

A QUALITATIVE VALIDATION STUDY  
OF KOREAN AMERICAN COLLEGE STUDENT DEVELOPMENT

by

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(Under the Direction of Diane L. Cooper)

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to validate the model of Asian American psychosocial development proposed by Kodama, McEwen, Liang and Lee (2002) as it applies to 1.5 and second-generation Korean American college students, while also exploring the role of religion in psychosocial development for these students. This study utilized a qualitative methodology using a narrative approach. Six students from one private, medium-sized institution in the southeastern United States participated in this study.

In particular, the researcher investigated four aspects of the participants' psychosocial development: the concept of students' experiences being balanced between two cultures; the concept of their identities being central to their identities; their emotional expression and control; and their orientation as related to interdependence and autonomy. Interview data generally supported the development model. Participants reported their identities were balanced between Korean and White American culture, with different locations for different aspects of their identities. Participants stated feeling separate from Korean

international students, White American students and third- and fourth-generation Korean American students, while also describing differences between themselves and their parents, who they admire greatly.

Participants noted their identities were strongly connected to their purpose at this time, while male participants showed more emotional expression than female participants when recounting their stories. At this stage of their lives, participants show strong signs of interdependence with their families, although they reported some establishment of autonomy from their culture of origin. Basketball played a significant role in the identity development of several male participants, while none of the participants reported that religion played a significant role in their lives.

Results of this study have importance for faculty and staff members. Significant findings to inform practice include: Korean Americans appear to be open to discussing their experiences with elders; relationships with parents are multi-faceted and highly significant; their relationships with other peer groups outside of their 1.5/second-generation cohort is complex and can be a source of conflict; and sports appear to play a significant role in Korean American male identity development.

INDEX WORDS: Asian American college students, Korean American college students, 1.5 generation, second generation, student

development theory, psychosocial development theory,  
religion, qualitative, narrative inquiry

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## DEDICATION

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First, I would like to thank Yaesul Park. The stories that you shared with me gave me a much broader picture of the 1.5/second-generation Korean American experience. Your encouragement, support, and enthusiasm throughout this process helped to strengthen my belief that this I could actually do this project well.

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adequately captured all of the wonderful aspects of being 1.5/second-generation Korean American.



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## Chapter 1

### Introduction

I get stuck when I think about how much I like being American because I wonder if I can embrace both cultures – American *and* Korean – and form an identity that is composed of both. Or must I choose between one or the other? Can I hold on to the value of autonomy, of independence, of self-actualization that is so admired and sought after in American society while keeping the values of family, community, duty and obligation that are the cornerstones of Korean society? Can I be happy with the same things that make my parents happy? (L. Lee, 2007, p. 109)

In the 2007 book, *Balancing Two Worlds: Asian American College Students Tell Their Life Stories*, Leah Lee, a second-generation Korean American student attending Dartmouth University, framed her struggle to establish her own identity as the clash between the often conflicting values of Korean and American cultures. Her words convey the additional challenges that bicultural students face as they attempt to construct their own racial/ethnic identities. While White students are attempting to build their own identity in a world that is similar to their parents, students whose parents come from a different culture have to sift through elements of both cultures to determine how these often-contrasting cultural elements best fit them. Additionally, most Asian

cultures stress respect for parents as a primary value (D. W. Sue, 1989), which may add an additional element of pleasing one's parents as these students make choices about what is best for them. As they grow up in a dominant culture that encourages independence, how do they build an individualized identity with both Asian and American aspects without displeasing their parents?

These challenges are particularly pertinent for students who are the first generation to grow up in the United States. This group includes students who were born in the U.S. to Korean-born parents, who are called second-generation Korean Americans, as well as students who were born in South Korea to Korean-born parents but emigrated to the U.S. during their childhoods. In 1974, Kim (Danico, 2004) labeled these children *ilchom ose*, or 1.5 generation, noting that they were neither truly first generation nor second generation.

This study explored how six 1.5 and second-generation Korean American college students attending a private, liberal arts university in the southeast described their psychosocial development. Through interviews, I explored how these students described who they are and what factors shaped or influenced their identities, while also comparing their experiences to a model of Asian American psychosocial development.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Korean Americans comprise a significant and distinct group within the Asian American community of the United States. Korean immigration to the United States began in 1903 (Chang & Patterson, 2003). However, Asian immigration numbers during the next 20 years fluctuated due to growing anti-

Asian sentiment in the United States. This discrimination culminated in the Immigration Act of 1924, which virtually halted all Asian immigration until the 1960s (Chan, 1991). After the passage of the Immigration Reform Act of 1965, however, Korean emigration to the United States increased rapidly (Hurh, 1998; Hurh & Kim, 1984a). Of the 753,349 Koreans who immigrated to the United States between 1820 and 1996, 712,485 (94.6%) of them came to the U.S. between 1971 and 1996 (U. S. Immigration and Naturalization Service, 1999). By 2005, the Korean population in the United States had grown to 1,406,687, making them the fifth largest Asian population in the United States after Chinese, Indian, Filipino and Vietnamese (U. S. Census Department, 2005).

Along with the rise of the Korean American and overall Asian American population in the United States, Asian American enrollment in American colleges and universities has dramatically increased. Over a 22-year period from 1987 to 2009, the number of Asian American students enrolled increased from 390,000 to 1,195,845, an increase of more than 206%. In 2009, approximately 48% of these students attend four-year colleges and universities (Knapp, Kelly-Reid, & Ginder, 2011).

While Asian American students are attending college in increasing numbers, research into their experiences has lagged behind other ethnic groups. From an historic perspective, Hune and Chan (1997) suggested three reasons why Asian Americans have not been included in discussions on race and education. First, Americans have historically viewed race through a Black and White lens, leaving other races out of the conversation. Second, Asian

Americans are often seen as visitors or international students, not as Americans with a long history of residency. Finally, they cite the continued representation of Asian Americans as the “model minority” who excel at academics and as such, do not need attention.

The phrase *model minority* first appeared in the 1960s but gained greater popularity in the 1980s (Peterson, 1966; Success story of one minority group in U.S., 1966; Success story: Outwhiting the whites, 1971; Suzuki, 1977, 2002).

While Asian Americans initially responded positively to the model minority stereotype, by the end of the 1960s many Asian American activists had changed their minds, noting both negative assumptions within the myth as well as negative outcomes from it. They charged that White Americans invented the concept to dismiss complaints from Asian Americans about possible discrimination against them. The myth also separated Asian Americans from other underrepresented groups. Both of these contentions are supported by the fact that Asian Americans were initially not covered in federal anti-discrimination legislation.

Other Asian American researchers noted that the rise of the model minority stereotype coincided with the rise of the African American civil rights movement and questioned whether this stereotype was created to discredit African American social justice concerns as well (Suzuki, 2002). In fact, a 1966 article in *U. S. News and World Report* about the success of Asian Americans made this point explicitly clear: “At a time when Americans are awash in worry over the plight of racial minorities, one such minority is winning wealth and

respect by dint of its own hard work—not from a welfare check” (Success story of one minority group in U.S., 1966).

Nearly fifty years after the rise of the model minority stereotype, its effects are still pervasive today. Suzuki (2002) noted, “although it is less flaunted by the media, its effects may be more insidious because it has become an almost unconscious image embedded in the minds of the public, subliminally influencing their perceptions” (p. 25). A recent study reflected just how ingrained this stereotype has become. Wong, Lai, Nagasawa, and Lin (1998) found that all ethnic groups of students they studied, including Asian Americans, Whites, African Americans, Hispanic Americans, and Native Americans reported that Asian Americans were superior to Whites in terms of preparedness, motivation and capacity for career success. However, African Americans, Hispanic Americans and Native Americans all reported that Whites were superior to their groups in the same categories.

Asian Americans’ status as the model minority in education is reinforced by several factors, including their high performance as compared to other ethnicities on the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) (Everson & Millsap, 2004) and their rate of college degree attainment, which is higher than any other ethnic group (Harvey & Anderson, 2004). However, these statistics do not reflect the experience of the 48 different ethnic categories that comprise the Asian American label (National Commission on Asian American and Pacific Islander Research in Education, 2008). While the great diversity within this group makes it impossible to describe the stereotypical Asian American experience, a pan-

Asian stereotype (the model minority) has developed regardless. While Chinese and Japanese Americans have achieved high economic and educational standing, other groups, such as Filipinos, Vietnamese and Hmong, have not (Chan, 1991; Kodama et al., 2002). For example, approximately one-third of Laotian, Cambodian and Marshallese Americans live below the poverty line, while more than 50% of the members of these groups have not completed high school (National Commission on Asian American and Pacific Islander Research in Education, 2008).

In addition to being inaccurate, the model minority myth negatively impacts Asian American students in a variety of ways, from universities' lack of response to Asian American claims of harassment (Delucchi & Do, 1996) to a lack of funding and research into Asian American student issues (Museus & Chang, 2009; Suzuki, 2002). The need for more research into for these students is significant. According to the National Commission on Asian American and Pacific Islander Research in Education (2008), "We must develop methods to critically and effectively study what is truly happening to our young people—both in formalized education and informally in the culture at large—rejecting what is fiction and embracing what is fact" (p. 31). Museus and Chang (2009) suggested that additional research into these issues will help debunk the model minority myth and encourage additional research into the needs of these students. I hope that my study might be a part of a larger effort to create greater understanding of the Korean American student development experience.

In particular, one aspect of Asian American experience that needs further research is the role of religion in their lives. In their study of Asian American students' coping strategies, C. Yeh and Wang (2000) found that many students use religious activities to help them cope with problems. In their discussion of Asian American student psychosocial development, Kodama, McEwen, Liang and Lee (2001) recommended that the role of religion in the lives of Asian American students be further explored. Considering this research, as well as the long and important role of Christianity and the Korean church in Korean Americans' lives (Davies, 1994; Hurh & Kim, 1990; Min, 1992), it seems both necessary and intriguing to include religion in a study of Korean American student psychosocial development.

### **Purpose of the Study**

This study explored the journey of six 1.5/second-generation Korean Americans as they progressed through the anticipated stages of psychosocial development for college students. Through utilization of qualitative research methods, narrative inquiry, and a combined postpositivist and social constructivist paradigm, I will present their stories in their own words to highlight how they described their development and what role religion played in the construction of their identities. In particular, I examined the stories of these six students to see if their psychosocial development reflects the differences in Chickering and Reisser's (1993) theory that were proposed by Kodama et al. (2002) in an attempt to validate the model.

### **Theoretical Framework**



Any study of student psychosocial development must include the foundational building blocks of Erik Erikson's (1963, 1964, 1968) theories on identity development. Additionally, I will review the subsequent works of Marcia (1966) and Josselson (1973) to further explore identity development in men and women. Arthur Chickering and Linda Reisser (Chickering, 1969; Chickering & Reisser, 1993) also broke further ground with their theory of college student psychosocial development, so I will review and summarize their work as well.

The framework of my study is Corinne Maekawa Kodama, Marylu McEwen, Christopher T. H. Liang, and Sunny Lee's (2002) model of Asian American psychosocial development. In developing their model, they examined each of Chickering and Reisser's (1993) seven vectors of development and, using previously existing research, reorganized the vectors into a different framework. Their model reflects the different cultural values of Asian societies, how these values affect the order of the seven vectors, and how these different values cause vectors to impact each other differently than in Chickering and Reisser's model (Kodama et al., 2002). According to two of the model's creators, to their knowledge no one has attempted a validation study of their model (M. K. McEwen, personal communication, July 7, 2011; Liang, personal communication, July 8, 2011).

Since Kodama et al. (2002) suggested that racial identity is key to Asian American students' progress through Chickering and Reisser's theory, I also reviewed the theories of racial and ethnic identity development theories of Donald Atkinson, George Morten & Derald Sue (1979, 1989), Jean Kim (1981,

2001), and Jean Phinney (1990). These racial identity models provide a framework for describing the methods my participants used to develop their bicultural identity, as well as an understanding of challenges they faced on this journey. I hope that these theories provided me with greater insight into gaining a fuller understanding of my participants' stories and experiences.

### **Research Questions and Methodology**

I have identified five research questions for my study. The first four are based on Kodama et al.'s (2002) model. These are:

1. Do the participants discuss their development as being centered and at times torn between "external influences from dominant U.S. society and traditional Asian values from family" (Kodama et al., 2002)?
2. Do the participants discuss their purpose as being central to their identity?
3. When discussing emotions, do they reflect the supposition that Asian Americans are learning how to identify and express emotions, as opposed to Chickering and Reisser's (1993) suggestion that students during this time work on managing emotions?
4. Do the participants discuss their journey as moving from interdependence to independence and autonomy, as compared to Chickering and Reisser's contention that students move through autonomy toward interdependence?
5. What role do religion and the Korean church play in the psychosocial development of the participants?

The first four questions are postpositivist in nature in that they attempt to reduce larger concepts into smaller ideas to test (Creswell, 2009). However, my

goal was to understand how they described their experiences related to these five questions as well in order to validate the model. Thus while overall paradigm used to guide data collection and analysis was social constructivism, postpositivism played a role in the process in order for me to attempt to validate the model.

