministry at school. That helped me to understand concepts like forgiveness. With my friends, I would confide in them about family and about my mom in particular. The way that they supported me was not to pit me against my mom, but to tell me to approach things

> in a different way and a kinder way. I really thanks to my community that helped me to internalized these lessons.
>
> P09: So I think one trend that has gotten stronger for my life is that my family is the principle reason for growing me to be the person that I am today. Because without them, I wouldn't have the opportunities that I have. Without the support, I wouldn't be anywhere that I am today. For that, I will always be grateful to them and very supportive of them whether financially in their old age, or whether it's keeping in touch with them and maintaining those relationships. Those are things that are very important to me. Those are my life priorities also. I think I have more holistic understanding now than when I was younger of hardships in family dynamics and you know, I know that sometimes in relationships hit rock bottom or hit really hard places. At the end of the day, these are the people in the world I can depend on. These are the people who had given me so much before I had any capability to give anything back. That is something that will be in my heart always. I love them a lot and they are the main priority in my life
>
> P10: And how my mom taught me was that SEA people act upon challenges, or how they live . . . Asian people are very hard working, they don't give up . . . and they strive for the best, they strive for excellence. So I took that to heart, and with that expectation and with that knowledge, it gives me the motivation to move on. Whenever I reach anywhere that's hard for me, I just talk to my mom or listen to my dad. There are expectations, yes, but I'm very motivated to succeed.

Discussion

Data analysis of the participants' transcripts yielded a volume of information related to their experience of family dynamics as Southeast Asian American female college students. While each young woman's narrative of their experience is unique, the data suggest common themes across most participants. The data provided good insight into some of the interactional process among the participants' families and how the participants experience the relational patterns. At the same time, it appears the picture is incomplete, thus warranting a deeper exploration of the participants' experience.

In order to gain a clearer understanding of the interactions between categories as well as between categories and properties, a visual diagram was constructed based on

open and axial coding data from round one transcripts (see Figure 1). Family dynamics was conceptualized as having two distinct categories, and this raised some questions regarding the nature of family dynamics. *Can family dynamics be limited to either negative or positive categories? Is it possible that family dynamics is comprised of both desirable and undesirable qualities?* In addition, the data provided a sense that perhaps family dynamic properties of *attending to parental expectations* and *meeting obligations to family* led some level of stress for all participants. While some participants experienced mild to moderate levels of stress, these properties created significant psychosocial and psychosomatic distress. This raised the question of, *at what point do family expectations, obligations and support become stressful?*

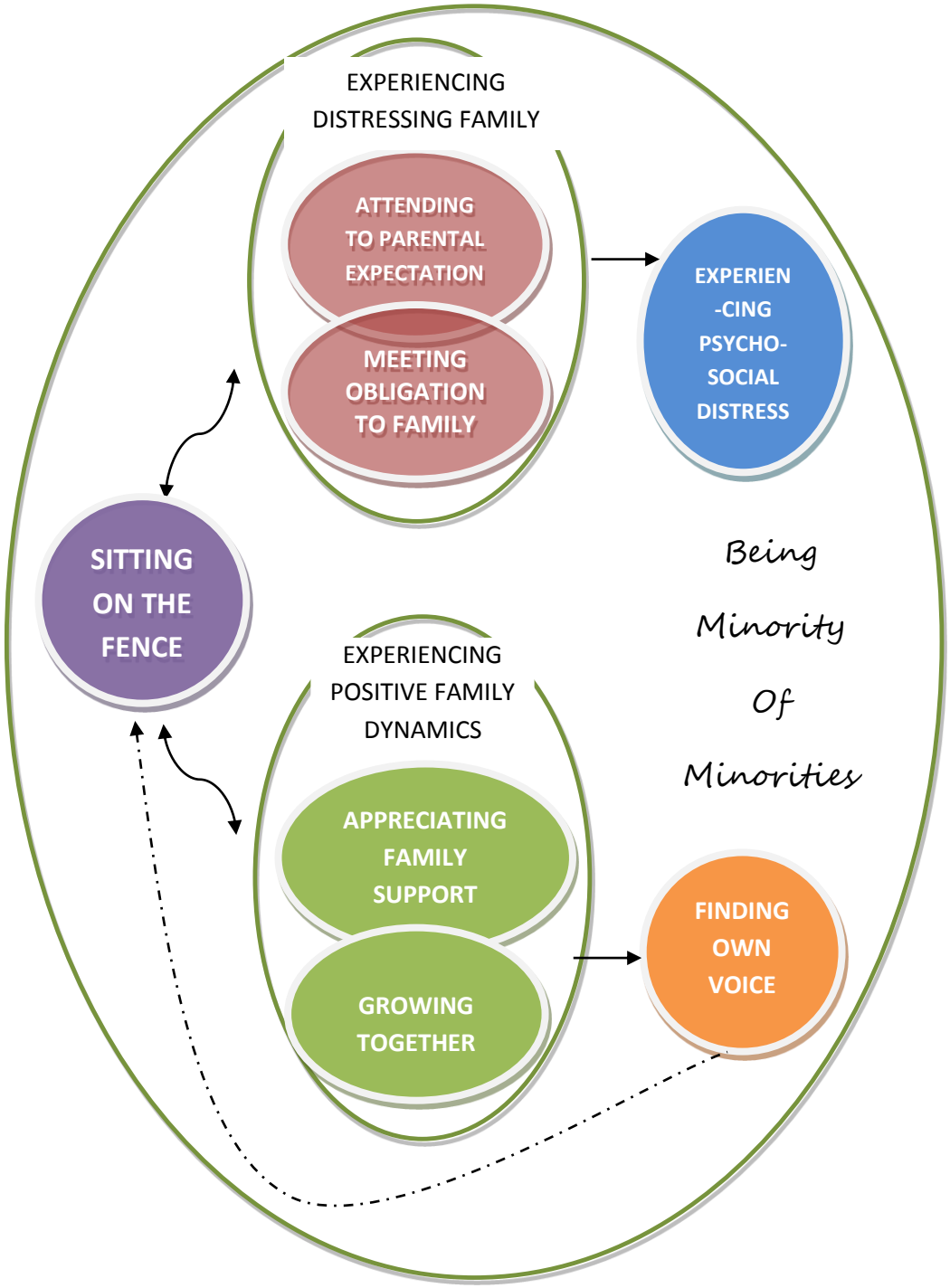

Figure 1: Diagram of Relationships among Categories and Properties for First Round of Interviews

Given the grand research question and the gaps in data that were identified, a set of questions for the second round of interviews were formulated. Based on the knowledge that emerged and gaps in the collected data, the second round of questions were as follows:

- In what ways do family dynamics affect the person that you have become?
- What are some family expectations that accompany the support you received from your family? For example, what is expected with parents' financing of your college education?
- When do family's expectations, obligations and support become personally stressful for you?
- How did you move from experiencing difficult family dynamics to responding or learning to respond to the situation?
- How have you grown as a result of the family dynamics you'd been experiencing?

Appendix G

Second Round of Interviews

Introduction

Two participants indicated at the beginning of the second round of interviews that they were unable to continue in the study in order to attend to other priorities. Participant P01 was experiencing multiple family- related crises. She was dealing with her mother's schizophrenia, her parents' separation, being a single-mom and her sister's suicidal attempt while holding a full-time job and attending college. Participant P11 was experiencing significant pressure from family to get good scores on the MCAT so she can be accepted into a prestigious medical school. She had taking the MCAT a few months prior to the first interview and had not done as well as her family had hoped. She expressed her parents' disappointment and stated that her mother is refusing to have much interaction with her until her MCAT score improves. She wanted to focus on studying for the exam. Therefore, there were ten SEAA young women who were interviewed in the second round.

As with the first round of interviews, this second of interviews were conducted and were transcribed, de-identified and sent to the participants for review. The task of coding commenced after participants verified the transcripts. The process involved comparing the new data with the categories and properties that emerged from data analyses of the first round of interviews.

Data analysis of this second round of interview transcripts resulted in the need to re-conceptualize of some of the categories and properties that were established in the initial round of interviews (see figure 2). The analysis revealed that family dynamics is a

singular phenomenon representing a mixed set of both positive and distressing interactions. Although family dynamics is multi-faceted, participants experienced it as a single set of relational pattern that comprise both the difficult and the enjoyable aspects of their family. All the subcategories of both the *experiencing distressing family dynamics* category and the *experiencing positive family dynamics* category from first round of interviews presented as having aspects of both positive and stressful of family relational dynamics in the second round of interviews. Therefore, the subcategories or properties associated with family dynamics categories in the initial round were placed under a single category *family dynamics*. These properties are *attending to parental expectations, meeting obligation to family* and *receiving family support*. *Growing together* property of the previous round was removed from the new family dynamics category because it resembles a dimension of *finding own voice*.

Sitting on the fence continued to be the central category because it was recognized as having an influence on all of the categories. However, its connections to other categories received adjustment due to re-conceptualization of the two family dynamics and the *being minority of minorities* categories from first round of interviews. Minority of minorities continues to be a context category in the second round of interviews, but expanded to include two properties – *being part of college community,* and *being part of support community.* This is because in this second round of interviews, participants shared about external factors that shaped who they are, and specifically those that influenced their experiences with family dynamics – the college community, their social and spiritual community and extended family had helped them navigate difficult family relations either directly or indirectly.

Categories, properties and dimensions that emerged from data analysis of the second round of interviews are discussed below and their connections to one another are illustrated in Figure 2 diagram. I would like to start with the context category of *being minority of minorities* and associated properties.

Being Minority of Minorities

In the second round of interviews, the context category of *being minority of minorities* includes two properties – *being part of college community,* and *being part of support community.* Participants shared about the importance of contextual environment they exist in that helped to shape who they are becoming. They discussed how being in college and the influence of social, spiritual and extended family communities in either directly helping them to navigate difficult family relations or indirectly providing insight.

Property: Being in college community

Being in college community is participants experiencing different ways of perceiving themselves and their cultural background. Here, they discovered their uniqueness as SEAA and was needing to adjust to being different. Some participants cherish their uniqueness, while others feel discomfort. This is the environment where their worldview and cultural practices are challenged. This is also the environment that enlarged their perspectives on their personal affairs and provide insight into their family dynamics.

> P03: Well, I feel like it's a very unique setting to grow up in. Chinese immigrants from the Philippines moving to the U.S. It's pretty not common here. It's a very unique situation, because I have different cultures ingrained in me. I enjoy being different, I like the way that I was raised. I guess I enjoy being different because, because I think I'm kind of adaptable. I can understand and I can also live and function well in both cultures. This is definitely encouraging to me. Knowing that I'm different in that way.

> P04: So with social expectations, I'd been pretty independent finding friends. I never had difficulty finding community. My parents would never pressure me to like, oh, go hang out with that kid or something**.**
>
> P05: Well, I think that having 2 different cultures in my family has made me more open-minded, has made me more reluctant to say that one thing is more right than another thing . . . if that make sense (yeah). I tend not to have strong opinion on most topics. I try to be educated as much as I can about different perspective.
>
> P08: It's the cliché of you don't know what you have til it's gone. Also involved with the campus ministry here at the (name) University. I feel very strongly that my faith has allowed healing of my relationship with my parents. Yeah, and a healthier perspective of my parents, including my family. Yeah, and a healthier relationship.

Property: Being part of support community

Being part of support community is defined as participants belonging to a group of people where there is mutual benefit and where they feel accepted. The most common types of support community discussed by the participants are their extended family, peer groups (off and on campus) and spiritual community in the form of a church or a campus group that share the same religious background. Sometimes, extended family provide respite and comfort to participants when the latter experience distress from family situations. Sometimes extended family add pressure when they are used by parents to compare participants with members of extended family (such as with participants P06, P11, and P12). There can also be additional obligations to carry out duties toward members of an extended family such as with participant P12 whose grandparents live with them. Peer communities were frequently presented as providing support in the form of listening ear and comfort in the form of shared experience in dealing with SEAA family dynamics. Participants expressed receiving positive influence from their families'

spiritual communities, particularly in shaping their values, beliefs and personal goals. In a few instances, spiritual community provided practical help with navigating distressing family dynamics (as shared by participants P07). At the same time, there were distressing aspects of social and spiritual communities when participants' parents expect them to keep up proper appearance in those settings.

