Themes in the Career Development of 1.5 Generation Hmong American Women

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friend.

Abstract

Research on the career development of Asian Americans have typically aggregated the diverse Asian ethnic groups as one group for study and have employed cross-cultural comparison methods often based on a deficit model that overlook important within group differences and ignore the subjective experience of the individual. This qualitative study set out to understand the ways in which 1.5 Hmong American women have experienced, understood and have navigated their career development processes, and sought to answer the questions: How do 1.5 generation Hmong American women understand and make meaning of the term "career"; what are the themes and characteristics of the career development process for 1.5 generation Hmong American women; and what factors influence the career development processes of 1.5 generation Hmong American women? Twenty participants were interviewed using a semi-structured interview guide. The interviews were transcribed and analyzed using principles of inductive analyses and modified CQR method. Six domains and 31 themes emerged from the analyses. The domains that emerged were: 1) Career Conceptualization, 2) Self and Career Actualization, 3) Family, Cultural, and Gender Expectations, 4) Systems of Support: Family, Role Models/Mentors, and a Sense of Community, 5) Overcoming Challenges and Barriers, and 6) Resilience. Implications and recommendations based on the findings were also made.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

The Hmong

The Hmong are a Southeast Asian highland tribe that lived primarily in North Vietnam, Laos, and Thailand; their origins can be traced as far back as northern China approximately 4000 years ago (Trueba, Jacobs, & Kirton, 1990). Traditionally, Hmong social organization and culture is built on the patrilineal family and is patriarchal. Within the family, the eldest man would traditionally hold the utmost power and control and would possess final say regarding all family decisions (Meredith & Rowe, 1986; Rairdan & Higgs, 1992). There are about twenty clans, whose main functions are to regulate marriage by prohibiting unions within the clan and to regulate social reciprocity by prescribing generosity between clans.

Tatman (2004) writes that the value placed by the Hmong on family and sense of community can be defined as the most important dynamic within their culture. The individual is seen as a product of all the generations of the family, and the welfare of the family and community has priority over individual wants or needs. The Hmong have traditionally been animistic people and believed strongly in supernatural causes of disease, death, and misfortune. Ancestors and nature, evil, and house spirits are believed to be responsible for personal or familial misfortune and sickness when angered. Numerous rituals are traditionally practiced as a source of connection for the Hmong between this world and the spirit world in order to appease these angered spirits (Livo & Cha, 1991; Tatman, 2001).

During the Vietnam War, the Hmong people were recruited by the United States Central Intelligence Agency to fight against the Communist regime in Southeast Asia. In 1973, the Paris Peace Accords were signed and the U.S. agreed to end its involvement in the Vietnam War. When the US withdrew from Vietnam, the Hmong experienced retaliation from the North Vietnamese and Lao Communists for their partnership with the U.S. In fear of this retribution, the Hmong were forced to flee to refugee camps in Thailand. Hmong military leaders and their families were airlifted to safety in these refugee camps, but many families had to escape on their own through the jungles and across the Mekong River (Warner, 1995). From these refugee camps, many Hmong were eventually granted asylum in other countries, including the US, France, and Canada, with the largest population residing in the U.S. The first wave of Hmong refugees came to the United States from 1975 to 1984 and the second wave came from 1985 to 1999. The third and present wave started in 2003 when 15,000 Hmong refugees came to the U.S. after the Wat Tham Krabok refugee camp in Thailand closed (New Internationalist, 2009). In the U.S., the Hmong are largely concentrated in the Midwest and on the West Coast, with scattered populations throughout the South and the East Coast.

The U.S. Census Bureau's (2006) American Community Survey reported a total of 209,866 Hmong in the United States with 59.4% having entered before 1990, 28.7% having entered between 1990 and1999, and 11.9% entering after 2000. Of the total Hmong population, 92,954 were foreign born and 116,912 were born in the U.S. The same survey reported that for persons 25 years of age and over, 10.4% have earned a Bachelor's Degree and 2.2% have earned graduate or professional degrees, as compared

to 17.1% and 9.9% for the total U.S. population, respectively. Median earnings for full-time year-round workers were $29,264 for Hmong males and $25,751 for Hmong females, as compared to $42,210 and $32,649 for the total U.S. population, respectively.

Industries represented by Hmong population, as compared with the total U.S. population in parentheses are, 1.4 % (1.8%) Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting, and Mining; 2.2% (7.9%) Construction; 33.1% (11.6%) Manufacturing; 2.3% (3.4%) Wholesale Trade; 10.6% (11.5%) Retail Trade; 3.3% (5.0%) Transportation and Warehousing and Utilities; 1.3% (2.5%) Information; 6.1% (7.2%) Finance and Insurance, Real Estate, and Rental and Leasing; 6.9% (10.1%) Professional, Scientific, and Management and Administrative and Waste Management Services; 14.6% (20.8%) Educational Services and Health Care and Social Assistance; 12.4% (8.6%) Arts, Entertainment, Recreation, and Accommodation and Food Services; 3.3% (4.8%) Other Services (except public administration); and 2.6% (4.7%) Public Administration. The Hmong family median income was reported at $42,875 and the poverty rate for Hmong families and people for whom poverty status was not determined was 26.4% as compared to $58,526 and 9.8% for the total U.S. population, respectively.

The experiences of Hmong in the United States is unique to each individual and within each family but a review of the literature on Hmong presented common issues including socioeconomic adaptation, health, mental health, race relations, education, acculturation, and gender identity, such as the changing roles of Hmong women (Pfeifer, 2008).

History of Hmong Gender Roles

Through anecdotes about women's lives in Laos, life histories and statements gathered from Hmong women and men, and research published by writers on Southeast Asia within the Western intellectual tradition, Donnelly (1994) gathered the following information about the gender roles of Hmong women in Laos. Hmong social organization includes about twenty clans, built on patrilineal and patriarchal principles, whose main functions are to regulate marriage between clans. Similar to the clan system, the family system also maintains this patriarchal ideology as well as a strong respect for the hierarchy within the family.

A Hmong household is organized around a married couple and their sons. Daughters marry out. As the sons brings in wives, an extended family forms, consisting of the older couple, their unmarried children, and their married sons and their wives and children. Thus Hmong households include one or more nuclear families closely related through the men, sometimes with other relatives as dependents. After the father dies, sons are likely to split apart into separate households, and the cycle begins again. The ideal pattern that follows is one where the widowed mother lives with the youngest married son, and unmarried siblings lived with their married brothers. Until Hmong marry and produce offspring, they are not considered adults. The natural state of a mature Hmong is as part of a married couple with children. Each woman works under the command of the men of her household; specifically under her husband if married, under her father and brothers if unmarried, and under her son if aged. Within this male-based system of social position exists another woman-based system of authority and loyalties; specifically, wives to their mother-in-laws, daughters to their mothers,

younger co-wives to their elder co-wives, and younger sisters to their elder sisters.

Across both these systems of authority cuts the hierarchy of age, with old men at the top

followed by old women, and young women at the bottom below young men (Donnelly,

1994).

Women's positional weakness is thus embedded in Hmong social structure.

More specifically, hierarchical relations between men and women that stem from

subsistence agriculture and state the imperative need to organize farm production

around men gives men control over many decisions and choices that affect the lives of

all family members. Access to choice, and therefore training and experience in decision-

making is accorded to men and boys but not to women and girls because men constitute

the economic core of the household, and the unit of decision is actually the household,

not the individual (Cooper, 1984). Cooper further states that Hmong girls in Southeast

Asia were raised to be hard workers, preparing for life in which they could work all day,

performing both household chores and agricultural labor.

Children learn ideas of gender not only from daily tasks, but through stories

their elders tell them, both religious stories and folk tales. A review of the folk tales by

Donnelly (1994) reveals that even in stories in which the female heroine is quicker,

richer, more long sighted or whatever else seems to give her advantage over the males

in the story, when she presents as the heroine she uses these qualities to advance the

fortunes of the males. When she uses her skills in opposition to males, when she does

not subordinate her own good to theirs, she is considered evil or stupid, and commonly

she is the tricked rather than trickster.

Changes in Hmong women's lives in Laos accompanied the changes driven by colonial expansion. In the 1940s, new French-built roads reached into the hill areas, and new economic opportunities arose for hill farm families through trade. As trade increased the Hmong's wealth it also reduced their isolation and increased more effective means of transportation and communication through roads and telegraphs. Girls learned domestic tasks in traditional Hmong villages in the Lao mountains but different opportunities, such as the increased number of schools, had also become available for girls in rural towns (Donnelly, 1994).

Statement of the Problem

Perhaps on a grander scale than the colonial expansion for Hmong hill farm families and Hmong girls in Laos are the opportunities available for Hmong girls as a result of immigration to the United States; specifically, access to education and opportunities for developing a work scope, or career. Over the course of eight years, Donnelly (1994) documented Hmong women's changing lives in the United States. She writes that understanding the meanings and values assigned to gender roles helps to explain how an entire social group is organized.

Hmong women choosing to access educational and career opportunities within a mainstream culture often means change within the family and social structure, including negotiating gender roles. Researchers have documented the educational achievements and experiences of Hmong women (McNall, Dunnigan, & Mortimer, 1994; Lee, 1997; Lee 2005; Lo, 2009). Given Hmong women's advances in education, the literature is lacking an understanding of the experiences of Hmong women in their career development processes. Studying the career development of 1.5 generation Hmong

women may be especially relevant in constructing an understanding of the experiences of Hmong women's career development in the U.S. For these 1.5 generation Hmong women, they were young during immigration; they went through most parts of the K-12 education system; some have gone on to pursue higher education; and to a large degree they grew up in the U.S. These women are also the first generation to encounter educational and career opportunities while negotiating gender roles within their, to varying degrees, traditional family and Hmong social structure.

Significance of the Problem

In much of the literature on the career development of Asian Americans, the diverse Asian ethnic groups have been aggregated as one group for study. These studies have largely been cross-cultural comparisons, mostly to European Americans, and are empirical in nature (e.g., Tracey, Leong, & Glidden, 1986; Gim, 1992, cited in Leong & Serafica, 1995; Sue & Kirk, 1972, 1973; Hsia, 1988). Studies that have researched the educational/vocational behaviors of Hmong Americans have mainly focused on educational achievement and negative factors such as barriers to educational achievement (Moua, 2007; Vue, 2007; Lee, 2008; Lee & Green, 2008). Cross cultural research can overlook important within group differences. In-depth understandings of the career processes and experiences of Asian American ethnic groups, subgroups and individual experiences are lacking in the literature. For example, understanding the meanings and values assigned to gender roles helps to explain how an entire social group is organized, and this is especially salient to understanding the history of the Hmong and to studying the career development of the Hmong in the United States.

Donnelly (1994) stated that gender concepts, like other cultural convictions, organize

and give meaning to daily experience.

The present study is an exploratory study of the career development of 1.5

generation Hmong American women who came to the United States during elementary

school years. This study serves as a pioneering contribution to research on the career

development of 1.5 generation Hmong American women; and through modeling, this

investigator hopes this study inspires future research that is dedicated to in-depth

understandings of with-in group career development experiences of unique

ethnic/cultural groups. Implications from this study's findings can help inform the field

of pre-college and college career counseling and education; and serves as one of the

pioneering contributions to research in understanding the career development processes

of Hmong American women.

Research Question

In the present study, the questions to be explored are: How do 1.5 generation

Hmong American women understand and make meaning of the term "career"? What

are the themes and characteristics of the career development process for 1.5 generation

Hmong American women? What factors influence the career development processes of

1.5 generation Hmong American women? The goals of the present study are two-tiered:

to empower Hmong women to tell their stories and to construct a preliminary

understanding of the ways in which this specific group experiences, understands and

navigates their career development processes.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

The Asian American population is a heterogeneous population comprising over 25 diverse racial and ethnic groups from different parts of the world, all with myriad intergroup as well as intra group differences, with numerous variables, such as educational level, immigration history and status, generation level, acculturation, socioeconomic and class status, and ethnic identity that further shape the uniqueness of each Asian American's life experience (Leong & Serafica, 1995). Despite these facts, existing research has tended to aggregate Asian American ethnic groups for study; and have neglected important moderating variables.

A literature search for a "concrete" definition of career development has been a fruitless effort. In the literature, scholars' use of the term career development is often understood only by the specific theory or approach they are using to discuss their work. Savickas (2002) provided a more comprehensive understanding of the term career development through comparing the differential and developmental perspectives within vocational psychology, through contrasting the career perspective and the occupational perspective, and through discussing the premise of career construction theory.

Savickas (2002) wrote that the differential, or individual differences, perspective pioneered by Frank Parsons (1909) focuses on occupations and the types of people who fill them. This approach uses tests to measure and identify stable traits or personality types that differentiate people in meaningful ways relative to occupational requirements and systematically match individuals to fitting occupations. The developmental perspective pioneered by Donald Super (1953) is a person-centered method that

"encourage individuals to implement their vocational self-concepts in work roles, including movement to increasingly more congruent occupational positions" and that "recognize the processes that construct and develop an individual's career through the life course" (p.150). Savickas also noted that Super's developmental theory on career development "concentrates on how individuals work lives unfold" (p. 150) and that the "developmental approach emphasizes how individuals fit work into their lives" (p. 153). In summary, the career perspective takes a longitudinal view of adaptational patterns while the occupational perspective takes a cross-sectional view of personality types.

Savickas (2002) stated that "the developmental vantage point of constructing careers situates the meaning of career in vocational psychology" (p. 150) and that "the developmental perspective on vocational behavior evokes the construct of career" (p. 151). Lastly, Savickas (2002) explicated that: "The basis of career construction theory is that career denotes a reflection on the course of one's vocational behavior, not vocational behavior itself. This reflection can focus on actual events such as one's occupations (objective career) or on their meaning (subjective career). From this perspective, a subjective career is a reflexive project that transforms individuals from actors of their career to subjects in their own career story. It tells one's "own story," usually by emphasizing a sense of purpose that coherently explains the continuity and change in oneself across time." (p.152). Contrary to Savickas last statement regarding "continuity and change in oneself across time", much of the research on the career development of Asian Americans has been cross-cultural comparisons, mostly to European Americans, and are empirical in nature (e.g., Tracey et al., 1986; Gim, 1992, cited in Leong & Serafica, 1995; Sue & Kirk, 1972, 1973; Hsia, 1988).

Collin and Young (1986) have stated that career theorists err by ignoring the subjective experience of the individual, since subjective experience will influence objective experience. Although the importance of within-group differences and homogeneous samples in Asian American research has been well documented (Leong & Gupta, 2007; Henderson and Chan, 2005; Leong and Serafica, 1995), there is a lack of research focusing on understanding the within experiences of the diverse Asian ethnic groups, subgroups or individual experiences.

Moderating variables are often neglected in the research on the career development of Asian Americans. Acculturation has been defined as the process of an individual's interaction with mainstream culture, where higher acculturation indicates more adaptation to the mainstream culture (Suinn, 1991, cited in Tang, Fouad, & Smith, 1999). Researchers have begun to examine acculturation's impact on the career choices and vocational behaviors of Asian Americans (Leong & Tata, 1990; Tang et al., 1999; Hardin, Leong, & Osipow, 2001; Leong, 2001; Fouad, Kantemneni, Smothers, Chen, Fitzpatrick, & Terry, 2007).

Considering the rapidly changing nature of women's role in society, many scholars have concluded that existing career development theories have not sufficiently dealt with women's career development (Osipow 1975; Fitzgerald & Crites 1980; Perun & Bielby, 1981). Yang (1991) further noted that systematic forces of oppression such as racism, discrimination, and sexism are impediments to personal fulfillment and can be destructive for Asian American women, and minority women in general, who face the triple jeopardy of cultural injunctions against sexual equality, existing gender and

racial differences in society, and having inadequate support. However, there continues to be a lack of research on the career development of Asian American women.

Presented in the next section is a synthesized understanding of the career development of Asian Americans, partitioned into three sections: 1) career development of Asian Americans, 2) relevancy of career development theories for Asian Americans, and 3) a critical review of the literature, including methodological concerns. Specifically, section one addresses Asian American career development pertaining to individual career interests, career choices, personality structure and work values, family influences, work adjustment, and societal influences; section two identifies career development theories and discusses the multicultural applicability and relevance, or lack of, to Asian Americans; and section three is a critical review of the literature on two moderating variables, gender and acculturation, on career development as well as related methodological and research concerns.

Asian American Career Development

Leong and Chou (1994) observed that several issues relevant to the career behavior or development of racial and ethnic minorities seem particularly relevant to Asian Americans: occupational segregation, occupational stereotyping, occupational discrimination, prestige, mobility, attitudes, aspirations and expectations, stress, satisfaction, choice and interest. This section looks at the literature on several of these issues pertaining to the career development of Asian Americans in the United States, including individual career interests, career choices, personality structure and work values, family influences, work adjustment, and societal influences.

Career interests. Research has shown that Asian Americans' career choices may not be consistently related to their career interests. Individuals may be interested in artistic careers (measured interest) but ultimately choose a career in medicine or engineering (expressed interest or choice) because of parental guidance or pressure. Significant correlations have been found between real and ideal choices for European American but not for Asian American students. (Leong, 1982, cited in Leong & Serafica, 1995; Gim, 1992, cited in Leong and Serafica, 1995).

Leong and Gupta (2007) summarized that over the past 20 years, there have only been a handful of studies on the career interest patterns of Asian Americans. Leong (1985) found that Chinese American males show more of an interest than all other males in areas of physical science, skilled technical trades, and business occupations. Chinese American males tend to be less interested in social service and welfare, sales or business, and verbal-linguistic occupations. In comparisons to all other males, the Chinese American males' vocational interests appear more masculine and seem to aspire to a lower level of occupational status and responsibility. On the other hand, the Chinese American females were more oriented toward the domestic occupations, such as secretary and elementary school teacher, than were White women. Similar to Leong's study, D.W. Sue & Kirk (1972) found that generally, Chinese American females are more oriented toward the domestic occupations (e.g., housewife, elementary teacher, office worker). Besides this major difference, when compared to other occupations, they differed from all other females in the same direction and pattern as the male comparisons. Chinese American females exhibited more interest in the technical-applied fields, biological and physical sciences, and business occupations and less

interest in the social sciences, aesthetic-cultural fields, and verbal-linguistic vocations. The Japanese Americans and Chinese Americans differ from all other first-year students in the same direction, with the exception that the Japanese American men did not express greater interest than White men in physical sciences or lower interest in the social sciences. Japanese American females, unlike Chinese American females, did not differ significantly from the other groups in the degree of their interest in domestic occupations (D.W. Sue & Kirk, 1972; 1973).

Other researchers found that those occupations that require a high level of self-expression, interaction with people, and verbal/written communication were the ones that Asian American men feel most uncomfortable with and most likely avoid (D.W. Sue & Kirk, 1972; D.W. Sue & Frank, 1973; Tang et al., 1999). Tang et al. (1999) also found that Asian Americans were presented with limited occupational choices that predominantly fell within the realistic and investigative categories. Similarly, Leung, Ivey and Suzuki (1994) found that Asian Americans displayed higher interest in the investigative versus the creative and enterprising arenas and no differences in the realistic and social fields. A recent study by Leong, Kao, and Lee (2004) found that Chinese Americans' highest vocational interest was in enterprising, closely followed by investigative, social, and conventional, whereas realistic and artistic tied for the least represented vocational interest. Trusty, Ng, and Ray (2000) conducted a study that looked at the choice of Holland's social careers within various ethnic/racial groups, including Asian-Pacific Islanders, and found that out of all the ethnic groups, only European Americans showed career choices that were consistent with Holland's theoretical model. This suggested that the structural validity of Holland's hexagonal

structure upholds within the European American group but that the structural validity of Holland's hexagonal structure as it applies to Asian Americans is questionable. In summary, these study results were inconclusive regarding the vocational interests of Asian Americans, as measured by vocational interest inventories.

Courses and academic majors chosen by Asian Americans provide another perspective in understanding their career interests. Results from a National Science Foundation (NSF, 2004) survey indicated that Asian Americans were more likely to enroll in math, calculus, biology, chemistry or physics courses in college; these results were consistent with the career interest patterns discussed earlier. Asian Americans were twice as likely to have intentions of choosing an engineering field; and to desire to become either engineers or physicians as compared to Whites. Within the sciences, Asian Americans leaned more toward biology and computer science than did Whites. More than two out of every five Asian American freshman, compared to one out of five European Americans, planned their highest degree to be either a doctorate or a medical degree.

Career choices. Hsia (1988) analyzed the 1980 census data pertaining to occupational distributions for Asian Americans and found that Asian Americans were more likely than European Americans to be in three of the nine major occupational groupings: professional (18% vs. 12.8%), technical (5.5% vs. 3.1%), and service (15.6% vs. 11.6%) occupations. On the other hand, there were fewer Asian Americans than European Americans in sales (8.4% vs. 19.7%), production/craft (8.4% vs. 13.4%), and operator/laborer (14.2% vs. 17.1%) occupations. Another data set indicated that Asian Americans comprised nearly 9% of scientists and engineers in the United States,

despite making up only 3.2% of the total population (NSF, 1996, cited in Tang, 1997).

Consistent with the two previous statistics reported, Tang et al. (1999) found that 75%

of their Asian American participants chose occupations that are proportionally

represented or overrepresented by Asian Americans, with the three most popular

choices (engineer, physician, and computer scientist) having an average of twice as

many Asian American than in the general population. The reports presented were

consistent with the pattern of career interests discussed earlier (D.W. Sue and Kirk

1972, 1973; D.W. Sue & Frank, 1973; Leong, 1985; Tang et al., 1999; NSF, 2004).

The consistency in career interests and career choices among Asian Americans

suggests that career decision making for this group is an easy and harmonious task;

however, this is not the case. In a study of help-seeking behavior and problem

perception with a sample from eight ethnic groups (White, Chinese American, Filipino

American, part Hawaiian, Korean American, Japanese American, Asian-American

White mix, Asian American mix), the researchers found that problem endorsement rates

differed significantly among the groups on each of the eight problem areas, with Asian

Americans more likely to present vocational and career problems to counselors than

personal-emotional problems (Tracey et al., 1986). Academic and career concerns were

over-endorsed by all the Asian-American students and under-endorsed by the Whites.

Whites over-endorsed problems reflecting intra- or interpersonal concerns which were

under-endorsed by the Asian Americans; and Filipino-Americans and Asian-American

White-mix students' endorsement fell between those two groups. Wong, Lai,

Nagasawa, and Lin (1998) looked at other racial/ethnic groups' perceptions of Asian

Americans. The researchers found that all other racial/ethnic groups expected Asian

Americans to have more motivation to succeed, to have higher academic performances, and to be more successful in their careers in comparison to other groups. With statistics showing an overrepresentation of Asian Americans in science and math related fields and perceptions such as those reported in the study by Wong et al., it is no surprise that the "model minority" concept has been applied to Asian Americans. On the contrary, Wong et al. noted that grade point averages and SAT scores show that in comparison to other groups, Asian Americans were not more successful, nor did the Asian Americans perceive themselves as more successful than other ethnic students. Leong and Gupta (2007) pointed out that using the criterion of occupational attainment alone, Asian Americans as a group have fared quite well relative to other minority groups. However, these authors stated that such an observation overlooks important within-group differences. For example, although Asian Americans as a group constitute 18.3% of professional occupations relative to the 12.3% for Whites, only 8.8% of Vietnamese Americans are in professional occupations, and 29.3% of Vietnamese and 20.5% of Korean Americans are in operator/laborer occupations compared to 17.1% for European Americans and 14.2% for Asian Americans overall. The model minority concept also ignores the problems of discrimination and prejudice against Asian Americans because success is not a protective factor. Such "model minority" type perceptions and Asian Americans' over-endorsement of vocational and career problems suggests dissonance, perhaps because of an incongruity between career interests and career choices, and quite likely, a host of other contributing factors (i.e., stereotypes).

  Personality variables. Although external factors (i.e., discrimination) must be considered to fully understand Asian Americans' career development, numerous studies

have identified internal factors related to Asian Americans' career behavior. Three personality variables (locus of control, social anxiety, and intolerance of ambiguity) were identified as having converging themes within the literature concerning the vocational behavior of Asian Americans (Leong, 1985).

Regarding locus of control, D.W. Sue and Kirk (1972, 1973) noted that Asian Americans tend to be less autonomous, more dependent, and more obedient to authority. Using the Omnibus Personality Inventory with Chinese American students, D.W. Sue and Kirk (1972) found these students were significantly more conforming and socially introverted than White students, suggesting a more external orientation in terms of how Chinese Americans view issues of control and reinforcement. It has been hypothesized that if Asian Americans perceive the locus of control for reinforcement as external, it could affect their career decision-making style as well as the nature and scope of their career choices (Leong, 1985; Park & Harrison, 1995).