### **Limitations of the Study**

The findings of my study are limited by several factors. First, as with most qualitative research, my findings are not generalizable to all Korean American students, since the background, experiences and generational status of my participants are in some ways unique to those six individuals. Some particular characteristics of my participants and research site that may impact the findings include: the location of the university, the socioeconomic background of the participants, and the size of the population of Korean American students at the university. Findings from this study may be considered to have *naturalistic generalizability* (Stake, 1997), meaning that they could have meaning for populations similar to the one used in my study.

Asian American cultural values automatically created one possible limitation for this study. Traditionally, Asian cultures discourage the sharing of personal information that might reflect negatively upon an individual and, in turn, upon his family (D. W. Sue, 1989). This reluctance to share information might have been further exacerbated by my race and ethnicity, since my participants may have felt that I would not understand their experiences since I do not share their cultural history and/or perspective. Additionally, my status as a White man

interviewing Asian Americans brought issues of ethnic group power into the interaction, whether I want it to or not. Finally, from a cultural perspective, my status as an older person and an employee of the university may have come into play as well. Asian Americans are taught to respect hierarchy and their elders (Kodama et al., 2002), so my participants' responses may have been shaped by how they viewed me.

While my cultural and ethnic background may have proven to be a limiting factor, I also hope that it provided me with a different lens with which to view my participants' experiences. An interviewer from the same culture may have assumed that he intuitively understood what the participant said. Since I grew up in a different culture, I hope I made fewer assumptions. In an effort to make certain that I understand a statement, my questioning may have unearthed a more complex explanation and understanding of the issue being discussed. When I met with my participants for the first time, I talked about my interest in Korean American culture and about what I have learned from my research in an effort to show the participants that I have a greater understanding of their culture than the typical non-Asian person with whom they might talk.

### **Significance of the Study**

Because of the 1965 legislation, the majority of Korean American adults in the United States are first generation, which in turn has resulted in the majority of current Korean American college students being 1.5 or second-generation. Despite the recent growth in the U.S. Asian American and Korean American populations, there has been little research on Korean Americans or other Asian

Americans, in part due to the “model minority” stereotype that Asian immigrants have few adjustment or emotional problems (Chiu & Ring, 1998). However, studies conducted with Asian immigrants have indicated that this population does have serious development, social and emotional issues (E. Lee, 1996; S. Sue, Sue, Sue, & Takeuchi, 1995).

Several recent studies have explored the unique experiences of 1.5 and second generation Americans as compared to the experiences of first generation members of the same ethnic group (Kasinetz, Mollenkopf, & Waters, 2004; Portes & Rumbaut, 2001, 2005; Rajiva, 2006; Zhou, 1999; Zhou & Xiong, 2005). One notable finding is that they lack significant connections to their parents’ homelands but also do not feel fully American. “Because of this dual identity, studies have repeatedly shown that they straddle the old and new worlds but are fully part of neither” (S. Park, 2009, p. 62). This study aims to further explore this identity development process to assist college and university faculty and staff in providing appropriate support for this population.

### **Definition of Terms**

The location of birth and the location of socialization are both significant factors in studies of immigrants and their children. Historically, researchers have used the following definitions to describe generations of Korean Americans. The phrase *first generation* has been used to describe Korean Americans who were born and grew up in Korea and immigrated to the U.S. after early adolescence. The phrase *1.5 generation* (also known in Korean as *Ilchom ose*) (Ahn, 2000) has been used to describe individuals who were born in Korea but immigrated to

the U.S. during late childhood and/or early adolescence. The phrase *second generation* has been used to describe U.S.-born individuals whose parents were born in Korea (Koh, 1994). There is no general consensus on the dates that separate 1.5 students from second-generation students. For my purposes, I will consider participants who were born in Korea but moved to the U.S. before the age of 5 to be second generation. Participants who moved to the U.S. from Korea between the ages of 6 and 14 will be considered 1.5 generation, and participants who moved to the U.S. after the age of 15 will be considered first generation.

## Summary

Korean Americans currently comprise the fifth largest subgroup within the Asian American community in the U.S. (U. S. Census Department, 2005) and the number of Asian American college students continues to rise at a rapid rate (Knapp et al., 2011). Over the past 50 years, Asian Americans have acquired a reputation as a “model minority” that has overcome the challenges of immigrating to the U.S. and succeeded in both business and education (Suzuki, 2002). However, this model minority stereotype masks the fact that not all Asian Americans are wealthy and high-achieving (Kodama et al., 2002). Research also suggests that this stereotype suggesting that all Asian Americans are succeeding is one reason that the paucity of research on the experiences of this group (Museus & Chang, 2009).

The psychosocial development model created by Chickering and Reisser (1993) is one of the most widely known and used college student development theories (Evans, Forney, Guido, Patton, & Renn, 2010). Kodama et al. (2002) have suggested that Asian American students progress through this psychosocial model in significantly different ways than Chickering and Reisser proposed. No one has yet attempted to validate this Asian American psychosocial development model, nor has anyone explored how religion might impact these students’ development. I hope that my study sheds light on how my participants’ experience reflected or does not reflect this new model and what role, if any, their religious faith plays in their journey.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Review of Literature**

But if I were to pick...I've thought about this too...if I were to relive my life or be born again, I wouldn't change anything. I don't think I would want to be born in Korea and live as a Korean. And I don't think I would want to be a White American and live in America. I love being a Korean American. (Eunice)

The goal of this chapter is to provide an overview of the most relevant research regarding Korean American human development. The first section of the chapter looks at some prominent theories of human identity development, starting with one of the first well-known theories by Erik Erikson (1963, 1964, 1968) and moving on other theorists, including James Marcia (1966) and Ruthellen Josselson (1973), who further refined his work. Then I will discuss in detail the most prominent psychosocial theory for college student development by Arthur Chickering and Linda Reisser (1969; Chickering & Reisser, 1993), followed by a discussion of a more specific model of psychosocial development for Asian American students. These reviews will help the reader understand the context in which development occurs, while also illuminating issues and challenges particular to Asian Americans.



The second section begins with a discussion the concepts of acculturation and enculturation, to clarify how members of a society learn the norms of their own culture as well as the norms of cultures into which they move. This understanding is necessary to move into a discussion of several prominent theories of Asian American racial and ethnic identity development, since acculturation and enculturation both play a role in how Asian Americans create a sense of who they are as non-White people in a White dominant society such as the U.S. This understanding of racial identity development is important for the reader, as it is central to Asian American students' overall sense of identity and development (Kodama et al., 2002).

The third section of the literature review discusses the history of Christianity in Korea, from the earliest missionaries in the 1600s up through the 20<sup>th</sup> century, noting both cultural and political factors that led to the significant number of Christians in South Korea today. This is followed by an exploration of the importance of the Korean church in the lives of Korean immigrants to the United States, including how churches impact most facets of their members' lives. While this review of the literature regarding Korean American psychosocial and identity development is not exhaustive, I hope it provides a firm foundation for the study that follows.

## Identity Development

**Erikson.** Erik Erikson is often the first researcher associated with human identity development (Torres, Howard-Hamilton, & Cooper, 2003). In his book, *Childhood and Society*, Erikson (1963) proposed a life-span theory of human development based on previous work by Freud, with eight conflicts between contrasting issues each person must work through. Erikson (1968), borrowing a term from biology, noted how this progression follows the *epigenetic principle*, which states “that anything that grows has a ground plan, and that out of this ground plan the parts arise, each part having its time of special ascendancy, until all parts have risen to form a functional whole” (p. 92). He noted that the eight conflicts are interrelated and that each conflict exists throughout the person’s life. Each psychosocial conflict involves reconciling the competing issues in order for the person to address later conflicts (Evans et al., 2010). Failure to successfully manage the conflict at each level leads to greater challenges later in life (Erikson, 1968).

The eight conflicts in order, which run from birth until death, include basic trust versus mistrust; autonomy versus shame and doubt; initiative versus guilt; industry versus inferiority; identity versus role confusion; intimacy versus isolation; generativity versus stagnation; and integrity versus despair (Erikson, 1963). From Erikson’s description, most college students are addressing the fifth (identity versus role confusion) and sixth (intimacy versus isolation) conflicts. The Identity versus role confusion conflict is particularly notable as it marks the transition from childhood to adulthood (Erikson, 1963).

During the identity versus role confusion conflict, people begin to question who they are and what their values are. They seek feedback from peers to gain a sense of how others see them, and will easily put trust in peers and authority figures that support their notions of who they want to be. Additionally, the adolescent “objects violently to all ‘pedantic’ limitations on his self-images and will be ready to settle by loud accusation all his guiltiness over the excessiveness of his ambition” (Erikson, 1968, p. 129). Erikson (1968) further suggested that adolescents’ love relationships are less related to sex but are more an effort to clarify one’s own image by projecting it onto another to see it reflected and clarified.

A well-developed identity shows strength and consistency through life events. “Identity connotes the resiliency of maintaining essential patterns in the processes of change...The key problem of identity, then, is...the capacity of the ego to sustain sameness and continuity in the face of changing fate” (Erikson, 1964, pp. 95-96). A well-formed identity is able to withstand radical change more easily than a more fragile identity (Erikson, 1964).

Successful negotiation of the identity versus role confusion conflict is vital to a person’s success in working through later development stages. For example, failure to develop a core sense of self may lead to difficulties in building and maintaining relationships later in life (Evans et al., 2010). Erikson (1968) noted that true intimacy with another person is not possible until one’s identity is significantly developed.

Erikson approached identity development from three perspectives (Josselson, 1973). First, he looked at the personal accounts and life stories of men who had made significant contributions to society, including George Bernard Shaw, Martin Luther, and Henry James (Erikson, 1968). Second, he focused on case studies of individuals who he determined had not built healthy identities – people he would classify as having identity confusion. Finally, he approached identity development from the theoretical perspective of the individual and society's need for individual identity development. Erikson (1968) himself noted what his perspective lacked: "In order to describe the universal genetics of identity, one would wish to be able to trace its development through the life histories of 'ordinary' individuals" (p. 155). Several other researchers subsequently stepped in to assist Erikson in this task.

**Marcia.** The first to do so was Marcia (1966). In 1980, he noted that he was initially motivated to create four identity statuses from Erikson's (1963) model so researchers could empirically test Erikson's identity stage (Marcia, 1980). He used a semi-structured interview and a complete-the-sentence fill-in questionnaire to learn more about two variables he identified, crisis and commitment. In his words, "Crisis refers to the adolescent's period of engagement in choosing among meaningful alternatives; commitment refers to the degree of personal investment the individual exhibits" (Marcia, 1966, p. 551). Marcia looked at an individual's decisions regarding occupation, political ideology and religion to determine commitment.

From these two variables, Marcia (1966) constructed a four-quadrant model where individuals were placed in one of the four *statuses* through his evaluation of their experience with crisis and level of commitment to their current identity. Unlike Erikson's stages, these statuses are not permanent or cumulative, and they have both positive and negative possibilities within each status (Evans et al., 2010). For example, adolescents who have made a commitment to their values but have not faced a crisis situation that challenges these values would be classified as being in *foreclosure*. These individuals tend to have very similar values as their parents and appear somewhat rigid. They follow authority and rules and can remain comfortably in this status as long as the authority does not change (Marcia, 1994). Individuals in *identity achievement* have also made commitments regarding identity. However, they have built this identity from having worked through a significant period of crisis. From this experience, they tend to exhibit more confidence and are able to clearly articulate who they are and how they determined their identity (Marcia, 1994).

Unlike the first two statuses, individuals in *moratorium* and *identity diffusion* have not made commitments about identity. However, the distinction between these statuses is that individuals in moratorium have shown signs of struggling to make commitments, while those in identity diffusion have not (Marcia, 1966). Marcia described an individual in moratorium as exhibiting a "preoccupation with what occasionally appear to him as unresolvable questions" (Marcia, 1966, p. 552). They may alternate between conforming to authority and rebelling against it in their quest to determine what is best for them (Marcia,

1994). Individuals in identity diffusion have not reached any decisions regarding identity and do not appear to be concerned with doing so. They act without taking into consideration positive and/or negative consequences that may affect them.

One recent study used Marcia's theory to compare identity development status with racial and gender identity development for White male and female college students (Miville, Darlington, Whitlock, & Mulligan, 2005). Among many interesting findings, the researchers found that for women, stronger gender identity was correlated with foreclosure and identity achievement statuses. Additionally, they noted that conflicts related to collective gender identity (but not racial identity) were connected to moratorium status. They also found that female students who exhibited lower stages of racial identity development were more likely to be classified in foreclosure status. For men, they found significant correlations between gender identity conflicts and moratorium and diffusion statuses, while positive gender and racial identity was found to be strongly correlated to foreclosure and achievement statuses (Miville et al., 2005). Marcia's work provided the first foundation for empirically testing Erikson's theory, laying the groundwork for others to follow after him.