> P04: I think (parents) also expect me to make the right decisions. And the right decisions in their head is to find some good friends. They definitely want me to go to church. Find like a Christian community. They don't want me to party that much. They never force that topic on me. They never sat me down and say, 'Hey (name of participant), when you go to college, these are my expectations of you.' I think going to church was something that was explicit, but not that explicit. In the way that my brother really didn't go to church when he was in (name of city) and they'd say, 'Oh, we wished you were in church.'
>
> P05: I'm a little more reserved in the sense that I'm a little more careful about how I present myself. Growing up, it was important to try to make my family look good. Okay, so there are 2 different things here. So I grew up always being careful of how I present myself. It was impressed on me that I needed to create a good image of my family. My family is not relevant in the workplace at all. But I find that I'm still more careful in my workplace, more careful about how I behave in social events. I'm just more careful about everything.
>
> P07: I went into depression, my grades were dropping and I lost all motivation. There was nothing that I wanted to do or wanted to accomplish. Then, I think I was going through the discipleship training with my pastor - the English Ministry pastor here, and there was a chapter on forgiveness and I think, I realized that there was no point in being bitter and angry. Because it took a toll on me, it's harder on me. Everything feels worse than it actually is, and so the first step was just forgiveness then patience . . . patience. I think over the years, my patience was growing I guess. I was able to sit down and try to talk to it out with my parents without feeling emotional and without feeling angry. Getting my words across and we were able to come to an understanding, and we were able to solve the problem of me feeling like I wasn't living my life. Feeling like I was wasted years of my life taking care of my sisters.
>
> P08: Also, my family dynamics, we grew up in a Christian Protestant household. I think that's also shaped how I've become too. I view my religion as something

that I have adapted from my parents. Growing up in that kind of household was helpful too. In forming ideas about church and I attended church from a very young age. That influenced my faith at a very young age. So a large part of my identity is my beliefs and my Christianity . . . I grew up in the Filipino-American church, so I was around a lot of Filipinos. Growing up, a lot of my peers my age were Filipino-Americans. None of them were born in the Philippines. They are more American than Filipino.

P08: Honestly, I think it comes down to me having a more transformed and mature character. I believe the reason I had become more mature has been because of my faith. As I said, I joined a campus community group here at the (name) University. In this setting, I was able to express my feelings. I had a group of people that I can practice with. It follows what the Bible and Jesus called all the followers to do. Having being able to practice that with my peers has given me that experience and enabled me to have courage to practice that with my parents. To be able to talk with my family, especially with my parents. It takes a lot of courage and being comfortable with myself. I think a lot of that has to do with my college experience. Being in a place where I see my relationship has changed help me to be able to communicate honestly with them.

P09: Also, in the larger relationship dynamics with my extended family that I also grew up with. I also really value . . . especially in the past few years I see my family went through some difficult times. First with unemployment of my uncle, and my grandfather passing away. And see how strongly they support one another through all those difficult times, and it really encourage me. And I hold it very high value for my own mind to build that kind of dynamic in my own family in the future. And also to be contributing to this type of dynamic in my current family.

P09: I think I appreciate the communication a lot now because of having grown up. Especially my mom, not because she was particularly a good communicator especially in times of conflict. But because she wasn't, I really appreciate that in my romantic relationship or in my relationship with men. Communication with someone who is very reasonable and level-headed. I think I am becoming that way. I think I have a very bad habit of avoiding conflict in my other relationships. When they're angry and when they're upset. I think my work habits in communication are very influenced by the way my mother communicates, which I think is not good. But being away from her and being exposed to how other people communicate, I can see the flaw in that.

> P12: It's when my dad mention his side of the family. And when he's comparing how well his nieces are doing, compared to where we are right now. That's when it gets kind of stressful. . I feel like he's pushing us so that he can impress his side of the family. I'd rather think that he wants what's best for us as opposed to he want to impress his side of the family.

> P12: You know how in the Asian culture, you respect the elders, how important it is to take care of the older people before the younger people. Depending of the age, like you always make sure grandma and grandpa are taken care of first. In terms of like meals and everything. I'm always taking into consideration about their wants and needs before our own. Like *Gong gong and Po po* (grandma and grandpa) always, they usually get to eat first. We want to make sure they get to eat the food that they want before we eat. With my elders . . . *Gong gong Po po* and my parents, I'm more sensitive to what they say. I want to make sure that I am pleasing them, or that they are comfortable or that they are happy.

> P12: In terms of my religion, (dad) knows that I'm going to go to the meetings. That this is what Jehovah's witnesses do . . . it's inevitable whether he likes it or not. He know that I still really care about him, and want to make sure that he knows that I still love him. It's not that I want to quickly shove him out of my life but I want him to know that I am firm in my beliefs and what I want to do.

Family Dynamics

Property: Attending to Parental Expectations

The concept of *attending to parental expectations* concept remains the same in the second round of interviews, with one exception. In the first round of interviews, the theme that emerged was that of participants recognizing and learning to be attuned to parents' desires and preferences of them, which for the most part, creates pressure on the participants to perform well particularly in the academic realm. In the second round of interviews, attending to parental expectations can be distressing but also rewarding when there are shared goals between the parents and the participants. Often the shared goals

(academics and career goals) are not recognized until participants gained perspective in the college context.

> P02: Especially coming from parents who immigrated here and came from a very poor background. Trying to build life here in America, so there's a lot is expected out of you as a first born. To have a strong academic career in medicine or law. Whereas with my sister, my parents after they'd seen how hard they were on me. They were easier on my sister, they let her pursue what she want to do. Get a degree in communication, being more involved in art and media, that sort of field. Whereas for me, I had to be in more of a hard science or law.
>
> P02: My dad only told me only a week ago when they were visiting me in town. That my dad said they realized they'd been hard on me. That was the first time they said that. It's because they pushed me to go into medicine pretty hard. I think that was what he was referring to.
>
> P03: Well, there were mentions once in a while that we're paying for your college so you need to do your best to do well in school. There's expectations that I do my best. Doing my best and the grades will show it up.
>
> P04: The bottom line expectation is to keep my scholarship. For my scholarship, I need to keep a 3.0 GPA which isn't very hard. I've been okay with that. My parents don't pressure me to be one specific thing or to do one thing. A lot of Asian parents want their kids to be a doctor. When I told them that I want to major in International Relations. They were like, oh, okay, whatever. Even though like at the time I didn't know what it was, and I just feel that it just sounded cool.
>
> P05: It's just second nature to me that I was going to college and get a degree. I've known since I was 8 or 9. I remember when I was in 5th grade, I asked my dad, "should I be more worried about middle school or about college?" And he said, 'college'. There was never a question as to whether or not I would go to college. I don't know if they ever specifically told me I need to go to college.
>
> P05: Definitely the expectation that I need to finish college, my bachelor's. It was never an option for me not to finish college. Yes, there was definitely that expectation. I know my mom would like for me to get a master's degree. Um, but it's not a requirement, but it's probably something she will bring up every year or so, she would like me to do that. And after college, it was expected that I would get a good job and be able to support myself.

P06: Oh, that's the question and the topic of a lot of arguments between me and my parents. Um, respect I think is a lot of times, in the way I perceive it because my parents never really articulate it. The definition of respect to me, a lot of times they just assumed that my sister and I would know. So the way that I've interpreted it, is um, deference to um, much . . . in what they want or what they need because they are my parents or because they are in place of authority over me.

P07: The most recent thing is that, my parents really, really, really want me to graduate first, to get my bachelor's. I've been fighting with them a lot about it. I took out a lot of loan for my first 3 years of college and it's piling up. I find that the pressure of those loans made me want to work hard to pay off those loans. The courses that I was taking didn't pertain to what I want to do. I want to work on paying off the loans, then get my bachelors. That's what I want to do. But my parents, right now they don't support my college financially because they are supporting my sister for the 1st year of college. I've been living at home though I moved back home about a year ago. It's the expectation that they have.

P08: Going back to being the eldest child, I think also . . . and the family dynamics. It has taught me to be responsible and mature about my decisions. I kind of carry those same characteristics to this day. Yeah. I believe it does translate to situations outside the home. Decisions related to buying things and, when I hang out with friends, going to different trips, knowing that like I can't just make those decisions. I had to be cautious about what my parents think. My parents would want me to be cautious about how my money was spent, or how much to spend.

P10: Their expectations for me, would be for me to stay with them, to live with them while I go through college, graduate. Their expectation would be for me to go to college, live with them, live under their household. Live with them after I get a job post-degree while I work and move out when I get married. That's their expectation.

P12: I think for now, it's mostly academics especially with the expectations that my dad has of us because now that I'm at the end of my college career. And so he placed his focus on me to finish. Getting my internship, graduating, get a really high paying job. But my mom understand who I want to be. She just want me to finish everything. Whether I get a really high paying job. She tell me to do what you can and you'll get the life that you planned.

Property: Meeting Obligation to Family

Meeting obligation to family is another family dynamics property that emerged during data analysis of the first round interview transcripts. It refers to participants' way of carrying out what they perceive to be their parents' expectation of them. One participant (P09) referred to family obligation as "duty driven" and although it may not be optional, she does not consider it to be necessarily a bad thing. In fact, many participants acknowledge there are mutual benefits from their contributing to family needs.

Accommodating family obligations can result in either ignoring or delaying personal goals in favor of duties to the family as understood by participants. Ignoring or delaying of personal goals can lead to psychosocial distress and therefore, resentment towards family obligations. There are six eldest child in this group of study participants. Four of the interviewees (participants P05, P07, P08 and P10) perceived that being female and eldest child in the family come with additional responsibilities and unfair treatment by parents. Often, there are duties related to caring for younger siblings and expectation to be a good role model for them.

> P02: I think there's pressure definitely from expectation to do well. With my parents paying for my and my sister's college, the expectation is that you work hard and do well in college. Similarly when we were younger, we were living under their roof and they paid for everything. We were expected to abide by their rules and do well in school. That was our job basically, to do well in school. Not to worry about money. But of course you are expected to excel academically.

> P05: Yeah, so my family gave me pretty much complete financial support through college. Half with scholarships, half with the 529 account. So I don't have to worry about money at all. They completely take care of me. So far, there hasn't been any long-term expectations in return for their support of my college.

No openly long-term expectation. There hasn't been explicit mention of me taking care of them when they're older. They haven't talked about it. There have been some expectations. For example, just a few weeks after I talked to you. I called my parents when I received my first paycheck, and I was talking to them, Mom said, "Natalia, in my culture, when you receive a paycheck, You set aside a small amount and you give it to your parents as a token of respect, and this is what I received and I want to share my good fortune with you." I have no idea about that part of my culture. It was funny because she, it wasn't that she was asking for financial support because she said "oh, it should be just a small amount – like $10, it's just a nice, respectful thing." It's purely symbolic. I thought it was interesting because she'd never told me about that part of our culture, so . . . I think slowly, as time goes there'll be more expectations.

P05: not explicitly . . . I sort of expect that in the long-term, my parents will expect financial support or some sort of support from me, or my parents will live with me as an adult. And so that interaction with my mother was the first time I saw the possibility of that, of future expectation. Definitely expectation that at this point in my life, I don't feel any pressure from them. They'd never said anything about paying them back or anything like that.

P06: I think my parents definitely expect some things, although I don't believe that they realize it. A lot of times my mom will tell me. When I express to her that I desire to get a job in my field in some ways to financially support myself. My parents said that they're financing my education because they love me. But there is kind of the flipside, my parents, or my mom had viewed the fact that they'd financed my education and my living situation as a way to get what she want. Oh, because I'm doing this, so you need to do this.