Regarding social anxiety, researchers found that Asian Americans do experience a greater degree of social anxiety, as measured by objective and standardized personality instruments (D.W. Sue & Kirk, 1972; D.W. Sue, 1975). Using the Omnibus Personality Inventory with Chinese American students, D.W. Sue and Kirk (1972) found these students were significantly more inhibited, were more impersonal in their interpersonal relations, and appeared less socially concerned with other people. D.W. Sue and Kirk (1973) found a similar pattern of social introversion and withdrawal among both Chinese American and Japanese American samples and concluded that the social discomfort experienced by these Asian American students may be due to conflict between the informal nature of social relationships in American culture and their own

more formal and traditional cultural values and minority status. D.W. Sue, (1975) noted

that social anxiety has an influence on Asian American's career goals and plans.

Specifically, social anxiety, discomfort, and inhibition are factors in the tendency of

Asian Americans to choose occupations in the physical sciences and technical trades

and Asian Americans underrepresentation in the social sciences and other vocations that

require verbal/persuasive skills and high levels of social interactions (i.e., psychology).

Similarly, Park and Harrison (1995) hypothesized that Asian Americans'

underrepresentation in social occupations may relate to their lower levels of perceived

control in the interpersonal sphere. D.W. Sue and Park and Harrison's suppositions are

consistent with Social Cognitive Career Theory (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 1994) which

places importance on self-efficacy in predicting career interests and choices. Hsai

(1988) noted the need to also examine the role of cognitive styles in the career choices

and behaviors of Asian Americans and discussed the role of a field-independent

cognitive style among Asian Americans in their occupational segregation and limited

occupational mobility. Hsai noted that given their field-independent orientation, Asian

Americans were much more likely to be limited to scientific and technical careers and

were not likely to be successful in people-oriented occupations, or those requiring a

more field-dependent cognitive style.

D.W. Sue and Frank (1973) found that Asian males tend to gravitate toward

occupations that have structure and business-detail aspects to them (i.e., engineering), to

score low in autonomy, to be more conforming, to be more obedient to authority, to be

more connected to familial control, to dislike ambiguity, and to experience strong

feelings of isolation, loneliness, and rejection. D.W. Sue and Kirk (1973) found that

Japanese American students were less oriented to abstract ideas and concepts than were European American students and were more socially conforming. Similarly, D.W. Sue and Frank found that Japanese Americans also tend to dislike ambiguity and prefer structured situations. Leung et al. (1994) examined sex stereotyping of the occupations of interest to Asian American and European Americans and reported that, as compared to European Americans, both Asian American men and women aspired to careers that were significantly more masculine, as explained in terms of percentages of men reported in the occupation. In summary, studies and data from personality inventories provide support for hypotheses about personality variables' influence on the career behavior of Asian Americans (Hsai, 1988; Leong, 1985; D.W. Sue and Frank, 1973; D.W. Sue and Kirk, 1972, 1973; Leung et al., 1994).

Career Values. The value placed on money was consistent with the finding of the importance of prestige in the career interests of Asian Americans (Leong & Tata, 1990; Leung et al., 1994). Task satisfaction was also valued by Chinese American children. Boys valued object orientation, self-realization, and ideas-data more than girls did; and girls valued altruism more than did boys (Leong & Tata, 1990).

Researchers generally compared the work values of Asian Americans and European Americans and produced mixed results. Using the Career Anchor Inventory (CAI), Park and Harrison (1995) measured nine career-related values among primarily East Asian American and European American college students. The nine values included Autonomy/Freedom, Challenge, Creativity/Entrepreneurship, Geographic Security, Organizational Security, Technical Competence, Managerial Competence, Lifestyle, and Service/Dedication to Cause. No differences were found in the

proportions of Asian Americans and European Americans who selected each value as most or least important. For both group, Service/Dedication to a cause was endorsed most frequently as the most important value, followed by Managerial Competence, Technical Competence, and Lifestyle. Asian Americans endorsed Challenge most often as the least important value, followed by Geographical Security, and Creativity/Entrepreneurship. Similarly, Leong (1991) formed and analyzed clusters of occupational values (Social, Extrinsic, Self-expression, Power, and Security) and compared the work values of European American and Asian American college students. Although Park and Harrison found no between group differences in the proportions of Asian Americans and European Americans who endorsed Security (Organizational or Geographical) as the most important work value, Leong found that Asian American students do seem to value Security more than do their European American counterparts. Weaver (2000), in a comparison study of full-time workers responses to 21 surveys representative of the U. S. workforce from 1972 to 1996 on six work attitudes, found that Asian Americans were not different in their confidence in the people who run labor unions or in their belief in the need to work hard to get ahead. They were more like European Americans than African Americans in their confidence in the people who run major companies and in their sense of job security. Asian Americans were more likely than the other two groups to say they would continue to work if they got enough money to live comfortably for the rest of their lives.

The literature suggests that extrinsic factors, such as security, money, and service to others, are particularly important work values for many Asian Americans. These results could be explained by the Asian American culture's emphasis on

pragmatism, a collectivistic orientation in decision-making, and a mindset influenced by the immigration experience. On a whole, there is a lack of empirical studies on the work values of Asian Americans (Leong & Gupta, 2007).

Family Influence. In addition to individual variables, influences within family and the larger society also accounted for the career interests and career choice of Asian Americans and helped to explain the observed career interest and career choice patterns. Researchers examined the relationships among psychological distress, perceived family conflict, and various career-related constructs in a sample African American, Asian American, and Latino/Latina American college students, and found that across each subsample of participants, greater levels of psychological distress predicted higher levels of career indecision, lower career certainty, and greater perceived family conflict. Conversely, lower levels of perceived family conflict predicted greater career aspiration for Asian American students, but this relationship was not significant for African American and Latino/Latina students (Constantine & Flores, 2006). Evanoski and Tse's (1989) agreed on the importance of family influences and posited that education and career choices were of great importance to many Chinese and Korean families; and that the role of Chinese and Korean parents in the career choices of their children makes it imperative that parents not be omitted.

Leong (1982, cited in Leong & Serafica, 1995) pointed out that some adolescents may be interested in, for example, artistic careers but may ultimately choose a career in medicine or engineering (expressed interest or choice) because of parental guidance or pressure. Other studies support this observation. Tang et al. (1999) found that, contrary to the predictions of SCCT and most other theories of career choice,

students' own interests were unrelated to their career choice; however, parental involvement were significantly related to career choice, with higher parental involvement predicting more traditional (i.e., science and technology related) career choices. It was found that Asian American adolescents assigned higher ratings than their European American peers to perceived parental pressure as a significant factor influencing their career choice; and were more likely to defer to parental guidance given the strong Asian value of respecting authority and submitting to the wisdom of elders (S. Sue and Okazaki, 1990; Gim, 1992, cited in Leong & Serafica, 1995). This parental influence and pressure may explain the overrepresentation of Asian Americans in math and science related fields (Tang, 1977; Tang et al., 1999).

Scholars provided an explanation for parental involvement and the phenomena between career interests and career choice. They noted Asian American parents' awareness that discrimination in the work world is quite common and that their children would have an easier time in a respected and autonomous profession in which many Asian Americans have already succeeded. These perspectives formed perhaps through parents' own and vicarious experiences. Furthermore, Asian American parents may be more likely than European American parents to put forth direct influence on the career goals and choices of their children. Given the strong Asian value of respecting authority and elders, Asian American youths were more likely than European American youth to defer to parental guidance about career goals and choices. Other factors that influenced Asian American parents' and youths' career choices may be the influence of immigration experiences on parents and Asian American culture's emphasis on a

collectivist orientation in decision-making (S. Sue and Okazaki, 1990; Leong and

Serafica, 1995; Leong and Gupta, 2007).

Work Adjustment. Work adjustment and vocational problems are processes that

impact Asian Americans' career development on an individual level and also have far

reaching consequences into family and society at large (Leong & Serafica, 1995; Leong

& Gupta, 2007). The sources of stress on the job for Asian Americans have yet to be

identified. One possible source is cultural conflicts. Stress may be induced not only by

the nature of the job but also by whether a job enables a worker to meet other

obligations. Asian Americans are faced with unique work adjustment problems,

specifically, the stresses from being unable to provide for extended family members.

Traditional concepts of filial piety or the duty of children to honor and care for their

elders often manifest themselves in married couples providing financial support to their

parents and in elderly parents living with their married children, particularly the

husband's parents. Undue strain is placed on families given this cultural ideal and the

state of economic realities in the United States. This was reflected in a study that found

differences in the levels of stress experienced by American-born Chinese versus

naturalized Chinese Americans (Yu & Wu, 1985). The researchers found that stress can

be reduced when employment status is sufficient to meet the various obligations; and

discomfort level and stress increase when parents-in-law are not supported.

Leong and Gupta (2007) noted that another work adjustment problem for this

group concerns their academic abilities. As measured by such tests as the SAT, Asian

Americans tended to have lower levels of verbal skills in English and higher math

scores than did European Americans. Although higher math scores balanced out the

lower verbal scores and aided in Asian Americans chances of admission into colleges and graduate programs, the two served to maintain the stereotype of Asian Americans being engineering or computer science "geeks". Inequalities arise on the job when Asian Americans' limited ability with the English language led to them being perceived as less intelligent than to European Americans. These stereotypes and perceptions also could result in Asian Americans being passed over for promotions in supervisory and managerial positions and fueling the stereotype of Asian Americans being best as technicians and not supervisors. Cheng's (1996) results are consistent with Leong and Gupta's suppositions. Cheng found that Asian American men were not selected as team managers in classroom mini-assessment centers because their qualities were perceived as being in opposition to the qualities of an ideal manager, which included being "aggressive and assertive", competitive, "independent and self-reliant", individualistic and having a strong personality. Students in charge of choosing the team managers described Asian American men as naïve, shy, soft-spoken, "too nice", passive, "too polite", "too respectful", and deferent. On the other hand, Asian American men identified their deferent, humble, polite, respectful, and "a team player" behaviors as characteristics of a good manager.

Madamba and DeJong (1997) found that higher levels of educational attainment among Asian Americans put them at higher risk for job mismatches. They found that Asian American men were twice as likely as European American men, three times as likely as African American men, and four times as likely as Latino men to experience "job mismatch" or being overeducated for the requirements of one's job and underemployed at work (Leong & Serafica, 1995). Job mismatch provides an

explanation for Brown & Minor's (1991) finding that Asian-Pacific Islanders reported being interested in getting more information about careers if they could start over and that Asian-Pacific Islanders were less likely than European Americans, African Americans, or Hispanics, to report that their skills were being very well used. Asian-Pacific Islanders also reported experiencing more stress on the job than members of other minority groups. Similarly, Tracey et al. (1986) found that Asian Americans were more likely to present vocational and career problems than personal-emotional problems to counselors; and they were more likely to indicate academic/vocational concerns as most important.

Immigrants and refugees have work adjustment problems that are also mutually dependent on adjustments elsewhere (Nicassio & Pate, 1984: Matsuoka & Ryujin, 1989; Haines, 1987). Nicassio and Pate emphasized problems of separation and immigration stress, which included such survival needs as learning to speak English, finances, job skills, and medical care. The researchers reported that work adjustment is a major problem for this group. Greater adjustment difficulties were reported in those refugees who were older, were less education, had lower incomes, were unemployed, and had been in the United States for a short period of time. This suggests that the socioeconomic, psychological, and cultural dimensions of adjustment among refugees and immigrants are probably interactive and mutually dependent.

Occupational prestige also contributes to work adjustment and job-stress of refugee and immigrant populations. Kincaid and Yum (1987) noted that migration has an impact on the work adjustment experienced by Asian American groups in Hawaii. In their study, the researchers examined some of the socioeconomic consequences, within

the context of income level, occupational mobility, and difficulty of work adjustment as indicated by stressful life events, of the migration of first-generation Samoans, Koreans, and Filipinos in contrast to local Japanese and Caucasian residents. Results showed that level of education corresponded to occupational status within each of these ethnic groups. The main consequences of migration observed were a decline in average occupational status/prestige, mobility issues within their occupations, differing degrees of stress, and differing degrees of personal achievement. Kincaid and Yum concluded that migration led to a substantial lowering of occupational prestige for the immigrant groups.

Similarly, Tang and O'Brien (1990) discussed the concept of status inconsistency, or the difference between the current position and the previous position in the country of origin, and vocational success. These authors studied the vocational expectations of Indochinese refugees (529 males and 192 females) by their readiness to remain in low-status jobs and found that greater likelihood of vocation success was dependent on length of time in the United States. Those refugees who had been in the United States for less than three years and previously held low-prestige positions in Asia tended to work longer than did their high-prestige counterparts. Tang and O'Brien concluded that refugees would focus on attaining vocational goals that were in line with their self-concepts once they acclimated to the present culture. Similarly, other researchers have found that acculturation and length of time in the United States were related to job satisfaction (Anh & Healy, 1985; Leong, 2001). In summary, there were significant positive relationships found between time in the United States and

employment status and satisfaction. Refugees who were in the United States longest were most likely to have jobs and to feel satisfaction with their jobs.

Occupational Discrimination. The successful minority myth stems from achievements that Asian Americans have obtained in the United States, and have been portrayed as an overcoming injustice and setback to becoming one of the most upwardly mobile minority groups in the country. These findings suggest that Asian Americans have successfully assimilated into American culture and do not experience discriminatory barriers to their success. Reference to their higher levels of educational attainment is often used as evidence of this successful assimilation (Leong & Gupta, 2007). Leong and Serafica (1995) noted that using the criterion of occupational attainment alone, Asian Americans as a group has fared quite well relative to other minority groups but that such an observation and model minority concept overlooks important within-group differences and ignores the problem of discrimination and prejudice against Asian Americans.

Fernandez (1998) lent support to the presence of discrimination and prejudice. Data from 1990 census reveal that, after controlling for variables such as human capital and assimilation, Asian Indian males in the San Francisco Bay Area were less likely to be in management positions than were their White counterparts. Data show that Asian Americans earned more science and engineering bachelor degrees than Whites in the 1990s. The same report indicates that there was also some evidence of occupational discrimination against Asian American scientists and engineers within U.S. universities. Asian Americans may have higher academic competencies and yet be paid less than European Americans (NSF, 2004). To investigate occupational discrimination against

Chinese Americans, Leong and Roate (1992, cited in Leong & Serafica, 1995)

calculated the cost of being a Chinese American as well as that of being African

American using data collected in 1976 from the Survey of Income of Income and

Education (SIE) and another report that is based on the SIE data set written by

Hirschman and Wong in 1981, who examined the socioeconomic achievements of

foreign-born Asian Americans. The researchers examined adjusted mean earnings of

Chinese, African, and European Americans, while statistically controlling for level of

education, occupation prestige, and number of hours/days worked. Everything else

being equal, European American males made $11,427, African-American males made

$9,741, and Chinese-American males made $8,817; which means it cost Chinese

American males $2610 for being Chinese and it cost African American males $1,686

for being African American. Leong and Serafica noted that these figures provide an

index of racial income inequity and challenge the economic uniformity assumption

concerning the education-income correlation.

Occupational Stereotyping. Asian American overrepresentation in certain fields

and underrepresentation in others have been documented (Tang et al., 1999; Tang,

1997; NSF, 2004; Leong & Gupta, 2007) and may have resulted from occupational

stereotyping (Leong & Serafica, 1995). Leong and Hayes (1990) investigated a sample

of White male and female college students. These students were presented with a profile

of a high school senior, described as either male or female and White or Asian. Subjects

rated (a) how well qualified the student was to seek training in certain occupations, (b)

their probability of success in 16 different occupations, and (c) how likely this

individual was to be accepted by his or her co-workers in those occupations. The results

showed that race had a significant effect on "probability of success". Asian Americans, as compared to European Americans, were seen as being less likely to succeed in insurance sales, but more likely to be successful as engineers, computer scientists, and mathematicians. Race also had significant main effects on both "qualified to seek training" and "probability of success". Because of occupational stereotypes held by others or by themselves, some Asian Americans may choose careers not on the basis of their interests and abilities but because they have been given the impression that their ethnic membership closely relates to success or failure in an occupation.

Occupational Segregation. Occupational segregation is a prevalent problem among Asian Americans, where their tendencies are to avoid the social sciences and humanities and to gravitate toward the biological and physical sciences (Chun, 1980, cited in Leong & Gupta, 2007). This phenomenon is probably a result of the societal and cultural barriers to Asian Americans' occupational aspirations. Chun also pointed out that this pattern of occupational segregation among Asian Americans parallels the stereotyping literature, namely, that Asians are stereotyped as being more qualified to enter the physical, biological, and medical sciences and less qualified to enter the verbal, persuasive, social careers such as lawyer, judge, and teacher. The consequences of occupational segregation, which are many, include being segregated into lower-paying jobs and denied access to higher-paying jobs. Occupational stereotyping and occupational segregation suggest that occupations held by Asian Americans may not reflect their actual career interests because some Asian Americans may have chosen careers not on the basis of their interests and abilities but because they have been given the impression that their ethnic membership closely relates to success or failure in an

occupation. This in turn could lead to occupational segregation, but the authors also acknowledged the numerical basis for occupational stereotyping of Asian Americans and noted that the relationship between occupational stereotyping and occupational segregation might be a reciprocal one. However one looks at this situation, researchers of occupational discrimination, stereotyping and, segregation have cited evidence of the complex and dynamic relationships among the various influences (i.e., individual, family, and societal levels) on Asian Americans' career development.

Relevancy of Career Development Theories for Asian Americans

Several major psychological theories have guided research on career development in the United States, particularly with Caucasian Americans. These theories have been categorized as developmental, trait-oriented, reinforcement-based, and personality focused (Leong & Serafica, 1995; Osipow, 1990). The applicability of career development theories to other racial and ethnic minorities has been criticized. Osipow (1975) raised an important question about the relevance of certain career development theories to special groups, such as minorities, women, and the poor. Since this question was raised in 1975, various distinct explanations have been offered to explain factors influencing racial and ethnic minorities' career choices but no theoretical model exists.

The applicability of career development theories to Asian Americans has been criticized and Osipow (1975) has raised an important question about the relevance of certain career development theories to special groups, such as minorities, women, and the poor. While various distinct explanations have been offered to explain factors influencing Asian American career choices, no theoretical model exists. Existing

theories do have promising application for the study of career development issues that are particular to Asian Americans. Three theories are briefly summarized base on the extent to which these theories deal with contextual issues such as race, ethnicity, culture, gender, class, and minority status.

Donald Super has proposed a detailed description of the career development sequence across the life span. He describes the career development process as a series of life stages, or a maxicycle, involving a sequence of growth, exploration, establishment, maintenance, and decline. The Life Career Rainbow is a visual representation of this sequence, with the stages corresponding to an individual's position in the life space, the temporal context, the social roles he/she plays, and the social context. Across the life span, both the individual and environment change in a reciprocal fashion (Super, 1990).

Lent et al.'s (1994) social cognitive career theory (SCCT), has stressed the predictive role of self-efficacy in career development. Their model provides a social-cognitive framework for understanding three aspects of career development: interests, academic and career choice options, and performance and persistence in educational and occupational options. The model emphasizes the influence of individuals' self-efficacy and outcome expectations on these three aspects. Personal factors, learning experiences, and contextual backgrounds also have an effect on individuals' self-efficacy and outcome expectations and vice versa. Self-efficacy is proposed as a mediating factor between the predicting factors and the criteria variables. It is assumed that a person chooses a certain occupation because he/she feels confident in that area and this confidence leads the individual to be interested in the area. Confidence is

shaped by contextual factors such as ethnicity, age, gender, support system, and past learning experiences.

Theories of vocational choice and behavior have attempted to describe and explain career choice, and predict career achievement, satisfaction, stability, and change. Personality is seen as the determinant of career choice, with career choice being an expression of personality. These are all central issues for Asian Americans. Holland's (1985) theory assumes that in American society, most people can be categorized as having one of six personality types, but might also show subtypes: realistic, investigative, artistic, social, enterprising, or conventional. Each of these personality types relates to the environment in a particular way. An environment comes to be populated by individuals of corresponding type, subsequently creating environments in which individuals with a particular personality type dominate. This attracts more individuals of that type because people search for environments that will enable them to exercise their skills and abilities, express their attitudes and values, and take on roles that fit their liking. Environments are therefore classified in the same fashion as personalities: realistic, investigative, artistic, social, enterprising, or conventional. Career decision making involves establishing the personality-environment match and then making a decision about the entry level. From Holland's perspective, career development is influenced by intelligence, gender, social class, and organizational structures. He sees culture influencing career development through culture's influence on personality development, where gender mediates cultures influence on personality development. Both personality and work environment interact

in a cultural context that affects their congruence and, ultimately, the workers career

satisfaction, achievement, and stability (Holland, 1985; Leong & Serafica, 1995).

Studies of Gender and Acculturation

Research on the career development of Asian Americans often fails to give

adequate attention to important moderating and psychological variables (Leong &

Gupta, 2007). Gender and acculturation are two variables that are examined below

through a review of studies conducted.

Gender has not been a central variable in research into career development of

Asian Americans. It is a factor considered and reported in the result sections; however,

an in-depth understanding and examination of its impact has largely been neglected.

Osipow (1975) raised an important question about the relevance of certain career

development theories to special groups, such as minorities, women, and the poor. Other

scholars have also raised questions about the applicability of career development theory

to women in general and have made conclusions that existing theories have not

sufficiently dealt with women's career development (Figtzgerald & Crites 1980; Perun

& Bielby, 1981).

Tang et al. (1999) stated that researchers have begun to examine the impact of

acculturation as an important moderating variable on the career choices and vocational

behaviors of Asian Americans. Acculturation has been defined as a process of an

individual's interaction with mainstream culture, where higher acculturation indicates

more adaptation to the mainstream culture (Suinn, 1991, cited in Tang et al., 1999).

Berry's (1980) model of acculturation has often served as a theoretical model as well as

S. Sue and D.W. Sue's (1971) ethnic identity model; with the Suinn-Lew Asian Self-

Identity Acculturation Scale (SL-ASIA, Suinn, Rickard-Figueroa, Lews, & Vigil, 1987)

most often used as a measurement instrument in research studies.

Gender and acculturation level in particular might have unique roles in

determining how Asian Americans in the United States navigate and negotiate their

career interests, career choices, family, society, and work adjustments. In this critical

review of the research, some of these variables are examined in order to better

understand the effects of gender and acculturation. The literature on the career

development of Asian Americans is growing, with career choice and work adjustment

receiving the most attention; however, there is not an abundant body of research

dedicated to salient factors (e.g., work values). This critical review examines research

that does exist in the literature, whether gender and/or acculturation is the main variable

of focus in the research conducted or only partial.

Three articles investigating (a) occupational stereotyping, (b) career

development attributes and occupational values, and (c) personality structure

hypothesis, prestige hypothesis and sex role are reviewed. These articles discuss career

development concepts related to Asian Americans and report gender effects in their

analyses. Another set of three articles are reviewed investigating (a) acculturation

effects on occupational stress and job satisfaction, (b) level of acculturation, family

SES, family involvement, occupational interest, and career efficacy influences on career

choice, and (c) career maturity and self-construal are reviewed. The last set of three

articles reviewed are selected because two of the studies provide an examination of the

gender and acculturation interaction as main variables of focus, and one study

incorporates a qualitative design that provides an in-depth understanding of the career development of Asian Americans.

Gender. In the first article reviewed, Leong and Hayes (1990) examined the positive and negative occupational stereotyping of Asian Americans. In exchange for extra course credit, 262 students enrolled in an introductory psychology class in a large eastern university were instructed to answer a questionnaire, consisting of two parts, during one regular class period. Four different forms of the questionnaire were randomly distributed to students who were instructed to complete it without discussing it with each other and were monitored by three experimenters.

The first part of the questionnaire presented a profile of a high school senior, described as a student who was 18 years old, male or female, White or oriental, with an IQ of 116, SAT Verbal score of 580 (87th percentile), SAT Math score of 620 (89th percentile), involved in the tennis club, treasurer of the student government, described as a good student, well liked by teachers, and delivered newspapers for a part-time job. After reading this information, respondents were asked to rate on a Likert scale of 1-7 how well qualified the student was to seek training in certain occupations, the probability of success in 16 different occupations, and how likely this individual was to be accepted by his or her coworkers in those occupations. Only responses from White participants (n=212; comprising 81.5% of participants) were used to serve the purposes of the study. Forty six percent were men and 54% were women. Six of the questionnaires returned were incomplete and were omitted from the study. Of the 212 White participants, 56 received the White-male version, 57 the White-female version, 43 the oriental-male version, and 55 the oriental-female version.