**Josselson.** Josselson was the first researcher to investigate gender differences in Marcia's theory. Since Marcia had primarily tested the validity of his theory by using male college students as participants, Josselson (1973, 1987) wanted to further explore how women may differ from men in their identity development. Over a three-year period, she interviewed 60 randomly selected

female college students from four different colleges and universities to see how they described their identity development. She chose additional descriptive names for the four statuses identified by Marcia. She named women in foreclosure *Purveyors of the Heritage*. They had clear direction and decision-making abilities and tended to follow the beliefs of their parents. "Without exception, Foreclosure women emphasize the closeness of their families and their need for the security they had in them" (Josselson, 1973, p. 14). Even when interviewed twenty years later, these women continued to show the centrality of family in their lives (Josselson, 1996). Josselson (1987) further described them as "hardworking, responsible and capable" (p. 60).

Josselson named Marcia's second status, identity achievement, *Pavers of the Way*. More heterogeneous than the Purveyors of the Heritage, the central theme of these women's stories was independence. They all faced significant challenges to identity construction and worked through them. These women were also more able to objectively judge their parents' strengths and limitations than the Purveyors were (Josselson, 1973). She found these women developed their identity through interactions with others, with relationships being of high importance to them. They sought approval internally as opposed to from external sources (Evans et al., 2010).

The third status, moratorium, was dubbed *Daughters of the Crisis* by Josselson. These women internalized their families' values but were challenged when faced with alternate points of view. Some emerged from this conflict to enter identity achievement but others regressed into previously held identities.

Josselson found these women had “daydreams, often from childhood, of wondrous success” (Josselson, 1973, p. 32), but lacked concrete plans to achieve them. Other notable features of women in this status include close but guilt-laden relationships with their mothers; idealized images of their fathers; a need to know the right answers; and a focus on and need for relationships, often at the expense of personal accomplishment. They showed great insight, were sensitive and likeable, but tended to have low self-esteem and anxiety.

Josselson (1973) used a startling image to delineate women in moratorium from women in identity diffusion: “Where both groups contain troubled, conflicted women, the Moratoriums are fighting to stay above water. The Diffusions are barely floating and allowing themselves to be pulled by the currents” (p. 35). Josselson further divided women in identity confusion (which she called *Lost and Sometimes Found*) into four subgroups to reflect their particular difficulties committing to identity. One group exhibited severe psychopathology, while another showed signs of childhood psychological trauma. The third and fourth subgroups showed identity diffusion in relation to other statuses, which she named moratorium diffusions and foreclosed diffusions. The women in this status shared a tendency to withdraw from situations (Bourne, 1978a, 1978b) and exhibited a lack of direction for their futures (Josselson, 1973, 1987). Even twenty years later, these women still appeared directionless and feeling as if life had treated them unfairly (Josselson, 1996).

From her initial study, Josselson (1973) suggested that women’s identity development differs from men’s. She stated that men’s development is



“metaphorically a straight line which may twist and turn but moves ever forward” (p. 49), while women’s development is a series of “concentric circles. Life...feels cyclical. They see their future as a succession of stages, in which each stage will have a slightly different focus, but all will integrated into a whole that makes sense” (p. 49).

**Chickering and Reisser.** Around the same time as Erikson and Marcia, other researchers were working on student identity development from different angles. Initially, Arthur Chickering created his theory of psychosocial development from data collected from students at Goddard College between 1959 and 1965 and from students he interviewed through his work as the director of the Project on Student Development in Small Colleges between 1965 and 1969 (Thomas & Chickering, 1984). From this data, he outlined a model proposing that students work through seven vectors of development while in college, with identity development serving as the core developmental issue. In 1993, to incorporate findings on gender and ethnic differences in his theory, Chickering and Linda Reisser published an updated edition of *Education and Identity* which redefined and reordered some of vectors (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). His theory “remains arguably the most well-known, widely used, and comprehensive model available for understanding and describing the psychosocial development of college students” (Valentine & Taub, 1999, p. 166)

Chickering (1969) selected the term *vector* to describe student growth and development because he noted that this growth had both direction and magnitude. Students may move through vectors at different rates and in any

order, and may even temporarily reverse direction. Growth in a vector signifies greater “awareness, skill, confidence, complexity, stability and integration” (Chickering & Reisser, 1993, p. 34).

The first vector, *Developing Competence*, involves skill and confidence building in three areas: intellectual, physical and interpersonal. Although actual skill level may be measured, confidence levels are subjective and up to each student to determine (Reisser, 1995). In the second vector, *Managing Emotions*, students learn how to appropriately express their feelings and emotions, while gaining insight into what information their negative feelings might be providing them. In the second edition of *Education and Identity*, Chickering and Reisser (1993) focused additional attention on negative emotions other than aggression and sexual desire, while also suggesting that in this vector, students learn how to bring positive emotions and feelings into awareness as well.

Chickering and Reisser (1993) renamed the third vector *Moving through Autonomy toward Interdependence* (as compared to its original name, *Developing Autonomy*) to highlight the shift in focus from independence to interdependence, while not denying the importance of independence. This vector requires growth in two areas, emotional independence and instrumental independence. The former refers to being free from continual reassurance and approval from family and friends, while the latter refers to the developing agency and mobility. In this vector, students grow to understand the importance of operating independently while also understanding their interconnectedness with others.

The fourth and fifth vectors reversed positions from the first to the second edition of *Education and Identity*. Chickering and Reisser (1993) made this move to acknowledge the importance of relationships in helping students establish their identity, as acknowledged by Reisser (1995):

The interplay between autonomy, interdependence, and intimacy is very complex. We moved the vector on relationships to an earlier place in the sequence as an acknowledgement that relationships provide powerful learning experiences about feelings; communication, sexuality, self-esteem, values, and other aspects of identity, for both men and women.  
(p. 508)

In the fourth vector, *Developing Mature Interpersonal Relationships*, students develop a tolerance and appreciation for differences in others, as well as the capacity for increased intimacy with partners and friends. Developing tolerance works on both an interpersonal as well as global level: students who successfully work through this vector are more open to others who are different from them in terms of race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, worldview and ability, but are also more accepting of differences in personality and attitudes in people close to them.

The fifth vector, *Establishing Identity*, is perhaps the most significant. Reisser (1995) noted that it “encompasses all of the other vectors” (p. 509). Developing one’s identity involves understanding and being comfortable with one’s skills, abilities, and values. Chickering and Reisser (1993) noted seven areas involved in identity development:

(1) comfort with body and appearance, (2) comfort with gender and sexual orientation, (3) sense of self in a social, historical, and cultural context, (4) clarification of self-concept through roles and life-style, (5) sense of self in response to feedback from valued others, (6) self-acceptance and self-esteem, and (7) personal stability and integration. (p. 49)

In response to research findings and feedback, they incorporated more emphasis on gender, ethnicity and sexual orientation into the second edition of *Education and Identity* (Reisser, 1995) to more accurately reflect the diversity of the college student experience.

Vectors six and seven remained relatively unchanged from the first to second editions of *Education and Identity* (Reisser, 1995). Vector six, *Developing Purpose*, includes generating plans for the future, including work, interests, and family. Additionally, it involves making decisions about these plans and implementing them, even if others disapprove. Individuals should also be able to unify these various plans and decisions into a cohesive life purpose. *Developing Integrity*, the seventh and final vector, is closely tied to the previous two. In this vector, individuals progress through three progressive but overlapping stages: humanizing values, personalizing values, and developing congruence. Humanizing values involves moving from simpler to more complex understanding and application of rules. Personalizing values, in turn, includes adapting these values to one's life to fit one's circumstances and being open to others having differing values, while developing congruence occurs when

individuals' behaviors reflect their personalized core values (Chickering & Reisser, 1993).

Despite Chickering and Reisser's (1993) expansion of the theory to include the experiences of a wider range of students, researchers have continued to show ways in which the theory may not apply universally. For example, Taub (1995) found that development of autonomy was intertwined and/or reversed with interpersonal relationships in her study of 325 undergraduate women, a conclusion supported by other studies as well (Blackhurst, 1995; Straub, 1987). This led her to suggest that the vectors *Developing Mature Interpersonal Relationships* and *Moving Through Autonomy Toward Interdependence* should not be separate constructs. She notes, "Although the vectors of developing autonomy and freeing interpersonal relationships mirror each other in process, Chickering clearly viewed them as two separate constructs, rather than as the related constructs they appear to be" (Taub, 1995, p. 149). Chickering responded to Taub's contention by confirming her findings while still maintaining his original position:

Taub's findings seem entirely consistent with, and supportive of, our basic formulation, which emphasizes the critical importance of relationships with peers; reference groups, and non-parental adults as disengagement with parents occurs and as a bridge toward increased recognition and acceptance of interdependence. Because two variables are highly correlated, it does not mean they are the same, nor that there is any necessary causal relationship... (as cited in Reisser, 1995).

Future investigation may be needed to further clarify the connection and/or distinction between these two vectors, as well as possible connections between development in these two vectors and gender.

Other researchers have noted similar discrepancies between men and women's progress through the vectors. These include possible differences in the development of autonomy for men and women (Mather & Winston, 1998) and differences in the order in which women and men progress through the vectors (Blackhurst, 1995; Taub & McEwen, 1991). Taub and McEwen (1992) also explored how race and ethnicity might impact psychosocial development, noting that African American students may need to develop their racial identity first before being able to work through some of Chickering and Reisser's vectors.

Although Chickering and Reisser's theory of psychosocial development may not be universally applicable, its shortcomings may be due to the impossibility of distilling all human experience into one relatively simple theory. As Evans et al. (2010) noted, "Much of psychosocial development is culturally specific, and it may not be possible to develop a theory that is totally valid for everyone" (p. 80-81). Regardless, it is important to examine how culturally specific values may have unintentionally impacted human development theories, rendering them culturally inappropriate for some students (Kodama et al., 2002). For example, since traditional Asian values (i.e. collectivism, duty, emotional restraint) can be quite different from traditional White American values (i.e., individualism, freedom of choice, emotional expression) (Huang, 1997), how

might Asian American students experience Chickering's vectors differently from White American students?

**Kodama, McEwen, Liang and Lee.** In the 1993 edition of *Education and Identity*, Chickering and Reisser included a six-page discussion of how ethnicity impacts identity development. However, this discussion looks broadly at this issue without delving too deeply into how various groups' identity development may differ from others. To fill this void, Kodama, McEwen, Liang and Lee (2002) offered a vector-by-vector analysis of how they view Asian American student development differing from Chickering and Reisser's conceptualization. They suggested that racial identity is key to Asian American students' progress through Chickering and Reisser's vectors. They noted that while the vectors are the same, the tasks associated within them are different (Kodama et al., 2002). Starting broadly, they started their analysis by noting that Chickering and Reisser's theory does not fully incorporate the effects of racism and oppression into the identity development of non-majority students in the U.S. The messages of supremacy from the dominant White American culture are so strong that non-majority individuals gradually accept these messages as truth and begin to disdain their heritage and themselves (Espiritu, 1997; Suyemoto, 2002). The second overarching theme regarding the identity development of Asian Americans is the importance of familial and cultural values, which may differ from traditional White American values. Some Asian values that conflict with White American values include collectivism, deference to authority, and interpersonal harmony (B. S. K. Kim, Atkinson, & Yang, 1999).

This conflict between traditional Western values and traditional Asian values led Kodama et al. (2002) to create their Asian American identity development model with Identity in a circle in the center of the diagram, on an axis with the domains of Family/Culture and Society placed on opposite sides of Identity to reflect how these individuals are often torn between these two domains (see Figure 1). They located Identity inside a concentric circle for Purpose, because Asian American college students' identity is often filtered through their vocational and educational purpose. Since Asian Americans' approach to higher education is often "pragmatic, goal-oriented, and job related" (Hune & Chan, 1997, p. 54), their occupational goals are frequently central to their self-image. Since purpose and identity are so closely related, a change in one may lead to a change in the other. Kodama et al. (2002) completed the identity development diagram by locating the other five vectors from Chickering and Reisser's theory (Emotions, Competence, Interdependence, Relationships and Integrity) in another circle around Identity and Purpose. This design reflects how changes in Identity and/or Purpose may ripple out to these other five vectors, which are non-hierarchical.