P06: A lot of times they said they're supporting me because they love me but then, in the heat of an argument where maybe I disagree with them about how, or I agree with them in the decision I am making. My parents will remind me, or use the fact that they are financing my education as a way to kind of intimidate me, 'I'm doing this for you so you need to do this for me?' Which a lot of times it makes me feel very trapped.

P07: This was when my youngest sister had gotten surgery for her brain cancer. We were a year into it. She was going through chemotherapy and then. My dad got a job here in Oregon and so he had to move to Oregon first. So it was my mom and us 3 girls living in California. But we had to pay rent for the house in California and also the house here in Oregon. So my mom had to work full-time

to cover all the costs, including my dad's. My responsibility was making sure the house got cleaned, bills got paid, getting laundry done, making sure the girls got food to eat, making sure they got to school, that they got picked up. We also had a dog, making sure it got fed and making sure it got groomed properly. Making sure my youngest sister's homework was done on time. In those days, none of her motor skills were working properly, so I had to write for her. I also had to feed her because she couldn't hold the spoon properly. She was doing occupational therapy for that. At the same time, I was taking my own classes. It was my freshman year of college. I knew that my parents wanted me to be home all the time to help out with my sisters. The 2 girls were 16 and 13, they were at that age. They also went to 2 separate schools at the same time, so I had to drop (sister's name) off in the morning then I would come back and pick up (sister's name) and send her to school. And (sister's name) was in school for half day because she couldn't sit up that long. So I had to pick her up, then I'd go to class and come back. And I had to make sure I get dinner ready before my mom got home because she was at work all day. That was my daily process for 2 months. And that was too much.

P08: I guess expectations are different. My parents were dealing with raising children for the first time with me being the first child. Because I am the eldest child, so the expectations were a little higher . . . My parents want me to give (my siblings) advice. The expectations mostly from my mom to give them basically cautionary tales of what not to do. I am happy to oblige with that and happy to do it anyway to help my brothers so they won't make the type of decision, to not make decisions independent of what my parents want. Expectations that my mom had or my dad had. Actually, it's mostly my mom, to report whatever is going on in their lives. She wants me to report back.

P09: To me, that means that you have certain obligations to your family and they are not negotiable, so things like spending time or spending money and giving any other resources that you have for your family. They're really not an optional thing. Even if there are times the only thing that is motivating you to give of yourself is recognizing it is your duty. Especially when you're working and there are multiple family members pressing you for money or time. Your parents in addition to your children and in addition to your spouse. Those kind of things add up a lot. My older family members have handled all of these responsibilities very well and have been exemplary role models to me in this respect.

P09: I don't have children of my own and I'm not married. And my parents aren't so old that they need me to support them expressively. So when I see that

> drive in most of my family is in that are in that position. It's really just . . . because they know that they have to do that no matter how they are feeling or no matter what other kind of obligations they have, their family is always first. So that's something that I've seen them done, I've seen them do very gracefully, actually. Even though you hear them complaining sometime, but you never have the sense that they will not do that duty to their family.

> P10: But taking away from growing up with my parents, it definitely forced me to grow up faster. I'm the oldest of the 4 children. So, my parents if they work and since they didn't speak English. They have very strong accents. I would be their representative, I would be their translator, I had to be the spokesperson, I had to be the parent sometimes. I had to be their voice sometimes, the family representative. It forced me to be more mature faster. It forced me to understand adult situations soon. So I grew up a lot sooner, I mature a lot sooner because I was put in the adult situation a lot sooner.

> P10: the support that I get from my family would be, I mean, everything. Their expectations for me, would be for me to stay with them, to live with them while I go through college, graduate. Their expectation would be for me to go to college, live with them, live under their household, live with them after I get a job post-degree while I work and move out when I get married. That's their expectation. The expectation of me would be complete the education and they think that for them to give me this life, this is how I can repay them.

Property: Receiving Family Support

All participants acknowledged *receiving family support* in one form or another. Family support include but not limited to, financial help for college tuition, material help, practical help, teaching, modelling appreciated values, and emotional support. A few participants discussed that their parents' support of their college education has strings attached. They expressed feeling pressure because their parents had communicated the expectations to "give back" to family.

> P02: I guess like with anybody developing, like with anyone growing up in a largely positive family environment. Coming from a loving environment where your family dynamics are loving and supportive. Your identity is going to be

affected versus coming from a tumultuous environment. So for me, I feel like the family dynamic was positive in that I have a lot support and love.

P05: I think for all of the instability in my family, I think I have a healthy family dynamics . . . Part of it is my parents always set very high expectations for us, but we always met them. They encouraged us to do well in everything we did. They did allow us to express ourselves differently. I am not good at sports but all my siblings are great at sports and my parents always encouraged that. There's a lot of . . . my family . . . we laugh a lot . . . There's never been any doubt that my parents love us and will do what they need to do to see us succeed. We've always been supported. If I needed a tutor, they'd find a tutor. If I need a ride to the movies, they'd be willing to give me a ride.

P06: My parents, or my mom had viewed the fact that they'd financed my education and my living situation as a way to get what she want. 'Oh, because I'm doing this, so you need to do this.' . . . My parents will remind me, or use the fact that they are financing my education as a way to kind of intimidate me, 'I'm doing this for you so you need to do this for me?' Which a lot of times it makes me feel very trapped.

P08: Some other expectations that are stressful for me. My parents have been very supportive of my job search. I think they realize that International Relations is a difficult field to enter. The fact that I've graduated and I don't have a full-time job yet, it's stressful for me. But also for my parents because I am the eldest child. They're nervous but patient. The fact that my parents also expect that, compounds the stress. If I have a full-time job, I would have that kind of security, but I don't. I think that type of expectation is quite stressful. They've also been very supportive. One of those unsaid expectations that I have to oblige with.

P08: I am working in a temporary job. I am making a little more money now, but still. I was talking to my parents recently and my mom said, 'You have to give back now'. 'Oh, but I am not making that much money.' But there are these financial expectations that I would be giving back to my siblings, giving back to my parents because they supported my college, that they paid for my college. That I should be giving back financially.

P09: Um, okay. Right now, my obligations are to support, be able to have a good career and live financially independently and enjoy my work. That was always their goal of them supporting me when I was younger. Another obligation that I

> deal with at the moment relate to spending time with them as much as I can, even though I am long-distance from my extended family.
>
> P09: I think my mom . . . since I was young before I went to college. She always let me know she'll be financing my education and she'd stuck to her word. It's always been an expectation for me to get a good job, being able to earn my own money, and live a comfortable life afterwards. So that has always been my aspiration since I was very young.
>
> P10: I did pay for my own education, you know. Whatever financial aid they would give me, I would accept. Whatever financial responsibility there was with school, I took care of that. They did not pay for my school but obviously if I can't take care of myself, they will step in. But things that are necessary, financially, they'll be able to help me out

Sitting on the Fence

Sitting on the fence is refers to participants' internal struggle with bicultural identity in navigating the gap between parental culture and their own emerging sense of identity as cultural being. This experience is enmeshed in the navigation shift in young adult roles with parental roles leading to confusion about their own dual identity as they become aware of misalignment between their parents' values and their own personal values. Therefore, is surfaces most frequently as participants *attend to parental expectations*, *meet family obligations* and in the context of *minority of minorities*. As participants became exposed to new ways of thinking and behaving in college, they begin to evaluate them with their family's cultural values and practices. As they sort out values, interests and goals they are attracted to, participants expressed desire to embrace the newly-discovered culture, while appreciating many aspects of the family's culture that they want to adopt as part of who they are becoming.

> P02: I did (express my career desires), I did and it looked like a fight, an all out fight. I think the fighting just . . . After we fought for a while, in the end, I think I

realize the main thing is that, eventually, they talked me into trying again. We were able to have conversation after all the initial fighting and screaming. We're able to sit down and talk about the compromise that I came to was that we'd like you to try one more time, we're paying for you application fee and you're still young. I think I finally caved in to what they want, that they have a valid point.

P03: I'm Chinese-Filipino and our culture affect my work ethics and worldview, and how I view some people. Growing up, my mom was a little bit more dominant, she's the disciplinary person. So I think that shapes a lot of family dynamics. I think It's very common for the mom to be the dominant parent in Asian American families. I feel like that's not an uncommon thing. That's also how it was in my family when I was growing up. I think the way I was raised. I learned a lot of important values like in the Asian American there's a lot of emphasis placed on the values of family, maybe more so than in American families. Values of family, extended families and grandparents.

P05: It's called the Nikah, n-i-k-a-h. It's the Islamic wedding, or a marriage ceremony. I guess the more accurate translation would be solemnization. There's sort of a clash when my mom sort of expect me to have this ceremony. It's not my culture, I never grew up in the Muslim community so this is contrary to my real life experience. It is stressful to have that expectation placed on me. I guess I might have felt differently if I was exposed to that culture when I was younger growing up.

P06: I think that . . . I think the hardest part for my parents' desire for me and my sister is to form opinion and to have a voice – which is a very American value. You know my parents came here when I was 8 years old. But also this conflict with their ingrained ideas of respect and how our relationship should in their mind be. Because they are my parents, I think in a lot of instances, my parents' usual knee-jerk reaction is that, If I disagree with them or if my priorities are different from them is to be angry because in their mental framework, they feel that it's not respect. Even though outside of that moment, they subscribe to the belief that I should develop my own opinion.

P07: I wanted to do wedding planning is because I find that I am very good at being a caretaker . . . I don't know why I feel so strongly about it. I really don't feel like I need to finish the university or college right now because I think, I really think it's a waste of my time.

P08: Yeah. I didn't realize how much of this is a cultural thing. I guess I didn't expect how much my parents want to have a say in my financial situation. I'm sure they want me to give back. Now that I am becoming financially independent, I think the family dynamics is going to be interesting. It's not like it's my mom versus my dad, but my mom is the one that said specifically. She's the one who said it that I should be giving back.

P10: I definitely struggle where things could be different. There are times when I have to force myself to step out of my comfort zone. And in certain things that go against what I'm used to. It's been difficult for me because I'm not used to that and I'm not used to. Sometimes, it's in the sense of satire, you know. It's been something I need to rethink things. They didn't grow up the same way I did. I struggled, I definitely did. Basically, adjusting my ways of thinking and broadening my horizon. Understanding that we all didn't come from the same place. My thinking is not the same as theirs and I just need to accept that and move on.

P10: At this point, I think I'm more . . . I honestly think that I am half and half and I juggle. I've found a way to juggle both. I can be very traditional, but I can also be very non-traditional. I believe that the struggle that I had gone through early on, really helps me balance that. Being able to understand ways others think. I also understand how my parents would think. Whenever I'm stuck in a situation, I would bring those experiences to life and determine which way I would go.

P10: can stop and look at the situation. I'm blessed with 2 types of perspectives. So I can look at situations from 2 different sides. I can stop and look at the situation and think, 'How would my parents resolve this? How would my parents evaluate this situation?' At the same time, I have experience in the western tradition. I would look at my western tradition and think about how I would deal with the situation. So I'm able to look at the situation from both perspectives.

Experiencing Psychosocial Distress

Experiencing psychosocial distress is defined as participants experiencing negative internal responses to the pattern of interaction within the family and between family members. The distress can be in the form of emotional or psychosomatic

symptoms. Analysis of the participants' data revealed that attending to parental expectations and meeting family obligations can lead to distress when accompanied by one or more of the following interrelated variables: a) participants perceive lack of choice in these expectations and obligations, or b) there is perception of misalignment between the participants' personal goals and their family's desires of them, or c) participants' personal goals are neglected for a lengthy period of time. These factors are related in that choice allowed participants freedom to attend to personal needs and pursue personal goals.

> P02: I think it becomes particularly stressful when the more, when the more out of alignment my wishes or goals were with my parents' goals, that's when the stress is greatest. When there's more misalignment between us. When I didn't get into med school the first time, I didn't want to re-apply. I didn't want to do medical school, but want to go to engineering school instead. My parents forced me to apply again. They basically said, no, don't come this far to be deterred by not getting in the first time. They really want me to try again, which in retrospect, I think I don't blame them for because my goals for my future were very different from what they had had in mind. So that was extremely distressful and very stressful.