A 2x2 (race of profile and gender of profile) design for multivariate analyses of variance (a priori alpha level at p<.05) of three evaluative dimensions (training, success, and acceptance) on 16 occupations was used. Results indicated that only the main effect for gender was significant for the dimension of "qualified to seek training"; both race and gender main effects were significant for "probability of success" but not interaction; and neither main effects nor the interaction were significant for "likely to be accepted". For the gender differences on the dimension of "qualified to seek training" four of the 16 occupations revealed stereotyping. Women were seen as less qualified to seek training as engineers, economists, and police officers but more qualified to seek training as secretaries. For "probability of success" dimension, significant gender stereotyping differences were found for secretary and police officer. Women were rated as more likely to be successful as elementary school teachers and less likely to be successful as computer scientists. For the race differences on the "probability of success", Asians were seen as less likely to succeed in insurance sales, but more likely to succeed as engineers, computer scientists, and mathematicians than were Whites. In sum, there were significant effects for gender on "qualified to seek training" and "probability of success". Results revealed occupational stereotyping on four occupations.

There are some limitations to this study. The sampling pool of White undergraduate college students limits the generalizability of results, as well as the construction of the profile used in the respondents questionnaire, which depicts specific variables and limits (i.e., 18 year old oriental-female with an IQ of 116, SAT Verbal score of 580, SAT Math score of 620, involved in the tennis club, treasurer of the student government). Generalizability is further limited because the category of

"oriental" is too broad to determine any useful geographical or ethnic descent

generalizations. The word "oriental" has varying descriptions and references in the

United States and is not well operationalized to use with study participants; for

example, the term has been used in the West to describe cultures, countries, peoples and

goods from the Orient. Some people consider the label "oriental" to be an ethnic slur

that eroticizes these individuals/groups, thus its use should not be promoted in research.

Because of researchers choosing occupations that are already identified in the literature

as occupational patterns of Asians, measurement bias might exist due to perceptual

priming by the questionnaire. For example, five of the 16 occupations were chosen

because they represent traditional career choices for Asian Americans

(overrepresentation of Asians). Sophistication among the public about the social

undesirability of prejudicial attitudes based on race and gender might also have biased

results especially in the "training" and "acceptance by others" dimensions.

While Leong and Hayes (1990) examined occupational stereotyping of Asian

Americans by White Americans, Leong (1991) compared Asian American college

students to White American college students on career development attributes and

occupational values; gender effects were also analyzed and were added as an

independent variable with culture (Asian American or White). Undergraduate students

at the University of Maryland were recruited to participate in exchange for credit;

recruiting efforts also involved specifically soliciting participation from Asian

American students in the same psychology classes until at least 50 of the students

participated. The final sample consisted of 83 White Americans (46% male and 54%

female) and 63 Asian Americans (38% male and 62% female; primarily Chinese and

Korean descent). Participants were administered the instruments in groups varying from one to six and were instructed to complete the career development measures including: (a)demographic questionnaire, (b) Crites (1973) Career Maturity Inventory: Attitude Scale (CMI), (c) Harren's (1978) Assessment of Career Decision-Making Style Subscale, (d) Holland, Daiger, and Power's (1980) My Vocational Situation (MVS), (e) Rosenberg's (1957) Occupational Values Scale, and (f) Holland's (1978) Vocational Preference Inventory, with the latter excluded from the analysis. Following Rosenberg's Occupational Values Scale, clusters of occupational values were formed for analysis: Social cluster, Extrinsic cluster, Self-Expression cluster, Power cluster, and Security, where the latter consisted of one item and the others, 2 items per cluster.

An overall two-way (gender x culture) MANOVA for career development attributes showed a significant main effect for culture (F=5.29, 138 df, p<.001) but not for gender (F=1.55, 138 df, p=1.78) and no interaction (F-.0.73, 138 df, p=6.1); only univariate analyses of variance (ANOVAs) were examined for culture. An overall two-way (gender x culture) MANOVA for all occupational value clusters showed a significant main effect for culture (F=2.28, 138 df, p=.050) and no significant main effect for gender (F=0.56, 138, df, p=.730) and no significant interaction (F=1.31, 148 df, p=.263).

Results revealed that on career development attributes, Asian Americans were significantly different than White Americans and exhibited higher levels of Dependent decision-making styles and scored lower on career maturity on the CMI. No significant culture differences were found for vocational identity as measured by the MVS. Of the five occupational value clusters, significant cultural group differences were found with

Asian Americans placing greater emphasis on the Extrinsic values and Security values

than the White Americans. No significant main effect was found for gender and there

was no significant gender x culture interaction.

There are a variety of issues to consider when assessing the validity of the study.

Similar to the previous study, generalizability is limited due to a sampling pool of

college students in one class at one university. The recruiting and administration

procedure raises concerns that are not addressed by the authors. The "soliciting" of

Asian American participation in the same psychology course "until at least 50 of these

students had participated in the study" presents an ethical research concern regarding

persuasion, as well as whether this solicitation may affect students' attitude toward the

study and their completion of the measurements instruments. Holland's Vocational

Preference Inventory was administered but no explanation is provided as to why the

data is not included in the analyses. Acceptable reliability and validity are reported for

all of the instruments used except Rosenberg's Occupational Value Scale, which has no

reliability testing. How the clusters of occupational values were formed challenges

statistical conclusion validity. Internal consistency reliability of the clusters is a concern

because of the limited numbers of items used to generate the clusters, two for each

cluster with Security only having one item. Correlation between the items within each

cluster appears to be rather weak, ranging from $r = .17$ to $r = .49$ [Social ($r = .49$),

Extrinsic ($r = .42$), Self-Expression ($r = .17$), Power ($r = .35$)].

In the third article reviewed, Leung et al. (1994) examined the personality

structure hypothesis, prestige hypothesis and sex roles as it relates to the career choice

patterns of Asian Americans. The researchers posited that (a) there are certain

personality characteristics (i.e., less tolerant of ambiguity, logical, concrete) of Asian

Americans that push them toward the science and technical occupational areas, (b)

Asian immigrants often encourage their children to consider occupational alternatives

that could give them the greatest survival value in the U.S. social structure and avoid

occupations that could subject them to direct contact with racial and cultural

discrimination, and (c) that because traditional sex role behavior is emphasized in Asian

cultures, the career aspirations of Asian Americans would be influenced by traditional

sex typing.

A retrospective strategy of data collection was used to compare the career

aspirations of a group of Asian Americans with a group of Caucasian Americans. A

total of 149 undergraduate Asian American students (52 men and 97 women) from a

major university in the west coast participated, with a mean age of 20.3 years. Forty

nine of these students were born in the U.S. and the remaining had been in the U.S. for

an average of 10.4 years. The data for the Caucasian comparison group was collected

from a large Midwestern university and was the same sample used by Leung and

Harmon (1990), with 12 non-White students excluded. A total of 234 Caucasian

undergraduate students (92 men and 142 women) participated, with a mean age of 19.9

years. Participants were informed that the study was about the career and life plans of

college students and were asked to complete a demographic questionnaire and the

Occupations List (OL; Harmon, 1971, 1981, 1989; Leung & Harmon, 1990), which

consisted of 155 occupational titles. On the OL, participants were asked to indicate

whether they had considered (or are still considering) each occupation, when they first

considered it, and if they had stopped considering it, when and why. An adequate level

of reliability for the OL was confirmed by Harmon (1981). Educational attainment of

participants' fathers was compared using the Irwin-Fisher test of proportions to examine

equivalency of socioeconomic backgrounds for these two racial groups, which showed

that proportions did not differ significantly.

Occupations in the OL were coded to particular occupational fields using the

Holland Classification System (Holland, 1973, 1985a), based on six work orientations

(Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising, and Conventional). A high-point

code was assigned for each occupation, which represented the major orientation, and

two secondary codes were assigned, which represented minor orientations. The Duncan

Socioeconomic Index (SEI; Duncan, 1961) was used as the measurement of the prestige

of occupations on the OL, with values ranging from 13.9 to 90.4, and greater values

indicating higher levels of prestige. The Male Dominance Index (MDI; Yanico, 1979)

was used to measure the traditionality or sex type of occupations, values ranging from

0-100, and a higher value equaling higher percentage (i.e., 81 = 81%) male. The

occupations in the OL with the SEI and the MDI were coded. Seventy nine of the 161

occupations were identified, exact equivalent titles were found in the sources, and the

SEI and MDI of the occupations was clearly assigned. Exact equivalent titles from the

sources for 82 occupations were not identified and were coded separately. No

appropriate code was found for six occupations in the OL and they were not included in

the analysis.

Holland's (1985) weighted method was used to generate quantitative scores for

the Holland codes, where three points were assigned to the first letter of a 3-point

occupational code, two points to the second letter, and one point to the third letter. A

"mean weighted Holland (MWHOL) score" was calculated for the average weighted occurrence of a particular interest area for each occupation considered and was based on all participants aggregated scores on each of the six Holland occupational areas. "Mean SEI score", "SEI range", "mean MDI score", and "MDI range" were computed as dependent measures, with ranges calculated to provide a measurement of the range of acceptable prestige and acceptable sex type.

Differences between Asians who were born in the U.S. and immigrants who were born elsewhere were examined through six univariate ANOVAs before being aggregated as one Asian American group in the main analysis for the "personality structure hypothesis". The independent variables were birth location (U.S. born and non-US-born) and sex. The dependent variables were each of the six MWHOL scores. The main effect for country of birth was not significant in all six ANOVAs. Gender main effects were significant for all six MWHOL scores. In the main analysis, six 2 x 2 (Race x Sex) univariate ANOVAs were performed. Significant main effects were found for race. Asian American students had higher MWHOL scores than did the Caucasian students in the Investigative area, but the Caucasian students had higher MWHOL scores than did the Asian American students in the Enterprising and Conventional areas. Gender differences were found in all six MWHOL scores. Male students had higher MWHOL scores than did female students in the Realistic and Investigative areas. Female students had higher MWHOL scores than did the male students in the Artistic, Social, Enterprising, and Conventional areas.

Again, differences were investigated between U.S. born and non-US-born Asians before being aggregated as one Asian American group in the main analysis of

the "prestige hypothesis". A MANOVA procedure was performed with country of birth and sex as the independent variables, and the mean SEI score, SEI range, mean MDI score and MDI range as dependent variables. Main effect of sex was significant. For the main analyses, a 2 x 2 (Race x Sex) MANOVA procedure was computed with the mean SEI score, SEI range, mean MDI score and MDI range as dependent variables. Univariate AVOVAs were computed and significant effects for race and sex were found. Asian American students had a significantly higher score than did the Caucasian students in the mean SEI score and the mean MDI score. Asian American students had a smaller MDI range than did the Caucasian students. For gender main effects, male students of both racial groups had a significantly higher mean SEI score and mean MDI and a smaller SEI range and MDI range than did female participants.

In summary, gender main effects were significant for all six MWHOL scores. Gender differences were found in all six MWHOL scores. Male students had higher MWHOL scores than did female students in the Realistic and Investigative areas. Female students had higher MWHOL scores than did male students in the Artistic, Social, Enterprising, and Conventional areas. The main effect of sex was significant for SEI and MDI scores and ranges. Significant effects for race and sex were found for SEI and MDI scores and ranges. For gender main effects, male students of both racial groups had a significantly higher mean SEI score and mean MDI and a smaller SEI range and MDI range than did female participants.

The use of a traditional age college student sample from two geographical locations and a sampling pool of Asian Americans that was not a representative distribution of the diverse Asian ethnic groups, and an unequal distribution of men and

women limits generalizability of these results. Samples being in two different geographical locations also potentially confound the effects of race. The Caucasian American sample is a sample that has previously been studied by the same researcher, though its' recentness is unknown. Given that the researcher's previous study topic was also about occupational stereotyping of Asian Americans, using the same sample gives participants additional insight and potentially biases responses. Hypothesis guessing might have particularly served as a type of social threat to construct validity because people often do not just participate passively in a research project but instead are trying to figure out what the study is about. It is also unclear how consensus is reached and how the Holland codes were assigned to the remaining occupations in the cases of disagreements between the two coders. Strengths in this study are that the U.S. born and non-U.S. born differences are considered before being aggregated for analysis and socioeconomic backgrounds of both racial groups are considered to ensure that it is similar for both groups prior to the interpretation of results. Using conservative alpha levels (.01 instead of .05) helped to reduce the possibility of Type I error in the Race x Sex univariate ANOVAs.

Acculturation. In the initial article reviewed in this section, Leong (2001) tested two hypotheses related to acculturation. Study one tested the hypothesis that Asian Americans with lower levels of acculturation (i.e., *separationists*, as conceptualized by Berry 1980's acculturation model), who held on to traditional Asian values, beliefs, and norms are more likely to experience higher levels of occupational stress and lower levels of job satisfaction. Study two examined Leong and Chou's (1994) reformulation that Asian Americans with low levels of acculturation are more likely to experience

higher levels of occupational stress and lower levels of job satisfaction as a result of occupational stereotyping and discrimination by their supervisors. In both studies, participants were part of a career development workshop specifically designed for Asian Americans who were sent a package of instruments to complete prior to the workshop. Data for the studies was collected and scored prior to the beginning of the workshops, which introduced participants to special career issues and problems encountered by Asian Americans in organizations.

Study one consisted of 39 Asian American participants in two companies who were primarily from the larger Asian subgroups (Chinese, Japanese, and Korean American descent). Company A (n=24; 58.4% women and 41.6% men) was a high-tech government engineering contractor and Company B (n=15; 54.4% women and 45.6% men) was a Fortune 500 house-hold product company; the average age of participants from the companies was 38.2 and 36.15 years, respectively. Participants completed the SL-ASIA (Suinn et al., 1987), Occupational Stress Inventory (OSI; Osipow & Spokane, 1981), Job Satisfaction Inventory (JSI; Brayfield and Rothe, 1951), and Adult Career Concerns Inventory (ACCI; Super, Thompson, & Lindeman, 1988). Results from the ACCI were not used in the study. All instruments had adequate psychometric qualities, with evidence of reliability and validity for White European Americans. With the exception of the SL-ASIA, no reliability or validity information was available for Asian Americans.

The SL-ASIA was a multiple choice 21-item measure used to assess the level of acculturation of Asian individuals, where a mean score of one denoted low acculturation (separationsist), 3 medium acculturation (bicultural or integrationist), and

5 high acculturation (assimilationist). The OSI was based on a three part stress model which consisted of stressors, strains, and coping responses, with only the former two used in the study. Adequate reliability was reported, with ranges from .71 to .94 for internal consistency on the 14 subscales. The test manual documented strong evidence supporting the construct validity of the scales. The JSI consisted of 18 statements about job-related attitudes on a 5-point Likert scale and was used to measure job satisfaction. Adequate reliability (Cronbach's alpha = .87) was reported and construct validity continued to be supported as cited in various studies.

In preliminary results, no significant differences were found in levels of acculturation and job satisfaction between the samples from the two companies. When analyzed separately a positive relationship was found between acculturation and job satisfaction in both Company A (r=.34) and Company B (r=.44) samples. Leong and Chou's (1994) hypothesis was supported by Company B's data but not by Company A's data. In Company A, high acculturation identities were positively correlated with two measure of stressors, role ambiguity (r = .18) and responsibility (r = .25), and two out of four of the measures of strain, psychological (r = .19) and physical (r = .30); but for Company B, high acculturation levels were negatively correlated with role insufficiency (r = -.25) and physical (r=-.31) stressors.

Study two participants were employees from Company B in study one but from a different division. Participants included 17 Asian Americans (58% women) and 10 Hispanic Americans (64% women), with average ages of 34.5 years and 36.6 years for the groups, respectively. Procedure was the same as study one with the exception that Supervisors' performance ratings on all the employee participants were also obtained.

Within the particular division of Company B, performance ratings consisted of a global

3-point scale (1=adequate, 2=good, and 3=excellent). Participants completed the SL-

ASIA and OSI but instead of the SL-ASIA, Hispanic American participants were

administered the Acculturation Rating Scale for Mexican Americans (ARSMA), which

was modified with "Hispanic and Hispanic Americans". Adequate reliability and

validity was cited. Analyses for Asian Americans and Hispanic Americans were

conducted separately, and only results for Asian Americans were presented. A

significant positive correlation ($r = .37$, $p < .05$) was found between acculturation level

and performance rating. High acculturation Asian Americans received higher

performance ratings from supervisors than low acculturation Asian Americans.

In summary, Leong and Chou's (1994) hypothesis was supported in Company B

where high acculturation levels were negatively correlated with role insufficiency and

physical stressors but not for Company A where high acculturation identities were

actually positively correlated with two measure of stressors, role ambiguity and

responsibility, and two measures of strain, psychological and physical. A significant

positive correlation was found between acculturation level and performance rating.

High acculturation Asian Americans received higher performance ratings from

supervisors than low acculturation Asian Americans.

This study deviates from using a sampling pool of college students and is based

on a theoretical model, which the previous articles were lacking. The researchers used a

measurement for acculturation level, the SL-ASIA, that has a supporting body of

literature for its' psychometric properties and culturally validity for use with Asian

Americans. There are also limitations to the study. The sample from both studies is

small which also presents the problem of having to examine Asian Americans as one group when there are often intragroup differences. Participants self-selected to attend the workshops, potentially making them systematically different from those who chose not to participate; this may be especially crucial when studies examine identities (i.e., separationists may tend not to participant). Two other major limitations are also identified. The type of stressors and strains that were reported by Asian Americans with different levels of acculturation seemed to interact with the company; and this sample variance may have biased results, as evidenced by the divergent results when data from Company A and Company B were analyzed separately. With the exception of the SL-ASIA, the instruments that were used have not been culturally validated and thus reliability and validity reports are non-existent for use with Asian Americans.

Tang et al. (1999) investigated level of acculturation, family SES, family involvement, occupational interests, career self-efficacy and the influence of these variables on career choice. The applicability of Lent et al.'s (1994) theoretical model of career choice and performance was examined to account for factors that influence career choices with the exception of one refutation. Based on the model, it was hypothesized that: 1) acculturation influences one's career self-efficacy, then jointly and directly influences one's interest, and ultimately one's career choice; 2) family socioeconomic status influences self-efficacy and also one's interest; 3) family involvement influences self-efficacy and has a strong directional relationship with one's occupational choice; 4) self-efficacy has an impact on one's interest and career choice, and 5) counter to the model, interest has a weak relationship with one's career choice because of the familial and cultural traits discussed in the literature.

There was total of 187 participants (52% male) from eight major universities in the Eastern and Midwestern areas of the U.S, with a survey response rate of 31.8%. Average age of participants was 22.6 years and ranged from 18-35 years. Participants were from a variety of Asian ethnic descents: Chinese (41.3%), Korean (6.5%), Japanese (2.2%), Vietnamese (26.1%), Hmong (7.1%), Laotian (1.6%), Filipino (11.8%), and others (3.2%). The majority was born or raised in the U.S. (54.9%), some spent about the same amount of time both in the U.S. and Asia (9.7%), and other participants were raised in Asia (35.5%). About half of the parents (45.8%) of these participants had college degrees. 57.1% of fathers and 36.4% of mothers held professional jobs.

Four instruments were used. A questionnaire was developed to collect data in three areas: demographic information, family socioeconomic background, and family involvement; and asked the participants to write the specific occupational titles that they had decided to pursue. Family involvement was measured using an eight-item Lickert scale (1 to 5); moderate reliability was reported, alpha=.59. The SL-ASIA (Suinn et al., 1987) was used to measure acculturation (please refer to the previous study for description). The 6 General Occupational Themes (GOT) from the Strong Interest Inventory (SII) were used to measure participants' occupational interests. GOT test-retest reliability coefficients for 3 to 6 month intervals ranged from .84 for Realistic to .92 for Artistic. The internal consistency coefficients ranged from to .90 for Social to .94 for Artistic. The Confidence Inventory (Betz, 1994) measured confidence levels of individuals performing various activities using a Lickert scale. The 60-item instrument corresponded to the 6 GOT of the SII. The activities were classified into six types

corresponding to Holland's hexagonal typology. Each item's score ranged from 1 to 5 for each scale, higher scores indicated greater confidence in each theme. Internal consistency reliability was high for the six themes, average alpha of .92. Prestige index was coded based on Socioeconomic Indexes and career choice was converted to indicate how representative the occupation was for Asian Americans based on Hsai's (1988) Representation Index (RI); a RI of 100 meant Asian Americans were represented corresponding to statistical expectations and 200 meant twice the proportion was represented. Self-efficacy and interest scores were converted to represent Asian Americans' typicality in self-efficacy and interest in conforming to the career choice.

Descriptive statistics, correlation analysis of the variables, and structural equation modeling procedures were used to analyze the data for hypothesized model fit. A computer program that analyzed linear structural equation systems was used to conduct the path analysis; and the standard Maximum Likelihood method of estimating free parameters in structural equation models was used. Two goodness-of-fit indices, Bentler-Bonett Normed Fit Index (NFI) and the Comparative Fit Index (CFI), were utilized to evaluate model fit.

Results indicated that the range of RI was from 41.70 (police officer) to 533.50 (biological scientists), with the majority of the occupations selected by Asian Americans having an RI of over 100: 75.4% of participants chose occupations with an RI ranging from 109.5-533.5. The most frequent occupations chosen were engineer (31; RI=244.2), physician (24; RI=426.8), and computer scientists (16; R=275.2). For those who chose the occupations of psychologist and lawyer, acculturation and family SES were higher than those who chose other occupations and the level of family

involvement was lower. Family involvement, with comparable family SES background, was higher for those who selected to be physicians and physical therapists. Correlation analysis showed that acculturation was positively related to family SES (.43; p less than or equal to .01) and family involvement (.16; p less than equal to .05) and negatively associated with interests (-.38; p less than or equal to .01) and career choice (-.21; p less than or equal to .01). These correlations indicated that individuals with higher acculturation had more interests in less typical occupations. Career choice was moderately correlated with acculturation (.-21; p less than or equal to .01), family SES (.17; p less than equal to .05) and family involvement (.18; p less than equal to .05). Interests (.27; p less than equal to .01) and self-efficacy (.37; p less than equal to .01) were found to be positively associated with career choice. No significant relationship was found between family SES, family involvement, self-efficacy, and interest.

Fit indices were reported as acceptable, with the Bentler-Bonnet Normed Fit Index at .96 and the Comparative Fit Index (CFI) at .97, with 1.00 as perfect fitness. The path coefficients between family SES and self-efficacy were not significant (.07), nor for interest (.17). The relationship between acculturation and self-efficacy was significant, with a negative value of -.21. Acculturation was found to be negatively associated with interests and career choice. Family involvement was found to be directly significant only with career choice (.31) but not with self-efficacy (.06). Self-efficacy was found to have significant paths with both interest and career choice, but interest showed no significant path with career choice.

In summary, results based on the descriptive and path analysis supported the role of acculturation in influencing Asian Americans' self-efficacy, interests, and career

choice. The influence of family SES and family involvement was mixed. Self-efficacy's influence on interest and career choice was supported by these results. The results showed little relationship between one's interest and career choice.

Limitation of the study included the generalizability of a college sample and that the interpretation of results cannot be generalized to all Asian Americans. The study sample, however, was more diverse because other Asian ethnic groups were represented in the sampling pool in addition to the three large groups found in most research (Chinese, Korean, and Japanese descents). The low response rate (187 of 600 invited) affects validity. It is unclear as to why researchers used differing p- levels in the correlation analyses, and if this has any effects on the relationships found. The study is based on a theoretical model and tests the models applicability to the career development of Asian Americans, which was lacking in the other articles critiqued in this paper.

Hardin, Leong, and Osipow (2001) examined acculturation and self-construal among Asian American and European American students to understand cultural relativity in the measurement of career maturity. They hypothesized that: 1) Asian Americans would have higher Interdependent and lower Independent self-construal than European Americans; 2) more acculturated Asian Americans would have higher Independent and lower Interdependent self-construal than their less acculturated peers; 3) as a group, Asian Americans would exhibit less mature career choice attitudes than European Americans, but that these differences would be largely a function of differences in acculturation and self-construal; and 4) Asian Americans would

demonstrate significantly less independence, involvement, and willingness to compromise in career choice attitudes than European Americans.

A total of 417 participants were recruited from introductory psychology courses at a large Midwestern state university: 62% were 1st year students, 22% were 2nd year students, 9% were 3rd year students, 6% were 4th year students and 1% were of other statuses. Ages ranged from 17-43 years, with a mean of 19.4 years, with comparable mean ages for the two groups of participants (Asian Americans, 19.48 years and European American, 19.39 years). Participants racial breakdown was 235 self-identified non-Hispanic, White European Americans (52% female) and 182 self-identified Asian Americans (56% female). The Asian American group comprised 15 different countries of national origin; 53% reported they were U.S. citizens.