Because of racism, sexism, and other forms of oppression, Asian American students have a more difficult time establishing identity, especially regarding Erikson's (1963) contention that identity development involves forming congruence between one's self-perception and others' perceptions of the individual. They report that others make assumptions about them without even talking to them, and these assumptions are usually at odds with how they see



themselves (Kodama et al., 2002). Asian American women may face unique challenges in developing their gender identity, as other students' feminist points

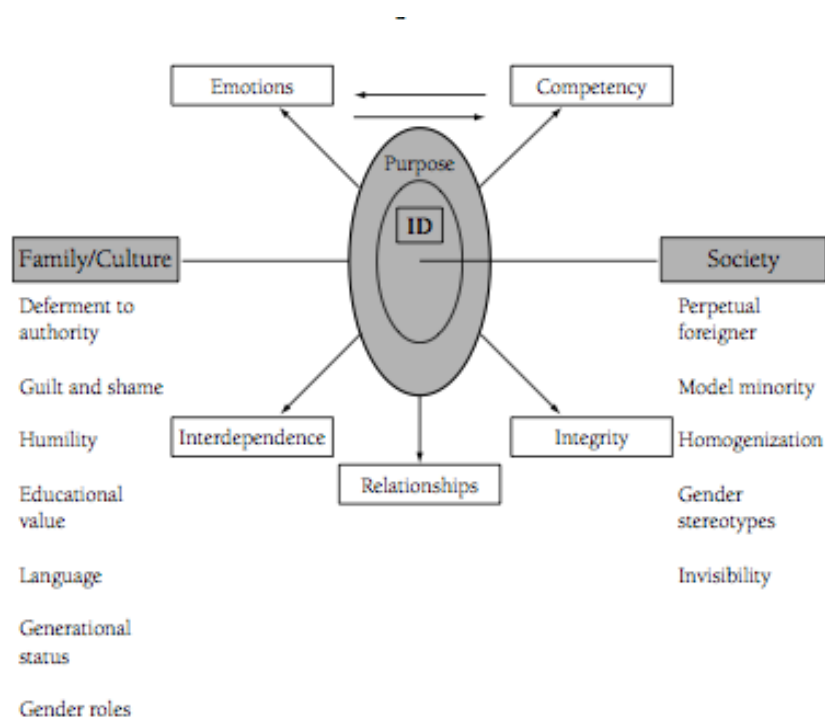


Figure 1. Kodama, McEwen, Liang and Lee's (2002) Model of Asian Psychosocial Development

of view may challenge their perspective on traditional gender roles. Asian Americans who may identify as gay, lesbian, or bisexual face additional challenges, due to the historic reluctance of most Asian cultures to acknowledge or discuss homosexuality. Additionally, “coming out” to friends and family may be viewed as bringing shame to the family and conflicting with familial values (Aoki, 1997).

Kodama et al. (2002) noted that for most Asian American students, purpose is closely tied to academic success. As previously noted, many Asian American arrive at colleges with predetermined majors they hope will lead to prestigious, high-paying jobs. Out of respect, though, students who wish to choose a different major may be reluctant to discuss this with their parents due to cultural respect for elders (B. S. K. Kim et al., 1999). Thus typical career counseling encouraging students to choose a major based predominantly on their interests and skills may not be suitable for Asian Americans, who may be more likely to have strong parental involvement in career decision-making.

*Developing Competence* may look somewhat different for Asian American students, as they tend to focus on the intellectual aspect of competence more than the social or physical (Kodama et al., 2002). This may be due to Asian cultures' emphasis on education (D. W. Sue, 1989) and/or the students viewing education as a means to succeed in a racist society (Hune & Chan, 1997). First-generation Asian students often face difficulty developing social competence due to language and cultural barriers as well (Kodama et al., 2002).

The vector of managing emotions may be turned inside out for some Asian American students. While in this vector Chickering and Reisser (1993) focused on students taming unruly emotions, this description does not fit for Asian Americans whose cultural values emphasize "emotional discipline, inhibition of strong feelings, and use of restraint in interactions with others" (Kodama et al., 2002, p. 51). Asian American students may be more likely to restrain their true feelings due to cultural expectations that they maintain

harmony (Chew & Ogi, 1987; D. W. Sue, 1989) and place others' feelings above their own (Wong & Mock, 1997). This emotional restraint may further reinforce the notion of Asian Americans as the "model minority", since this may make them less likely to tell others when they are experiencing personal difficulties (Kodama et al., 2001). Kodama et al. (2002) suggested that exploring or understanding emotions might be a better fit for Asian American students.

Similarly, Chickering and Reisser's (1993) third vector described students as working through autonomy toward interdependence. Since Asian culture tend to be collectivistic as opposed to individualistic, Asian American students have grown up with a cultural expectation of interdependence (D. W. Sue, 1989). Kodama et al. (2002) suggested that these students may actually need to work through this vector in reverse, so they may see themselves as separate entities from their families.

Because of this collectivistic nature of Asian culture, the key aspects of relationships for Asian Americans are maintaining harmony, cooperation, patience, humility and deference to authority (Uba, 1994). Interpersonal relationships have many rules, such as hierarchy and respect, so negotiating these relationships with peers, adults and authority figures may be complex and challenging (Kodama et al., 2002). Additionally, Asian American students may face challenges in developing mature interpersonal relationships when these relationships are romantic in nature. Asian Americans who date White Americans are often viewed as "selling out" and not having a strong ethnic identity (Mok, 1999), when in actuality these views may be more a reflection of

the prejudices of those who view interracial dating this way (AhnAllen & Suyemoto, 2011). When the source of this criticism comes from family members, though, it places an additional level of challenge for Asian American students to navigate since it adds issues of respect and honoring one's parents to the conflict (E. Lee, 1996; Wong & Mock, 1997).

Asian Americans also view integrity in a different manner than Chickering and Reisser (1993) described. For them integrity is determined "within the context of one's family and community by how individuals represent their families, respect their ancestors, and uphold the family name" (Kodama et al., 2002, p. 54). Also, because of the strong sense of family in Asian culture, an Asian American's task in identity development may be less separating from others to personalize values but more a process of determining who they are and maintaining a sense of self within the larger sphere of their family and culture (Kodama et al., 2002).

Kodama et al.'s (2002) model offered great insight into the unique developmental issues of Asian American students. They offered an important reminder that faculty and staff working with non-majority populations must take cultural differences into consideration when working with these populations.

### **Acculturation versus Enculturation**

One unique aspect of psychosocial development for bicultural Americans, such as Korean Americans, is the impact of immigration, which can be a painful and stressful experience (Segal, 1991). If the destination country has a markedly different culture, immigrants may feel torn between home country and new

country values (Y. Y. Kim, 2001; Padilla, Wagatsuma, & Lindholm, 1985).

Historically, many theorists have referred to adapting to a new culture as *acculturation* (Birman, 1994; Rogler, Cortes, & Malgady, 1991). Redfield, Linton and Herskowitz (1936) provided an early description of this process:

“acculturation comprehends those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact, with subsequent changes in the original cultural patterns of either or both groups” (p. 149). While some recent researchers have supported this neutral, non-directional approach (Suinn, 2009), others have noted that acculturation tends to create change in one group more than the other (Berry, 1990). Additionally, when the two cultures vary in power, the non-dominant group members typically adopt the norms of and sometimes identify with the dominant group (Graves, 1967). In this usage, Berry (1997) distinguished between dominant and non-dominant groups by referring “to their relative power where such a difference exists and is relevant to the discussion” (p. 8). Researchers have identified attitudes, behaviors and values as the most prominent qualities affected by acculturation (W.-N. Lee, 1989; Moyerman & Forman, 1991).

While many studies on immigrants use the terms *acculturation* and *assimilation* interchangeably, Y.Y. Kim (2001) differentiates the terms by delineating acculturation as the change in people whose primary learning occurred in one culture who later assume aspects of another culture, while assimilation refers more broadly to the process by which immigrants become a part of another culture. LaFramboise, Coleman and Gerton (1993) also noted

that assimilated individuals eventually give up their original culture to become part of the new culture, while acculturated individuals remain part of their culture of origin.

Early researchers, including Y. Y. Kim (1977), proposed that acculturation progresses linearly, with immigrants losing aspects of their native culture while acquiring aspects of their new culture. This linear progression ranged from “low acculturation” (retaining the values and behaviors of their indigenous culture) to “high acculturation” (adopting the values and behaviors of the new culture) (Suinn, 2009). K. C. Kim and Hunh (1993) suggested immigrants’ level of assimilation varies in different dimensions of their lives, such as language, religion, food choices, and attitudes. They also advised that immigrants may acquire aspects of the new culture while without necessarily discarding the correlated aspects of their old culture (K. C. Kim & Hurh, 1993), a view supported by several other researchers since that time (Berry, 2005; Berry, Phinney, Sam, & Vedder, 2006; S.-K. Lee, Sobal, & Frongillo, 2003). In fact, developing competence in both cultures may be the key to maintaining psychological well-being (LaFramboise et al., 1993).

Reflecting this more complex progression, Berry (1997) proposed four possible strategies for acculturation based on how the individual chooses to address two main issues dealing with their native and new cultures: cultural maintenance and cultural contact and participation. These categories include integration (high connection to both native and new cultures), marginalization (low connection to both cultures), assimilation (high connection to new culture but

low connection to native culture) and separation (high connection to native culture but low connection to new culture) (Berry, 1997).

As previously noted, acculturation is especially difficult for immigrants from cultures whose values vary significantly from the new country's values. This is especially true for Asian immigrants. Traditional Asian cultural values include conformity to norms, family recognition through achievement, emotional self-control, collectivism, humility, and filial piety (B. S. K. Kim et al., 1999). Some of these values contrast strongly with White American cultural values. For example, White American culture encourages young adults to establish their own identities free from their families, while Asian cultures require loyalty to the family above self (Huang, 1997).

The stress from acculturation often takes a toll on the health of immigrants. Researchers have shown correlations between acculturation status and health concerns in a number of studies, including connections between higher levels of Westernized values and eating disorder behaviors among girls in Hong Kong (Mao, 2000) and connections between levels of acculturative distress and emotional eating behaviors in Asian American and Hispanic adolescents, putting children at risk for obesity (Unger et al., 2004). Acculturation affects mental health as well. Sadowsky and Lai (1997) found that levels of acculturation in Asian immigrants were strongly correlated to acculturative distress levels – the lower the level of acculturation, the higher the distress level. Wilton and Constantine (2003) similarly found a negative correlation between the length of time that Asian and Latino international students had spent in the

United States and their amount of acculturative distress, with higher levels of distress reported by students who had more recently arrived in the U.S. Other studies show correlations between acculturation and school performance, career decisions and attitudes toward counseling (Suinn, 2009). Clearly, acculturation impacts many aspects of immigrants' lives.

Other factors related to acculturation may be impacted by the length of time a person lives in the U.S. Shi and Lu (2007) found that adolescents found it more challenging to be bicultural, preferring to focus more on their American identities. However, as they aged slightly, young adults preferred to live biculturally. They suggested that this difference might be due to lower need for peer approval and more interest in self-exploration as they aged (Shi & Lu, 2007). This refining of one's cultural identity is a continual process, as ethnicity is "constantly shaped and reshaped through interactions with others" (S. Park, 2009, p. 69).

Herskovits (1948) first defined the term *enculturation* as the general process by which members learn the mores and standards of their indigenous culture. The term applies to all members of a culture and not just to new members (S. Park, 2009). Kim and Abreu (2001) distinguished enculturation from acculturation, which, in their view, applies to the ways in which people learn about and adapt to the dominant culture, as opposed to the indigenous one. Using these definitions, Asian families who are recent immigrants to the U.S. will be more enculturated (adhering more closely to the norms of their culture of origin), while Asian families who have been in the U.S. for several generations



will be more acculturated (adhering more closely to U.S. norms) (B. S. K. Kim, Ahn, & Lam, 2009). Researchers currently disagree whether second generation members of a culture go through enculturation or acculturation, although it appears reasonable to assume the process is enculturation since they grew up in the host country as citizens (S. Park, 2009).

Despite growing up in the United States, second generation adolescents and young adults often report feeling different from their White American peers. Kibria (2002) described this phenomenon as “a part yet apart” (p. 10). Min and Kim (2001) reported that every participant in their narrative study reported experiencing racism from both African American and White students during childhood. Despite this, participants noted that they “tried to be White and associate with White students” but eventually they “realized that they could not dismiss their differences, particularly their non-White, physical differences” (Min & Kim, 2001, p. 750).

However, Korean American students who felt rejected by White students did not necessarily feel connected to ethnic Koreans, either. In fact, Park (2009) found that Korean American adolescents who had interacted with ethnic Koreans reported that they felt even less connection to ethnic Koreans than to White Americans. This feeling of isolation often leads Korean American adolescents to seek out other Korean Americans for support. “The comfort that they feel when they are with Korean American friends is because they do not have to explain their differences to their friends” (S. Park, 2009, p. 83).

Park (2009) suggested that second generation children grow up in Berry's (1997) assimilation category, and upon reaching a certain age and having interaction with their originating culture, they move to integration, separation or marginalization, with most Asians moving toward integration, especially younger Asian Americans (S.-K. Lee et al., 2003). Since these adolescents are moving from a primary American identity to a more Korean American identity, Park (2009) suggested that this movement be termed *re-acculturation*. At this point, Korean Americans begin to feel comfortable identifying themselves as both Korean and American (S. Park, 2009).