> P02: When I was younger I had more resentment because of tension in the family, and of their expectations of me. One example is when I did not get into medical school the first time. Fighting tooth and nail trying to convince me.

> P03: It's only mild pressure for me. They know that I'm doing my best. I don't like worship my school work. It's important, but it's not the only thing. When I was young, I probably didn't have much of a choice. Coz I was too young. As I grow older, my mom also began to change.

> P05: Definitely, there is a range of emotions related to my family's opinions on my relationships. The mildly annoying side would be . . . So I have been in the relationship with my boyfriend for 4 years now. My family like him a lot, but they would not accept, if they knew that we were spending the weekend visiting each other. The annoying part is that I have to say, "oh yeah, I'm just go up for one day, and then I came back." It doesn't matter, it doesn't affect the way I live. It just sort of annoying that I have to lie to my mother

P05: In the longer run, and I guess that's on the other side of the spectrum of what is stressful. In the longer run, I think this is the one area of my life where my mom would like me to behave like a Malay Muslim. So she'd like me to have the Nikah . . . It's the Islamic wedding, or a marriage ceremony. I guess the more accurate translation would be solemnization. There's sort of a clash when my mom sort of expect me to have this ceremony. It's not my culture, I never grew up in the Muslim community so this is contrary to my real life experience. It is stressful to have that expectation placed on me. I guess I might have felt differently if I was exposed to that culture when I was younger growing up. But it almost seems like my mom is holding on to my last big life event. She's trying to make this big event conform to her idea of how I should live or how I should present myself. At the end of the day, it has very little to do with me and it has everything to do with making my mom happy.

P06: I think especially in relationship with my parents, probably the way that I've been affected is my work ethics most definitely. I'm very committed and I attribute that to my parents expecting me to always do my best. The person I am now, in some ways or in a lot of ways, very perfectionistic, and afraid in a lot of aspects to make mistakes. Fear inhibit me from taking risk. Yes. I think my fear of making mistakes. This is sometimes inhibiting me from taking risks - that comes from my relationship with my mom. A lot of times if you don't succeed the first time. When I was little, a lot of times the chances to try is taken away from me because she'll do it herself. Usually, I'm very . . . I don't get it right the first time, yeah, so that's the negative side of my family dynamics.

P06: Remembering I was very angry that (my parents) are expecting, so I was equating financial independence with being trapped, for not being everything that they expected of me. And so during that time, I remember distinctively trying not use anything that my parents had bought or paid for, or made from me because in my mind I had equated financial independence with being free from uh, from being trapped into my parents' expectations.

P06: I think family dynamics become stressful when I've committed to other obligations and it feels like I can't say no to either my other obligations or to my parents because of the position in my life and the expectations that they have that I should prioritize them over everything else . . . that usually cause anxiety attacks. When I feel trapped between my parents' expectations and obligations that I'd committed to in other capacities. When I can't say no. I think feeling trapped especially by my parents' expectations of me. In my mind it feels like

entering a state of claustrophobic. Whenever I feel trapped during my anxiety attacks, I will try to physically compensate for my mental feelings, to get out of the environment that I'm in and removing myself into open space. There were instances where I have arguments with my parents and I felt trapped in the car. That's the most stressful situation. That compounds the mental feeling of being trapped not being able to move or not being to find solution.

P07: I moved through a lot of different phases. I went through the phases of anger and bitterness. I prayed a lot about it. But I think I prayed with words and my heart wasn't in it. I felt that I was owing something by my family. I felt it very strongly. It took a lot of arguing and talking, arguing and talking it out again. Fighting again and talking again. We spent a lot of time just trying to explain our, our feelings. It was very unproductive because either I wasn't listening or my parents weren't listening. And so we ended up dropping it and ignoring it as long as possible. But the problem is, it wasn't solved. The same issue would keep coming up. It didn't go anywhere for a good year or two. It keep recurring for a year or two. I went into depression, my grades were dropping and I lost all motivation. There was nothing that I wanted to do or wanted to accomplish.

P07: If they reject, I think I would be very emotional quickly, especially when it comes to my parents, which usually brings a lot of tears and words that are incomprehensible. Probably in the moment when they reject, I would say some very hurtful things and get upset and walk away. But then I would think about it and then think of a different way to phrase it.

P08: Well, um, I guess as children, I found that my parents don't quite understand how much money I can give according to my means. Their not understanding is frustrating. But mostly I feel frustrated and annoyed because there seems to be a lack of understanding. But also, almost concurrently, I feel like, I should also be giving back in some ways. But not in the way that they suggested. I also feel that I can be generous with my money the way I am able to. I feel frustration because there seem to be a lack of understanding with their expectation. A lot of unsaid expectations. I do feel that I should be giving back in some way. But sometimes when they say things like that and I feel annoyed.

P10: I would say, I wouldn't say, it was extremely distressful, but I would say it would reach the distressful kind of level. There would be times where I have plans, or I have these goals I'd set for myself that I want to accomplish. I would feel that my parents' expectations of me were unreasonable and that I can't even

> attain my goal because they're in the way. Their traditional ways of looking at things prevented me from actually accomplishing these goals.
>
> P12: I think it has to do with my dad. You know he would give me, (sister's name), and (sister's name) articles once in a while about like work . . . like Top 10 jobs. He would give us articles about high paying jobs and degrees that are useful or things like that. It's stressful when he talks to my siblings and I about school. He would push us by talking about my cousins being at the top of the class, getting real high paying job. It's stressful when he's comparing his side of the family with my siblings and I. That type of things to me, that becomes stressful. But it's not super stressful where I want to pull my hair out. You know, it's fine because at the same time I understand that he just want what's best for me.

Finding Own Voice

Finding own voice is participants' experiencing confidence in who they are, what they believe in and why they want certain things, that resulted from their gaining awareness of their own identity, values and needs. This confidence translated to transition from past patterns of family relations that brought distress and pursuit of personal goals. In this developmental experience, participants gained perspective regarding their parents and their family dynamics as well as arrived at an understanding of factors that shaped their identity. It is also clear that they developed self-efficacy in ways that enabled them to gradually transition from passive experiencing of stressful family dynamics to actively responding to them in ways that bring desired outcomes. The young women began learning to make independent choices and become assertive in pursuit of their personal goals.

In the process of experiencing a change in family dynamics that it is becoming healthier and more productive than in the past, participants began to perceive that their parents are changing as well. There is a sense that the whole family is growing together.

P02: It dawned on me that my parents came to the country from Cambodia without a dime. My dad supported himself through college and became an engineer. So the expectation is that, Oh, that's what they can achieve. The expectation is that I should be able to do the same.

P02: I want to do pediatrics and pediatricians don't make a lot of money. My engineering friends will make more money than me. It has to do with doing something good and something respectable. Meaningful and respectable for me, not because it reflects on my family.

P02: I used to envy um, relationships that my Caucasian friends had with their families. They talk about everything with more, almost less hierarchical and less patriarchal than my family. I definitely wanted to change things in my family then. I wish we could have been more like them. I wish we can talk more about things. Back then I thought I could not do anything about it. That's definitely changed now because my family dynamics now . . . I wouldn't change anything now. Definitely when I was younger, I wanted to change things because I was not able to communicate with my parents. Back then, I didn't think I could do anything about it. I don't feel, I didn't think there was anything I could do. It was like, whatever my parents say, goes. No arguing, no back talking, nothing. That's how it was.

P03: I think some of it is the result of direct conflict with my parents - they really shaped me. I think I've grown . . . I would venture to guess that I am becoming more patient due to my siblings. That and becoming more forgiving also.

P04: Now that I'm in New Zealand, and I'm also going to be graduating while I'm in New Zealand. So, yeah. They'd been like really chill with what I want to do. Like, I was thinking of staying here in New Zealand for a little bit, and they're like, they're talking it over. If I wanted to really do something, they won't ever fight me for it. I think it's because I'm pretty stubborn. So when they say we forbid something, I fight back a lot, so then they never forbid me to do anything. They know that I'm more keen to what they say and listen to their opinion. Those types of altercations aren't very stressful for me. We don't really clash too much.

P04: I think I've grown as a person from the dynamics that my parents have shown in my family but also through how my parents relate to their families. I definitely learned how to be a strong woman and how to gain respect from men.

Because my mom was pretty much a tomboy when she was young, I understand that I as a woman can also be a leader.

P05: At some point I will have to tell my mom that I'm not raising my children as Muslims. Of course it's important to maintain my relationship with my parents. But . . . I definitely will be asserting myself more strongly. In the next few years as I make the decision to get married.

P05: I had a happy and productive childhood. Since the last time we spoke, I am more optimistic. Yeah, I'm more optimistic. In the next several years, I'll have my own family. That will be something I can do with my parents' blessings. So I'm more optimistic.

P06: Yeah, I think going on vacation with my parents is huge with feeling like I'm not talking to a brick wall. But um, I think a lot of times because my parents now understand that their expectations put me in the situation where I feel trapped. They are now more inclined to listen to me. Now they'd ask me rather than tell me. Developing the back and forth communication has really, has done wonders for me mentally and my relationship with my parents. I think my parents understand now that their expectations. Instead of seeing rigidity, I see flexibility in them and understanding in them for me.

P06: Mutuality in our communication has altered my perspective of my parents. It makes it easier to . . . to not give in but to see their opinion, out of respect for them. Also they're making a lot more compromise than when I was younger. That type of flexible only came about because of the extremity of my anxiety attacks. I felt like that level of my emotional state was what shook them to be more flexible, which is sad because sometimes when I'm having anxiety attacks, I'm wondering whether I'm still having them because I think that's the only way people will listen to me or take me seriously.

P06: I think (family dynamics) has really affected the way that I relate in friendship, in group work, in a job situation with other people, in how I understand people's actions and motivations. Because I've come to terms with why my parents acted the way they did, or why I would react the way that I did, I now have more understanding of other people. I want to know why people make the decisions that they did, and a lot of times, it gives me more compassion for them. I don't look at other people on the surface level anymore, or the surface actions anymore. But I look at them at a deeper level and that came from understanding my own family dynamics.

P07: For me, it doesn't really get that distressful. There was one point in my life where it got, it was just too much and I thought I was going to explode. After that was resolved, I don't think I ever felt distressed by my parents' expectations because I know that we have different mindset and we think different. They are older and their thought is so embedded that it's so different for them to think anything than what they want me to do. Because I now understand that, it's easier for me not to get too stressed about it.

P07: One of the reasons that I wanted to do wedding planning is because I find that I am very good at being a caretaker, but I'm also good at multi-tasking. The thing that I'm really bad at, is sitting at a desk for hours. And being at the same place everyday. When I get married and I have kids. I want to be at home with my kid. I'm trying to find the type of work that I can do that would allow me to be a stay-at-home mom as well. The wedding planning is very flexible because a lot of talking is on the phone. You pick your own hours, usually you can meet people in your home, or, it's very casual. It's not a strict, you have to be here for 8 hours. I also really enjoy it, I think it's really fun because I enjoy planning events. I also do that at my church, like for the Harvest party, VBS, Christmas party. I'm in charge of organizing all those events. And I really enjoyed it.

P07: But I actually didn't waste those years. I learned a lot and I grew a lot. I was able to acquire skills that I didn't have before I was able to react very quickly to emergency. I looked back and realize that it's an experience that does not come to everyone. It's only given to people who can really handle the situation and really learn from it. I just kind of look at the situation and everything. I thought about it and prayed about it. It didn't happen instantly. It wasn't like there was a moment where everything was better. It fixed itself over time; not fix itself . . . it got fixed by God's grace. There wasn't like one moment, one earth shattering moment. It was gradually over the years. It took a long time.