European American and Asian American participants were recruited, and based on racial descent, were tested in single sessions, in groups of 5 to 30 participants. Three measures were administered to European Americans and four measures were administered to the Asian American group. A demographic questionnaire was administered regarding age, gender, class standing, family income, citizenship status, grade point average (GPA), and college major and career decision status (decided, uncertain, or undecided). Form B1 of the Attitudes Scale of the Career Maturity Inventory (CMI; Crites 1978) was used to measure career maturity. The measurement contained 75 items and provided five subscale cores (decisiveness, involvement, independence, orientation, and compromise) and a total career maturity score where higher scores represented higher career maturity. Reliability in the current sample for the total score was acceptable, with subscale ranging from .43 (Compromise) to .80

(Orientation) for the European Americans and .40 to .77for the Asian Americans. The

SL- ASIA (Suinn et al., 1987) was used to assess level of acculturation in the Asian

American group (see previous two studies for description details). The Self-Construal

Scale (Singelis, 1994) was used to measure an individual's independent and

interdependent self-construal. The instrument contained 30 statements on a 7-point

Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree), where higher

averaged scores indicated a higher self-construal. Reliabilities reported were low for the

current sample but comparable to those reported for other measures of self-construal

and individualism-collectivism.

A one-way MANOVA was conducted with the SCS scores as dependent

variables and the three acculturation groups and the European Americans as the four

levels of the independent variable. The MANOVA revealed a main effect on the

Interdependence scale only. Post hoc Tukey tests indicated that the Low and Medium

Acculturation Asian Americans had significantly higher SCS and Interdependence

scores than the European Americans ($p < .001$). No differences were found between

groups on the Independence scale.

A 2 (gender: male vs female) x 4 (ethnicity/acculturation: European Americans

vs High, Medium, and Low Acculturation Asian Americans) ANOVA was conducted

with CMI total scores as the dependent variable. There was a significant main effect for

acculturation. Post hoc Tukey tests showed that the Low and Medium Acculturation

Asian Americans had significantly lower CMI Total scores than European Americans.

The Low Acculturation Asian Americans also had significantly lower CMI total scores

than the Medium or High Acculturation Asian Americans. The High Acculturation Asian Americans did not differ from the European Americans in CMI total scores.

A 2 (ethnicity) x 2 (gender) x 2(level if independence) x 2 (level of interdependence) ANOVA was conducted with CMI Total scores as the dependent variable. Analyses revealed a significant main effect of ethnicity, a small main effect of interdependence, and no significant main effects for gender or independence.

A 2 (ethnicity) x 2(gender) x 2(level of independence) x 2(level of interdependence) MANOVA, with the five CMI subscale scores as the dependent variables. Main effects were found for ethnicity on the Compromise, Independence, and Involvement subscales. On all subscales, the European Americans had higher subscale scores. There were also main effects of interdependence on two subscales, Independence and Involvement. On all subscales, participants with low interdependence had higher scores. Neither of the other main effects (for gender or independence) was significant. A significant interaction was reported between independence and interdependence on the Involvement subscale only. Post hoc tests showed that for participants high in Interdependence, there were no differences in CMI Involvement scores as a function of Independence; but for participants low in Interdependence, those high in Independence had significantly higher CMI Involvement scores than participant low in Independence. Lastly, high Independence/low Interdependence participants had significantly higher CMI Involvement scores than those with the opposite pairing.

In summary, results partially supported the acculturation hypothesis. Asian American participants reported a higher Interdependent self-construal than the European Americans but did not differ in Independent self construal. The career

maturity hypothesis was supported by the study's results. Low and Medium Acculturation Asian Americans had significantly lower CMI Total scores than the European Americans and also had significantly lower CMI total scores than the Medium or High Acculturation Asian Americans. The High Acculturation Asian Americans did not differ from the European Americans in CMI total scores. The hypothesis that participants who have higher interdependent and lower independent self-construals would have the lowest career maturity and those with the opposite pattern would have the highest maturity was supported. Analyses revealed a significant main effect of ethnicity, which supported the prediction that European Americans would exhibit more career maturity than the Asian Americans. Neither of the other main effects (for gender or independence) was significant, which indicated that CMI Total scores did not significantly vary as a function of either gender or independence. The last hypothesis that Asian Americans had significantly lower subscale scores than European Americans and those differences in subscale scores would vary as a function of self-construal was supported. Main effects were found for ethnicity on three subscales, and on all subscales the European Americans had higher subscale scores. There were also main effects of interdependence on two subscales and on all subscales participants with low interdependence had higher scores. Neither of the other main effects (for gender or independence) was significant.

In general, the limitations in this study mirror the previously reviewed articles. The study was limited by the small number of Asian American participants within the differing group variables (i.e., acculturation). Generalizability is limited because the sampling pool consisted of undergraduate college students; and again the diverse

nationality groups in the study were combined as one group. Cultural validity is also concern for the instruments used.

Gender and Acculturation. Also reviewed under the acculturation section above, Hardin et al. (2001) investigated acculturation as one of its main independent variables and although gender was not a variable, some of the analyses include gender effects. Results partially supported the acculturation hypothesis. A one-way MANOVA was conducted with the SCS scores as dependent variables and the three acculturation groups and the European Americans as the four levels of the independent variable. The MANOVA revealed a main effect on the Interdependence scale only. Results revealed that the Low and Medium Acculturation Asian Americans had significantly higher SCS and Interdependence scores than the European Americans (p less than .001). No differences were found between groups on the Independence scale.

The career maturity hypothesis was supported by the study results. A 2 (gender: male vs female) x 4 (ethnicity/acculturation: European Americans vs High, Medium, and Low Acculturation Asian Americans) ANOVA was conducted with CMI total scores as the dependent variable. There was a significant main effect for acculturation but not for gender. Post hoc Tukey tests showed that the Low and Medium Acculturation Asian Americans had significantly lower CMI Total scores than the European Americans. The Low Acculturation Asian Americans also had significantly lower CMI total scores than the Medium or High Acculturation Asian Americans. The High Acculturation Asian Americans did not differ from the European Americans in CMI total scores.

It was hypothesized that participants who have higher interdependent and lower independent self-construals would have the lowest career maturity and those with the opposite pattern would have the highest maturity. A 2 (ethnicity) x 2 (gender) x 2(level of independence) x 2 (level of interdependence) ANOVA was conducted with CMI Total scores as the dependent variable. Neither of the main effects for gender or independence reached significance which indicated that CMI Total scores did not significantly vary as a function of either gender or independence. The last hypothesis that Asian Americans would have significantly lower subscale scores than the European Americans and that differences in subscale scores would vary as a function of self-construal was tested with a 2 (ethnicity) x 2(gender) x 2(level of independence) x 2(level of interdependence) MANOVA with the five CMI subscale scores as the dependent variables. Neither of the main effects for gender or independence was significant. (See previous review for study limitations)

A qualitative study by Fouad et al. (2007) was designed by the researchers in order to understand the ways in which a group of Asian American professionals constructed meaning in their careers and how contextual, cultural, and personal variables influenced the career choices of this sample. Consensual qualitative research (CQR; Hill, Thompson, Williams, 1997) design was used in interviews with Asian Americans. Selection criteria included second generation Asian American or first generation Asian American who came to the US prior to or during elementary school years and who had entered an occupation. Research team members solicited acquaintances who met these criteria for participation and snowball sampling was also used where participants in the study were asked to recommend other Asian American

individuals they knew who would be appropriate for the study. Individuals were initially given a brief overview of the study and asked preliminary demographic information to ensure that criteria for participation were met; interviews were then scheduled and took place either in person at a location chosen by the participant or by telephone at the request of the participant. All interviews were audio-taped and notes were taken by the research team members.

Twelve total participants (nine female and one male) who had entered an occupation for at least 5 years were interviewed. Of the 12, there were two Chinese Americans, four Japanese Americans, four Southeast Asian Americans, one Mexican/Southeast Asian American, and one Asian Indian-American. Four of the 12 participants were born in an Asian country and eight were born in the United States and self-reported as second generation Asian American (parents immigrated to U.S. before birth) or first generation Asian American who came to the U.S. prior to or during elementary school years. Ages ranged from mid-20s to 80s; seven were in their late 20s-early 30s, two in their late 30s, two in their 50s, and one was 80. Occupations included housewife (retired from a family business), professor, electrical engineering, accountant, teacher, computer analyst, marketing, advisor/counselor, chemist, sales representative, and entrepreneur.

Semi-structured interview protocol questions addressed: a) work history and decision making processes; b) work or career dreams as a youth and adolescent; c) family influences on work choice; d) opportunities or supports and barriers in entering chosen occupations; e) role of work in present life and balance between work and other responsibilities; f) role models; and g) interests and influence of interests in career.

A modified version of the CQR methodology was used where domains, categories, and subcategories were abstracted, in that order. Research team members reviewed the data independently and coded transcripts into domains and then collectively came to consensus on 7 total domains. Four overarching themes emerged: 1) family expectations influenced individuals' goals, development of interests, work values, and other traditional career variables; 2) participants desired to act as a representative for their family and their community through their career choices; 3) transmission of cultural values through one's family; and 4) a life-long process of establishing their bi-cultural identity, a process of integration and acceptance of multiple identities.

The qualitative nature of this study and the emic approach provide a subjective investigation of the narrative experiences of the participants. The diverse level of acculturation, culture of origin, and age are good attempts to form a representative sample of individuals; however, this strength is also its limitation in generalizability. Study expectations and biases were discussed by the research team at the outset of the study as well as throughout the course of the data collection and analysis, which helps with researcher and administrator bias. The interview questions were constructed by the research team to address specific areas (i.e., family influences on work choice, role models, interests and influences of interest on career) and this specificity may have biased the identification of the seven domains. The domain names appeared to mirror the questions asked of participants, for example there were questions asked about role models for participants. It is of no surprise that role models came up as a domain in the

analyses. The role of the external auditor and his processes were not reported but has

important implications since his feedback is integrated in the analyses.

Leong and Tata (1990) examined sex and acculturation differences in

occupational values among a group of Chinese American children. In addition to

within-group rankings of values, the relation between the Chinese-American children's

level of acculturation and work values was examined, as well as sex differences among

the sample.

Participants included a total of 177 Chinese-American fifth graders (n=98;

44.9% boys and 55.1% girls) and sixth graders (n=79; 35.4% boys and 64.6% girls)

from a Los Angeles inner-city elementary school composed of mainly Chinese-

American students. Questionnaires were administered to the students in their classes by

their teachers, who also explained the purpose of the task and answered questions. Class

sizes range from 25 to 40 students.

Participants completed a demographic questionnaire with questions about their

age, sex, and occupational choice. The Ohio Work Values Inventory (OWVI; Hales &

Fenner, 1973, 1975) consisted of 77-items and was used to measure specifically the

work values of elementary school children. THE OWVI yielded scores on 11 scales,

with 7-items per scale. Intensity of value was measured on a 1-5 point scale (1 = not

much and 5 = very much). The SL-ASIA (Suinn et al., 1987) was used to measure level

of acculturation (please see previously reviewed articles for a description and validity

information) and some wording of the SL-ASIA was slightly modified to make the

scale more easily understood by fifth and sixth graders. For example, item 3 was

changed from "How do you identify yourself?" to "How do you call yourself?"

Group means on the OWVI subscales were used to provide a ranking of values. The two most important values revealed for the Chinese-American children was money and task satisfaction and the other values were similar to each other. The Chinese-American children were divided into three groups according to their SL-ASIA acculturation score (scores of 1.00-2.00 were low-acculturation; scores of 2.01-3.00 were medium-acculturation; and scores of 3.01-5.00 were high-acculturation) in order to examine the effects of gender and acculturation on work values. A two-way ANOVA (Sex x Acculturation) was used to compare the work values of boys and girls and the groups low, medium, and high levels of acculturation. Separate ANOVAs were also conducted for each value. Weighted means were used due to unequal samples in the two-way ANOVA. Four significant gender differences were found. Boys valued object orientation, self-realization, and ideas-data more than did girls. Girls valued altruism more than boys did. Significant acculturation differences were found only for self-realization. Post hoc pairwise comparisons with Fisher's procedure found that high-acculturated Chinese-American children valued self-realization more than their low-acculturation counterparts. There was no significant Sex x Acculturation interaction.

This study examined within group differences (using only Chinese-Americans), which is often lacking in research methodology for this specific topic. The researchers used a population (fifth and sixth graders) that is not typically studied in issues surrounding career development. Generalizability is limited as the sample was from an inner city in Chinatown and might not be representative of other Chinese-American children. How the instruments were administered poses a threat to the validity of the study, as teachers may have biased responses depending on what questions were asked

by students and how teachers answered these questions. Another limitation to this study

is that there are a host of other factors that bias results which were not addressed, for

example socioeconomic status.

Hmong American Career Development

Career development research on minority groups states that women and

racial/ethnic minority students generally report significantly more perceived educational

and career barriers; and lower levels of career decision-making, self-efficacy, family

support, role model influence and career decidedness than male and Caucasian

American college students (Luzzo & McWhirter, 2001; Lopez & Ann-Yi, 2006). These

contextual factors and characteristics might very likely be representative of Hmong

American experiences; however, little research has been conducted to investigate its

actual validity in the career development of Hmong Americans. The body of research

on the career development of Hmong Americans is scant and research focusing on

specific groups and factors within this ethnic group (i.e., gender) even more meager.

Two dissertations Chang (2009) and Thao (2009) investigated aspects of career

development for Hmong in the United States. Chang (2009) investigated how

contextual factors (i.e., perceived career barriers, perceived educational barriers, family

support and role models) and dispositional characteristics (i.e., positive and negative

affect, optimism, and self-efficacy beliefs) related to career outcomes (e.g., career

decidedness) in a sample of Hmong American college students. Results for Hmong

American college students also were compared to Caucasian American college students

to investigate sex and racial/ethnic comparisons. Results showed a significant positive

relation between Career Decision-making Self-Efficacy (CDSE) and Career

Decidedness (CD) across all groups (i.e., Hmong American female college students, Hmong American male college students, Caucasian American female college students, Caucasian American male college students). Correlation results indicated significant relations between Affective Commitment (AC), with CD, CDSE and role model Support/Guidance (S/G) for all groups. The author did not explicitly report the direction of these relations (i.e., positive or negative). The Hmong American male college students and Caucasian American female college students reported significant positive relations between Career Decidedness (CD) and Positive Affect (PA) and Career Decidedness (CD) and Optimism (OPT).

Two significant negative relations were found among contextual factors [perceived Educational Barriers (EB) and Coping self-efficacy with perceived Educational Barriers (EC); perceived Educational Barriers (EB) and Career Decision-making Self-Efficacy (CDSE)] and self-efficacy beliefs for Hmong American female college students, Hmong American male college students, and Caucasian American female college students. However, Lent et al. (1994) noted that it remains unclear whether individuals who report fewer barriers have higher degrees of coping self-efficacy or if individuals with higher degrees of coping self-efficacy are likely to perceive fewer barriers. The author reported that overall correlation results suggested that participants in this study might be more likely to recognize perceived Educational Barriers (EB) rather than perceived Career Barriers (CB) because of their undergraduate student status versus working adults who have more experiences which might better elucidate perceived CB.

Sex comparisons for the total sample found that female college students reported more perceived Educational Barriers (EB) and Career Barriers (CB) than did male college students and that women reported more role model Support and Guidance (S/G) than did their male counterparts. This suggested that S/G did not appear to decrease the number of perceived barriers that women reported. Negative Affect (NA) was found to moderate the relation between perceived Educational Barriers (EB) and Career Decidedness (CD) for Hmong American female college students. Optimism was also found to moderate the relation between perceived Educational Barriers (EB) and Career Decidedness (CD) for Hmong American female college students and Caucasian American male college students. These results indicated that dispositional characteristics did moderate the relation between perceived barriers and career decidedness and that these relations tended to vary by sex and racial/ethnic group membership.

Finally, Chang's (2009) dissertation found that contextual support variables (i.e., family support) accounted for 14% of Career Decidedness (CD); and none of the predictors appeared to account for Career Decidedness (CD) in Hmong American male college students. These results suggest that positive variables such as support and coping self-efficacy appear to assist Hmong American female college students and Caucasian American male college students.

In a his dissertation, Thao (2009) conducted a qualitative ethnographic study focusing on fifty-two male and female Hmong adolescents, ages 14-23, whose families were refugees from Laos and came to the U.S. within three waves. First wave were born in the U.S. and their parents came to the U.S. between 1975 and 1984. Second wave

were born in Thailand or Laos and came to the U.S. with their families, between 1985 and 1999, before the age of 10 years. Third wave were born in Thailand or Laos and came to the U.S., between 2003 to present, when they were 10 years or older.

Thao (2009) conducted interviews investigating eight domains: home, community, school, peers, educational aspirations, career aspirations, barriers/impediments, and attitudes. Results found for educational aspirations and career aspirations will be summarized; as well as overall similarities and differences between the waves. All three waves showed themes that include the following statements: there is much emphasis at home about education; there are lots of lectures from parents, mostly the father, to influence the participants to focus on their education seriously; parents, siblings, and relatives influence their education; the family's past hardships, current struggles, poverty, and oppression influence their education; Hmong community influences their education; moving up motivates them to study; all receive support and attention at home for their homework and study; across all waves, family influence persists; supportive peers influence their education; pride/positive self-esteem/ strong character influences them to succeed; and after school programs, supportive programs, extracurricular programs improve their learning.

The research found that the third wave group aims very high for college education and career in the future despite the many disadvantages that they are encountering; the third wave group is motivated by their parents or relatives' past hardship, unavailable and inaccessible opportunities, and the overall negative plight of their relatives and fellow Hmong in previous countries; the third wave group appears to have a collective mentality to strive for their education for the sake of their family,

community, and Hmong society's benefit, name recognition, and self-sufficiency. In contrast, the first wave tends to break away from their family. Comparison across wave groups showed that the influences factor for the first wave were, in hierarchical order of influences, me, self, family/relatives, and then Hmong community; for the second wave, self and family have equal influence and the community is the last to have influence; and for the third wave, the order of influence starts with family, clan, community, and then self.

The third wave group emphasized being educated and intellectual, whereas, the first and second waves emphasized having a livable career first; the third wave acknowledged that job were important but being educated was their number one priority and aspiration. The third wave group will be the first of their family to attend college in the near future, whereas, second wave group have older siblings in college and the first wave group had both parents and siblings who graduated from college or who were still in college.

The third wave group appreciated the support, attention, and lectures from their parents, siblings, and relatives; and acknowledged and believed that the constant lectures from their parents or relatives had been an effective and helpful tool to motivate them to achieve their education and elevate them to a more prosperous social status. In contrast, the second wave group and the first wave disliked the constant lectures of their parents but admitted that the lectures had been helpful to their education. The third wave considered the wishes, dreams, and interest of their families as the primary goal to attain their education, whereas the first and second waves took their personal interest ahead of others. Thao (2009) stated that this suggests that the first and second waves are

more assimilated to the American culture. In general, subjects from the third wave

appeared to have more positive experiences about their education in the United States

than those from the other two waves, despite of the many disadvantages that they are

encountering, such as language and related factors for newer immigrants.

Summary

Asian Americans constitute the fastest-growing minority group in the United

States (Leong & Gupta, 2007). Leong (1985, 1991) observed that little research has

focused on Asian Americans' career choice and development. Most of the existing

research literature on the career development of Asian Americans has largely been cross

cultural comparisons, mostly to European Americans (e.g., Tracey et al., 1986; Gim,

1992, cited in Leong & Serafica, 1995; D.W. Sue & Kirk, 1972, 1973; Hsia, 1988), with

the term Asian Americans used to encompass all diverse Asian ethnic groups (e.g.,

Tang et al., 1999; Leung et al., 1994). The majority of research with Asian Americans

includes largely samples of Korean-, Japanese-, and Chinese-Americans, and is

experimental in nature.

Research on career development of Asian Americans, in general, has asked the

following questions: In what ways is the career development of Asian Americans

similar to that of all other ethnic groups? In what ways is it similar only to that of some

ethnic groups or some members of an ethnic group? In what ways is it unique? (Leong

and Serafica, 1995); with the last question most neglected in research into the career

development of Asian Americans.

The Asian American population is a heterogeneous population comprising over

25 diverse racial and ethnic groups from different parts of the world, all with myriad

intergroup as well as intragroup differences. The groups being labeled as "Asian" include such distinct cultures as Chinese, Korean, Japanese, Filipino, Indian, Thai, Vietnamese, Cambodian, Laotian, and Hmong, among others. Adding to this complexity is the influence of numerous variables that further shape the uniqueness of each Asian American's life experience, such as educational level, immigration history and status, generation level, acculturation, socioeconomic and class status, conditions in the home country, religious beliefs, and ethnic identity (Leong & Serafica, 1995; Henderson and Chan, 2005). Given all this, research still continues to aggregate Asian ethnic groups into one "Asian American" group, where the majority of participants continue to be of the large groups, Chinese, Japanese, and Korean descent.

Collin and Young (1986) reviewed career theories, concluding, that there is not even agreement regarding the meaning of the term "career". They believe that career theorists have erred by ignoring the subjective experience of the individual, since subjective experience will influence objective experience. Accepting subjective experiences would result in changes in our definitions of major career change and work adjustment, since the worker's perception and values would be taken into consideration in those definitions. What the observer (scientist) might classify as a major job change might be perceived as a relatively minor shift by the individual.

In a recent review, Leong and Gupta (2007) summarized that the literature on the career development and vocational behavior of Asian Americans continues to find similar conceptual and methodological problems in the literature. The authors noted that there continues to be a lack of empirical studies on the career choices of Asian Americans. The uneven pattern of the studies of the career behavior of Asian Americans

continues. There are many more studies on the work adjustment problems of Asian

Americans than about the role of family influences on their career choices. The limited

research that does exist seems to follow more of a deficit model than a theory-driven

model. For example, there are many more studies about the work adjustment problems

of Asian Americans than about their career development processes and outcomes from a

theoretical point of view. There is no question that problem driven research is needed

and has its value; however, many of these studies are primarily descriptive in cataloging

the problems experienced.

Research studies have tended to examine a specific ethnic group's experience

(e.g., level of job interviewing skills among Vietnamese refugees) or sought to compare

two groups based solely on ethnic designations (e.g., whether Chinese American

engineers are more satisfied with their jobs than European American engineers). Studies

of the career development of Asian Americans are predominantly at the descriptive

level and are based on the examination of ethnicity as a demographic and not a

psychological variable. Studies must identify, evaluate, and test the role and impact of

various psychological variables which are believed to influence the work behavior and

career development of Asian Americans. Additionally, research is needed that will add

to our theoretical knowledge base of career development of Asian Americans.

Chapter 3

Methodology

Participants

Twenty 1.5 generation Hmong American women who came to the US during their elementary school years and have obtained a Bachelor's degree or higher were interviewed. Participants immigrated to the United States between 1975 and 1995. At the time of immigration, participants' ages ranged from 2 months to 12 years. At the time of interview, participants' ages ranged from 23 years to 42 years, with median of age of 31 years. Eleven participants are married and nine are single. All participants resided in the states of Minnesota and Wisconsin, 13 participants and 7 participants respectively. All participants have entered a professional position or are currently pursuing a graduate or professional degree. Seven participants earned Master's degrees, and one of these seven participants also earned a professional degree. Four other participants are currently pursuing graduate degrees (2 Master's degrees and 2 Ph.D. degrees), and one other participant is currently pursuing a professional degree. A summary of the participants' demographic data is outlined in Appendix D.

Design

This study used a qualitative approach to research the career development of 1.5 generation Hmong American women. Qualitative methodology was especially appropriate here because there was no a priori hypothesis or theory to prove or disprove. Rather, the overarching goal was to describe and understand these women's experience while highlighting participants' spoken words rather than interpretations by researchers. Sue (1999) stated that qualitative research is not only appropriate but

necessary in order to deepen our understanding of psychological constructs and phenomena in different cultural groups. Several other authors described qualitative methodology as, not only appropriate, but more likely to provide insights into complex social phenomena (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007; Patton, 2002; Silverman, 2005). Qualitative analysis was also used to allow researchers to understand the data without imposing pre-existing expectations on the topic of study.