Researchers have suggested that the experiences of Korean Americans who move from Korea to the U.S. during their childhoods are distinct from first-generation and second-generation Korean Americans. Danico (2003) noted the origins of and need for the phrase *1.5 generation* to describe this experience:

Demographically, of course, the notion of a 1.5 generation is impossible; someone born in Korea is technically considered first generation, and anyone born in the United States is considered second generation. The term *1.5 generation*, however, is significant when it is used in reference to certain sociocultural characteristics and experiences of pre-adult immigrants. (p.1)

Danico also pointed out there is no consensus on the definition of what constitutes a 1.5-generation Korean American:

Broadly, the term Korean American 1.5 generation has been used as an informal demographic marker to differentiate immigrant children from their

parents (first generation) and from American-born (second generation) Koreans. The Korean 1.5 generation has been generally described as those who are bicultural and bilingual and who immigrated to the United States during their formative years (p. 2).

Therefore, one of the distinguishing characteristics of 1.5-generation Korean Americans is how truly bicultural their experience is.

Danico (2003) noted some other aspects of the 1.5 experiences that distinguish it from the second-generation experience. For example, second-generation Korean Americans are American citizens, while 1.5s may not be. Generally, second-generation Korean Americans speak English without an accent, while this is not necessarily true for 1.5-generation Korean Americans. Second generation Korean Americans tend to view White American culture and the English language as primary, while 1.5-generation Korean Americans have equal associations with both languages and cultures.

Due to this placement between both cultures and languages, 1.5-generation Korean Americans can feel lost between the two worlds and a part of neither. The Korean soap opera *Ilchom Ose*, which aired in Hawaii, reflected this, characterizing these Korean Americans as “marginalized, confused, and in conflict with their first-generation parents” (Danico, 2004, p. 2). Danico (2004) noted that, while there is a possibility that 1.5-generation Korean Americans may feel lost between cultures, resulting in an identity crisis, they might also see the opportunity to have the best of both worlds.

### **Racial and Ethnic Identity Development**

**Racial identity models.** The stories from the previous paragraph reflect many of the stages described in various models of racial and ethnic identity development. “Racial identity theories focus on the role of race and the extent to which it is incorporated into identity or self-concept” (Evans et al., 2010, p. 254). By contrast, ethnic identity theories examine how members of a culture pass on traditions and norms to future generations (Helms, 1995). The most significant theories of racial identity development that pertain to this study include those of Donald Atkinson, George Morten, and Derald Sue (1979, 1989) and Jean Kim (1981, 2001).

***Atkinson, Morten and Sue.*** One of the earliest attempts to explain racial identity development came from Atkinson, Morten and Sue (1979, 1989). From the work of earlier researchers, such as Cross (1972) and Jackson (1975), and their own clinical experience, they developed the Minority Identity Development (MID) Model (Atkinson et al., 1979), which D. W. Sue and Sue (1990, 1999, 2008) revised and renamed the Racial/Cultural Identity Development (R/CID) Model. Their model identified five stages of development, which offered a framework to help counselors understand the experience of minorities within existing personality theories. “The model defines five stages of development that oppressed people may experience as they struggle to understand themselves in terms of their own minority culture, the dominant culture, and the oppressive relationship between the two cultures” (Atkinson et al., 1989, p. 38). Their work provided the foundation for many of the specific racial identity models that followed (Evans et al., 2010).

In the first stage, *conformity*, minority individuals prefer White societal norms and expectations above those of their own cultures. They devalue elements of themselves that are connected to their cultures of origin and show little interest in learning about their native cultures. Often a significant event or encounter with another person will push the person toward the second stage, *dissonance*. In this stage, individuals begin to question their perceptions of their own group as well as the majority group, begin to feel some pride in their native cultures, and begin to question how beneficial the dominant paradigm is in their lives. This questioning may lead individuals to the third stage, *resistance and immersion*. Here individuals reject the authority and beneficence of the dominant group and expend great energy into learning about and being involved with their cultures of origin. After this deep involvement in their native cultures, individuals often move into the fourth stage, *introspection*. They begin to see the world in less dualistic terms, realizing that there are both good and bad elements in both their native cultures as well as the dominant culture. They also realize that the intensity of the previous stage is quite draining, taking energy away from gaining deeper insight into themselves. In the final stage, *synergistic articulation and awareness*, individuals feel comfortable in and proud of their native group membership while also appreciating positive aspects of other cultures, including the dominant culture. This allows them to easily interact with members of both the dominant and native cultures. From their experiences through the stages, individuals in this final stage are concerned with oppression in all forms (D. W. Sue & Sue, 2008).

**Kim.** After Atkinson, Morten and Sue (1979) published the MID Model, other researchers worked to further develop the theory for specific racial and ethnic groups. For example, Jean Kim (1981, 2001) developed her Asian American identity development model from her work with Japanese women. She outlined three key assumptions regarding the racial identity development process of Asian Americans in a White-dominant society. First, one must consider the impact of oppression by White Americans when analyzing the racial identity development of Asian Americans. Second, Asian Americans must unlearn the negative stereotypes they unconsciously learned from growing up in a White-dominated society. And finally, in order to develop a healthy racial identity, Asian Americans must be able to take negative experiences and turn them into positive growing experiences (J. Kim, 2001).

Kim further outlined five stages in her model, which she described as “conceptually distinct, sequential, and progressive” (J. Kim, 2001, p. 67). Here is a brief summary of those five stages:

*Ethnic awareness:* This stage begins around ages 3 to 4 and continues into elementary school. In this stage, Asian American children have awareness that they are Asian and not White. Children growing up in predominantly Asian communities generally develop a sense of pride in their ethnicity, while children growing up in predominantly White communities may feel more neutral about their heritage.

*White identification:* As children begin to internalize positive messages about being White and negative messages about being Asian, they respond by

attempting to fit in and become more like Whites. This White identification can be either active (generally for Asians growing up in predominantly White environments) or passive (for Asians who have grown up in more Asian communities). Active White identification generally involves more significant attempts to remove all aspects of Asian culture from their identity.

*Awakening to social political consciousness:* Individuals in this stage develop the self-awareness to see that their White identification was due to their internalizing the racism that is present in the U.S. Recognizing their status as an oppressed group, they reject White identification, begin to build a more positive Asian identity, and seek to build coalitions with other disempowered groups to fight oppression.

*Redirection to Asian American consciousness:* The next step in the identity development process is to transcend viewing themselves as oppressed and working to establish pride in their identity as an Asian American. This often entails a deeper exploration of their culture and family history.

*Incorporation:* The final stage of Kim's model is marked by the incorporation of one's Asian American identity into one's overall sense of identity, leaving the individual free to focus on understanding all aspects of her identity beyond ethnicity. The individual feels confidence and pride in her status as an Asian American, but sees this as simply one aspect of her overall identity. She also shows appreciation for other racial and ethnic groups, including Whites (J. Kim, 2001)

**Ethnic identity models.** R. M. Lee (2005) defined ethnic identity as “a multidimensional construct that refers to an aspect of one’s self-concept derived from one’s awareness and knowledge of membership in an ethnic group, coupled with the emotions, behaviors, and values attached to ethnic group membership” (p. 37). Ethnic identity development appears to be much more flexible and complex than initially conceived. Recent researchers have labeled it multidimensional (Phinney, 1996) and relational (Rosenthal & Hrynevich, 1985), and it may change due to social contexts and geographic locations (C. J. Yeh & Huang, 1996). Jean Phinney (1990, 1992) was one of the first to develop a general theory regarding ethnic identity development that was applicable for different ethnicities.

Phinney based her work on the theories of Erikson (1964, 1968) and Marcia (1966), going so far as to incorporate the names of Marcia’s four identity statuses in her model. From her research with minority youth, Phinney (1990) proposed that all ethnic groups go through a similar ethnic identity process, which she outlined as having three stages. In the first stage, *unexamined ethnic identity*, individuals have not yet examined their ethnicity and thought about what it means to them to be a member of that group. If they view their ethnic identity as non-important, this may lead to diffusion. If they internalize attitudes about their ethnicity from significant others in their lives, this may lead to foreclosure.

In the second stage, *ethnic identity search/moratorium*, is similar in many ways to the immersion stage of the Racial/Cultural Identity Development Model (D. W. Sue & Sue, 2008). A significant incident regarding their ethnicity may



spark introspection and an in-depth analysis of what it means to be a member of their group. Similar to Marcia's (1966) concept of moratorium, individuals question their experience and seek out more information about their ethnicity. This examination may lead to anger against the dominant group. In this stage, their ethnicity moves from being an abstract concept to a personal reality reflected in their actions and values (Torres et al., 2003).

The final stage of Phinney's (1990) theory, *ethnic identity achievement*, is marked by the individual's acceptance of a bicultural identity. After the challenges of working through the second stage, individuals choose to identify as part of their culture. They feel comfortable and confident as group members, and are open to others from other ethnic groups.

Phinney (1992) also developed one of the most popular instrument used to measure ethnic identity, the Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM). This 20-item questionnaire broadly measures ethnic identity across three major dimensions (ethnic identity achievement, affirmation and belonging, ethnic behaviors). R. M. Lee (2005) noted that many researchers using the MEIM have simply used the total score of the instrument as a measure of ethnic identity as opposed to looking at the scoring of individual questions or attempting to look for concrete factors comprising the overall MEIM score. To more accurately reflect the multidimensional aspect of ethnic identity for Asian Americans, Lee and Yoo (2004) further broke down the MEIM score into three factors, which they named Cognitive Clarity (understanding one's ethnicity), Affective Pride (feeling proud of and positive about one's ethnicity), and Behavioral Engagement (showing

interest and engaging in learning about one's ethnic heritage). The MEIM has strong validity and reliability for use with a wide variety of ethnic groups, although additional research is needed to strengthen the psychometric properties of the instrument (Torres et al., 2003).

### **Koreans and Christianity**

Christianity has made significant inroads into Korean culture in the past two centuries, strongly impacting Korean political and social life (Davies, 1994). From a historical perspective, Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism have been the primary religions of Korea since the 7<sup>th</sup> century (Davies, 1994). However, current estimates of the Christian population in South Korea range from less than 20% (Korea National Statistics Office, 2002) to 33% (Onishi, 2004). South Korea is the second largest provider of Christian missionaries, after the United States and ahead of Great Britain (Onishi, 2004). The practice of sending Korean missionaries abroad is a relatively new one, but it reflects the long and important relationship between missionaries and Korea. This relationship is acknowledged in an popular aphorism among Koreans for last 20 years: "when Koreans now arrive in a new place, they establish a church; the Chinese establish a restaurant; the Japanese, a factory" (Hurh & Kim, 1990; Onishi, 2004). The next section of this literature review will examine how Christianity integrated its way into Korea, while also discussing the significant role the Korean church plays in the life of Korean Americans.

### **History of Christianity in Korea.**

***The Catholic era of influence (1600-1876).*** As with its other primary religions, Christianity first entered Korea through China. Scholars in the Practical Learning (Sirhak) movement in Korea learned about Catholicism from European Jesuit missionaries in the early part of the 17<sup>th</sup> century (Davies, 1994). One member of the Southerner faction of the Sirhak movement returned from Poland as a baptized Christian in the 1770s, which truly started the Christian movement in Korea (Davies, 1994).

Initially, Christianity initially gained in popularity without presence of missionaries in Korea. Interested Sirhak scholars learned more about Catholicism from the writings of Christian missionaries living in China. This interest was fueled in part as a response to the corruption of the current ruling dynasty in Korea (Davies, 1994). Disappointment with the current king encouraged some Koreans to push for openness to new ideas, such as Western thought, which also encouraged the study and spread of Catholicism. Despite several organized persecutions by the current rulers and the outlawing of Catholicism in 1785, its popularity continued to spread over the next one hundred years, especially among the oppressed, poorer Koreans, who responded to the concept of a kingdom of God for all people. More than 20,000 Koreans had converted to Catholicism by 1864 (Davies, 1994).

***The Protestant era of influence (1876-1945).*** Because of its distrust of Japan, Korea sought to build a relationship with the United States in the 1880s to gain another ally. Because Kojong, the current king, believed that the United States did not want to colonize Korea, he decided that the U.S. could be an ally.

Kojong admired the American way of life and felt that its success was due in part to its Protestant religion, so he opened Korea's borders to Protestant missionaries from the United States and welcomed them to visit the country (Davies, 1994).

These missionaries had a profound effect upon Korean society, doing much more than simply proselytizing. They build hospitals and schools, introduced public health measures to control the spread of diseases, encouraged democratic reform, and supported the rights of workers and women. Because of their close relationship with King Sojung, several missionaries served as de facto ambassadors for the United States in Korea (Davies, 1994). Their impact extended far beyond the confines of Korea.

For example, Christianity was a central component of one of the first Korean communities in the U.S. and its territories. Between 1898 and 1905, nearly 8000 Koreans immigrated to Hawaii to work as day laborers on sugar plantations. (This immigration abruptly halted in 1905, when Hawaii outlawed emigration from Korea) (Lyu, 1977). Slightly less than half of these immigrants were Christian (Choy, 1979; Patterson, 1988). However, the Christians tended to be literate and better educated than their non-Christian counterparts. As a result, they assumed leadership roles in the burgeoning Korean community and created Korean Christian churches on the islands. By 1906, there were 36 Korean Methodist churches in Hawaii, and Methodist missions began to import Korean Christians from Korea to help run the churches. American-educated Korean Christians from the United States then joined these church leaders. These

American-educated Koreans became the backbone of the Korean political movement within Hawaii for the next 40 years. “The transplanted Korean church in Hawaii left a legacy of providing Koreans with both Christian and ethnic fellowship” (Hurh & Kim, 1990, p. 29).