P07: I think it was the mindset that I had before was, 'They're older, they need to come to me. They're my parents, they're older, they have more knowledge so they need to be wiser.' That's what I always thought. I came to realize I think the same thing we do to pastors. They are only human, that pastors are not perfect. They can't think that, they can't say that, they can't wear that. I thought about my pastor, and how my dad was a pastor. And how I didn't like it when other people thought that way about him. And I didn't realize that that was what I was doing, wanting them to come and make amends. In reality, they might not really know how I was feeling because I never really told them about it. It was really hard

because I've never done it before. It took a lot of time. Every time I would try to start something, I would kind of joke about it and shrug it off. But it took some time and I'm not a very brave person, so it took a long time to have courage to really sit down and say, 'Oh, I need to talk to you guys and can you guys just hear me out.' On the flip side as well, my parents are very, for lack of a better word, more chill than other Asian parents. And they're more accepting, if not a little bit understanding of certain situations. Even if they're not willing to accept all the way. I think, I just didn't want to feel the awkwardness. It was more than nervousness, being afraid that they would reject what I have to say. It was more like, how am I going to make this situation work for everyone, without them thinking that I was trying to . . . It was weird.

P07: Before, if she rejects me I would ignore the problem as long as I could. But now, if I get rejected, I'd find a different way of saying it. I think our communication has been improving from before

P07: I realized that the reason I've been able to grow through my family dynamics and look at it so positively. That's because I value the . . . I value the family in the way that's been embedded in me since I was very, very young. The family is the most important, and even though sometimes my family gets kind of messed up. I noticed that other families also get messed up, but they don't try to fix it because they don't think the family is that important.

P07: It's because my dad, especially my dad from when we were very young He made sure we have family worship time, having family prayer time, and having dinner with family. And how in order for the church to grow, the family has to be strong and work together. Because it was embedded in me, I was able to grow from the stressful experience. If it wasn't embedded in me, I would have just moved out and never look back. But because I value the way my dad taught me using God's word.

P08: I think the biggest growth has been just starting to understand where parents are coming from. One of the growth for my character has been learning to have empathy and patience with my parents. I think empathy because we're immigrants and they have expectations of what life is going to look like in the United States. They came with the intentions of improving their lifestyle. So, financially, they're going to do what's going to help their life be more stable. They didn't have opportunity when they were younger. A lot of their pressure on us is motivated by the fact that they want their children to have better opportunities . . . opportunities they didn't have.

P08: I had the privilege of going back home and meeting my parents' siblings – my aunts and uncles, and saw their family dynamics there and what their families' expectations were and how they viewed life. My mom and my dad are the eldest in their families too. They were the only family members who had the opportunity to come to the United States. They're also kind of have obligation to give back. I realize they have a similar experience as I. That knowledge of their background really helped me understand my parents a little bit better. Having opportunity to spend enough time in the Philippines helped me to see their family dynamics, and this is very important to me.

P08: Another way that I've grown is in knowing how to communicate effectively with my parents. I think sometimes, I realize that it's so much better to be . . . Well, it's basic communication skills. To be open and honest about how I'm feeling. It's hard sometimes to practice with your own family. But I know my parents are interested in what's going on in my life, and to keep them updated. Instead of hiding certain details from them because I'm afraid of what they'll think about me. Being open and honest and sharing my feelings. It's important to me because my parents are emotional creatures. But they don't really know how to communicate effectively because they didn't grow up in a culture where people help each other to share feelings. Often we express our emotions, but we don't really do it in a helpful way. I'd never sat down and being able to be honest with them. Learning to express my feelings with them. So, growing in my communication. Communication and being able to like, be honest and open really has grown me and helped me in my relationship with them. In the past, I was not quite sure how to go about doing it.

P09: I think that the values that I have now or the traits that I try to associate myself with because I value them. Those are SEA values that I've seen in my family. For example, most everybody in my family are very family-oriented. And very duty-driven in that way. Even when, even in times of stress and they're stretched very thin in other areas of their lives. They would come home at the end of the day and cook dinner and talk to one another in the family even when the mood is not there. And working hard to support other members of the family. To this day, this is what I identify with very strongly. And I want to grow to become like that when I have a family of my own.

P09: If she's angry about something, I would just leave or not just say anything. It seem to diffuse the situation. To this day, when she's upset about something, I just stay quiet, I just say nothing and let her shout about it until long after . . . so I

try not to interact with her until she's calmer and I'm calmer too. It just took me several years in each phase to realize that it was not working. The only thing that's working right now is for me to avoid her when she's in that kind of mood. That might change for her. As she grow older, she's also more mellow. She doesn't get as angry. Hopefully, when I'm older I'll find a different way of responding. Not just avoiding, but something more constructive.

P10: I'm at a point where I guess I went through it and I don't want them controlling me anymore. It was to the point it kept me back. They kept me from really experiencing life. I'm not going to give in. So she'll give me a hard time and she'll be frustrated with me. And I would be too, but I'm not going to let her control it.

P10: I think a lot of times, I go with my gut feelings. I guess I go with common sense as well. If I want something and it doesn't make sense, I would talk to them about it and they would agree with me that. I would start out not telling them exactly how I feel. I would ask them whatever the situation is, what are their thoughts. If I'm talking to them about something and they agree then I'd go with that. But if they disagree with what I feel is right in my gut. If they're telling me to do a certain way and my gut tells me no, that's not right thing to do, I'm going to go with what my gut tells me.

P10: I think they've changed too. Now, when there are important decisions in the family, they would ask for my input. In the past, they kind of did but they did it out of formality. Whereas now, they respect my opinions more and they took what I have to say seriously.

P12: Well, (sister's name) and I had talked about it - That our dad is more of a reasoning type of person. He needs to see evidence first. That's probably one reason why he's now okay with what I'm doing. He knows that we're still going to do what we want to do anyway as long as we tell him first.

P12: When I was younger, I used to cater to everyone wanting me to do things for them. My mom told me that you don't have to cater to all their needs. I thought I was just being nice, but that kind of help me to not be stepped all over by them and not be just as hurt as I would be. She kinda helped me set some boundaries as to how much I should help people. You know, in terms of helping them when they need help or pushing myself too hard to help others. Before, it was hard with friends. You can't be everything for everybody. My resources are

limited, so they all really helped me a lot. She helped me to be a decent person, to be somebody that others want as a friend or as confidant

Discussion

Data analysis of interviews with Southeast Asian American female college students from the second round suggested that family dynamics was a continuing process they needed to manage. While the themes remain consistent between Round One and Round Two of interviews, there appeared to be a slight shift in the participants' narrative of their experience with family dynamics. There were more balanced discussion of both sides of the family interactional coin. Although family dynamics brought distress, the participants acknowledged growth associated with it and they are able to see hope for healthier relationships in part because they are developing self-efficacy to pursue favorable outcomes, and in part because they are perceiving change in their parents as well.

In order to gain a clearer understanding of the interactions between categories as well as between categories and properties, a visual diagram was constructed based on open and axial coding data from round two transcripts (see Appendix G, Figure 2).

In reviewing the data, several gaps were identified. First, there is a sense that the experience that participants were describing sounds like a common phenomenon of adolescents transitioning into adulthood. So the question we want to ask was, is there anything about this experience that is uniquely Southeast Asian? Another question that emerged was the matter of personal goals – how were they shaped? We also wanted to have a deeper understanding of their experience as SEAA on campus. Here are the questions asked of participants in the Third Round of Interviews:

- What pieces of family dynamics would you attribute to SEAA culture?
- What shaped your personal goals?
- How are things different for you in college because you are SEAA?

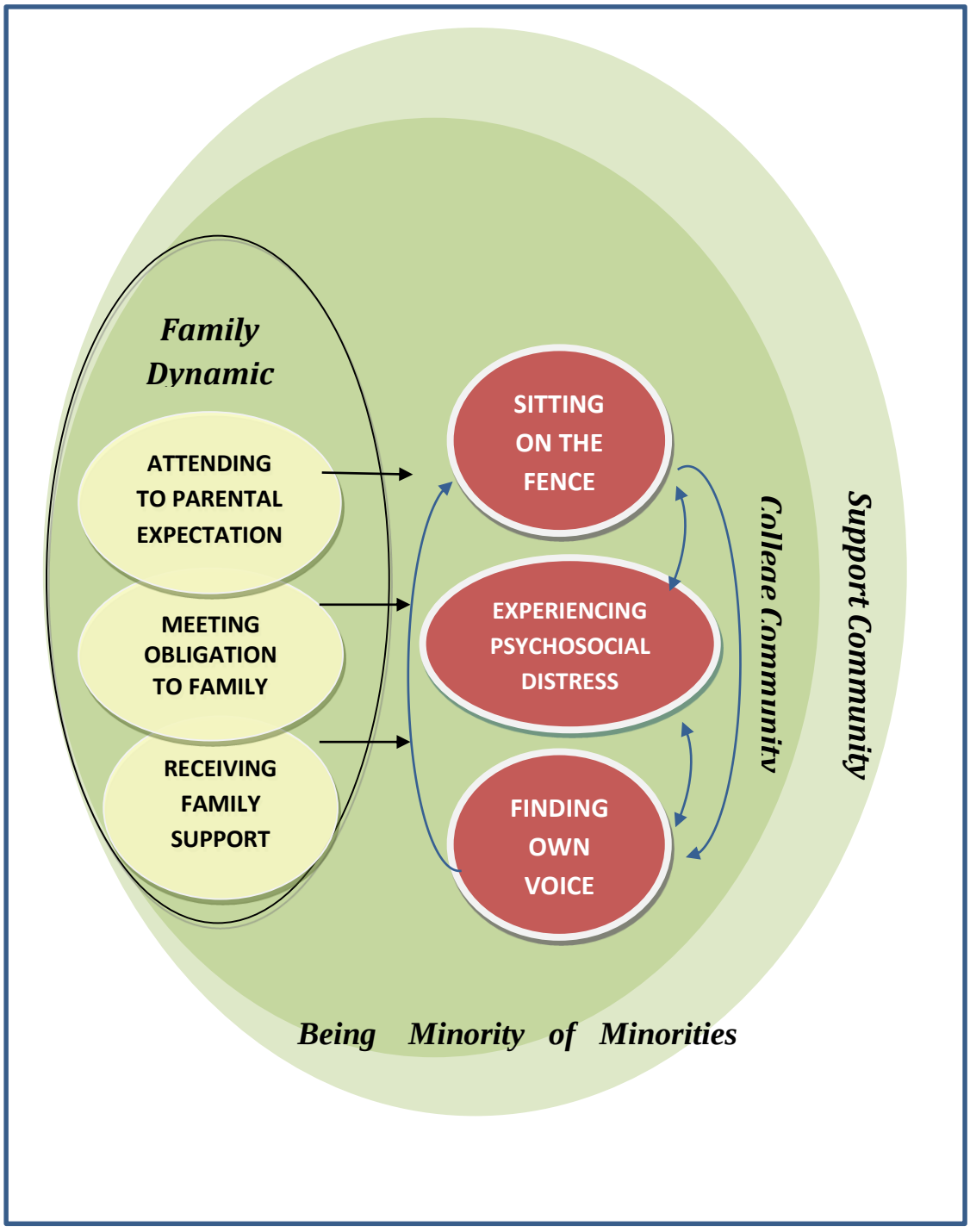

Figure 2: Diagram of Relationships among Categories and Properties for Second Round of Interviews

Appendix H

Third Round of Interviews

Introduction

The third round of interviews were designed to continue addressing the grand research question and to build upon the foundation of results from Round One and Round Two of transcripts data analyses. New information derived from the second round of interviews allowed for a richer picture of the phenomenon of experiencing family dynamics by this group of Southeast Asian American female college students. Data from Round Two added depth to our understanding of the experience first conceptualized during Round One. Nevertheless, there were gaps in the data that provided an incomplete picture of the uniqueness of SEAA family dynamics that the participants were experiencing.

Questions for the third round of interviews were developed as gaps in the data from Round One and Round Two were identified. In addition, the questions for this round were intended to generate a better description of the categories generated in the previous rounds. Upon completion of data analysis for the third round of interviews, it was necessary to re-conceptualize and or expand some of the categories and properties as discussed under the respective headings below.