Procedures

Participants were recruited from Hmong women affiliated professional organizations and association and by referrals in the states of Minnesota and Wisconsin. At initial contact via electronic email, potential participants were provided a brief overview of the study including the topic, the confidential nature, the inclusion criteria, and that participation involved an audio-taped interview (see Appendix A). In the email, potential participants were invited to interview if they met inclusion criteria, and potential participants were requested to forward the email with study information to others who might meet inclusion criteria and who might be interested in participating. Attached to the email was the consent form for potential participants review (see Appendix B). When participants contacted the principal investigator, a 90 minute face-to-face interview was scheduled for a location convenient for the participants, with the stipulation that location was conducive for audio-taping. All interviews were conducted by the principal investigator. At the start of each interview, participants were reminded of recording and the confidential nature of the study. Participants were informed of the semi-structured interview questions and were informed that they may choose to not answer questions in which they are not comfortable. At the end of the interview,

participants were thanked for their time. Participants were invited to contact the

principle investigator if they had any feedback or concerns, but there were no

indications that interviewees had any.

Instrument

Semi-structure interview questions were developed for use. The questions were

open-ended and follow-up questions were designed to help participants more fully

explore each interview question (see Appendix C).

Analysis

In order to analyze the data, audio-taped interviews were transcribed verbatim

by a professional transcriptionist. Analysis of the data was based on inductive analysis

(Patton, 2002) as well as a modified Consensual Qualitative Research (CQR; McCarthy

Veach, Bartels, & LeRoy, 2001). Inductive analysis (Patton, 2002) began with specific

observations and developed towards general patterns. Data analysis consisted of

organizing the smallest units of data (concepts) into meaningful and progressively

broader themes, categories, and domains. The analyses also adhered to the principles of

the CQR (Hill et al., 1997), in which investigators took a team approach and a

consensual process in determining how data is coded and interpreted. So that the

principle researcher did not dominate, the CQR method provided checks and balances

throughout the analyses process to ensure that participants' experiences and responses

were accurately represented and expressed. In this present study, the team comprised

the principal investigator and her doctoral advisor. The team worked through a

consensus process to develop the domains and themes reflected in the results. This

entailed a process of both working separately and consensually in order to come to

agreement about domains and themes. The principal researcher independently analyzed the transcripts first through paragraph to paragraph analysis in search of basic concepts that were represented by quotes from the participants. In the next stage of analysis, Patton (2002) emphasized the identification of important themes and patterns in the data. Basic concepts in participants' quotes were identified and organized into themes. To resolve any discrepancies, the researchers worked together until consensus was achieved regarding how the data were classified. Discussion, dialogue, and consensus between the researchers resulted in 31 themes being identified under six domains.

Issues of Validity and Researcher Bias

Issues of reliability, validity and researcher bias are important to address for this study. The terms reliability and validity have distinctly different meanings in quantitative versus qualitative research. In qualitative research, and specific to this study design, reliability refers to how consistently researchers utilize a protocol to collect and analyze data. The issue of external validity, or the ability to generalize findings to a wider population, is not necessarily the researcher's main objective. Instead, validity refers to the extent to which results accurately reflect participants' experiences.

In order to ensure validity of this research, variations of several procedures as recommended by Hill et al. (1997) were incorporated into the design and analyses. Variations within samples were labeled in accordance to suggestions made by Hill et al. in that themes that apply to all participants were denoted as general, themes that apply to half or more participants were denoted as typical, and themes that apply to less than half of the participants were denoted as variant. A second investigator, a first

generation Chinese American male, reviewed the basic concepts and themes at two stages of formation to ensure that it captured participants' narratives, and he reviewed domains at two stages to ensure that the domains captured the essence of the themes. The research team worked through a consensus process to develop the domains and themes reflected in the results. By having these check points by a second investigator, who has a relatively objective stance on this topic and has extensive experience with qualitative research, helped keep the risk of bias in check. Presented results used direct quotations to provide rich and actual narratives reflective of the themes and to let the data speak for itself, thereby boosting the validity of the findings. In summary, researchers took a team approach and a consensual process in determining how data was coded, interpreted, and presented to ensure validity of the research.

The fact that the principal researcher is a 1.5 generation Hmong American woman studying 1.5 generation Hmong American women may be a concern for some. The researcher's identification with this population and topic may have prevented her from recognizing blind- spots in both the interviewing and analysis processes. It was also possible that the interpretation of the data was inadvertently influenced by her own life experiences; or more specifically, overlooking nuances in participants' stories because they reflected some her own experiences. As described in the above paragraph, the check-points by the relatively objective stance of a second reviewer on this topic and the procedures implemented aimed to minimize the potential risk of bias throughout this research process.

It also can be argued that the principal researcher's proximity to this topic was an advantage. The common background and experience of the principal researcher and

participants helped accelerate rapport because the participants were able to talk about their experiences without having to provide a frame and explain each detail of their cultural backgrounds. Many of the participants preceded disclosures with reference about how the researcher "might understand" because of her similar background and seemed more willing to share their private experiences. With this deeper level of trust, the researcher was able to gather rich descriptions of their experiences that may have otherwise been withheld.

Chapter 4

Results

Introduction

In this chapter, the domains and themes derived from the qualitative analysis of the interviews are presented. A total of six domains and 31 themes emerged. The six domains represented salient concepts about participants career development: 1) career conceptualization, 2) self and career actualization, 3) family, cultural and gender expectations, 4) systems of support: family, role models/mentors, and a sense of community, 5) overcoming challenges and barriers, and 6) resilience. Within each domain, several themes are presented and selected quotes from participants are cited as raw data to help illustrate. Variations within samples are labeled in accordance to suggestions made by Hill et al (1997) in that themes that apply to all participants are denoted as general, themes that apply to half or more (>10) participants are denoted as typical, and themes that apply to less than half (<10) of the participants are denoted as variant (see Table 4.1). In traditional qualitative studies, results are often presented by the most typical themes first, tapering off to more variant themes, however, under each domain, themes are presented in a more intuitive representation of participants' experiences. A summary of domains and themes is available in Appendix E.

Domain 1: Career Conceptualization

Theme 1: Career at different points in participants' lives is associated with an evaluation financial necessity.

It was typical that at different points in their lives, participants thought about their

career in association with financial necessity. Participants discussed finances in terms of

being able to support themselves and support their family.

> Early on for me career success was a high paying job. That's kind of the
> idea that you graduate out of college with but as you move through life
> and you move through your work experience you define that further and
> it's not just an extrinsic value you're looking for anymore. If it's part of
> the deal great but it doesn't always have to be part of the deal …
>
> … if I put some thought into it, I'd be able to articulate it better but if
> you want to say a career is doing, doing what you want to do and getting
> paid for it, doing what you want to do and getting something in return for
> it, something tangible not like a good feeling. So when you add in the
> word livelihood, means to me, being able to feed yourself … provide
> yourself shelter or family or shelter at the level you think you should be
> in and want to be. So if you add the other part, career to me, doing what
> you love to do and getting paid for it. That was the first job that I was
> doing what I loved to do and getting paid for it, even though not at the
> level I want. So for me that's a career, but a successful career is getting
> paid at the level that I think I should get paid.

Theme 2: Career involves helping others and making an impact.

It was typical that in describing their career, participants valued helping others

and making an impact within their community.

> I became a Christian and I believed in Christ and I started believing in
> helping other people out that are less fortunate and I think that's carried
> on into my early community service. I did mentoring early on … taught
> kind of traditional Laos dancing to girl at that time when I was younger,
> and now leading into adult life just volunteering to be on board to do
> projects for non-profit organizations and really to have some way to
> develop myself. There's professional growth but then there's also
> personal development, and I love this and so the more company or
> organizations will allow me to develop professionally for better, but I am
> impressed if they also stress the personal development.
>
> A career is something more in line with your values and what you
> believe in and how you want to be perceived as a person in the
> community or your family and so yeah I think that's what a career is … I
> think just for something better in terms of working with the community

and being in touch with the community and making this world a better place for everyone to live in.

Theme 3: Career is pursuing a passion which fulfills participants' interest, challenges them, and brings them happiness.

It was typical that participants felt careers were tied to their interests and cognitive and emotional state of fulfillment. Participants cited needing to be appropriately challenged to continue to grow and advance in their career, and to feel a reciprocal sense of happiness and compelling enthusiasm for their and from their career.

> … to me a career is something that it's a profession, it's a long training profession that I look forward to doing it. And it's my passion it's something I really enjoy doing it. Um, I look at it beyond a job. A job is a job you do a job for maybe a living to pay bills but you know a career is pursuing a passion. A passion that you look forward to in getting up every morning and going and doing it, putting your best effort into it.

> You know to me career is something that you find, something you enjoy doing and then also make a living from there. But when I was younger I had no idea what that means because I didn't have anybody to guide me so I had to do a lot of soul searching to find out what it is that I really want to do in life and I went to school for a different career but then I end up doing something different because I finally found what it is that I love to do as I mature in life.

Theme 4: Career is a journey which changes throughout life and involves growth and advancement.

All participants cited a general theme in which they felt their career was a journey that changed throughout life and involved growth and advancement. Changes in their career were dependent on self, others, and their environment.

> I think for me career is sort of one of those things where it's kind of transient. It kind of changes along with like where you're at in life … what I'm thinking right now at this point in my life, and I think of career as something like a position or like a job that you hold that will sustain not only yourself and your family but also sustain maybe the people in

your community, and sustain like the population at large and not only are you getting selfish things out of it but also helping the greater population …

What I've come to understand it to be is very different from what people who have been born here and people who have come, like my parents. White Americans would see career as what you're gonna do the rest of your life. I think too in my definition of career, and career is kind of vague, it's all about gathering information and experiences and building up my own skills professionally whatever that's gonna be in and then personally I'm also just a free-spirited person so it can of kind of be whatever doors open up for me. It's what I'm willing to explore and feel challenged by it …

Theme 5: Career success is a dynamic and integrative relationship between personal and professional livelihood.

In defining career success, it was typical that participants felt their personal and professional livelihoods both comprised their idea of success. Participants described career success not only in terms of their career but as an overall view of their success that is relational to and dependent upon their environment.

I think career success means different things at different points in your life. Early on for me career success was a high paying job. That's kind of the idea that you graduate out of college with but as you move through life and you move through your work experience, you define that further and it's not just an extrinsic value you're looking for anymore … I think for me right career success is finding something you enjoy doing. Like I said earlier it doesn't seem like work. You're really enjoying it and you have a passion and commitment to it. For me career success is that kind of helping impact other people's lives that would be career success for me. And also what I mentioned earlier allowing me to have time with my family …

I take a more balanced perspective so it's not success in my professional life but also personally because what's the point of like you see all these wealthy wealthy people, they're rich but then they're on their 5th marriage and they don't know any of their children and their children hate them and the people that they manage hate them, that's not success to me you know.

Domain 2: Self and Career Actualization

Theme 6: Participants felt there was something more to life than their present situation and that marriage was not their only path.

A variant number of participants felt there must be other purposeful meanings to their lives than only following the traditional marriage route. Participants were not against the idea of marriage but felt agency in shaping this path, and they felt an overall curiosity for life and exploring their potential.

> All I heard was well as long as you married your husband has to take care of you and I didn't want that kind of life. I don't know what I need to do to not end up in that kind of life, then I'm just gonna take advantage of everything that's in front of me, every opportunity that's in front of me that I can, given a twenty-four hour day what can I do short of killing myself but I enjoyed them all. I was young… physical energy was there as well as the drive to say I've got a life here that I'm chasing after…and that's the life that I know that they've got set for me already, they meaning my family and the culture I grew up in. I didn't want that life so if I'm gonna go a different route. I'm gonna be on my own…I am not bitter toward not having the support because I wasn't following the life they would have supported.

> I met my husband, I think six months before, and I got married when I think I was 20-21. At that time, at that age it's considered you're an old maid … the first year I didn't attend college because I missed the deadline to apply to the local university here so I decided to get a full-time job working at a local company in town, and when I was working with a lot of the older ladies who are in their thirties you know have families and I was one of the youngest workers. I said to myself life, has got to be more than this. I can't do this forever. There's got to be something better and I know I have the ability. I have the ability to really have a better life, to have a better career and I knew it was just something short term.

Theme 7: Participants had limited resources and family circumstances that often limited their views of future career options.

During the early parts of their career exploration, participants were typically limited in their knowledge and resources about career options. Participants cited lack of vocational role models and lack of expectations and support for their career exploration. Participants' narratives also included family circumstances that hindered their exploration, such as traditional familial obligations and practices.

> I felt the pressure and it wasn't my dad, it was the culture pressure, it wasn't the pressure from my parents or peer pressure … as I look back I understand part of it is that the culture wasn't, it wasn't culture pressure but it was the cultural glass ceiling, the invisible ceiling of not being able to see beyond the age of eighteen, not having anybody else to look at to see what happens after the age of eighteen, it was that kind of invisible pressure of now thinking okay the next step really is to get married because what else is there in life?

> I think when I chose the major elementary education, it wasn't so much gender expectation but it was more like that's what I, those are the only careers I knew existed for a Hmong lady or for young lady at that time, either nursing, teaching and then my other exposure was missionary work and then secretary. So I'm limited to those choice but when I made my decision it wasn't so much this is what's expected of me, but it's just what I knew … I think at that time it was more like after you reach a certain age then you're expected to get married, start a family, education wasn't really something you focused a lot on at that time seriously.

Theme 8: Participants engaged in pre-college enrichment and other targeted preparatory programs that served as helpful venues for meeting mentors, learning about themselves, and exploring career, work, and education.

It was typical that participants engaged in pre-college enrichment programs and other preparatory programs. Participants felt that through these programs, they met mentors, learned about themselves, and were provided the opportunity to explore career, work, and education.

> I spent a lot of my summers in some of the these youth at risk programs and some of them were specifically geared towards college or pre-

college programs, so a lot of campus programs, and in one of those summers one of our exercises was to write a timeline of important moments in their lives going forward as well as going back. I must have been about 15 or so and I wrote down that I would get my bachelors, and I would get my masters, and then I would buy a house, and then buy a car, all these important moments in my life. I think that exercise is really interesting, more interesting that I kept it and was able to look back on it …

… I had a middle school teacher who would encourage me to go to science camp and he helped me apply and everything … I also had teachers who identified college prep programs, and I actually went to one, two, or three summers in a row; and then in high school I had science and math teachers who identified different internships and programs that I could go to.

Theme 9: Exposure to others of similar cultural background and experiences was influential in participants' development.

It was typical that when participants encountered others from similar cultural backgrounds (i.e., other Hmong, other women) they felt a deeper sense of connection that influenced their perspective of self. Some participants also actively sought such encounters and environments.

Just going back to the question about like the way the culture has like shaped you, you know Hmong girls I suppose would not think about that. They'd be like do what you're asked kind of thing and I think that's part of the reason like I'm not the outspoken person. Like meeting a lot of Hmong women like yourself … meeting all these brilliant powered women, I'm like I don't have to be this image anymore you know, and I almost feel like to be successful in this world and this country you couldn't be that little girl who's so shy and so afraid to speak up and stand up for herself.

There was my cousin who was a youth program coordinator and there was an older gentleman who's been there since I think the early years of our family. At that time he worked with employment. I think he helped people get into work and I volunteered with him … You know although I think he was really critical because he was a man, an older man, say that you can do whatever in life was really meaningful because you didn't hear that from a lot of Hmong men so you know you have this older

Hmong man sat that you know you're very smart, you're a really good person and you know I really want you to pursue higher ed, do this or that, please don't get married yet, so to hear it from a Hmong man was really impactful just because you didn't hear it from Hmong men a lot. So he was someone that was critical and I worked with him for several years …

Theme 10: Participants were open to exploring a multitude of experiences and possible careers.

It was typical that participants expressed desire in gaining a multitude of experiences. Participants typically agreed that they did not necessarily have one career in which they linearly based decisions, instead followed their interests, sought experiences, and took advantage of presented opportunities as building blocks to a career. Participants cited that both positive and negative experiences helped to inform their next steps in career decisions.

I don't think I ever had a specific thing that I wanted to be. There were lots of things I think I could be but I always thought I could be anything and I could build on things. I could see some of the desires would take a little bit more work than others but I think for me success has always been more personal and less professional and so my career is just a methodology to get where I want to be personally but it's not how I define myself.

Um, how did I get here? … There's a lot of stuff throughout the way and I don't think I identified it, say ten years ago, that I'm gonna be where I am today. I think it's just the building blocks out of the way and you just sort of go at the time with the experience you want to have. For me, I used the experience to say, oh here's an experience I want to have, and I just follow that; and you know after that, there's another experience that I want to get … so that kind of pattern, I just kind of ended up where I am. It wasn't like charted out to say I'm gonna go from point A to C and D you know or A to B to C to D that kind of stuff.

I always thought I wanted to be a nurse and then when I came here I took a summer job and I didn't enjoy it at all. I didn't enjoy working with that population. I don't like being in a hospital … I think because of

that, then I kind of you know pushed myself away from wanting to be a nurse and explore other options that are out there for me.

Theme 11: Participants desired continued learning and growth in their career and personal development.

It was typical that participants expressed a desire for continued learning and growth in their career and personal development.

> I think personally my career has being much more mission oriented and as my perspective changes and develops, as I develop, that mission has been fine tuned but for me a large part of that is service to my community … However, at that time in my life and also the underpinning of that in my own development has been this very keen awareness of education or learning; so I know that has been a large part of my own career development is the next position, let's increase my knowledge in some way, and it's good to apply and to have practical experience but it's that learning piece that's most attractive …

> I think in terms of career development, I think it's very important to keep developing yourself either through self help books or going to seminars, webinars because I've done that in the past too and it's really helped. And looking for those different types of mentors because mentors can come in different forms too, they're both person or if you're involved in religious organization or what not, and so I think mentors play a huge role in my life and other people's life as well … I think just keep developing yourself as a person …

Theme 12: Participants were constantly aware that their identities (self, culture, gender, and ethnicity/race) played a role in their education and career.

Participants were typically aware of the different identities they may have and how it affected their education and career.

> I think there's a tension for Hmong woman at any part of their development as they start to figure out who they are and what their identity is and whether that's professionally or personally. The tension is how much of responsibility do you have to your family and culture and community and how much of a responsibility do you have to yourself? And in one pocket, there's those gender-specific roles that you go to school, you're done with school you get married and have children and

you become this, you know, you learn your role as a mother of a
household.

I also read a lot of mainstream literature about women in general because
white women are also marginalized like us too; and so kind of see how
that parallels with what my culture does because if they're already
marginalized, we're probably marginalized much more, or ten times
more and I think reading up on that to see that yeah they're white
women, they're also oppressed but we're probably more oppressed and
that's probably why we have to work much harder to get to where we
are. It's just like, you just have to keep going and ignore the fact cause
otherwise you keep thinking about it, it's not going to help you so you
just have to keep going, set your goals and know what you're doing.
What do you do? You have a plan already and you just keep doing what
you're doing. I think that's how I overcome some of the challenges.

 I think it's confused because I think for me there's not a day that goes
by in my life that I forget where I come from because I know that I'm
Hmong, and I know that I'm a woman, and those pieces are a huge part
of my identity, those pieces have influenced all of the experiences of my
life that was largely shaped who I'm now … whether it was my
experiences in my own family or growing up being a Hmong girl and
always feeling like I was back in a cage because there were so many
rules and expectations about what Hmong girls can do growing up and I
didn't want those expectations.

Domain 3: Family, Cultural, and Gender Expectations

Theme 13: Participants were surrounded by ubiquitous messages about being female

and getting married.

It was typical theme that participants felt direct and indirect pressure from

family and relatives to marry. Participants also talked about the general pervasiveness

of this pressure from within the culture.

I argued with my mom for years about marriage and how I wasn't gonna
get married; and when I did want to get married that I would let her
know, that she didn't need to ask me about it.

Yeah it's emphasized all the time, I mean as early as high school …
when are you gonna get married, when you gonna have kids? You know
I laugh about it but at the same time it's stressful. The role that you were

expected to fulfill, you couldn't, and you know at those times I just like shake my head but when you get in college and you still aren't married and you start wondering jeez is something wrong with me and at the time, by the time I got into college I wasn't ready, but by the time I got to graduate work I was ready to say you know what if I meet the right person it's time you know. Not only do I have to fulfill my goal but I think it'll be good. I mean I'm getting old enough and I know what a family should be like … and then having my mother constantly on my back about it isn't a good feeling.

… because I'm a girl, telling me that I should stay home until I get married and but I come home and I'm not married, why can't I just get married (laughs). And for me it's definitely, it's not a light decision but my parents are still ready to throw me out into the next person that I'm dating, whether they have flaws or whether we connect or not, or like are compatible life partners or not. So, in a way I don't know if that's cultural for everyone, but it's definitely a challenge for me to focus on my career. Right now, I'm done with college and they probably expect me to go on and get married.

Theme 14: Participants struggled in negotiating their family and cultural responsibilities with their own needs and wants for education and career.

It was typical that participants struggled with negotiating family and cultural values with their own needs and wants for education and career.

Especially financially for my parents, I guess they've been so busy working all their lives that all they care about is material things and just being financially stable and things like that and so I think the relationship between my parents and I have like dissipated. Um, and so with that, what they validate or what they consider valuable is when I do things for them … it's usually when I do chores for them, when I do things for them so that they can go on about their plan and goals and that's drawn me away from my own career track. I think that's definitely a big challenge and trying to create those boundaries, yeah I would say boundaries where you know this is where I stop and this is where I start to put myself, this is where I can give more of myself back to my parents.

I know one of the biggest obstacles that I face now is being married and having two kids. I've always wanted to go back and get my masters in social work because that's my passion … part of the reason why I've been holding back is raising, our in-laws, my in-laws they live with us

and so you know having to play that Hmong woman, that daughter-in-law role and also going to pursue higher education. I just felt it just wouldn't be a fit right now just because it's they're, my in-laws, are very traditional in terms of what a daughter-in-law supposed to be. That has always been in the back of my mind when I think about pursuing my education because it's definitely something I want to do but I also know if I go and pursue it then I don't, I wouldn't fit their mold of what a daughter-in-law should be, even though I really don't care … you try to, you put their needs in front of your needs …

Theme 15: At points in their lives, participants recognized a need for independence and put their wishes first before certain family and traditional cultural expectations.

It was a typical for participants, at some point in their lives, to recognize that there were things they wanted to do for their self. Participants had a yearning for psychological and physical freedom. In bettering themselves, participants felt more able to come back to help their family and community. Because to some degree families valued education, participants used this as leverage.

> …the family that I married into, they married like second wives and had mistresses and stuff like that … I grew up with what the Christians say with knowing it's just one dad, you know husband and wife. Then my husband was starting to do that but he never took on a mistress but he was doing you know meeting other women and stuff like that … I remember specifically in the car and I said to myself … it's not like he's taking on a mistress or a second wife just accept it if you love him that much, just accept it and, holy smokes, I felt another person coming to my body and into my spirit and to my being, into my understanding of what marriage was. Everything that my parents had taught me, I felt was being wiped away - so my whole identity was being wiped away and it was that moment I said I couldn't and I think it was then for us to go our separate ways … That was a defining moment, when I was willing to give my identity up and that scared the heck out of me because the minute I decided to do that, I didn't know who I was.

> My cultural background had everything to do with how I turned out. It's a sad way it is to say because it was so restrictive to women in terms of the expectations of what women can do … their potential could be very limited, their mobility was completely restricted and at least from in my family at that time, that those kind of experiences said I need to be free.

It build the value of freedom so much larger than I think some people might appreciate because I wanted that freedom and how do I become free. And to me at that age I felt and I think I made really good decisions at such a young age to say education is gonna set me free so everything I did that was outside of the cultural boundaries for me, I used education. I said well the teacher said I had to do this, or I gotta go do this to have a good grade and I think my family valued education, they just didn't value it that high for women but when I talk about education, they still allowed it because it was within that value of education for them so I used education as an excuse for everything that I got involved in and it probably was. At the time I thought I was just lying to my parents …

At the end of the day, no matter how much you try to prove to everybody else try to be the good daughter in law or the good daughter or sister, you got to make yourself happy first.

Theme 16: Participants' career decisions were seldom made without including family factors.

Participants typically agreed that their educational and career decisions included factoring in family needs and input.

… not necessarily my family as an obstacle in a negative sense but family in a sense that I'm always thinking about how my career decisions are going to affect my family … One of the things that I have always felt is that if Hmong culture wasn't so enmeshed in relationships with your family and if I could be like other White kids I would have gone far away to California where it's hot you know but I can't do that because my family is here and I'm bound to them and so sometimes I have felt like I have made decisions to stay in Wisconsin largely based upon my family's need for me to be near but also my need to be near my family because I don't know what it would be like not to be with them.

Yeah, being a daughter-in-law, a housewife, a mother, a career woman, and in teaching too … I didn't think I would be happy staying in that profession because it is a very demanding profession, it can be stressful too. I thought well maybe at least I need to do something different relating to education that will also allow me to have time with my family … you know to be a good teacher you really have to spend a lot of time outside of the classroom and I know that I could not give that. I knew my family's important and I don't see giving that part of myself, long term wise it might not be good for me as a teacher so I decided to get out of the classroom and switch to the university level where I am today. I

feel you know, I still work in an education setting but it's not as demanding as being a teacher because now I have a very set schedule … I don't take my work with me.