While there were several reasons for their success in Korea, C. Park (2003) argued that the most significant reason Christian missionaries were successful (as compared to other east Asian countries) was a change at the macro level (in this case, geopolitical relationships), not the actions at the micro level (the work of the missionaries). Specifically, she suggested that Korea’s fear of Japan’s impending imperialist rule caused them to be more open to Western ideas and assistance, in particular the ideas and assistance of U.S. missionaries (C.-S. Park, 2003). Without Korea’s distrustful relationship with Japan, American missionaries’ efforts might have been as unsuccessful in Korea as they were in China and Japan. Onishi (2004) echoed this theory, adding that Koreans also appreciated American missionaries alerting the West to the brutality of the Japanese at that time.

***Significance of Korean churches for immigrants in the United States.***

Historically, immigrants to America have given up most of their native cultural norms. However, one aspect of their native culture that they have tended to maintain is their religion (Herberg, 1960). Herberg (1960) suggested that it is in and through this connection to their native religion that immigrants find their place in American life. Other researchers have found that that religion helps

immigrants from Third World countries to maintain their native culture (Carnes & Yang, 2004; Chen, 2002; Chong, 1998; Ebaugh & Chafetz, 2000).

Immigrants tend to be more religious after their emigration to the U.S. than they were in their home countries (Saran, 1985; Williams, 1988). This holds true for Korean Americans. For example, approximately 40% of Korean immigrants who were not Christian in Korea now attend Korean churches (Min, 1992). However, a significant number of Korean immigrants come to the U.S. with Christian backgrounds. Two surveys of groups of Korean immigrants in the late 1980s showed that a slight majority of them were Christians in Korea before they emigrated (Hurh & Kim, 1990; I. S. Park, Fawcett, Arnold, & Gardner, 1989).

Christians are overrepresented in Korean immigrant populations for several reasons. First, the Korean urban middle class tends to be more Christian, and this population has immigrated to the U.S. more than other subgroups of the overall Korean population (Hurh & Kim, 1990; I. S. Park et al., 1989). When the United Nations separated Korea into two countries in 1948, many of the Christians fled Communist North Korea to South Korea. Since these Koreans were ethnically and historically less tied to South Korea, they immigrated to the U.S. in higher numbers than people from the section of the country that became South Korea (I. Kim, 1981). Finally, Christian Koreans tend to be less traditional than Koreans of other faiths, which has helped them to immigrate to the West in larger numbers (Hurh & Kim, 1990; Min, 1992).

Research shows historically high levels of involvement and attendance by Korean Americans at Korean churches (Hurh & Kim, 1990). In fact, Koreans

appear to attend ethnic churches at higher levels than any other ethnic group in the U.S. (Min, 1992). Several studies in Los Angeles, Chicago, and Atlanta have shown that approximately 70% of Korean Americans attend church with nearly all of them attending Korean churches (Hurh & Kim, 1984b, 1988; Min, 1988, 1989). In 1990, there was a Korean church for every 350 Korean Americans (Hurh & Kim, 1990) and by 1995, that ratio had shrunk to one church for every 300 Korean Americans (K. C. Kim & Kim, 1995). As of 2001, more than one million Koreans attend one of 3000 Korean churches in the United States (Warner, 2001).

Historically, the Korean church in the U.S. has served many non-religious functions (Ebaugh & Chafetz, 2000). It has operated as a social center; as an educational center to teach the native language, history and culture; and as a source of Korean nationalism (Choy, 1979; Min, 1992). Other researchers have noted its function as a surrogate extended family that works as a bridge between new immigrants and the larger American society (I. Kim, 1981). Additionally, Korean churches provide social services and emotional support for their members. Although many immigrants attend church in the U.S. because of their faith, others attend because of the support and social services that these churches provide (Min, 1992).

The history and purposes of Korean ethnic churches make them unique among immigrant populations:

The role of Korean ethnic churches in sustaining Korean ethnicity is interesting, particularly because Protestantism is not a Korean national

religion. . . .In their effort to preserve the Korean subculture and identify through Christian churches, Korean immigrants have significantly “Koreanized” Christianity. (Min, 1992, p. 1391)

While Korean churches have assisted first-generation Koreans in passing along their religion to their children, researchers have reported mixed findings on how successfully the church helps to transmit Korean culture and language to their children (Chong, 1998; Min & Kim, 2005). This area needs further exploration by researchers.

In summary, the field of identity development has received much attention during the past century. In particular, Erikson, Marcia, Josselson, and Chickering and Reisser each suggested concepts of this process, creating a framework from which current researchers can work. However, other researchers, including Atkinson, Morten and Sue; Kim; and Phinney, have illustrated how Asian Americans experience the identity development process in different ways than these traditional models suggest. In particular, Kodama et al. (2002) pointed out ways in which Chickering and Reisser’s model does not fully reflect the Asian American experience. From these differences, they created their own model to describe Asian American identity development. This study attempted to validate Kodama et al.’s (2002) model, while providing further detail and clarity into the model and any noted areas of difference. It also examined the roles of faith and the Korean church in this experience, due to the significant history of Christianity in the lives of Koreans and especially in the lives of Korean Americans.



## **Chapter 3**

### **Research Methods**

I was a captain of the team, and my senior year, we had a party [for] our team . . . and girls approached us and asked, “Oh, who is this player? Who is this player? Who is the captain?” And then [my teammates] pointed at me, and the face [the girls] expressed. I don’t know, I might be biased or something, they didn’t quite expect that I would be the captain of the team. (David)

The purpose of this study is to compare the experiences of six 1.5/second-generation Korean American college students at Emory University with the model of Asian American psychosocial development proposed by Kodama, McEwen, Liang and Lee (2002) in an attempt to validate this model. This model was based upon the theory suggested by Chickering and Reisser (1993). In this chapter, I will begin with a discussion of the rationale behind the selection of my chosen research method, narrative inquiry. This will be followed by a discussion of the participants, the site in which the study was conducted, my research procedures, my data analysis procedures, factors I considered to ensure trustworthiness, and finally, a subjectivity statement outlining my journey up to and through this research project.

### **Research Questions**

This project was guided by the following five research questions:

- 1) Do the participants discuss their development as being centered and at times torn between “external influences from dominant U.S. society and traditional Asian values from family” (Kodama et al., 2002)?
- 2) Do the participants discuss their purpose as being central to their identity?
- 3) When discussing emotions, do they reflect the supposition that Asian Americans are learning how to identify and express emotions, as opposed to Chickering and Reisser’s (1993) suggestion that students during this time work on managing emotions?
- 4) Do the participants discuss their journey as moving from interdependence to independence and autonomy, as compared to Chickering and Reisser’s contention that students move through autonomy toward interdependence?
- 5) What role do religion and the Korean church play in the psychosocial development of the participants?

### **Research Tradition**

Qualitative research methods provide a different lens through which to view human experience. They allow researchers to gather rich data from participants in order to gain a deeper understanding of their perspectives (C. J. Yeh et al., 2005). Qualitative research also provides a framework to generate new hypotheses. Counseling psychologists recommend the use of qualitative methods to study the ethnic minority experiences (B. S. K. Kim, Brenner, Liang, & Asay, 2003).

In particular, narrative inquiry is a form of qualitative research especially suited for life stories. In undertaking this study, I sought to gain a deeper understanding of the psychosocial development process of Korean American college students and I wanted to represent their stories in their own words. Narrative researchers Clandinin and Connelly (2000) noted that, “for us, narrative is the best way of representing and understanding experience” (p. 18), while Creswell (2007) added that, “narrative research is best for capturing the detailed stories or life experiences of a single life or the lives of a small number of individuals” (p. 55).

As a new researcher undertaking my first qualitative study, I was drawn to the unique opportunity that narrative provides for both the researcher and participant. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) noted the power of people recounting their own stories:

People live stories, and in the telling of these stories, reaffirm them, modify them, and create new ones. Stories lived and told educate the self and others, including the young and those such as researchers who are new to their communities. (p. xxvi)

I hoped that my participants would not only educate me about their experiences, but also gain insight into their lives as they remembered and recreated their stories.

Since my aim was to gain a greater understanding through the narrative approach, I initially approached the study using a social constructivist paradigm to guide my work. Stage and Manning (2003) suggested that a constructivist

perspective is well-suited for the study of “behaviors of groups who occupy a particular culture” (p. 21). Researchers using this paradigm believe that reality has multiple points of view and is socially created. They enter into the study without pre-existing codes but instead allow the codes to emerge from the data (Stage & Manning, 2003). Interactions between the researcher and participants create a two-way collaboration that affects both parties, resulting in high quality data (Guba & Lincoln, 1990; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Manning, 2000; Manning & Ahuna, 1999). Constructivists believe that the stories they collect are situational and must be viewed from that context. They also believe that multiple interacting factors create the stories they research (Stage & Manning, 2003).

However, as I began to code my data I realized that in order for me to compare my participants’ responses to the model being tested, I would need to use the model created by Kodama et al. (2002) as a guide for coding. This approach suggests a postpositivist worldview, which is theoretically at odds with a social constructivist paradigm. After some consideration, I decided to proceed using both paradigms at different steps of the data coding process, which will I discuss in more detail later in this chapter.

On a practical level, researchers using a social constructivist framework create their questions to be “broad and general”, with “the more open-ended questioning, the better”, while using active listening skills to gain insight into the participants’ lives (Creswell, 2007, p. 21). Realizing that they bring personal values and beliefs to the study, constructivist researchers seek to understand how these values and beliefs affect their interpretation of their participants’

stories. After thoroughly immersing themselves in their data, they offer an interpretation of others' experiences in the world (Creswell, 2007). These beliefs and guidelines informed my work throughout my process.

## **Participants**

I used purposive sampling to identify six third- and fourth-year Korean American participants for my study. To be eligible for inclusion, students also needed to be 1.5 or second generation Korean American students, meaning both parents were born in Korea and the students were either born in the U.S. or emigrated to the U.S. from Korea by age 14. These six students (three male and three female) were recruited at Emory University, a mid-sized, private university in the southeastern U.S.

I recruited participants through several methods. First, I sent my recruitment email (see Appendix A) to Korean American students with whom I am acquainted to recommend other Korean American students that I do not know for my study. Surprisingly, this request did not yield any participants. For my second attempt, I sent the recruitment email to all of the resident advisors at my university, asking them to forward the message to potential participants. I also asked the director of our Office of Multicultural Programs if she could help to recruit participants. She, in turn, asked the president of the Korean undergraduate student group on our campus to send out my recruitment email. This was the most effective method of recruitment, generating ten interested students. I responded to each email from interested students in the order in which they were received. In my email response, I explained the purpose of my

study, outlined what the students would need to do to participate, and discussed how much of their time I expected their participation to take. The first six students to respond were eligible for the study and interested in participating, so they became my participants.

Here is a brief description of each participant, including basic demographic information and class standing:

Christine: Christine is a 21-year-old senior originally from a major metropolitan area in the northeast U.S. that featured a large Korean American community. Her parents emigrated separately from South Korea when they were adults and married in the U.S. Shortly before she began high school, her family moved to a major metropolitan area in the southern U.S. with a smaller but still significant Korean American community. She is a second-generation Korean American.

Eunice: Eunice is a 21-year-old senior who grew up in a small town in the Upland South section of the United States. Before her family settled in this area, she lived in several countries around the world. Her parents were also born and married in South Korea, but she was born in a major metropolitan area on the west coast of the U.S. She spent the majority of her childhood in areas with few other Korean Americans. She is also a second-generation Korean American.

Jennifer: Twenty-year-old Jennifer is the only third-year student in my study. Her parents were born and were married in South Korea, where she was born. A year after her birth, her family moved to a medium-sized suburban town in a major metropolitan area in the northeast U.S., where she has lived since that

time. Her community featured a small number of Korean Americans. Although she was born in South Korea, her emigration to the U.S. as a one-year old classifies her as a second-generation Korean American.

Phillip: Phillip is a 21-year-old senior from the southeastern U.S. His parents were born in South Korea but emigrated individually to North America, where they met and married. After spending the first few years of his life in a large metropolitan area with a strong Korean American community, Phillip's family moved to a very small town for several years that had no other Korean Americans. Around the time he began high school, they moved back to the same large metropolitan area where he had been born. Phillip is a second-generation Korean American.

Mitchell: Twenty-two year old Mitchell, a college senior, is one of two participants who emigrated the United States after the age of five. He spent the first seven years of his life in South Korea, then his family moved to a metropolitan area in the deep South of the U.S., where his family has lived since then. His community had very few other Korean Americans. His emigration at age 7 would classify him as a 1.5-generation Korean American.