Ten participants were interviewed for Round Three. At the end of the interview, the researcher conducted member checking as part of the essential step completed the grounded theory process. As with the previous two rounds, the interviews were recorded and transcribed. The transcripts were emailed to participants for verification before commencing the task of analyzing them. The researcher utilized the grounded theory

approach of open coding and axial coding procedures in analyzing the data. The purpose was to arrive at more accurate and relevant definitions of the conceptual categories.

Experiencing College

Experiencing college is the context category that replaced being minority of minorities which was presented as the context in the previous two rounds of interview data analyses. It is participants' process of transition into the new life stage on a university campus, in which they simultaneously encounter *being minority of minorities* and *expanding worldview.* This new life context influences the young women's engagement with family dynamics in a number of ways. First, it intensifies some of the existing interactional patterns that brought stress to the participants, such as the pressure to excel academically and pursue prestigious career. Second, it brought to light the differences between the participants' cultural background and the university culture as well as the culture of their peers. Third, the experience of college opened up the minds and eyes of the participants in ways that enabled their personal growth, and led to relational growth with their family. Against this temporal, socio-cultural and environmental backdrop, the SEAA female students described being in a unique state where they experience both discouragement and growth.

Property: Being Minority of Minorities

Being a *minority of minorities* on campus refers to how the participants' unique SEAA background led them to experience feeling different, inferior, stereotyped, misunderstood, isolated, and marginalized, adding stress to their college adjustment. In this new environment and role, the participants perceived lack of shared values and

interests with peers on campus, as well as frequent misunderstanding by peers due to peers' lack of exposure to SEAA people and culture.

> P07: I really felt uncomfortable. I didn't know how to interact with people because I've never interacted with people other than Chinese, Vietnamese, Koreans, mostly all Asians. When I first moved here to go to college, it was a culture shock. I had a really hard time talking to people. And I felt lonely more than anything, and it affected my studies.

> P11: It feels like we're minority of minorities. Coz on campus, there are Asian Americans which is already considered a minority group. The SEAs are a smaller group out of that. We're almost invisible. People couldn't tell us apart from other Asians . . . nobody understands me.

Property: Expanding Worldview

At the same time, the college context enabled participants' *expanding worldview*, where they receive exposure to new knowledge, alternate values and different style of interpersonal relationship. This broadening of perspective enabled growth in gaining self-awareness, shaping of personal goals, as well as provided SEAA college students with resources to act on their personal and family situation. While the participants perceived personal growth, the college years added challenges to family environment as new ideas, behavior and values were brought home from college. The participants depended on the available resources from the college environment, particularly emotional and psychosocial support from the social and spiritual community to help them negotiate between meeting parental and their own desires.

> P02: Just because living under my family, it was a very sheltered, limited life. Finally going to college and being able to explore what I want to do and who I want to be, what interests or activities I want to pursue. I thought that was interesting because it's all new. I had independence, I felt liberated. All these grew during college time.

> P04: in my college community, I found spiritual community as well. And so, going to that and finding Christianity on my own again was really interesting because I came out with different things culturally from my parents, but we came up with the same things religiously. There's like a cultural gap between my parent's generation and my generation in terms of how Christianity is viewed. So I am definitely more liberal than my parents.

> P05: (In college), when I was coming into my own identity as being SEA, I became more interested in that more broadly. I guess as I fleshed out my identity, I am more confident in who I am and confident in pursuing goals I want in life.

> P06: Coming to college help me see that my parents and I were viewing things in different context . . . I have opportunity to see how my other friends think or how their families think, realizing that the fact that my parents are immigrants really impacted our relationship a lot more than I think it did. When I say something to them and they translate in their head into their Filipino culture, that's different.

> P12: I do have conflicting thoughts within myself in terms of what my family expects of me and what I'm discovering as I go through college, you know, and things I am experiencing outside of my family. There are views that I find are conflicting.

Family Dynamics

Family dynamics is defined as participants experiencing relational patterns that lead to psychosocial pressure as well as interactions that provide significant community and emotional support. The core properties of this phenomenon include *attending to parental expectations and obligations* and *appreciating family support*. Family dynamics is a concept that represents the emotional, behavioral and communication patterns among members of the family. Participants expressed experiencing socialization to perform based on parents' desires as made known to them either explicitly or complicitly.

Gradually, they become aware of, and are grateful for their family's financial, material and emotional support as they pursue academic goals.

> P03: Now that I've become a person of my own . . . I think it's changed my family dynamics. Because I've gained more respect from my family members coz I'm older and coz I have goals in life and I've thought through like what I want to do in life. Instead of being unsure of everything and just relying on my parents for everything. I think in SEAA culture there's a certain level of respect that's earned for people who have at least an idea of what they want to do in life and they're somewhat independent and can think for themselves. I think there's a lot of respect that comes with that.

> P04: Parents might not necessarily express love in that sort of warm, fuzzy way like Euro-American families. SEA families are more stoic. I'm paying for your college, I work, I cook for you, I provide for you and that's how I show my love . . . Mom is from the SEA culture so she has different expectations of me to react as a child and to have her cultural standards. Me being very American, I don't have her cultural standards and mom is not used to that.

> P04: How my parents respond to us children. I see my Western friends, they have like, they're more disrespectful, not disrespect but they treat their parents like more equal like me or my SEAA friends. We're taught to treat our parents more as if like honored elderly, not elderly but adults kind of, like how to break that apart and like see our parents treat us like adults. Because we are adults also, there's this barrier between parent and child, no matter how old we get.

Property: Attending to Family Expectation and Obligation

Attending to family expectation and obligation is a category that comprised two components in the previous two rounds of interview data analyses, and they are *attending to family expectation* and *meeting obligation to family*. Upon careful analysis, the data suggested that the two categories were so interrelated and participants often discussed both as being the same. Analysis of Round Three transcript data confirmed that it is logical to combine them into a single category. Participants have learned to accept family expectations and

obligations as the cultural norm and this led them to frequently make choices favored by their family. Although participants described family obligations to be non-negotiable, they are not always perceived as a bad thing. Participants become attuned to parents' desires of them through a number of ways: a) parents' explicit statements to their children about what they want; b) things parents give priority to (i.e., things they chose to invest time and energy in); and c) children's behavior/performance that parents either praise or criticize.

P02: I feel like . . . SEAA family, being raised in SEAA family. In a lot of ways, like in my case, it can kind of be a little paternalistic, and can be almost oppressive. Not all, not all SEAA families are like that. But I think you have this strict Asian upbringing. If I can use one word to describe Asian parenting and family dynamics. I think strict is the word that come to mind.

P02: Parents might not necessarily express love in that sort of warm, fuzzy way. Like Euro-American families, Asian families are more stoic. It's more like, I'm providing for you . . . I'm paying for your college, I work, I cook for you, I provide for you and that's how I show my love.

P04: So it's kind of a shift in my parents of seeing me as an adult. I also talked to my friends about this too. We talk about the cultural differences that my parents and I have to go through and like, my mom had different expectations of me as like, she is from the SEA culture so she has different expectations of me to react as a child. Even though I am her child, and I'm still very American and she is not used to that. She thinks of me as her child and to have her cultural standards. But I'm very American and I don't.

P04: (Mom and I) both have cultural expectations. The next time we get frustrated, we need to talk it out with what my mom thinks is respectful versus what I think is respectful. Culturally, this is what I want and this is what she expects of me. What they want is complicit, and I'm expected to know versus me as an American and I just expect them to say what they want versus me knowing.

P05: Before I get married, it'll have to be with my parents' approval. They will expect to have a lot of influence. So that's one where beside respect for my parents, I will be expected to include them in my personal life decisions.

> P06: Culturally, this is what I want and this is what she expects of me. What they want is complicit, and I'm expected to know versus me as an American and I just expect them to say what they want versus me knowing.
>
> P06: That definitely feeds into family dynamics. I know this is one of those things that me and my family are working on meeting expectations and learning what their expectations are. Having my parents communicate their expectations to us and me and my sister communicating our expectations to my parents. So that we can somehow find balance in that and understand each other instead of just reacting to it.
>
> P11: I don't know if it's SEA, but there's this constant pressure by my parents, especially my mom, for us kids to get straight A's, get involved in extra-curricular activities so we can get into prestigious colleges.
>
> P09: They are just mandatory because they are good things. They are not negotiable, so things like spending time or spending money and giving any other resources that you have for your family. They're really not an optional thing. Even if there are times the only thing that is motivating you to give of yourself is recognizing it as your duty.

Property: Receiving Family Support

Another property of family dynamics is participants *receiving family support*, where they receive help for felt need in both tangible and intangible ways. Participants recognize and feel grateful for the sacrifices made by their parents in order to support their children's college education financially and materially. The family's emotional support is in providing a grounding place where the participants experience the bond of mutual understanding and acceptance as SEAA individuals, and this is highly valued given their status on campus and in society as a *minority of minorities*. The young women also expressed appreciation for, and are attracted to many of the cultural and familial values that are being modeled in their family of origin.

> P01: My family is what I come back to, they're the ones that keep me grounded. It's like a conundrum. I have an obligation towards them and they have many unstable situations that they throw me into, but ultimately in the end, those roots is what I hold my values in.

> P09: My family went through some difficult times . . . see how strongly they support one another through all those difficult times, and it really encourage me.

> P02: It's more support for things you've come up on your own. Or things that you, you're doing on your own. Decisions that you've come up with independently and thinking that your family wouldn't necessarily support. And then be surprised by their support.

Finding Own Voice

The phenomenon of *finding their own voice* is the central category conceptualized as the participants' growth process where they experience cognitive shifts leading to behavioral change that empowers their pursuit of personal goals while maintaining acceptable relationship with family. It is comprised of three progressive and interconnected properties, each with its own accompanying dimensions. The property *feeling trapped* is characterized by participants experiencing psychosocial distress when they perceived they are not given a choice in the family environment. As *feeling trapped* is very destabilizing, and participants seek to alleviate it by *negotiating dual goals*, which involves the evaluation of their parents' and the personal goals. They are torn between valuing for the family's well-being and standing up for what they want in life. In *going for it*, the participants gained confidence to take risks to pursue what they strongly believe in, while taking initiative to make their voice heard.

This process occurs during the life stage when they are emerging as young adults and experiencing multi-dimensional life transitions. The young women's internal sense of self is changing as they gain perspective and confidence, grow psycho-socially, and

begin to practice different ways of interacting with others, especially with parents. This is a process that is comprised of both "straining and strengthening" of family relations, with more of the straining in *feeling trapped* and the strengthening in *going for it*, while the participants may vacillate between strain and strength in *negotiating dual goals*.

The path of *finding own voice* begins with the influence of being in a new environment (i.e., college) where the participants learn and observe alternate ways of relating and doing things. They begin to evaluate among the styles, values and goals belonging to their family and those associated with mainstream America and adopt those that carry personal meaning to them as part of their self-identity. Subsequently, participants become aware that their goals do not align with their parents' preferences for them. Some of the misalignments is the result of intergenerational gap, while other differences are cultural and personal in nature. All the parents of participants in the study are first generation SEAA who came to the U.S. as adults. The participants being either American-born or came to the U.S. as children, experience distress and confusion when they perceive differences between their and their parents' values.

> P02: Coz finding your own voice, part of that has to do with pulling away from my family and your upbringing and trying to figure out for yourself who you are and who you want to be. So inherently, I think part of that is straining. Because family, particularly parents generally don't want to see their kid grow up and moving on and moving away. Finding my own voice . . . I think initially it did put a strain in my relationship with my family. I think at times it is still straining. But . . . but it can also strengthen it as well when you feel the support and encouragement. That's the flipside and you can also feel more empowered and loved. And so, in that sense it can strengthen your relationship as well. But sometimes it goes the other way too. At least personally for me, I went through quite a bit of strain before the strengthening part.