Theme 17: Participants juggled education, career, and familial and cultural

obligations.

A variant number of participants had to juggle education and career with

familial and cultural obligations. This was especially salient for participants who are

married, have children, and attend to their in-laws.

> I'm up in the morning I'm gone until one. I did come home for lunch because I went to school in town, so I had to come home. I'll see them a little bit for an hour or so and then head back out but it's the cultural piece where they don't understand why are you going back out at six o'clock … I always make it back and in terms of my obligations to my family, I get up in the morning and I could still cook for the family, that's part of my obligation make rice, leave it there, and they could do the rest of it, I come back, I cook something and have dinner and I'll head back out … It's not so much that I couldn't fulfill my obligation to the family in terms of my role in the house, contributing to the household it's more about the cultural beliefs of why I was leaving, as if young women leaving the home at hours that aren't equating in their mind as class hours or school hours, but that's what you do if you're gonna do these extra-curricular stuff, you have to take that extra time out of the regular nine to five kind of stuff …

> … girls are expected to do a little bit more of the house chores and the cooking and cleaning up … So the expectation is just a little bit different in that when I got married you know being a daughter-in-law you're expected to still do a lot of the house chores those type of responsibility as well as helping kind of like the clan or the family in the community when they have New Year's. If you marry into a large family then especially during the summer you feel like every weekend is work … I found out that because I set the standard too high for myself. I expected myself to be at every event, to help people out as much as I can, and then I realized you know there will be other people there. I do what I can, when I cannot, you know just communicate that with the family. I started doing that and I started feeling less overwhelmed, being able to focus more on the other things, like with my immediate and my career and my work …

Theme 18: Participants faced professional challenges with cultural, traditional

practices, and gender roles in the community.

A variant number of participants faced professional challenges with cultural and

traditional Hmong practices and gender roles. These challenges were interwoven

throughout participants' workplaces, families and communities.

> … you can be a leader in your profession, in your career, in your job you
> can do well and you're rewarded for it and it's very easy to see that
> success. It's harder to see it in the other track. And then if you want to
> be a leader in this other track because of the specific gender roles you
> can be a leader but one, it won't be recognized in the same way and sort
> of a more overt way and two, because of the defined roles there's certain
> ways that that leadership is looked that is being different from what you
> learned when you were in this other track of being out there and being
> more aggressive and more individualistic. Leadership I think in the
> Hmong community is more much more clanal and so, there's not that to
> say, women are very clanal but that leadership role in the Hmong
> community because of the gender roles isn't always inclusive of
> women's voices.

> … I get every single police report so I know exactly what's going on,
> and obviously professionally and personally are two different things.
> When they come to your home and they have my father listen to them
> you know and make decisions for them, it's like I know, like I know this
> stuff and it's at times it's hard to blur between the professional and
> personal because the Hmong community is so tightly closed; it's good,
> it's healthy, but at the same time it's like how can we not perpetuate the
> cycle and make it because I know I've spoken with my father about it,
> how dare you, I'm like dad you never, you did not raise me this way, you
> would never allow a man to touch me you know, I never heard you say it
> to any woman Hmong woman when they came to you as a couple or she
> came to you having marital issues … he goes, well at that point I can't
> say it. So to me it's a much deeper problem issue within the Hmong
> community within you know because my father knows that's not right,
> he knows.

> Just trying to further my education, like I said my father was very
> traditional so in terms of furthering my education, he never, he always
> kept us close and he never allowed us to go apply for college education
> so we always had to be close to the home. I always knew that was
> because we were girls and we were women, we he treated us that way or

just growing up and being around I was in a lot of Hmong non-profit places and you see the dynamics, of back, then you saw the dynamics of Hmong male roles in these non-profits and the Hmong women roles. And even though it was in the professional setting you always saw how males are more dominant just because that was the culture.

Domain 4: Systems of Support: Family, Role Models/Mentors and a Sense of Community

Theme 19: Family members supported education through verbal messages and through providing care for participants and their children.

It was typical that participants felt supported by family members both personally and in their educational and career aspirations. Participants felt supported through certain verbal messages as well as nonverbal acts like parents providing childcare.

> I remember in high school my mom and I were driving … she said you don't have to get married. Here in America you don't have to get married. Just become a lawyer because at that time I was thinking of being a lawyer … She was like you don't have to get married, you can support yourself here in America. You don't need a man … you can do that on your own as a woman here in America and I think that really stuck with me, I always think about that. My question now that I'm 23 and all my relatives are always nagging about when I'm going to settle down and I always think about what my mom said and like who says I have to get married.

> Yes early on it would be my grandmother and my parents. Whatever I said to my grandmother she just said you can do it. She never said you know you can't … Or you're a girl don't think about that. My mom did discourage me from the arts because she said you would starve. And I loved art back then when I was a young child and was very good at drawing. And then my dad he discouraged me from certain sports but not careers. Like I told him one time I wanted to play he said that's for guys. Well I ended up playing soccer when I was in high school and he came and pick me up from soccer practice. I think early on my parents really encouraged me…

Theme 20: Family members (siblings, cousins, parents) served as role models.

It was typical that participants cited family members as sources of inspiration and role models in their educational and career aspirations.

> I think my mom, growing up my mom never had the education that she really wanted. She grew up and went straight to working so many jobs; and so just seeing her and having her really push us, and seeing how much she sacrificed for us, really encouraged me and also my older sister to really pursue education and get to where our parents really wanted us to be at … so I think that definitely played a big part in growing up and getting a good career.

> My brother, my oldest brother, was the first to graduate from the UW of Madison and it was just such an inspiration for the rest of the family. He finished his master in electrical engineer, was working for the government during that time. So I was just so inspired by him and his success and living with them. You know he taught me just how to manage my time, some of the different ways that I could study better and he also actually spent time with me reviewing some of my homework, so it was strange that year that I was just so inspired and that's why I went into computer science. Later on, I decided it wasn't for me (laugh).

Theme 21: It was helpful when husbands supported participants' higher education pursuit and career aspirations.

A variant number of married participants felt that their husbands' support helped them in their educational and career aspirations. Participants described their marriage as one of partnership and described working as a team in navigating life, such as the pursuits of education, career, and cultural obligations to family and community.

> … education is very important in my life because I knew I didn't want to stay in that $5 an hour job working 40 hours a week. And being a young lady I felt I still had a lot of potential that I shouldn't settle for what I see. But my parents they had a different thinking though. They said well now that you're married you have a family of your own … But I said to them, Mom, I need to continue with my college education. I know I'm married but it's going to help me in the long term and my husband was pretty supportive too so the following year I continued with my education at the local university here …

Yeah, we were very, very active couple in the community before even before we got married and after we got married … on the weekends we were always at family gatherings or cultural events but education were my priority and there were nights where he had to go without me; and you know I had my parents, my parents were always there for me, for the children … or if I need to go to study, he would show up at the event and I would be at a library doing my research or doing my project for school. And so we learned how to balance it out. It was very important in those days to really connect and support each other.

Theme 22: Outside the family, participants also received personal and professional support.

It was a general theme that participants felt supported by individuals and found resources outside of their family, both personally and in their educational and career aspirations. Participants identified individuals, groups, and programs as supportive resources in their personal growth and in their education and career.

I guess part of the reason why I want to go into counseling is that when I was in high school, I was in a program and one of the, I think her title is student education specialist but she's more like a counselor to me. She really helped me my last two years, preparing me for ACT and really just giving me a lot of information about college, you know where to go, summer, all the pre-college programs and encouraged me to be part of their programs … my parents couldn't be there for me or they didn't understand the process of going to college so they didn't know I have to write a personal statement or they don't know how to help me with that … She continued to be somebody in my life that even to this day still helps me get something. So I think she's part of the reason I want to pursue this kind of career too cause I feel like I want to be like her.

I had a quite troublesome youth so when I was 13 years old … my parents, first generation had conflict right … and it got to the point where I just didn't get along with my parents and they kicked me out. I lived in a foster care system for a … my social worker's supervisor, she kind of took it upon herself to be my mentor … and that changed my whole life because I think at that point I didn't have that family system, I didn't have many friends either... She believed in me and even when I didn't believe in myself. She said you know what you're a smart, beautiful woman and you're gonna be fine and that made a difference in my life. I think without her I wouldn't be where I am today and it's not that she

taught me anything about life, nothing, she just was there, that's it you know because she believed in me, it gave me the inspiration or the motivation to do something with my life.

Theme 23: Participants' own and observed experiences of others sparked their interest

in helping people through addressing community issues and building resources.

Helping others and their communities was a typical theme in participants'

narratives. Through their personal and observed experiences, participants developed

interests in addressing community issues and in building resources to help. Many

participants talked about wanting to be role models and wanting to help ease the

challenges, which they themselves faced, for younger generations.

> Just thinking about how I define my own health and how my parents, my relatives, my grandparents, you know people from my community, how they define health as well and it doesn't really match up with the majority of the population where health is some medical or disease related … when I finished with that degree, because I was gaining the background of how to think about health care and how to approach health care, that was when it really dawned on me that I really did want to get into pharmacy and that I wanted, not only did I want to like learn about the approaches of health care but also learn about the health care itself, like what is a disease? What can we use to treat a disease? What are these like technologies and advances that are going on around me that probably like 90% of the people from my community don't know and so who's gonna be there to help filter in the right information or like give the appropriate information; and so at that time I'm like you know if I don't do it, who else is going to?

> I guess my motivation for wanting to give back to the community is because I've learned so much from the community you know. The community that didn't really accept me. The parents that didn't really love me or accept me. I learned so much and now I don't want another Hmong woman to go through what I've gone through you know. And yet it's really, now I look at the youth today, they still face the same situations. I mean my sister's telling me all her friends or her classmates are married and pregnant and I said to her that happened a lot when I was younger because of the conflict between parents and the children so they feel this is the only way out but it's still happening to this day and I think my parents they've mellowed out, they've become more Americanized,

more accepting and so they let my siblings do anything and it's not the same way it was before but you still see that happening so that's why I want to give back, I want to educate people that there is a better way…

Domain 5: Overcoming Challenges and Barriers

Theme 24: Participants felt compelled to prove that they could do what others believe otherwise.

A variant number of participants talked about proving to their families that they could succeed and that what they have chosen to pursue was worthwhile. Messages of doubt received from others became sources of motivation for participants to succeed. Participants talked of their struggles in having to contend with cultural and family traditions in order to pursue experiences that were traditionally perceived as unacceptable for Hmong women (e.g., living alone as an unmarried woman) or less expected of Hmong women (e.g., higher education).

> I think I was very optimistic at that time … I think I had this attitude I'm gonna show them you know, at some point I'll be able to demonstrate to them why all this is worth it and I don't know when that will be but it's having that patience that whenever that happens, help bridge what they didn't understand … I think having that foresight came from a lot of the activities I was doing and learning from other people that weren't just Hmong … it opened up my eyes to how other people think and how they process information and the kind of opportunities that's out there … just seeing that gives you the experiences and opportunities to explain and help bring people on board, but it's very hard to bring my family on board, but eventually they do understand cause I think they totally do. Because of the path I've taken I'm able to work across different sectors and help different people in the family …

> I knew my education was the way out. Cause when I got married at 16 my dad's like you're gonna get pregnant … He said he never thought I would graduate high school and that made me so angry, that was my motivation so I did. I had my daughter just before I graduated and then I finished high school and went on to college. I got divorced in college and my dad again disowned me at that point. He's like you're not my daughter anymore. I'm like okay. You know and then he says you'll

never graduate. To this day I'm still the only one who's graduated college … and so because my childhood was so turbulent and I had my parents not believing in me, that it just made me so angry that I said I'm gonna prove you wrong.

Theme 25: In place of a lack of validation from family and the Hmong community,

participants found personal and external validation.

A variant number of participants found validation within them and received it

from external sources when it lacked in their family and in the Hmong community.

Educational and career achievements were forms of validation, from self, others, and

the mainstream culture. Participants ability to come back to help their families was also

cited as a form of self-validation.

> … if you are needing something, if you're needing to build your self esteem, if you're needing someone to help guide you in your life personally, the professional route or the academic route gives you those clear indicators of success. You get a certificate in school, party for you when you're 18 and 22 and there are benchmarks for that, then you feel there is encouragement for this other path; whereas, if you go into the family path there's encouragement for it and there's a lot of pressure around it, but there's not necessarily that clarity or that outspoken congratulations you've now supported yourself for five years and then brought new children into the world, nobody throws a party for you.

> … I still feel sometimes I'm not good enough you know but then I also know there's something larger to life than just the piece of trying to get my parent's approval and trying to get them to you know love me and all that stuff. I have that. Because when you have nothing at all, when you don't have your parents behind you, you need to look for something, a bigger meaning to life and to me I turned to education. I turned to school and I loved learning too. And now because I guess my motivation for wanting to give back to the community is because I've learned so much from the community you know.

Theme 26: Personal and family struggles were motivators for change and success.

It was typical that participants used their personal and family struggles as a

source of motivation for change and success. Participants felt that seeing their parents

struggle with poverty and adjusting to the mainstream culture were motivators for them

to be successful. Their own experience with and observation of their parents engaging

in manual labor was often cited as impactful in their decisions for education and career.

> I think a part of it was because they worked labor jobs their whole lives and they didn't like it and they knew that they didn't want their kids to have to do that. They wanted us to have, so for them the ideal was that we would have an office job where we didn't have to carry you know stuff that was heavy, that we didn't have to get dirty. So their ideal was that we would have that, and in order to get that, we have to be educated and so they really had a vision for us that they um that helped them to kind of support us to get there.

> I don't think I ever had a career goal when I was younger but I knew that I grew up because my mom and my dad, they didn't make very much money and there was eight of us so we had to creative about how to get money. Every summer we had a cucumber field that my mom rented, it was about an acre every year, sometimes even more, and its hard labor and that's all that I did all summer long working … I knew I did not want to do that for the rest of my life and I could not do that for the rest of my life … also because my parents were on food stamps and it was hard for us because 0we had to wait until the beginning of the month to get food stamps … and I knew that's not how I wanted to live and that. I wanted to provide for my family and that I really wanted a nice house, you know this and that, and not do hard labor.

Theme 27: Education was seen as the key to change and bettering participants and

their families' lives.

It was typical that participants felt education was a key factor in bettering both

their and their families' lives. Participants saw a positive connection between education

and overcoming poverty and navigating their communities and environments.

> Again, the fact that it was a way out of poverty for me. It was a way out to have a better life and also I wanted to grow. I felt that if I allowed myself to be surrounded in that type of environment, maybe I would you know grow, maybe you know, because I see that there's a lot of possibilities in life but I just didn't know what it is, but I knew that maybe education will at least open doors, not just career-wise but maybe to grow as a person.

… I grew up doing all the translating cause my brother was very shy and he was not a talkative person so I ended up in elementary school going to the bank with my parents and doing all that stuff that I know a lot of other Hmong kids have done for their parents as well, and I guess that really, not really influenced my career choice, but influenced the fact that or it compounded the idea that education is important.

We also knew education was the key, was the key to a brighter future. Whether that's gonna earn us money or it's gonna earn us privilege or you know anything in the future, it was education … when you look at education it's usually money. As time went by I realized education wasn't just money. Education was about knowledge, it was about power … education really changes the way you are, how you look at things, how you appreciate, how you are connected with different cultures and different people, it's all within you, it's not something that money can just buy …

Domain 6: Resilience

Theme 28: Participants did not think negatively of parents who were not able to provide them support, instead were able to understand parents' perspectives and level of comprehension.

A variant number of participants engaged in perspective taking with their parents. Perspective taking helped participant to move forward because they were able to externalize, versus internalize, parents lack of support and to see it within contexts of financial, educational, cultural, and generational factors.

I am the first woman in my family, for how many generations, to get an education, a higher education. And when I had the opportunity given to me I took it. I took it you know even though a lot of people didn't believe in me you know in those days … Even my own father didn't even believe me. And I didn't blame him because he has never had an education, he has never gone beyond the third grade level of education; but I knew that one of these days I would be able to pave the way and show him yeah look at what I've accomplished, a profession as well.

I think as far as when you're a Hmong woman, I guess just Hmong, the problem with me I get bitter sometimes. I should be beating them. I

should be having those dreams. How come I don't have the same things they do or the same opportunities? Sometimes I'm okay well it's okay my situation's different you know they don't have the obligations I do so they're able to do more. Two of my girlfriends moved out and live on their own, I don't want to do that, especially when I'm not married and I don't want to have expense. But then I think okay her family's here, she's not the youngest, she's the middle child, her parents are very independent, they have a job they can drive. My mother doesn't drive so I think about it, well it's okay my situation's different. I think at the end of the day no matter how bitter or angry you might be you have to see the silver lining in it. Okay she loves me…I'm grateful for my mom, I had a really good relationship with her.

… my parents didn't go to college so they don't know what consists of finals week, you have to you know, people are cramming, you're studying. I've come home at three, four in the morning and they're like oh you're partying, you're doing other things, just things like that. I, in hindsight now can see how difficult it must have been for them to understand like any of this, what library's going to be open till then.

Theme 29: Participants accepted and were unfazed by what life dealt them; instead maintained an unshaken attitude to move forward with life and goals regardless of setbacks.

It was typical that when faced with setbacks in their lives, for example surrounding educational and career aspirations, participants persevered. They perceived their adversities as a part of life with which they had to deal with and move forward.

… it surprised me that I got laid off at that time, but I was one of 10,000 because there was a big merger between two big telecommunication companies so I decided what am I gonna do next. I knew I wasn't happy where I was, so it was kind of, I took it as a blessing in disguise, thought it was kind of a push for me to move on. I just brushed up my resume and started … I was not familiar with sales or the financial industry but the recruiter there was very friendly and I just got to talking with her, she invited me in and one thing led to another and before I knew it I was an agent and a registered rep with them and in sales.

I in hindsight, when I was pregnant the first time and going to school and working, I think that was the time I can look back thinking how, when did I sleep? When did I even do homework? You know just thinking

and I think it's just part of being women in general, that we find a way to do things when we have to do it. I didn't plan this out how I was gonna do that. I just knew this is what needed to be done, this is what I wanted to do to get that, so therefore, it was that what I needed to do … I think I do it really well, my kids are awesome girls, I'm very proud of them … There was never a time for reflection during these times when you have to move and make split-second decisions, so how are we gonna make this happen you know because then nothing could go wrong. You can't, if anything went wrong according to my schedule, I mean you just have to think quick, you have to be able to you know rely on those resources and call somebody up and say hey I need this hey I need this.

I cannot express enough that sometimes nothing can teach you more than the mistakes you made in life, the experience you went through. So, I'm not afraid of something that happened or if I made a decision it wasn't the right one. Nothing is set in stone. You can always try to recover or go the other way and see where that takes you.

Theme 30: Higher expectations and responsibilities placed on Hmong women were influential in their growth and self-sufficiency.

It was typical for participants to report having higher expectations and responsibilities placed upon them because of their gender. In having to juggle expectations and responsibilities, participants had to learn and build certain skills, which also helped them be more self-sufficient. For example, their responsibilities involved developing such skills as planning, self-management, multi-tasking, problem solving, and being resourceful.

Looking at everything how everyone turned out in my family now, my sister and I finished college, one of my brothers did but he's not applying his degree to anything that he's doing. My other two brothers tried going but then they have a complete set of different expectations; and like taking care of my parents, even now I'm probably the only person who interact with them the most.

… the reason why I'm such a go-getter and my sister's successful because my brother's who has less initiative, it's because of the way my parents raised us. My parents raised us in a sense they always relied on us for everything, it was always the girls. So early on we had

responsibility and we just had those things you know because of that liability that our parents put on us it made me just more responsible. The boys, oh those are boys, let them do what they want … So it was the fact that my parents really put the responsibilities on the girls and that allowed us to be, because we have also responsibility of school work made us more responsible, okay I got to be time management wise, I got to be able to get home and cook, do dishes for my mom - so it helped us in a way to be more responsible because, we in a sense, were raising the family.

Being a Hmong girl you have that same expectations from your parents but it's what you choose to do with it and I think because of my upbringing it made me a stronger person and I'm definitely, I think all the girls in our family are very outspoken and very strong you know. I have to say we probably have more back bone than my brothers do because we've had to fight to prove our worth to our parents you know.

Theme 31: Participants were highly reflective and mindful of the consequences of their actions.

Participants reflected persistently. It was typical for participants to ask questions of their personal selves and anticipated how their actions and its future consequences would affect their educational and career endeavors. Reflections in general and of their educational and career aspirations involved both participants and their families and were oriented to their present and future. Participants did not profess to have clear answers for their lives through reflections; instead, it was a process that guided them in decision-making and planning.

I keep a journal so I was reading in my journal from my job hunt my last semester in college, my first sort of more professional job hunt, listing things that were important to me …what I wanted to do, and at the time I had written down the three criteria. I can't remember them off the top of my head, one was that I wanted an environment that was, that had interesting people that I can really relate to and work with and that I could see fully contributing to the work … I didn't want to be just doing something not meaningful in my eyes. And the third part it had to be that the organization itself had to contribute to my life or the people

around me, in addition to the salary, something beside the monetary value to myself or my community.

I think a lot about the fact that I am a Hmong woman and how is that going to shape my career once I get married. I think about that a lot because if I get married to a very traditional family and I have to go home and cook as a daughter in law or else I'll be a bad daughter-in-law. How that influences my career is because I can't be going to happy hours after work because I got to come home and cook dinner. So in a sense when I think about those, the Hmong culture and how what a good Hmong woman would do, the things she's supposed to do, I could see how that could potentially impact my career, how fast I move along, or how much I'm able to do because of those obligations of Hmong women.

Summary

A total of six domains and 31 themes emerged that represented salient concepts about participants career development. In the first domain, participants talked about their conceptualization of what career is and what it meant to have career success. Domain 2 addressed the dynamic interplay of participants' self and career actualization processes. What emerged were themes of marriage, identity, and awareness of multicultural factors. Intricately woven throughout these themes were contextual factors including family, community, career and educational experiences. In Domain 3, participants discussed having to balance and negotiate their personal self and career with gender and cultural expectations within their family and community. In Domain 4, participants discussed various personal and professional sources of supports they received, both from within their family and from outside the family. Participants also talked about being inspired to address community issues and to build resources. Domain 5 addressed how participants navigated challenges and perceived barriers. Domain 6 addressed participants' resiliency and their ability to preserve. A list of the

domains and themes were summarized in Table 4.1 and variations within samples were

labeled in accordance to suggestions made by Hill et al. (1997).

Table 4.1. Final domains, themes, number of cases, and classification*

* As suggested by Hill et al. (1997), themes that applied to all participants were classified as general, themes that applied to half or more (>10) of the participants were classified as typical, and themes that applied to less than half (<10) of the participants were classified as variant, respectively.