David: David, like Mitchell, is 22 years old and was born in South Korea. David's family moved back and forth between South Korea and the U.S. several times during his childhood, eventually settling in a suburb of a major metropolitan area in the northeast U.S. that featured very few Korean Americans. His experience is somewhat different from the other participants in that he grew up with financial resources the other participants did not have. Also, unlike the other

participants, his childhood was almost equally divided between South Korea and the U.S. His final emigration to the U.S. at age 13 classifies him as a 1.5-generation Korean American.

### **Site Selection**

I conducted my study at Emory University, a medium-sized, private university in the southeastern United States. Total enrollment at Emory is nearly 14,000, including approximately 7,500 undergraduate students and 6,500 graduate and professional students (Emory University tuition and fees, 2012). Anticipated cost of attendance at this institution is approximately \$50,000 per year (Emory University tuition and fees, 2012). Emory University is selective in its admission process and has appeared in the top 25 of *U.S. News and World Report's* annual list of top colleges and universities for the past 20 years (Best Colleges, 2011; Gleason, 1997). Recent student demographic information for Emory's undergraduate population from 2008 show that 53% are White, 26% are Asian/Pacific Islander 13% are Other, 12% are Black, and 4% are Hispanic (Emory University, 2011).

### **Procedure**

Once I identified my six participants, I individually met with them to ensure they fit my research criteria, they understood what their role in the process would be, and they signed the consent form (see Appendix B). Once this meeting was complete, I scheduled and conducted two individual interviews with each participant.

### **Data Collection**



I first met with each participant for approximately 30 minutes to review the selection criteria to determine eligibility for my study, to review the consent form and the interview process so that each participant was aware of what I needed from them, and to answer any questions they might have. All six students I met with at this stage agreed to participate and signed the consent form. At the end of each of these initial meetings, we set up the time for the first interview. We determined times for the second interview at the conclusion of the first interview.

Each participant was interviewed twice, with a separate set of questions for each interview (see Appendices C and D). I utilized a semi-structured interview format to allow for further probing when needed (Creswell, 2007; Hill, Thompson, & Williams, 1997). I developed the questions using Kodama et al.'s (2002) model of Asian American psychosocial development as a guide, attempting to explore the areas of development they suggested Asian American students experience in a different way than Chickering and Reisser (1993) proposed. To further guide my question development, I also used Clandinin and Connelly's (2000) concept of four directions of inquiry: inward and outward, backward and forward. They define inward as internal conditions, such as feelings and hopes. Outward refers to existential conditions, such as environmental factors. Backward and forward refer to time-related issues, such as the past, present and future. Guiding the participants to look inward, outward, backward and forward helped me to gain a deeper understanding of the Korean American experience.

Interviews ranged from 46 to 93 minutes long. I conducted the interviews in three locations: my office, a conference room on campus, and in a residence hall study room. I recorded each interview then had it transcribed by a hired transcription specialist in another state who did not know any of the participants. At the completion of the second interview, I gave each participant a \$20 gift card to Starbucks or Target.

To assist with confidentiality, I changed participant names to their assigned pseudonyms on all documents and files once I received them from the transcriber. I allowed participants to select their pseudonym if they wished to do so; two of the six selected their alternate names. I added password-protection to the transcriptions once I had received them back. I plan to destroy the interview files one year after the project is complete.

## **Data Analysis**

My process for analyzing the data was somewhat unusual. Validating an identity development model using qualitative methods appears to be somewhat counterintuitive, since the validation process usually implies a postpositive worldview, while a qualitative methodology is generally utilized along with a social constructivist worldview. However, I thought that this approach was appropriate because of the way I wanted to answer my research questions. Not only did I want to know whether the participants' experience reflected the differences as noted by Kodama et al. (2002), but I also wanted to know how they experienced these differences. A simple yes or no answer would not be sufficient to understand these differences and how they play out in the lives of Korean American students. Thus, my data analysis plan incorporated both a postpositivist and a social constructivist worldview at different points during the process in order to answer both the "yes/no" and "how" parts of my research questions. My data analysis method is detailed in Figure 2.

After receiving the completed transcripts, I read each transcript while listening to the recording of the interview to ensure thoroughness and accuracy. Once any discrepancies were corrected, I formatted and analyzed the interviews according to procedures developed by Dr. Wendy Ruona (2005). I used the tabling feature of Microsoft Word to reformat each transcript into a table, dividing each statement by the participant and me into a separate cell in a table. I coded each line in the table to identify the speaker, the interview, and the line number.

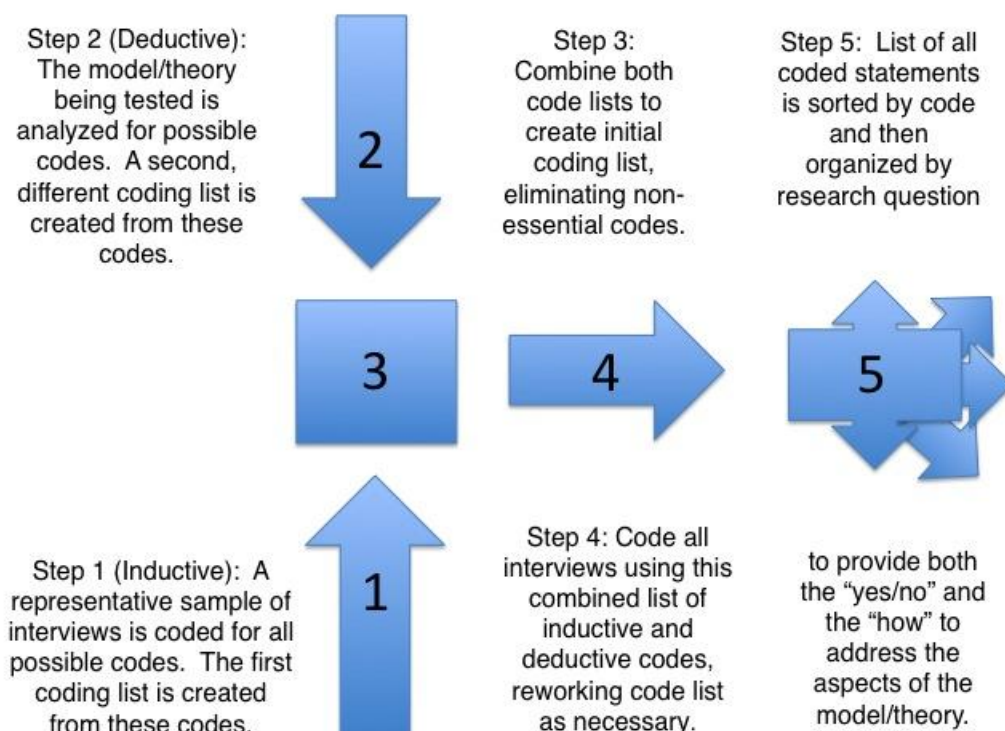


Figure 2: My qualitative validation data analysis method

Once all 12 transcripts were converted into this format, I read through and completed an initial round of coding for four interviews, utilizing a social constructivist worldview. I intentionally selected two male and two female participants and two first and two second interviews to cover as many possibilities as I could during this initial round of coding. I coded every item I could identify in each response (including items that did not seem to relate to the research questions) to ensure that I was not overlooking possible themes. If a response contained more than one code, I separated the response into

segments and created a new line in the table for the second segment so that each initial code was in a separate line.

Once I had completed this initial round of coding for these four interviews, I reviewed all of the codes I had identified in those interviews to develop the first list of codes. At this point, I shifted my worldview to a more postpositivist perspective for the next step in an effort to more directly address the research questions. I reviewed Kodama et al.'s (2002) model and their description of each vector to identify codes that could appear in the interviews based upon their model. Then I compared and merged the two code lists into one working list, removing codes from the first step of the data analysis that did not seem related to the research questions. This exercise created an initial coding list that contained ten main themes and 53 subthemes. Once this coding list was finalized, I used it as a guide to conduct a second round of coding for all 12 interviews. As I coded, I continued to modify the coding list to reflect what I was saw in the data. I ended the coding process with ten main themes and 63 subthemes. (See Table 1 for a complete list of codes.)

Once this second round of coding was complete, I merged the 12 separate interview tables into one large table that contained all questions and responses (and their associated codes) for all participants. Then I sorted the table by code to organize the responses by topic rather than by participant. For my final analysis step, I reviewed the large, sorted table line-by-line and re-sorted the

Table 1

*Code List*

Main Code	Subcode	Original Theme
10000		<b>Identity</b>
	10100	Korean identity
	10200	American identity
	10300	Korean American/multiple identities
	10400	Gender identity/roles
	10500	Stereotypes – model minority
	10600	Racism
	10700	Assimilation
	10800	Enculturation
11000		<b>Korean culture/values</b>
	11100	Family
	11200	Parents – expectations
	11300	Siblings
	11350	Korean language
	11400	Achievement/Hard Work
	11500	Collectivism/Interdependence
	11600	Respect/deference to authority
	11700	Duty
	11800	Educational value
	11900	Financial success/material goods
12000		<b>Society/American culture/values</b>
	12100	Peer influence
	12200	Media
	12300	Celebrities
	12400	Affiliations
	12500	Individualism/Independence
	12600	Perpetual foreigner
	12700	Invisibility
	12800	English language
13000		<b>Purpose</b>
	13100	Vocational choice
	13200	College major choice
	13400	Motivation - Internal
	13500	Motivation – External (Parents)
14000		<b>Competence</b>
	14100	Physical competence
	14200	Intellectual competence
	14300	Interpersonal competence

Main Code	Subcode	Original Theme
15000		<b>Emotional expression</b>
	15100	Guilt
	15200	Shame
	15300	Exploring emotions
	15400	Understanding emotions
	15500	Expressing emotions
16000		<b>Relationships</b>
	16100	Harmony
	16200	Cooperation
	16300	Accommodation
	16400	Patience
	16500	Humility
	16600	Non-confrontation
	16700	Dating relationships
	16800	Friendships
17000		<b>Cultural environment</b>
	17100	Home environment (how Asian?)
	17200	Campus environment (how Asian?)
18000		<b>Integrity</b>
	18100	Personal values
	18200	Family values
	18300	Representing their families
	18400	Respecting their elders
	18500	Upholding family name
19000		<b>Religion</b>
	19100	Korean church
	19200	Religious faith
20000		<b>Conflict</b>
	20100	Conflict with Korean culture
	20200	Conflict with American culture
	20300	Conflict with parents
	20400	Conflict with non-KA peers
	20500	Conflict with KA peers
	20600	Conflict with Korean international peers
	20700	Conflict with elders
	20800	Conflict with authority

coded responses into a new document – a final working outline organized by the research questions.

As I organized responses by research question, I grouped them into categories under each research question. I continually reviewed these categories during this part of the process to combine similar items and make each category as inclusive as possible. Using this rather unique approach, I developed an outline that directly addressed the research questions (utilizing a postpositive worldview), while each section of the outline contained participant quotes providing examples of the codes, which allowed me to answer the questions with rich examples from the participant stories (which utilized a more social constructivist worldview). This allowed me to answer the research questions in both a yes/no and a how fashion.

### **Trustworthiness**

One of the greatest challenges to collecting accurate data from Asian Americans is the cultural norm to not share personal information with people outside their families. When I first met with participants to review the process, I explained both my interest in Asian American culture and articulated a basic level of knowledge and sensitivity about their culture to encourage the students to feel more comfortable sharing with me. I found that this approach has worked in previous discussions with Asian American students. Additionally, since many Asian American cultures are hierarchical in nature and they value respect for elders and those in authority (Kodama et al., 2001), Asian American students may seek to give me the responses they think I am looking for. In order to



combat this, I attempted to reflect consistent encouragement and support in my verbal and non-verbal responses so I did not inadvertently reward or encourage participants to respond in any particular way.

I attempted to increase the trustworthiness of my findings in other ways as well. I offered the opportunity to the participants to review my findings so they could provide additional insight into my process, as recommended by Lincoln and Guba (1985) and Clandinin and Connelly (2000). Additionally, I consulted with two university colleagues who have great experience with Asian American and Korean American student issues as I worked. I also asked them to review my initial coding as well as my initial findings for thoroughness and appropriate complexity. Each theme in the findings is supported by participant quotes to provide “rich, thick description” as encouraged by Lincoln and Guba (1985), among others.

I employed prolonged engagement and persistent observation techniques throughout the data analysis process to gain as deep of an understanding of the data as possible. For example, I lengthened the time allotted for data analysis by an extra two months to ensure that I had enough time to read over the transcripts multiple times and did not rush the coding process. I also completed three rounds of data coding and organization to ensure thorough familiarity with the transcripts. Although I did not type the transcriptions myself, I listened to each interview while reading the transcriptions to ensure accuracy. I also went back to listen again to sections of the recordings that I felt were important to the overall meaning of the participants’ experiences.