> P06: Do we hold to American ideal or to Filipino ideal? Sometimes expectations are not clear and my parents are like, 'Oh, this is just respect and you're going to

> be punished for it.' My sister and I would get really confused . . . we never really know how American we're allowed to be in the context of family.
>
> P07: It's more recent where I've found my own voice and I really am letting it be heard. It's a little difficult on my parents because they feel I'm being disrespectful and rude and that I'm inconsiderate of them. They've mentioned that they feel like I have no regard for them by standing for what I want. It hurts me that they think that way.

Property: Feeling Trapped

Feeling trapped is the first of three properties of *finding own voice,* and was an in vivo phrased expressed by Participant P06 to describe not having a choice and voice regarding parental expectations. It is characterized by participants experiencing psychosocial distress, an internal response to perception of being in difficult family dynamics where they are not given a choice. Furthermore, the complicity of parental desires combined with the high context cultural norm that SEAA families exist in, causes the participants to be on constant alert for possible socio-environmental cues that dictate expected responses. The participants oftentimes perceive that there is only one acceptable way to respond in family and social situation.

Here, the participants are becoming aware of the interaction between family relationship and their own identity, values and needs. Initially, the participants perceived misalignment with their parents' desires and this creates some discomfort. However, it is when the participants perceive they have no choice in the matter. Lack of, and ineffective patterns of, communication add frustration to the family environment. The state of distress affected the participants' emotional and physical health as well as academic performance.

> P02: (Parents are) a little paternalistic, and can be almost oppressive. Not all SEAA families are like that. But I think you have this strict SEA upbringing. If I

> can use one word to describe Asian parenting and family dynamics . . . 'strict' is the word that comes to mind.
>
> P06: Americans are very low context, everything is very straightforward. Whereas with SEA or most Asian nations are very high context where everything is very cultural. This is the way things are supposed to be.
>
> P06: It's hard because there's this expectation that I have to immediately drop everything, and be there for them . . . I actually had anxiety attacks a few times.
>
> P06: My parents will remind me, or use the fact that they are financing my education as a way to kind of intimidate me. 'I'm doing this for you so you need to do this for me' which a lot of times it makes me feel very trapped.
>
> P07: (My father) never said that I was responsible . . . but there was unspoken feeling where I still feel it was my responsibility to do this . . . I have a choice but because of the way I was raised and the way that I grew up, it wasn't really much of a choice.
>
> P07: In SEA culture . . . Parents are very, they're like the authority figure and they're the head of the family. No matter what, they are right. That's very imbedded in my parents. When we have different opinion, the reason they jump into conclusion that I'm just being rude, and that's because it's so important in Asian culture to respect your elders in the way that you just, you just obey.
>
> P07: It took a lot of arguing and talking, arguing and talking it out again. Fighting again and talking again . . . for a year or two. I went into depression, my grades were dropping and I lost all motivation. There was nothing that I wanted to do or wanted to accomplish.

Negotiating Dual Goals

Negotiating dual goals was the participants' experience of navigating family dynamics while attending to their personal goals in a way that enabled them to maintain relationship with family members without losing sight of their goals. As customary practice in SEAA culture, parents continue to be involved in their children's lives as the latter goes off to college, and this interferes with adjustment to college and psychological well-being. As a result, the participants would delay the pursuit of personal goals in order to maintain family relations and avoid conflict with parents. As they entered

college, the participants were encouraged by their social community, college courses, campus environment and observations of interpersonal styles of relating. Empowered by *expanding worldview*, the participants move from *feeling trapped* to *negotiating dual goals.*

Although participants experienced distressing aspects of SEAA family dynamics, they also recognize meaningful benefits of being a part of this family. Relationship with family members is strongly desired, and pursuing personal goals is never been a matter of ignoring parental expectations or neglecting family obligations. In SEAA context, pursuing one's goals that are different from parental preference is often regarded as inconsiderate and disrespectful to one's elders. Therefore, in negotiating both goals, the young women attempt to attend to the family expectations in a respectful way that also allow them with options to pursue their personal goals.

> P05: My instinct is to say it's really hard to include parents in life decisions because this is an area where we don't always line up. But also over time, both sides have made adjustments toward each other. Over time, I've made adjustments and my parents have made adjustments. It's hard but it's doable. As long as there is mutual respect, I believe it's doable.

> P06: They see me sometimes making those decisions and then they want to micro-manage. And that's what cause the conflicts between us. I had to explain to them that I had been making decisions, and I am capable of making those decisions. And I just need them to have confidence in me and my ability to make those decisions and to support my decision-making. And not have them make those decisions for me anymore.

> P07: I want to be a wedding planner, but it does not require a bachelor's degree per se. But if I just mention that, it would start an all out fight in the house because my mom doesn't believe in taking breaks from college. But I would like to talk about their opinion and my options . . . she would avoid the topic.

> P07: My personal goal was looked down upon (by parents) . . . I have this goal right now and the fact that my boyfriend understand that and is very supportive of

me wanting that. My friends don't judge me for it, but they really encourage me to pursue it.

P07: Sometimes I don't really know what to do and I get confused. I feel like my parents are hurting. Because I am forming my own opinions and thoughts that don't always go parallel with my parents' opinions and thoughts. I think it just hurts them because they think that I don't need them anymore. Which I can understand and which I want to alleviate that as much as possible."

P10: My goal is to make myself be more independent, learn more about myself and find out what limits that I am able to go. But I am restraint by things that my parents expect of me. So I cannot meet certain goals that I had set for myself because of my parents.

P10: I want them to understand that I am choosing this not because I hate them, or that I am choosing this because I want to rebel. I am choosing this for my own personal growth. But it was really difficult talking to them because they don't really understand it. And they think it's an attack on them . . . I choose a goal where we're all collectively happy and feel very successful at the end of it.

P12: I used to be what my family want me to do, like finish school, finish college, and like especially from my dad. He wants me to get a high paying job. As I grow older, and I got more into my religion . . . so that's what shaped my personal goals now.

P12: Balancing respect for dad with pursuing my personal goals mean I defend my views and get assertive, sound natural and listen patiently, take a deep breath and try to discuss in a calm manner . . . be open with each other, and willing to compromise.

Property: Going for It

Going for it is the step beyond *negotiating dual goals* in that participants are beginning to believe in who they are and their personal goals confidently, therefore, they are standing firm and letting their desires be known. These SEAA female college students were choosing not to abandon their important life goals, but were finding ways to voice their desires as well as seek resources to help them implement their desires.

In addition, these SEAA students are *finding their own voice* by practicing help-seeking, assertiveness, risk-taking, and problem-solving behavior to implement their desires and goals in life. As evident from the participants' quotes below, they are no longer feeling trapped and are able to see that they have the option to go for their dreams without jeopardizing family relations. The above statements are indicative of the experience of these young women's family dynamics as a process in which they are at different points for different life situations. Eventually, when these SEAA college students strongly believe in "the desires that are imbedded in me" as participant 07 phrased it, they devised a plan to *go for it*.

Going for it also translates to participants purposefully and creatively changing the way they interact with their parents. The participants are moving away from passively experiencing distressing family dynamics to becoming more confident and active to change the relational patterns with their parents, including being capable of being assertive, open and honest in expressing their own feelings and opinions. Therefore, interpersonal growth at this stage takes on both attitudinal and behavioral characteristics.

> P02: Coz finding your own voice, part of that has to do with pulling away from my family and your upbringing and trying to figure out for yourself who you are and who you want to be . . . you have to come to a point that you want it so bad where the family strain and the risk doesn't matter anymore or matters less.

> P02: I think a lot of it has comes from a lot of the personal experiences I had. Personal experiences, role models . . . and, and probably my family as well had a big hand in it. I guess the things that I can think of as far as personal goals is first in terms of career and second, in terms of personal character. First, my career goal going into medicine. That personal goal came from a lot of my experiences growing up as a child of refugee, going to Cambodia, seeing sick kids, and then as I grew older, going to the hospital and volunteered. All those led up to the eventual goal of going to med school and becoming a pediatrician. And then,

number two, my goal in terms of personal characteristics - that has been shaped by my upbringing, and particularly my mom as a role model. My family's Buddhist background, I think a lot of it taught me to be compassionate and forgiving and generous. And those are the qualities that I really strive to embody**.**

P02: I think being active is my one other goal. I am big into rock climbing, I like to snowboard, I like hiking and be outdoors. I think getting better at those outdoor activities is also a goal for me. And as far as what motivates me, I think a lot of that is intrinsic for who I am. Determined, goal-oriented, those sort of things. For instance rock climbing, I set a goal to climb a certain route, then push myself to complete and then I think my significant other also helped me with pushing these with other goals as well, keeping me active.

P03: I think it's kind of a process, like when I first started college, I wanted to be a teacher but I didn't know what I needed to do. I came in as an English major, coz I was good at English and then I ended up doing math. I think what shaped my wanting to be a math teacher was probably, the fact that math is objective, and it's not open to interpretation. A lot of it is because English is very subjective and open to interpretations and the subject matter is just random, and it doesn't really seem like . . . my first impression of what English was going to be like teaching English was to be teaching grammar and how to construct sentences and write good essays, and rather than like, how do you interpret this, and how do you write an entire paper interpreting this weird random story that this author wrote.

P03: I think I just saw my teachers when I was growing up and how they were just in control. They just got to do what they wanted to do and they could control other people and teach them things. To have like, a lot of people who listen to you, you could kind of, yeah, teach them, yeah. What drew me to teaching was the fact that I could have influence on people and also I can use my creativity in a way that is useful.

P04: In terms of like, personal goals, I took a class on the environment and my dad used to take me out to hiking a lot. So I always thought it was really great. It wasn't my dad who inspired me but we have a park outside of our house that I used to go to hang out in the trees. That's how I got into the environment and European studies in college . . . I think they don't really understand it. I'll be working for NGO's, it's really hard and you don't really make a lot of money. They are not big on the environment.

P04: Whereas In high school, I would have just broken down. We'd be really, really crazed. We would get into a stalemate, and shouting match or cold shoulder kind of a thing. Knowing who I am now, and knowing that I am an adult now, and that despite me living with my parents now. I am an adult and I can handle it as an adult. I was able to talk to her and I was able to break things down. With my parents they have more of this face issue. In terms of when they get angry, they won't say why they're angry but they expect you to know why. Also there's this whole parent-child barrier. My mom won't make herself vulnerable. She won't actually say that you hurt my feelings when you did this, but instead she'd say you did this and it's disrespectful.

P05: So both my parents the thing that they wanted, they wanted me to have a college education, a stable job. My paternal grandmother especially really have a strong focus on education. So that has always been a major personal goal for me. Probably, I've always read a lot . . . I read a lot of books and newspapers and magazines and been exposed to a lot of different ideas and different writers' opinions of what is important in life. I'm sure some of those shaped my ideas as well. I think being financially stable has been a major personal goal. A lot of that is for independence, to be living independently from my family even though I am close to them, I still want to be financially secure.

P06: Definitely, my parents' expectations kind of set the baseline for me. They are what defined me. One example is that, one expectation that my dad always had for me is to go to college, to have a degree in something so that I can fall back on. That's always been the baseline of my goals to okay get into college. And then dreams would be just in addition to that. So my interests would be building on top of that. They're what my parents' expectations. Goals that my parents instilled in me.

P06: Being able to talk about this is with my parents. So sometimes it's important to pause in the moment to say, I don't understand. And for the other person to be accepting of the fact that that person doesn't understand. And then talk about it when the other person is calmer, and more clear-headed. Being able to talk about this is what I don't understand. This is what was communicated. I never knew this is what you wanted this of me. I never knew this is what you expect of me. And talk about expectations. That has really helped me a lot. Because it has helped me to be giving to my parents that they need from me to them and for my parents to understand and for them to give me and my sister the things that we need.

> P07: I feel like I cannot *not* voice my opinion anymore. Because I've really started to really believe in what I want to do and who I am in general . . . when it comes to matters of my school and my major and what I want to do after I graduate, the future of me with my boyfriend, these are things I cannot give up and those are things that I cannot change. I don't tell them I can still have hope. I can still go for it.