Domains	Themes	N	Classification
Domain 1: Career Conceptualization	Theme 1: Career at different points in participants' lives is associated with an evaluation of financial necessity.	17	Typical
	Theme 2: Career involves helping others and making an impact.	16	Typical
	Theme 3: Career is pursuing a passion which fulfills participants' interest, challenges them, and brings them happiness.	18	Typical
	Theme 4: Career is a journey which changes throughout life and involves growth and advancement.	20	General
	Theme 5: Career success is a dynamic and integrative relationship between personal and professional livelihood.	18	Typical
Domain 2: Self and Career Actualization	Theme 6: Participants felt there was something more to life than their present situation and that marriage was not their only path.	6	Variant
	Theme 7: Participants had limited resources and family circumstances that often limited their views of future career options.	16	Typical
	Theme 8: Participants engaged in pre-college enrichment and other targeted preparatory programs that served as helpful venues for meeting mentors, learning about themselves, and exploring career, work, and education.	10	Typical
	Theme 9: Exposure to others of similar cultural background and experiences was influential in participants' development.	10	Typical
	Theme 10: Participants were open to exploring a multitude of experiences and possible careers	17	Typical
	Theme 11: Participants desired continued learning and growth in their career and	10	Typical

	personal development.		
	Theme 12: Participants were constantly aware that their identities (self, culture, gender, and ethnicity/race) played a role in their education and career.	15	Typical
Domain 3: Family, Cultural, and Gender Expectations	Theme 13: Participants were surrounded by ubiquitous messages about being female and getting married.	14	Typical
	Theme 14: Participants struggled in negotiating their family and cultural responsibilities with their own needs and wants for education and career.	14	Typical
	Theme 15: At points in their lives, participants recognized a need for independence and put their wishes first before certain family and traditional cultural expectations.	15	Typical
	Theme 16: Participants' career decisions were seldom made without including family factors.	15	Typical
	Theme 17: Participants juggled education, career, and familial and cultural obligations.	9	Variant
	Theme 18: Participants faced professional challenges with cultural, traditional practices, and gender roles in the community.	7	Variant
Domain 4: Systems of Support: Family, Role Models/Mentors, and a Sense of Community	Theme 19: Family members supported education through verbal messages and through providing care for participants and their children.	14	Typical
	Theme 20: Family members (siblings, cousins, parents) served as role models.	10	Typical
	Theme 21: It was helpful when husbands supported participants' higher education pursuit and career aspirations.	6	Variant
	Theme 22: Outside the family, participants also received personal and professional support.	12	Typical
	Theme 23: Participants own and observed experiences of others sparked their interest in helping people through addressing community issues and building resources.	20	General

Domain 5: Overcoming Challenges and Barriers	Theme 24: Participants felt compelled to prove that they could do what others believe otherwise.	8	Variant
	Theme 25: In place of a lack of validation from family and the Hmong community, participants found personal and external validation.	8	Variant
	Theme 26: Personal and family struggles were motivators for change and success.	16	Typical
	Theme 27: Education was seen as the key to change and bettering participants and their families' lives.	11	Typical
Domain 6: Resilience	Theme 28: Participants did not think negatively of parents who were not able to provide them support, instead were able to understand parents' perspectives and level of comprehension.	9	Variant
	Theme 29: Participants accepted and were unfazed by what life dealt them; instead maintained an unshaken attitude to move forward with life and goals regardless of setbacks.	15	Typical
	Theme 30: Higher expectations and responsibilities placed on Hmong women were influential in their growth and self-sufficiency.	16	Typical
	Theme 31: Participants were highly reflective and mindful of the consequences of their actions.	15	Typical

Chapter 5

Summary, Discussion, and Implications

Summary

This study explored the career development process of 1.5 generation Hmong American women who immigrated to the United States at a young age and completed a post-secondary education degree, and sought to answer the questions: How do 1.5 generation Hmong American women understand and make meaning of the term "career"; what are the themes and characteristics of the career development process for 1.5 generation Hmong American women; and what factors influence the career development processes of 1.5 generation Hmong American women? From data obtained through interviews with 20 participants, six domains and 31 themes emerged that addressed these research questions. The domains and themes represented salient concepts about participants career development: 1) career conceptualization, 2) self and career actualization, 3) family, cultural and gender expectations, 4) systems of support: family, role models/mentors, and a sense of community, 5) overcoming challenges and barriers, and 6) resilience.

Bronfenbrenner (1977), in his ecological model of behavior, identified four major subsystems influencing human behavior: microsystems, mesosystems, exosystems, and macrosystems. Themes that arose in the career development of participants in this study seemed best conceptualized with an ecological model. Cook, Heppner, & O'Brien (2005) nicely illustrated the relationships of Bronfenbrenner's major subsystems:

The career development of all women occurs in a specific cultural context; that is, the values, customs, and norms of society implicitly provide messages about appropriate and inappropriate career paths based on the cultural and gendered context of which the girl or woman is a part. The larger culture operating as a macrosystem perpetuates career myths and stereotypes related to race and gender and, in fact, institutionalize forms of race/gender discrimination. This macrosystem embodies such values as White male privilege, Eurocentric worldviews, race-/gender-appropriate ideologies, or race/gender typing of occupational choices. Macrosystem values may be internalized by the individual (e.g., internalized oppression) and, on the microsystem level, influence how others treat a woman because of her gender or ethnicity. In addition, mesosystems, or the interactions between two microsystems, such as a young girl's parents and her teachers, can have a powerful role in defining and reinforcing certain choices and influencing foreclosure on other choices. Finally, exosystems are linkages between subsystems that have an indirect, although many times highly influential, impact such as that of media images that provide girls and women with information about appropriate and inappropriate career choices (pp. 167-168).

Discussion

Domain 1: Career Conceptualization

Participants described career as a passion that fulfills their interest, challenges them and brings them happiness, and at the same time they can make a living from. It therefore is no surprise that participants felt that their personal and professional livelihoods both comprise their idea of career success.

At different points in their lives, participants thought about their career in association with financial necessity. Participants expressed importance in being able to financially support themselves and family, whether it is their own or their family of origin. For some participants, an evaluation of finances also included how well their financial income reflects their status within their career and how well it supports their desired life-styles. Literature show that the value placed on finances was consistent

with the finding of the importance of prestige in the career interests of Asian Americans (Leong & Tata, 1990; Leung et al., 1994). There are some validity as applied to participants in this study, however, the rich narratives afforded by qualitative methodology revealed that many of the participants related their evaluation of finances to their experiences growing up in poverty, in which their family endured manual labor and struggled to survive, and less so with prestige of their career.

A factor affecting a woman's career development is the centrality of relationships with others for her self-perception and life decisions; a relational orientation among women and a collectivistic orientation among people of color (Gilligan, Lyons, & Hanmer, 1990; Helms & Cook, 1999). In Thao's (2009) dissertation, he found that Hmong participants from the third wave, or those who came to the U.S. after 2003 and were 10 years or older, had a collective mentality to strive for education for the sake of their family, community, and Hmong society's benefit, name recognition, and self-sufficiency. The 1.5 generation Hmong American women in this study also cited valuing careers that involved helping others and making an impact within their communities. Participants related this value to having experienced and having observed their families and communities struggle with poverty and lacking resources.

Donnelly (1994) documented Hmong women's changing lives in the United States over the course of eight years. She stated that the economic system, family and household organization, educational practices, political relations, and the rest of social life are not independent systems co-existing to form a larger entity called a society; instead are held together and made meaningful by underlying cultural concepts. She

further stated that gender concepts, like other cultural convictions, organize and give meaning to daily experience. It has been approximately 20 years later and Donnelly's conceptualizations remain consistent in describing the experiences of Hmong women in the U.S. For participants in this study, their construction of career is a dynamic and multifaceted process involving self, family, and community that appeals to both their personal and professional identities, in an integrative manner. All participants talked about their career as a journey of growth and advancement which changes throughout their lives. They felt that these changes are dependent on processes within themselves that are influenced by others and their environment.

Domain 2: Self and Career Actualization

In addition to their status as women in the United States, the Hmong women in this study also contend with their ethnic minority status and contend to navigating their way among cultural contexts. Women of color are particularly susceptible to double binds that present contradictory, culturally based definitions for appropriate behaviors (Unger, 1995; Oakley, 2000; Laird, 2000, Cook et al., 2005). Involved in these processes are participants' quest for personal and career actualization. Cook et al. (2005) stated that any framework used to conceptualize the career development of women and of racial and ethnic minorities must accommodate the multiple influences shaping their experiences concurrently and over time.

Participants were constantly aware of their identities and the affects it might have on their education and career. It was typical for participants to frame their experiences in regards to gender, ethnicity, and culture; and to describe their identities as self apart from family, as a daughter, as a mother, as a daughter-in-law, and as a

single woman. Fendya (1995), in a phenomenological study of being a Hmong woman in America, found that a woman's sense of identity and her ideas of what constitutes a successful life in this country reflect the tension between, and her attempts to integrate, American values of individualism and self-determination and Hmong values of interdependence and kinship. Ngo (2002) found that the perspectives and experiences of the Hmong American female college students in her study suggest that early marriage may be a method of responding to school alienation or a means of contesting parents' restrictions on young women's social lives. Ngo stated that Hmong identity and social practices, such as marriage, must be understood as dynamic and ever changing and that Hmong females' responses to social and educational practices are much more complex than explained by a cultural-difference model.

These notions discussed provide a framework for understanding the dynamic negotiating processes as described by participants' rich discussions in this study about marriage and pursuing higher education and careers. Some participants talked about the limitation of growing up knowing only that the next step and expectations for a Hmong girl is to get married and start a family. One participant described this as the "cultural glass ceiling", or of not knowing and being able to see what else is out there for Hmong girls beyond a certain age. Another participant talked about getting married as a way to gain independence from her parents, which reflect Ngo's (2002) study finding. Other participants talked about having a feeling that there are other purposeful meanings to their lives than only following the traditional marriage route. For the participants in this study, marriage is ubiquitous. All twenty participants talked about their career processes in some relation to marriage. A frequency count of 199 words was found within

participants' transcriptions when the words marriage, marriages, marry, and married were searched. This count did not include words and references related to marriage (e.g., children, in-laws, etc) which exponentially would add to its omnipresence. Unfortunately, with the exception of this current study, no literature exists in understanding the career development of Hmong women and no literature exists regarding the impact of marriage on Hmong women's careers. In general, career development literature has neglected to give full attention to the study of the impact of the institution of marriage on the career development of women of color.

Participants in this study did not speak ill of marriage but felt agency in shaping this path and their life, and they possessed curiosity about their overall potential. The alternative paths to marriage were not necessarily easily identifiable; instead participants described it as a desire for experiences. Fendya (1995) found that for a Hmong woman, education is considered the key to a successful life, defined as one that includes economic self-sufficiency and security, increased personal autonomy within the context of ongoing relationships, and advancement of the family and Hmong community. The educational environment serves as a transitional space between cultures, providing her with opportunities for the exploration of her potentials and the integration and consolidation of her identity.

In Thao's (2009) dissertation study, he found that participants who immigrated to the U.S. after 2003 emphasized being educated and intellectual, whereas, the first (1975-1984) and second (1985-1999) waves participants emphasized careers for the purpose of economic survival first. The third wave participants indicated that having a job is important but being educated is their number one priority and aspiration. This

wave is similar to the 1.5 generation participants in this study in their desire for learning

and that they will more than likely be the first of their family to attend college in the

near future. Thao's finding also supported the similarity between his sample of third

wave participants and participants in this study in how they viewed education as a

source of personal and familial betterment and not necessarily initially perceiving it as

translating into a livable career.

Participants in this study keenly followed their interests and pursued a multitude

of experiences. In reflecting back, participants saw these experiences as building blocks

in their career. Participants expressed a desire for opportunities to continue to learn and

grow in their career and personal development. Participants were able to gain these

opportunities by engaging in pre-college enrichment and other preparatory programs,

volunteer and paid work experiences, and participants felt that both positive and

negative experiences helped to inform next steps in their career decision. Through these

programs, participants were able to meet mentors, learn about themselves, and were

given opportunities to explore career, work, and education. Participants' openness to a

multitude of experiences may have served to compensate for their limited knowledge

about career options. Participants cited lack of vocational role models and lack of

expectations and support for their career exploration growing up. It is noted here that

this theme differed from Theme 20 (Domain 4) that discuss family members serving as

role models. Here participants were speaking directly about their limited knowledge

about career options due to a lack of vocational role models within the family and the

lack of encouragement from family to learn about the various careers and to pursue a

career.

Dissimilar to Thao's (2009) finding that education is emphasized in the home for third wave participants, participants' families in this study lacked this prominence. The difference may be accounted for by the likelihood that although third wave families are newer immigrants who came after 2003, these families have first and second wave individuals, families and the community at large as role models. Instead, participants in this study discussed having value placed on their multiple roles, such as cultural obligations and expectation in being a daughter, wife, daughter-in-law, and mother. Unlike Thao's third wave participants, participants in this study lacked role models and mentors from similar cultural backgrounds growing up. When they did encounter such role models and mentors, like other Hmong and other Hmong women, and saw themselves positively reflected, participants felt a reinvigorated sense of self confidence and motivation to pursue their aspirations

Domain 3: Family, Cultural, and Gender Expectations

Participants in this study, similar to Thao's (2009) third wave participants, were motivated by their parents or relatives' past hardship and lack of access to opportunities. Participants in both studies are also similar in that they straddle growing up in the U.S. as well as growing up in a family that has not had as much time to acculturate or assimilate. They are the promising generation in their families, more than likely are the first to have attended college or, in the case of Thao's third wave participant, will attend college in the near future. This means that these Hmong women will often have to negotiate multiple cultural contexts, including the systems and cultures of the mainstream, community, and their family. Given these factors, it is not surprising that participants in this study reported some contention with familial, cultural, and gender

contexts in understanding and negotiating education and career. Career development

research on minority groups found that women and racial/ethnic minority students

generally report significantly more perceived educational and career barriers; and lower

levels of career decision-making, self-efficacy, family support, role model influence and

career decidedness than male and Caucasian American college students (Luzzo &

McWhirter, 2001; Lopez & Ann-Yi, 2006; Chang, 2009). It is evident from their

narratives that participants in this study have encountered educational and career

barriers within their family and community. Participants cited lack of role models,

specifically those of similar background. Family support for these participants is

contradictory in the sense that while families do value education, they do not value it

highly for women. Families do provide care for participants and their children, but

there remains a pervasive message about marriage and gender-roles. Familial support is

further discussed under Domain 4.

Participants discussed being female and being surrounded by ubiquitous

messages about marriage. They received direct pressures from family and relatives to

marry as well as indirect messages that are pervasive in the culture. Participants

especially voiced frustrations in the direct pressures they receive from family and

relatives. Participants do want to get married but when and to whom may differ

depending on family and relatives' perspectives and traditional cultural practices.   In

their narratives, one participant talked about how her parents seemed eager to give her

up to any willing male regardless if he is a good person or not, one participant talked

about the stigma that if you are not married by a certain age, this being in your teens,

you were an "old maid", and another participant reflected back on her experience while

in college and wondering if there is something wrong with her that she is still not married. Another participant was told that her outgoing attitude and her strong spiritedness may be reasons Hmong guys did not want to date her.

Participants' career decisions were seldom made without consideration of family and culture, whether explicitly or implicitly. Many struggled to balance what they want and what is expected from their family and culture. Participants who were married and those who were single shared similar struggles of juggling family and cultural obligations while pursuing education and career. For the participants who were married and who have children, it often meant that they must also juggle having children and juggle obligations with in-laws and relatives from their husbands' side of the family. As suggested by Walker-Moffat (1995), Hmong American women's traditional roles as daughters, wives, and mothers often interfere with their education. If these roles interfere with education, it subsequently and perhaps simultaneously also interferes with career. Participants' narratives indicated that traditional roles have affected and have interfered with their education and career aspirations. Participants in this study however have obtained post-secondary education degrees or higher and are engaged in professional work positions. This suggests that participants possess or have developed skills necessary to overcome barriers and challenges, or that they have systems in place to help them navigate these processes. This is further discussed throughout the next three domains.

At some point in their lives, participants recognized a yearning for psychological and physical freedom from familial and cultural holds. Some cited critical moments in their lives where they felt this strongest. During these moments, participants made

decisions to put their needs and their self first. Participants expressed feeling a sense of agency in shaping their own lives. Lowe (1996) indirectly spoke to this theme when she argued that explanations of Hmong experiences that focus only on filial piety or generational conflict overlooks the agency and critical responses of Hmong Americans to their experiences in U.S. society. The Hmong women in this study seem to have found a medium for self actualization and continuing to honor the filial piety system that Hmong culture is based through obtaining education. Because participants' families do value education, even though not as highly for females, these Hmong women were able to use education as justification for pursuing certain activities and experiences. Many participants discussed how in bettering themselves, they are more able to come back and to help their family and community.

For women of color, the confluence of both race and gender may pose additional challenges to their career development (Cook et al., 2005). A salient and troubling interaction of race and gender in career development involves the compounded discrimination that women of color face in the world of work (Betz, 1994, Oakley, 2000). In their career, participants in this study discussed challenges they faced as Hmong women and traditional practices that were barriers in their professional practices and personal beliefs. Many participants talked about being women leaders and advocates in their careers, and feeling validated by the larger society, but unable to put into practice in their community. Participants spoke of leadership and of wanting to improve their communities (i.e., addressing domestic violence) but cultural and gender roles continue to exist as barriers. One participant said, "… you know my friends, family, relatives supported me through education, not only with monetary value but in

terms of emotional supports, and so I want to be able to say I matter in their community as well you know, but it's hard because you go back there, you have higher education then you're thinking thinking everyone else make you even lower again …". Although participants were educated Hmong women who are a part of the workforce, participants still feel that men are more valued and continue to be more dominating in the Hmong community and culture. One participant said, "And even though it was in the professional setting you always saw how males are more dominant just because that was the culture". Another participant stated that "leadership in the Hmong community is not always inclusive of women's voices". Although these participants defined career success as an integrative relationship between their personal and professional, their professional career does not seemed to be as valued in their families and communities. Lacks of affirmation for participants in their achievements are further discussed under Domain 5.

Domain 4: Systems of Support: Family, Role Models/Mentors and a Sense of Community

Many participants felt supported, through verbal and nonverbal messages, by family members in their life decisions and in pursuing their education and career. Participants felt encouraged by verbal messages; for example, that it was okay if they did not marry, or that they should not let their status as a woman hinder them from doing things. Participants also translated certain nonverbal acts as support for what they have chosen to pursue. Childcare was interpreted as a supportive act by parents and in-laws. One participant spoke of how her father discouraged her from high school sports because he felt it was for males, but yet he still came and picked her up from practice.

Of the participants that were married, six of the 11 felt that their husband's support helped them in their pursuant of education and career. These participants described their marriage as one of partnership. They described working as a team with their husband in navigating life together, such as pursuits of education, career, and cultural obligations to family and community. Chang (2009) in her study of Hmong American college students found that contextual support variables (i.e., family support) accounted for 14% of Career Decidedness (CD). This suggests that Hmong American female college students might benefit from interventions that increase family support and role model inspiration.

Mentoring and role models at the micro-system level, or the interpersonal interactions within a given environment (e.g., family, school), have been shown to play a critical role in career development of girls and women (Betz, 1994; Barrow, Armstrong, Vargo, & Boothroyd, 2007; Rhodes, Lowea, Litchfielda, & Walsh-Sampa, 2008; Viets, Baca, Verney, Venner, Parker, & Wallerstein, 2009). This is consistent for participants in this study. Participants cited family members as sources of inspiration and role models in their personal development and their educational and career aspirations. Participants felt inspired by siblings who went on to college and motivated by their parents' struggles. They also identified mentors and role-models outside of the family, for example teachers and social workers, whom were influential and inspirational in their personal and career development.

In examining family and community influences on the career aspirations of Hmong students, Thao (2009) found that a discrepancy between the educational levels of parents and their children contributed to a lack of knowledge in the areas of

educational achievement and career choice. Outside of the family, participants also identified role models and mentor who they felt play a significant role in their lives. These individuals supported, believed, and encouraged them in their educational and career development. In addition to role models and mentors, programs such as pre-college enrichment and career exploration programs helped to compensate those participants whose parents and families may not have had the knowledge or experiences that can support them in their educational and career exploration. Scott and Ciani (2008) found females who attended career exploration sessions reported significant increases in their efficacy for career planning and problem solving. Consistent with this finding, participants in this current study felt that these types of programs were as helpful resources through which they were able to meet mentors, learn about themselves, and were given the opportunities to explore career, work, and education.

Helping others and making an impact within their community was a part of participants' construction of what a career is. Participants connected this value to their families' struggle with poverty and lacking certain resources, as well as their observations of others' struggles in the community. Through these personal and observed challenges, participants developed interests in addressing community issues and in building resources to help their community. Participants own personal struggles in contending with family and cultural aspects have also influenced their desire to serve as role models and mentors for the younger Hmong generations. For example, participants talked about conflicts with their families, of not having role models, of lacking guidance as they entered college, and of not knowing how to culturally adjust as they enter the work force. Chang (2009) found that the presence of role models

appeared to be a significant predictor for career decision-making self-efficacy and career decidedness among Hmong American female college students. It is beneficial on two levels that participants in this current study serve as mentors and role models: first, younger Hmong American female might better see themselves reflected in another Hmong American woman because of their shared ethnicity, gender, and similarities in the cultural contexts they grew up in; and secondly, having mentors and role models represented who have finished college, have worked, and for some participants, simultaneously managing being married and having children.

Domain 5: Overcoming Challenges & Barriers

In researching the exceptional academic performance of 31 female and 19 male low socioeconomic college students of color, Morales (2008) found that females faced more resistance than males in pursuing of their college and career goals, resulting in the need for them to overcome unique obstacles and challenges. Participants in this study talked about their struggles in having to negotiate family and culture in order to pursue paths less accepted and less expected for women. Participants in this current study talked about wanting to prove to their families that they could succeed, and to show that what they have chosen to pursue is worthwhile. Some participants talked about turning others' doubt into motivation to succeed and to prove their doubters wrong. They held on to their optimism that what they are doing, in the long run, will be worth it.

Participants' personal and family struggles served as a source of motivation. Many participants felt that seeing their parents struggle with poverty and adjusting to the mainstream culture were motivators for them to lead a different life. Their own experience with and observation of their parents engagement in manual labor work was

often cited as impactful in their decisions and motivations to pursue education and career. Consistent with this finding, Thao (2009) found that families' past hardship, current struggle, poverty, and oppression influenced his Hmong participants' perspective and motivation in education and career aspirations. Participants felt that education is a key factor in bettering themselves and in helping to better their families. They made a connection between education, successfully navigating their environments, and getting out of poverty. Participants recognized that their families placed value on education and therefore used education as justification for pursuing certain experiences and activities that may otherwise not have been supported for girls within their families (i.e., staying late after at school to study; joining certain clubs).

Although these women were resilient in the face of doubt and opposition, their internal struggles and the situations they had to bear to persevere should not be overlooked. When affirmation lacked in their family and the Hmong community, participants found validation within themselves and from external sources. Their educational and career achievements were forms of self-validation, as well as validation from mainstream culture. Educating themselves and coming back to help their family and community served as a form of self-validation that their pursuant of education and growth has been worthwhile and now benefiting others. It was not apparent that participants received overt praise from their families but participants felt more validated that family members come to them for assistance.

Many participants talked about being women leaders and advocates in their career but unable to put into practice in their community. Participants were educated Hmong women who spoke of leadership, of wanting to improve their communities (i.e.,

addressing domestic violence) but cultural and gender roles continue to exist as a barrier

in their communities. In an ethnographic study that explored the issue of gender role

changes encountered by Vietnamese-American women, Zhou & Bankston (2001) stated

that in addressing broader views about gender roles, special attention must be paid to

whether refuge in the U.S. has brought about a break from traditional Vietnamese ways

of thinking about men and women or whether these ways of thinking have shifted in

subtle ways to adapt to new circumstances. Likewise, we must further explore whether

the Hmong community has made strides in including the voices of women and

validating women's achievements, or are women pursuing education and work outside

the home only to accommodate the socio-economic realities in the U.S. The accounts

from this study suggest that Hmong women's achievements are minimally

acknowledged and status quo maintained. One participant stated, "…for the work place

or my career it's what I'm doing to advance myself while in the Hmong culture it's

really hard to ... so I don't promote the work I do in the culture as much". Another

participant shared that within the Hmong community, her work and involvement on

committees and boards do not define her. Instead what really defined her is how she

treated her elders, husband, and how she supports her family. It appears that value that

continues to be placed on traditional women's roles, and the incongruence in the

practice and validation of Hmong women's' careers in society at large and lack of

within the community, work to sustain gender specific roles within the Hmong

community. This also indicates that work needs to be done in the Hmong community in

affirming Hmong women's achievements and how far they have come. This work will

want to engage the community in dialogue about topics related to gender roles,

education, career, and what constitutes community pride in the Hmong community. See the implications and recommendations section for an example of how such platforms for dialoging can be implemented and facilitated. In a phenomenological study of being a Hmong woman in America, Fendya (1995) stated that dialogue is recognized as a vehicle for achieving greater understanding of the differences between American and Hmong values and for promoting cultural change. This author found that Hmong women's concern with dialogue reflects the juxtaposition of her growing sense of personal autonomy and differentiation from others with her desire to establish and maintain supportive relationships. Fendya also articulated the importance of support for Hmong women's aspirations both outside and within the Hmong community, as it provides confirmation and legitimization of her developing identity and helps her to cope with the stresses of a bicultural life.

Domain 6: Resilience

When faced with situations that may otherwise have been blockades in their lives, participants in this study have persevered. Resilience was reflected in participants' cognitive and affective processing, and in their forward moving mind-set. Participants engaged in reframing and perspective-taking. Many participants reframed parents' lack of support for their education as a lack of understanding since their parents have not attended any K-12 schools or colleges in the U.S., and have minimal concepts of what it may entail. Conflicts arose when participants' educational activities operated outside of cultural norms and compounded with parents' lack of understanding about college entailed. For example, some participants talked about their family not understanding why they were at school in the evenings or staying out late to study.

Participants seemed to possess an optimistic approach to challenges. They maintained an action-oriented attitude when faced with adversities and setbacks in their lives. Participants did not deny that life has, at times, dealt them a hard hand. However, they perceived their adversities as a part of life that they have to deal with and move forward from. In her dissertation, Chang (2009) found that Optimism did moderate the relation between perceived Educational Barriers (EB) and Career Decidedness (CD) for Hmong American female college students.

How have participants learned to manage hardships? Many participants felt having higher expectations and responsibilities placed upon them may have helped them to be more self-sufficient. Participants from a young age had to learn, and put into practice, skills such as planning, self-management, multi-tasking, problem solving, and being resourceful. Many participants juggled heavy responsibilities in their family, such as cooking, cleaning, and interpreting for their parents while maintaining their school work, first in secondary school, and then as college students. Participants felt that their parents relied more heavily on them at home while they allowed boys to pursue freely whatever they wanted. Hmong communities are similar to the Vietnamese communities, as studied by Zhou and Bankston (2001), in the way that when girls came home from school, they are expected first to help with the housework and care for younger siblings and then do their studying. In contrast to boys who were allowed to participate in relatively unsupervised activities outside the home, girls often had to stay home doing household chores. Zhou and Bankston found a similar trend in Vietnamese women outperforming their male counterparts in education, as Hmong women outperforms their male counterparts (Lo, 2009; Lee, 2005).

Participants in this study reflected continuously about their education and career. In their reflections, participants did not profess to have come up with perfect solutions or models for others to follow. Rather, they described processes that helped them reframe, take perspectives, as well as guide them in decision-making and planning. Fendya (1995) found that Hmong women's concern with dialogue reflects the juxtaposition of her growing sense of personal autonomy and differentiation from others with her desire to establish and maintain supportive relationships. Although Hmong women may be lacking or shying away from opportunities to dialogue with the community on such issues as gender roles, in their quest for self and career actualization, the Hmong women in this study engaged in inner dialogues while navigating the multicultural contexts they lived in and their various identities. For example, participants often asked questions and projected how their actions might affect them and their families.

Research that compared the career development process of women and racial and ethnic minority group members has found that the relations among career variables might vary depending on race/ethnic and sex group membership. Chang's (2009) dissertation found that the relation between perceived Career Barriers (CB) and Coping self-efficacy with Career Barriers (CC) was significant for a Hmong American female college sample. Lopez and Ann-Yi (2006) found a similar significant relation between perceived Career Barriers (CB) and Coping self-efficacy with Career Barriers (CC) for an African American female college student sample. Many participants reframed their conflicts with their family as financial, cultural and generational in nature instead of personalizing and internalizing the negativity. The dynamic interplay in participants'

cognitive and affective processes served as coping mechanisms. Participants did not deny the impact that adversities had on them, but reframing, perspective-taking, optimism, reflection, and inner dialogues have helped them to move forward.

Conclusion

Themes that relate to family, culture, gender, ethnicity, identity, self, and community are currents in participants' understanding of their career development. Participant narratives highlight the fluid and dynamic nature of their career and personal development and make known the ways in which traditional practices and cultural practices are not fixed, instead are continuously being negotiated and changed. The focus of this study is to gain an understanding of the career development of 1.5 generation Hmong American women. It is very likely that studying the career development of other ethnic and cultural groups may produce similar themes, as well as reveal the evolving nature their culture.

Participants in this study live in and negotiate multiple cultural contexts and contend with multiple identities. It therefore comes as no surprise that participants' conceptualization of their career development was not a solitary description. Instead, their conceptualization is a dynamic and multifaceted process involving self, family, and community that appeals to both their personal and professional identities in an integrative manner.

In meaning making of the term career, participants described it as pursuing a passion that fulfills their interests, challenges them, and at the same time they can make a living from in order to support themselves and their family. Participants desired being appropriately challenged to continue to grow and advance in their career, and to feel a

reciprocal sense of happiness and compelling enthusiasm for their career and from their

career, respectively. In a career, participants valued helping others and making an

impact within their community. Participants felt their personal and professional

livelihoods both comprised their idea of success; and that their overall view of success

is relational to and dependent upon their environment, such as family and their

community. Participants felt that their career was a journey that changed throughout

life and involved growth and advancement. They did not necessarily have one set career

in which they linearly based decisions, instead followed their interests, sought

experiences, and took advantage of presented opportunities that became building blocks

to a multitude of career options.

Throughout their lives, participants' juggled education and career with familial

and cultural obligations, and this is was especially salient for those participants who are

married, have children, and attend to their in-laws. They struggled with negotiating

family and cultural traditions, values and obligations with their own needs and wants for

education and career. Messages about marriage were ubiquitous starting from a young

age. Participants talked about the limitation of growing up knowing only that the next

step and expectations for a Hmong girl is to get married and start a family; however,

participants felt there must be other purposeful meanings to their lives than only

following the traditional marriage route. They were not against the idea of marriage but

felt agency in shaping this path and felt an overall curiosity about their potential. At

some point in their lives, participants recognized a yearning for psychological and

physical freedom from familial and cultural holds. There were critical moments in

participants' lives where they felt this strongest, and during these times they put their

needs first. Because families valued education participants used this as leverage to pursue the experiences they desired. In bettering themselves through education, participants felt they were able to come back to help their family and community.

During the early parts of their career exploration, participants were limited in their knowledge and resources about career options due to a lack of vocational role models and a lack of active expectations and support for their career exploration from family. Outside of the family, participants identified role models and mentors who believed in them and encouraged and supported them in their educational and career development. Mentors, role models, engagement in pre-college enrichment programs and other preparatory programs, and participants' desire for gaining a multitude of experiences compensated for their limited knowledge and for parents may not have the knowledge to support them in education and career exploration. Through these sources of support participants learned about themselves, and were provided the opportunity to explore career, work, and education. Mentors and role models from similar cultural backgrounds were particularly inspiring for participants. Participants own personal struggles in contending with family and cultural aspects have also influenced their desire to want to serve as role-models and mentors for the younger Hmong generations.

Within their families, participants felt supported by certain family members, both personally and in their educational and career aspirations. Certain family members were also sources of inspiration and were role models for them. Married participants felt that their husbands were supportive, and that they worked as a team in navigating life, such as the pursuits of education, career, and cultural obligations to family and community.

Reframing, perspective taking, optimism, reflection, and inner dialogues were components in participants' resiliency. Their engagement in perspective taking with their parents helped them move forward because they were able to externalize parents lack of support and to see it within contexts of financial, educational, cultural, and generational factors. Participants perceived their adversities as a part of life with which they had to deal with and move forward. When faced with situations that may otherwise have been blockades in their lives, participants have persevered. Participants possessed or have developed skills (e.g., planning, multi-tasking, self-managements) necessary to overcome barriers and challenges, or have set in place systems (e.g., family, mentors, role models) to help them navigate these processes. Participants maintained an action-oriented and forward moving attitude when faced with adversities and setbacks in their lives, in general, and surrounding educational and career aspirations. Unlike boys, who were mostly given more freedom, participants talked about how having higher expectations and responsibilities placed upon them may have helped them to develop more self-sufficiency and skills.

Participants in this study described a lack of validation and recognition for Hmong women's experiences and achievements in the Hmong community. Participants found validation within themselves and from external sources. Their educational and career achievements were forms of self-validation and affirmed by mainstream culture. Participants spoke of leadership and of wanting to improve their communities, however, participants seemed more accepted by the larger society for their leadership and career and less so in the Hmong community. Although these participants defined career success as an integrative relationship between their personal and professional, their

professional careers do not seem to be as valued, as compared to their male

counterparts, in the Hmong community.

Implications and Recommendations

There exists little to no scholarly research on the career development of Hmong

Americans, and this study is the first to qualitative attempt to understand one group, the

1.5 generation Hmong American women. Ongoing research is needed on the career

development of Hmong American women/girls and men/boys across the generations,

and specifically aimed at building applicable theories and models for this population.

This study showed that the career development process of 1.5 generation Hmong

American women is a dynamic process that involves their self, family, and their

community. These women live and negotiate multiple cultural contexts and identities.

They described their career development as a journey of self and career actualization

that is influenced by their environment. Cook et al. (2005) stated that any framework

used to conceptualize the career development of women and of racial and ethnic

minorities must accommodate the multiple influences shaping their experiences

concurrently and over time. These authors also stated that the interactions between two

microsystems, such as a young girl's parents and her teachers, can have a powerful role

in defining and reinforcing certain choices and influencing foreclosure on other choices.

Recommendations are based on the findings of this study and aimed at targeting

the microsystems that were a salient part of participants' narratives. Recommendations

can be further tailored and detailed to meet the implementation realities in K-12

schools, colleges and universities, and/or in community settings. These suggestions are

directed at programming for the Hmong population and in particular Hmong

women/girls, but it is arguable that with some modifications there is applicability for other ethnic minority groups.

1) *Mentoring*. Build in a mentoring program where Hmong Americans can mentor other younger Hmong Americans about career. Recruiting mentors from diverse tracks is also important, particularly science and engineering fields for Hmong women/girls. How we see ourselves reflected vary, and mentees should have the option to choose what they look for in a mentor (e.g., gender, career interest). Brief questionnaires or interviews with mentees can help identify the best matches. Also, consider more creative ways for mentors and mentees to meet before a match is made; for example, plan a speed mentor-mentee matching event that incorporate similar concepts as speed dating. In addition to one-on-one matches, programming should incorporate frequent forums where mentees will have opportunities to engage with other mentors on an informal basis and invited to contact individuals that they meet. A mentor, as described in participants' narratives, were not individuals assigned to them; instead, it happened through a process of building a relationship with someone who has gained their trust, and who has inspired, encouraged, supported, and believed in them.

2) *Pre-College Enrichment and Career Exploration Programs*. Participants felt that pre-college enrichment and career exploration programs were essential in their career development. There is a need for career exploration programs that focus non-traditional education and careers tracks for Hmong women/girls. Of the women in this study, only three were initially oriented towards the science and engineering fields, and two of these three participants changed careers into the social services field. Of these three participants, two initially became interested in the science and engineering fields

because one had a sibling in engineering, and the other engaged in science and technology exploration camps. Retention of women of color in the science and engineering fields and corporate settings is another area of concern that needs to be addressed; however, is outside the scope of this paper and specifically this recommendation section.

3) *Experiential Learning*. Participants in this study learned about careers, what they liked and did not like, from engaging in a multitude of experiences. Programming for education and career exploration of Hmong girls and boys and young Hmong adults should include experiential learning opportunities where they can gain access to diverse experiences. Experiential learning in the fields of science and engineering is especially necessary because Hmong women/girls are often more likely to be exposed to knowledge about social services through helping their families; and because role models in the communities for social services fields are more represented.

4) *Family Education*. Implement programming that informs families about education and careers. Family orientations, at all levels of educational training, are prime opportunities to engage Hmong families. Participants in this study talked about school and work and that their families do not know what they do and do not know how much effort they put into it. The purpose of these orientations is to bridge the individuals' microsystems. Workshops should be tailored and presented through knowledge of factors salient to Hmong families and culture. Topics to consider are : basic information about the structure of the level of educational training and what might be expected of students (i.e., K-12, college, or graduate school); what Hmong children may experience as a student; what they, as the family, might experience; appropriate

information about career and work exploration (e.g., introduction of the importance of being exposed to a broad range of experiences at the K-12 level; introduction of work versus career at the high school level and higher; and provide information about majors, career, and what one can do with a major at the college level); how Hmong families can help their children succeed in school; how parents can stay engaged (this will depend on if other programming exists at the schools and colleges). Topics that provide information that is supported or framed by research on the Hmong would be ideal (e.g., the results of this study). It would be most effective to have orientation led by and workshops conducted by Hmong staff that are bilingual, and also to include Hmong students in the school/colleges (e.g., at the college level, collaborate with Hmong student groups). Professionals and prominent Hmong figures in the community who specialize in education and career development can also be invited to present relevant workshops to Hmong families during orientation sessions.

5) *Engage the Hmong Community in Dialogue.* Implement programming where Hmong professionals can have a platform to engage each other in facilitated dialogue about factors that influences Hmong men and women's educational and career development. Participants in this study talked about the lack of validation for Hmong American women's educational and career achievements in the Hmong community. Furthermore, participants talked about how their leadership and work contributions are more valued and accepted in the larger society but less so in the Hmong community. Dialogue is recognized as a vehicle for achieving greater understanding of the differences between American and Hmong values and for promoting cultural change (Fendya, 1995). In light of the themes from this study, it seems that dialogue is warranted about what

constitutes community pride in the Hmong community, how is it affecting Hmong

American women, and how we as a group and as individuals contribute to its

perpetuation. Other dialogues might address the changing gender-roles within the

Hmong community related to education and career, and understanding factors in the

underperformance of young Hmong boys and some Hmong girls.

6) *Create New Forums and Strengthen Existing Forums*. As an example, Bridge:

Connecting People to Success is a program in the Twin Cities for recent Hmong college

graduates who are transitioning from student to working professionals. Bridge hosts

workshops and plan events where participants can gather to network, to share ideas and

experiences, and to support one another.   Participants in this study talked about not

having vocational role models from others similar in background. Participants also

talked about wanting to give back to their community and wanting to be available as

role models and mentors for younger generations. Bridge can be strengthened by taking

a research-based approach to creating a more holistic vision in addressing concerns of

this Hmong population. For example, based on findings from this study, Bridge can

provide opportunities for its participants to mentor other Hmong who are younger (i.e.,

K-12 and college students), and by having opportunities where participants can be

mentored by more seasoned working professionals. In addition to the informal

networking events and workshops, Bridge might consider hosting facilitated discussion

forums on pertinent topics related to education, career and work within the community.

See recommendation 5 above for details.

7) *Adopt and Implement an Ecological Model to Career Counseling*. Cook et al.

(2005) discussed an ecological approach to career counseling that may be more

culturally relevant to Hmong American women, and other populations of color. In using

an ecological model, career counselors are challenged to make the environment more

helpful and affirming for the individual, and also to help the client gain skills to cope

successfully in the environment. Counselors can intervene using direct (i.e., individual

or group counseling) or indirect (i.e., consultation) methods for remedial,

developmental, or preventative purposes with either the person or environment, or both,

as targets of change (Conyne & Cook, 2004). A restructuring of traditional career

counseling interventions is called for. The history of career counseling has mostly

focused on individual trait assessments, teaching decision-making skills and increasing

decision-making and less so on perceived contextual factors that may be real barriers or

supports in the career development process. In working with the Hmong population,

career counselors must incorporate interventions that address perceived educational and

career barriers and explore role models and support systems.

Limitations

The qualitative methods approach to this study has generated a rich data set that

provided a clearer understanding of the process of career development for 1.5

generation Hmong American women. There are, however, several limitations that must

be addressed.

While qualitative methodologies often provide richness in understanding the

subjective experiences of participants, these experiences cannot be generalized beyond

the sample. The sampling method may have also excluded people who had very

different experiences from that of our participants. The limited geographic area (two

Midwest States) from which the participant pool is recruited may also bias how

participants experience and conceptualize their career development. For instance, because of the higher concentration of Hmong and the perceived progressiveness of some of the communities from which participant were drawn, the participants in this study may be qualitatively different and their career development experiences differ than Hmong American women in other parts of the country.

Finally, the principal researcher is a 1.5 generation Hmong American woman studying 1.5 generation Hmong American. There are benefits to this but also limitations. To ensure validity of the research, variations of several procedures as recommended by Hill et al. (1997), and as described in the methodology section, was incorporated into the design and analyses. However, unknown biases may still have had an effect on the conceptualization of this study, collection of data, how participants responded, and how results were interpreted. For instance, it is also possible that the collection and interpretation of the data was inadvertently influenced by the principal researcher's life experiences. It is possible that a non-Hmong American researcher might have elicited different responses from participants, asked different questions to stimulate elaboration during the interview, and interpreted the data through a different lens.

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APPENDIX A

Career Development of 1.5 Generation Hmong American Women

Recruiting Letter

We are researchers at the University of Minnesota, Department of Educational Psychology and we are currently conducting a qualitative study to better understand the career development of Hmong American women. Specifically, we are looking to interview 1.5 generation Hmong American women who came to the United States during their elementary school years, and who have completed a post-secondary degree (AA and BA/BS degrees or higher). Participation would involve a one-on-one, audio-taped 70-90 minute interview. Responses from interviewees will be completely confidential and will be kept anonymous.

Please contact us if you are interested in participating and/or would like to refer someone who fit the study population and who might be interested in this study. Thank you for your consideration.

The researchers conducting this study are Ava Yang, doctoral candidate, and Dr. Michael Goh from the Department of Educational Psychology in the College of Education and Human Development, University of Minnesota. If you have any questions, please contact us at: Ava Yang, 612-626-7432, yangx326@umn.edu; or Michael Goh, 612-624-4885, gohxx001@umn.edu.

Sincerely,

Ava Yang, Doctoral Candidate   Michael Goh, Ph.D.
250 Education Science Bldg   250 Education Science Bldg
56 E River Road   56 E River Road
Minneapolis, MN 55455   Minneapolis, MN 55455
612-626-7432   612-624-4885
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APPENDIX B

Career Development of 1.5 Generation Hmong American Women

Informed Consent Form

You are invited to be in a research study exploring the career development of 1.5 generation Hmong American women. You were selected as a possible participant because we believe you meet the study inclusion criteria based on a referral or self-referral. We ask that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

This study is being conducted by Ava Yang, doctoral candidate, and Dr. Michael Goh from the Department of Educational Psychology in the College of Education and Human Development, University of Minnesota.

Background Information:
The purpose of this study is to better understand the characteristics of the career development of 1.5 generation Hmong American women who came to the United States during their elementary school years, and who have completed a post-secondary degree (AA and BA/BS degrees or higher).

Procedures:
If you agree to be in this study, we would ask you to participate in a one on one audio-taped 70-90 minute interview. Your audio-taped interview will then be transcribed by a professional transcriber with no identifiable name attached to the taped interview.

Risks and Benefits of being in the Study:
There are no known risks or direct benefits for participants in this study. However, you will be asked to talk about your career development experiences which involve personal information about yourself and potentially your family.

Confidentiality:
The records of this study will be kept private. Once the tape recordings are transcribed they will be destroyed. The transcriptions will not have identifying information. Any sort of report we might publish will not include any information that will make it possible to identify you as a participant. Research records will be stored securely and only researchers will have access to the records.

Voluntary Nature of the Study:
Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with the University of Minnesota. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw from the study at any time without consequence.

Contacts and Questions:
The researchers conducting this study are Ava Yang, doctoral candidate, and Dr. Michael Goh. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact them at:

Ava Yang, Doctoral Candidate   Michael Goh, Ph.D.
250 Education Science Bldg   250 Education Science Bldg
56 E River Road   56 E River Road
Minneapolis, MN 55455   Minneapolis, MN 55455
612-626-7432   612-624-4885
yangx326@umn.edu   gohxx001@umn.edu

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher(s), **you are encouraged** to contact the Research Subjects' Advocate Line, D528 Mayo, 420 Delaware St. Southeast, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55455; (612) 625-1650 or email irb@umn.edu. *You will be given a copy of this information to keep for your records.*

Statement of Consent:
I have read the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

Signature:_____ Date: _____

Signature of Investigator:_____ Date: _____

APPENDIX C

Career Development of 1.5 Generation Hmong American Women

Interview Questions

1. What does the term "career" mean to you?
   - How did you get to this point in your occupation?

2. We are interested in knowing more about your work history. As far back as you can remember, please talk about your work history?
   - What worked well for you?
   - Are there things you would change?

3. What were your work or career dreams growing up?
   - How did you learn about or become inspired to have these work or career dreams?

4. Were there certain persons in your life that has contributed to or have influenced your career decisions?

5. How has your cultural background influence your career development?

6. What are gender expectations that you face with your family and community and how has it influenced your career choices?
   - How did you reconcile these expectations?

7. Were there certain situations in your life that has contributed to or have influenced your career decisions?

8. What obstacles did you have to face and how were you able to overcome these obstacles to get to where you are in your career today?

9. What does the term 'career success' mean to you?
   - What does it look like to be successful in one's career?

10. How has your perspective on "career" changed over time?

11. Of all the things that you have talked about today regarding your career process, does any one thing stand out as the most important you would like to emphasize?

12. Is there anything else you would like to add?

APPENDIX D

Summary of Participant Demographics

Age	State of Residence	Status	Highest Degree Obtained	Industry	Occupation
23	WI	Single	Bachelors	Education and Training	Student
24	MN	Single	Bachelors	Education and Training	Researcher
24	MN	Single	Bachelors	Arts	Artist
25	WI	Single	Master's	Education and Training	Student
25	MN	Single	Master Public Health	Health Science	Pharmacy Intern
26	MN	Single	Bachelors	Marketing, Sales and Service	Senior Retail Merchandise Specialist
29	WI	Single	Master's	Education and Training	Counselor
29	MN	Single	Bachelors	Human Services	Community Development
29	MN	Married	Bachelors	Human Services	Program Assistant
30	MN	Married	Bachelors	Human Services	Program Coordinator
31	MN	Married	Bachelors	Human Services	Foundation Relation – Fundraiser
32	MN	Single	Bachelors	Education and Training	Service Learning Specialist
33	MN	Married	Bachelors	Information Technology	Application Development Manager
34	MN	Married	Bachelors	Finance	Program Officer
34	MN	Married	Master's	Human Services	Research & Evaluation
35	MN	Married	Master's	Human Services	Program Coordinator
36	MN	Married	Master's & Juris Doctor	Business, Management and Administration	Director of Corporate Philanthropy Program
40	WI	Married	Bachelors	Education and Training	Bilingual Specialist (Bilingual Education Services)
41	WI	Married	Bachelors	Education and Training	Student Services Specialist (Multicultural Services)
42	WI	Married	Master's	Human Services	Program Coordinator

APPENDIX E

Summary of Domains and Themes

<u>Domain 1: Career Conceptualization</u>

Theme 1: Career at different points in participants' lives is associated with an evaluation of financial necessity.

Theme 2: Career involves helping others and making an impact.

Theme 3: Career is pursuing a passion which fulfills participants' interest, challenges them, and brings them happiness.

Theme 4: Career is a journey which changes throughout life and involves growth and advancement.

Theme 5: Career success is a dynamic and integrative relationship between personal and professional livelihood.

<u>Domain 2: Self and Career Actualization</u>

Theme 6: Participants felt there was something more to life than their present situation and that marriage was not their only path.

Theme 7: Participants had limited resources and family circumstances that often limited their views of future career options.

Theme 8: Participants engaged in pre-college enrichment and other targeted preparatory programs that served as helpful venues for meeting mentors, learning about themselves, and exploring career, work, and education.

Theme 9: Exposure to others of similar cultural background and experiences was influential in participants' development.

Theme 10: Participants were open to exploring a multitude of experiences and possible careers.

Theme 11: Participants desired continued learning and growth in their career and personal development.

Theme 12: Participants were constantly aware that their identities (self, culture, gender, and ethnicity/race) played a role in their education and career.

Domain 3: Family, Cultural, and Gender Expectations

Theme 13: Participants were surrounded by ubiquitous messages about being female and getting married.

Theme 14: Participants struggled in negotiating their family and cultural responsibilities with their own needs and wants for education and career.

Theme 15: At points in their lives, participants recognized a need for independence and put their wishes first before certain family and traditional cultural expectations.

Theme 16: Participants' career decisions were seldom made without including family factors.

Theme 17: Participants juggled education, career, and familial and cultural obligations.

Theme 18: Participants faced professional challenges with cultural, traditional practices, and gender roles in the community.

Domain 4: Systems of Support: Family, Role Models/Mentors, and a Sense of Community

Theme 19: Family members supported education through verbal messages and through providing care for participants and their children.

Theme 20: Family members (siblings, cousins, parents) served as role models.

Theme 21: It was helpful when husbands supported participants' higher education pursuit and career aspirations.

Theme 22: Outside the family, participants also received personal and professional support.

Theme 23: Participants own and observed experiences of others sparked their interest in helping people through addressing community issues and building resources.

Domain 5: Overcoming Challenges and Barriers

Theme 24: Participants felt compelled to prove that they could do what others believe otherwise.

Theme 25: In place of a lack of validation from family and the Hmong community, participants found personal and external validation.

Theme 26: Personal and family struggles were motivators for change and success.

Theme 27: Education was seen as the key to change and bettering participants and their families' lives.

<u>Domain 6: Resilience</u>

Theme 28: Participants did not think negatively of parents who were not able to provide them support, instead were able to understand parents' perspectives and level of comprehension.

Theme 29: Participants accepted and were unfazed by what life dealt them; instead maintained an unshaken attitude to move forward with life and goals regardless of setbacks.

Theme 30: Higher expectations and responsibilities placed on Hmong women were influential in their growth and self-sufficiency.

Theme 31: Participants were highly reflective and mindful of the consequences of their actions.