> P07: So it's kind of we give and take a little. Sometimes there's more giving from one side and more taking from the other. But whatever happens I try to see the situation. Coz I feel like I'm also constantly changing and I still have a lot to learn from my parents.

> P10: I told them that they don't get to make a decision about this. I'm going to do what I feel is best for myself . . . Now is the time to do what I want for myself. I succeeded what they asked for, I now have the confidence to make this decision.

Discussion

For Southeast Asian American female college students, family is a significant part of who they are, and *experiencing family dynamics* is a relational process that require continual attention. The properties of *attending to family expectation and obligation*, and *receiving family support* coexist as two sides of a coin. The opposing as well as complementary nature of these two categories mean that participants need wisdom and skill to navigate family dynamics in a way that bring favorable outcome.

Participant narratives in all three rounds of interviews suggested that the context of *experiencing college* expands the young women's perspective and develops their self-efficacy in ways that enable them to navigate family dynamics differently. In addition, experiencing college gave the participants confidence to pursue personal goals.

Throughout the interview process, the dual themes of desiring interests and goals that are different from family's preferences and desiring healthy, meaningful relationship with family emerged. *Finding own voice* is the participants' process of experiencing the

confusion, frustration and resentment in *feeling trapped* and growing out of it to take initiative in pursuing personal goals while maintaining positive relationship with family. The process of *negotiating dual goals* came about because participants cherish both personal goals and family relational goals, and their drive to achieve both. When participants felt strongly for one or both sets of goals, they are willing to take risks and try *going for it.* By the third round of interviews, several participants already took steps to go for it, with varying degrees of success.

In the third round of interviews, participants were hopeful about their family dynamics and in *finding own voice.* They were encouraged by changes they observed in their family dynamics. Some of the changes were due to their own initiative, and they also perceived changes in their parents' way of interacting with them.

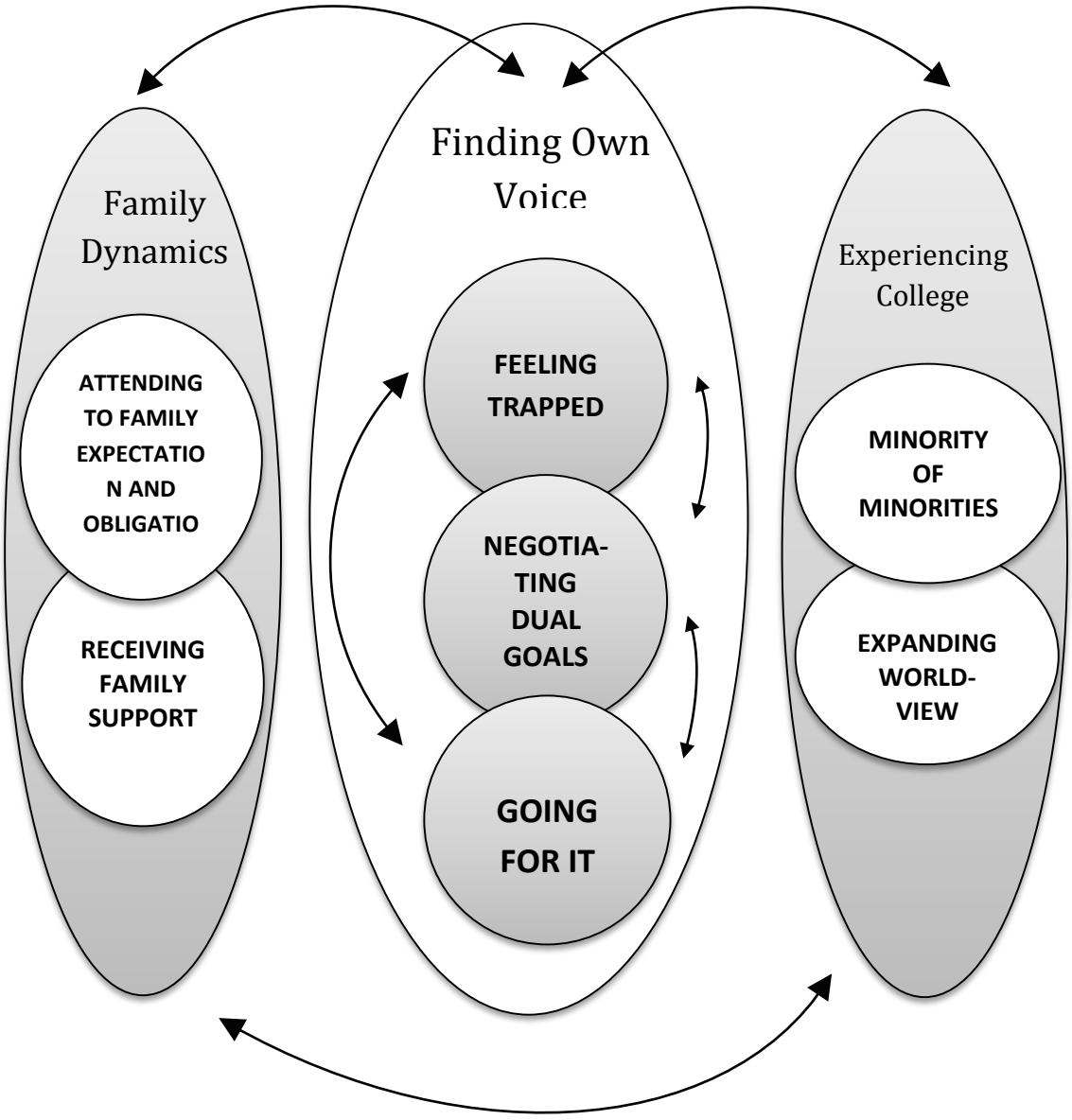

Figure 3. Diagram of Relationships between Categories and Properties for Round Three of Interviews

APPENDIX I

Member Checking

In order to strengthen the trustworthiness and credibility of study results, member checking is essential component of grounded theory process (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Member checking was scheduled for the end of the third round of interviews. In order to prepare participants for member checking, the script below along with the diagram (see Appendix G, Figure 2) developed from the second round of interviews were emailed to the participants prior to the third round of interviews.

Email to Participants Regarding Member Checking:

> Dear Participants,
>
> This is an outline of the major preliminary concepts/categories that emerged from the analysis of interview data gathered for this research project. Below are the brief descriptions of each category that were identified, and the attached diagram illustrates the inter-relationships among the categories. Keep in mind that our theory is developed based on your collective narrative and not on a single participant's experience. Therefore, there will be pieces that you will recognize as part of your story and there will be pieces that you may not be able to relate to. We want to check the general pattern of your experience.
>
> I would like to know from you whether the concepts and inter-relationships we outlined follow a similar pattern of family dynamics you experienced. I have 4 specific questions (see bottom of page 2) that I would like you to respond to when we meet by phone in the next 2-3 weeks.
>
> Thank you for your continued participation and I look forward to our next phone conversation soon. Please let me know if you have any questions.

A. **FAMILY DYNAMICS** can be both positive and negative, comprising of 3 categories as follow:

1. ATTENDING TO PARENTAL EXPECTATIONS . . .
   is participants learning and being attuned to parents' desires and preferences of them through explicit teaching, things parents place priority on, and parents' response to children's behavior/performance. Participants perceive parents' expectations as either aligning or conflicting with own needs, and evaluate whether they are either meeting or failing parents' standards.

2. MEETING OBLIGATION TO FAMILY . . .
   is participant's way of responding to their parents' expectations of them that includes accommodating and self-sacrificing behavior. In some cases, participants perceive having a choice while others feel family obligations are non-negotiable. Participants' responses range from feeling they benefitted from accommodating the obligations to becoming angry and resentful, particularly in the presence of competing obligations.

3. EXPERIENCING FAMILY SUPPORT . . .
   is participant's experience of receiving help in both tangible and intangible ways. It is participant becoming aware of, and appreciating the sacrifices made by their parents in order to support their children's college education financially and in other ways. In many cases, there is either minimal or significant pressure to "give back".

B. INFLUENCE OF FAMILY DYNAMICS is a set of phenomena that resulted from growing up in their respective family environment.

4. SITTING ON THE FENCE . . .
   is participant's experience of being enmeshed in the shift in young adult roles with parental roles and navigating the gap between parental culture and their own emerging sense of identity. The participant compares and evaluates her family dynamics to observations outside the home and cultural community. While they experience frustration with certain aspects of their family's style of interaction, participants also express appreciation for the family's relational practices based on SEAA cultural values.

5. EXPERIENCING PSYCHOSOCIAL DISTRESS . . .
   is the participant's response to her awareness of the misalignment between her parents' desires and her own identity and values. It may mean she becomes a little concerned or anxious about how her parents might respond or feel a little

resentful because she does not get to follow her desires. Or, it means she experiences a lot of anxiety or distress, particularly when she perceives lack of choice in the matter and this can affect her emotional/physical health as well as academic performance.

6. FINDING OWN VOICE
   is when growth occurs as the participant is choosing to address the difficult family dynamics. She is becoming more willing and confident to express her desires and stepping out in pursuit of them. She is gaining perspectives, seeking support, growing spiritually and practicing healthier ways of interacting with family, especially with parents. She is capable to assert herself in pursuit of personal goals.

C. BEING MINORITY OF MINORITIES is the environmental context that enables the participant's identity to take shape as well as encourages her to do something about her situation.

7. COLLEGE COMMUNITY . . .
   is where the participant is exposed to alternate values and ways of interaction. Being in college adds stress but also enables growth. While it is a place of support and protection with physical distance from family, it can be isolating (even marginalizing) for SEAA students as they are a "minority of minorities" on campus. Participants feel uniquely different and disconnected from peers, and face adjustment challenges to college.

8. SUPPORT COMMUNITY . . .
   can be extended family as well as social and spiritual community that provide support when participants need respite from the challenging family dynamics. Extended family sometimes serve to reinforce family expectations and obligations when participants are recruited to improve the family's social standing with extended family. Social community is important in that it provides support, perspective and healthier ways of addressing difficult family dynamics both for the participants as well as for their family members.

Here are the questions I want you to be thinking about:

1. Does the summary accurately capture your experience of family dynamics while you were enrolled in college? How so?

2. How do your experiences in a Southeast Asian American family relate to the categories? (For instance, how do you see yourself in some of the categories, but not others?)
3. Does the diagram capture your experience as a Southeast Asian American female college student?
4. In the summary, was there any part of your experience that you considered crucial that was not mentioned?

At the end of the third round of interviews, the researcher discussed the three categories, properties and dimensions with participants, followed by as asking the questions listed in the email sent to the participants. Participant P10 asked what "spiritual community" meant. After the researcher explained to her, she added that her family is Roman Catholic and observes this religious tradition but never thought of it in terms of spiritual community. Several participants responded to the member checks and the responses included:

> P2: The concepts look good and I can see my experience in almost all the pieces of your diagram.
>
> P3: I was sitting on the fence, but I believe I have a better idea now which side of the fence I'm at. It feels good.
>
> P4: I think oh it makes perfect sense. It's true with how my parents are. So it's kind of a shift in my parents of seeing me as an adult. I thought it was really cool in terms of like putting those things together, that sums up pretty well.
>
> P6: This is really helpful to help me make sense of what is going on in my family.
>
> P7: Family is super stressful for me right now, but I also get a lot of strength and encouragement from them. So, yeah, family dynamics, is definitely both stressful for the expectation piece and they're also supportive in some areas.
>
> P09: I believe I am no longer in the distressing stage. I hope I am moving forward to finding my own path and my voice.
>
> P10: It all looks good. It's very clear and I can identify with all that you

described.

P12: Thank you for explaining it. Now that I will be graduating next year, I can see myself becoming more independent and not have to worry about my dad's expectations about school. That's the part that is causing a lot of stress.

In general, the results of member checking upheld the emergent grounded theory and confirmed the categories and properties although the participants did not have much to add.