**Subjectivity Statement**

Both my head and my heart prompted my decision to research Asian American college students. On an intellectual basis, I am fascinated by the differences between White American and Asian American cultures. Some of this fascination stems from growing up in a homogenous environment. I grew up in Wadsworth, Ohio, a small town in northeastern Ohio that virtually defines the term “homogeneous.” According to the 2010 U. S. Census, Wadsworth’s population is 96.9% White, with African Americans, Asians and Latinos each comprising less than 1% of the total population of 21,567 (U. S. Census Department, 2010). My high school class had one African American student and no students of Asian or Latino descent. I did not interact with an Asian person until college, when I became friends with a student from Malaysia, Choong Ngee Woon. My friendship with Choong helped me to form my first concept of Asian people – kind, smart, hard working and respectful.

My contact with Asians and Asian Americans after my undergraduate college career continued to be very limited. I learned more about Asian culture from Emory students during my first 10-12 years working there, but their numbers were still fairly small compared to other groups so my interactions were infrequent. During the last decade, however, Asian American enrollment at Emory has increased significantly. For example, in 2000, 1,292 students (11.3% of the total student population) identified as Asian/Pacific Islander. By 2008, that number had increased to 2,587 (20.3% of the total student population), an increase of 100% in just eight years. This strong increase in enrollment has

correlated with more frequent interactions with Asian American students, which has led to much more frequent contact, deeper knowledge and increased curiosity.

My primary contact with students is through supervision. In my current position, I oversee a residential campus that houses primarily third- and fourth-year students. I oversee more than 30 student staff members through my chain of supervisory command. Developing relationships with students is a priority for me, so each year I schedule one-hour one-on-one meetings with student staff in order to get to know them better and vice versa. During these meetings I have the opportunity to explore my student staff members' lives more deeply. These conversations open doors for future conversations about how my student staff members' lives are going, including their families and their futures.

My student staffs over the years have reflected Emory's changing demographics and increased numbers of Asian American students. In 2007-08, the first year I had Resident Advisors (RAs) working under my supervision in my current job, I had 4 RAs (24% of the total number of staff) who identified as Asian American or mixed race including Asian American. That number has increased to 13 RAs (48% of the total number of staff) for the current 2011-2012 academic year. My one-on-one meetings and subsequent regular interactions with all of my staff have helped me build strong relationships over the years, especially with a number of Asian American staff members.

In the spring of 2010, the sole assignment in my qualitative methods research class was to conduct my own small-scale qualitative study. Almost

immediately, I knew that I wanted to work with one of my then-current staff members, a Korean American student, on the project. Eun was fascinating to me – very culturally Asian in some ways, while also very culturally American in other ways. How did she define her ethnic identity? What helped her form her definition? During our two one-hour interviews for the assignment, I was mesmerized by her story. She was open and honest, explaining the nuances of Korean culture while elaborating on why she chose to maintain some cultural elements while rejecting others. After completing this assignment, I was certain that I wanted to study Korean American student development for my dissertation.

Without question, Eun's story captured my intellectual curiosity, but it also touched my heart. Perhaps due in part to the Asian American cultural norms of keeping personal challenges or problems private, I had little knowledge of the struggles of my Asian American students. However, by taking the time to develop trust and ask appropriate exploratory questions, I was able to gain a much deeper understanding about many of the challenges faced by Asian immigrants to the United States, including lack of money and language and cultural barriers. Eun's story fascinated me. I related strongly to both her successes and struggles, which caught me somewhat by surprise, as our life experiences are so different. I had a very similar reaction to each of my participants' stories as well. I have spent a great deal of time trying to understand this emotional connection to my participants' stories. It has been a lengthy and complex journey, and I do not completely understand the full nature

of the connection. However, this exploration has given me a much deeper understanding into who I am and what I value.

As my participants' stories resonated with me, I realized how many aspects of our lives we shared, despite our different cultures. Like my participants, I was a highly motivated student. Despite my parents being of European descent, the instructions they passed on to me were very similar to the messages my participants received from their parents: work hard, keep your head down, and don't draw attention to yourself. After reading more about Asian culture, I realized that I possess a more collective than individualistic orientation. Since harmony is extremely important to me, I work to make others around me happy and feel included, sometimes to my own detriment. I feel uncomfortable talking about my accomplishments, or myself, as this seems like bragging. Although my orientation and experiences are not identical to Asian Americans, I connected deeply to stories related to these aspects of their culture.

One of the ways in which my participants and I are similar played out in an amusing and telling incident during one interview. Asian American culture stresses the importance of showing respect to those older than they are. Meanwhile, in an effort to make others more comfortable speaking with me, I try to even out differences in authority or age when I talk with others by showing respect to those who are younger than I am. These dual processes played out during one particular exchange with a participant. This participant answered one of my questions in a different way than I had intended, so I rephrased the question and asked it again. He immediately apologized for not understanding

the question, which I followed by apologizing to him for not asking the question in a way that he would understand. I did not realize that this had happened until I listened to the recording of the interview. Both of us wanted to accept responsibility for the miscommunication, when most likely neither of us was really at fault. On one level, my attempts to show respect for my participants might have made them feel uncomfortable, as they may have viewed that as their responsibility, not mine. However, because my participants opened up and shared so deeply, I believe that my attempts to show respect to my participants helped to create a positive, caring environment where they could share their personal stories without judgment.

I also wrangled with other ways that my visible identity as an older White man may have impacted my interactions with my participants. While listening to the playback of my interviews, I noticed how my tone of voice seemed to match the tone of my participants, reflecting my unconscious attempts to make my participants feel more comfortable. As I listened, though, I understood that their respect for elders most likely influenced all of our interactions and conversations. While I felt immense gratitude for the effort displayed by my participants to provide information to help me, that gratitude was tempered somewhat by my understanding that their effort might not have been entirely voluntary.

The impact of my being male is more difficult to determine. Korean culture is quite patriarchal, so my sex and gender should have played an important role in my interactions with my participants. In this situation it is important to distinguish between sex and gender. My sex (male) is a fixed constant that does

not vary from one culture to another, while my gender could be more fluid since it is a social construct that may vary from one culture to another. While I am indisputably male, my gender may not be viewed as rigidly, since my behaviors are often not those of a typical American male. Generally, I am soft-spoken rather than brash, hesitant rather than decisive, and emotional rather than stoic. These personality characteristics contribute to my success as a counselor and may mitigate the impact of my sex on my interviews. Issues related to American notions of masculinity played out strongly in one interview with a male student, who struggled against the White stereotype of Asian men not being “real men” as compared to White American men. He told me that a White female student he had wanted to date had told him that he was “too nice.” Because of my personal experience with this stereotype, we were able to delve fairly deeply into the ways that concepts of American masculinity impact those who do not display these stereotypical traits or behaviors. So, while my sex (i.e., my participants see me as male) impacted how my participants interacted with me, at least in this particular case my gender manifestation being somewhat non-traditional (i.e., my behaviors not being stereotypically male) may have mitigated this impact and also helped to build a stronger connection with one of the participants.

Similarly, while my participants may not have known that I am gay, it certainly impacted my response to their stories. My sexual orientation is my only identity that is not a majority identity, so it has given me insight into oppression and how it impacts people’s experience. However, my minority identity is a hidden one, so I have had the luxury of being able to reveal it when I choose, for

the most part. Despite the differences in our minority status experience, there were several times when my experiences matched my participants', allowing me deeper insight into their lives. For example, one participant talked about how she intuitively knew which Korean friends could handle hanging out with her White friends and vice versa, and I realized that I had constructed a similar filter for my gay and straight friends without even realizing it. I did not share my status as a gay man with my participants because I wanted to keep the focus on their stories and not on mine. However, my sexual orientation most likely provided insight for me into their experience, while also partly explaining why their stories resonated so strongly with me.

Listening to my conversations with my participants gave me insight into my discomfort being a White man trying to explore Korean cultural issues. On several occasions during the interviews I went into drawn-out explanations about hunches I had regarding participants' feelings and experiences, instead of directly asking the participants about their feelings. I believe I may have done this in an effort to show my participants that I understood their experience, but it also may have inadvertently communicated my insecurity stemming from not being a member of their group. I wanted my participants to understand that I had done research to give me some basic cultural understanding prior to conducting the interviews. However, I would rather I had conveyed this understanding through my interview questions and follow-up questions rather than by lengthy conjectures.



This journey with my participants has pushed me both intellectually and emotionally. I have learned more about myself and about my position in the world through this research. Allowing both my head and my heart to take the lead at various times through this project has provided me with a more fully-rounded concept of what it is like to be a Korean American student on my campus.

**Summary**

After determining my research questions, I decided that a qualitative research design featuring semi-structured questions would be the best way to answer these questions. My awareness of Korean American cultural issues helped me to explore my participants' lives in a sensitive way, building trust and openness in the process. By intentionally creating questions designed to explore their experiences from a multidirectional approach, I was able to generate rich, layered responses from which I could attempt to answer my research questions.

## CHAPTER 4

### Results

And a lot of times I feel pressured, for example, if I don't get into dental school, I'm afraid that I'm going to let my parents down, and . . . a lot of times I feel that pressure, which I don't know is a good thing or a bad thing, but I mean, it motivates me, but at the same time, I'm really pressured and really worried . . . to see if I'm going to let my parents down. (Mitchell)

Mitchell's statement highlights one of the many pressures that many 1.5 and second-generation Korean American (Korean American) college students face. The purpose of this study is to examine the stories of six current 1.5/second generation Korean American college students to see if their psychosocial development reflects the differences in Chickering and Reisser's (1993) theory that were proposed by Kodama et al. (2002). My interest in exploring Korean American psychosocial development emerged from my experiences supervising and talking to current Korean American students at Emory University.

In my study, I sought to gain information regarding four differences in Asian American psychosocial student development that were suggested by Kodama et al. (2002). Additionally, I sought to gain an understanding of the role

that religion and the Korean church played in the psychosocial development of Korean American college students. These areas of inquiry were expressed in five research questions:

- 1) Do the participants discuss their development as being centered and at times torn between “external influences from dominant U.S. society and traditional Asian values from family” (Kodama et al., 2002)?
- 2) Do the participants discuss their purpose as being central to their identity?
- 3) When discussing emotions, do they reflect the supposition that Asian Americans are learning how to identify and express emotions, as opposed to Chickering and Reisser’s (1993) suggestion that students during this time work on managing emotions?
- 4) Do the participants discuss their journey as moving from interdependence to independence and autonomy, as compared to Chickering and Reisser’s contention that students move through autonomy toward interdependence?
- 5) What role do religion and the Korean church play in the psychosocial development of the participants?

To answer these questions, I conducted two interviews each with six 1.5 or second generation Korean American college students at Emory University, a medium-sized private university in Atlanta, Georgia. I recruited participants primarily through the director of Emory’s Office of Multicultural Programs and Services Office, although I identified a few participants from referrals from coworkers on campus. Each participant received a \$20 gift card to Starbucks or Target after the second interview was completed.

After I conducted the twelve interviews, I hired a professional transcriber to transcribe each interview. Once I had received and verified the accuracy of each transcript, I conducted three rounds of coding to ensure thorough data analysis. Data from the interviews provided much insight into the experiences addressed by the research questions. Summarized findings for each research question are listed in Table 2. In the following section, I will discuss the findings related to each research question.

### **Responses to Research Questions**

**Research question #1: Do the participants discuss their development as being centered and at times torn between “external influences from dominant U.S. society and traditional Asian values from family” (Kodama et al., 2002)?** To answer this question, I will look at a variety of different aspects of the participants’ experience to formulate a comprehensive picture of their perceptions of their development as it related to their ethnic identities. Areas to be explored include: their definitions of their ethnic identities; their relationships to peer groups and their parents; their relationships with other 1.5/second-generation Korean Americans; their most significant values; their levels of cultural pride; their use of language; their experience with racism and stereotypes; and their strategies for acculturation.

Table 2

#### *Summarized Research Findings*

Research Question	Findings
RQ1: Do the participants discuss their development as being centered	Participants described their cultural/ethnic identity as bicultural.

Table 2

*Summarized Research Findings*

Research Question	Findings
and at times torn between “external influences from dominant U.S. society and traditional Asian values from family” (Kodama et al., 2002)?	<p>Participants described their experience as a 1.5/second generation Korean American as distinct from the experience of related peer groups.</p> <p>Participants differed with their parents on a variety of aspects of the participants’ lives.</p> <p>Participants generally formed the strongest friendships with other 1.5/second-generation Korean American peers than with other peers.</p> <p>Participants mentioned more traditionally Korean values than traditionally American values in their stories.</p> <p>Participants expressed stronger feelings of Korean cultural pride than American cultural pride.</p> <p>Participants reported maintaining both English and Korean language skills, but feeling more comfortable with English and using English more often.</p>

RQ1: Do the participants discuss their development as being centered and at times torn between “external influences from

Participants encountered varying amounts of racism during their lives, while also noting how Asian stereotypes affected their

Table 2

*Summarized Research Findings*

Research Question	Findings
dominant U.S. society and traditional Asian values from family" (Kodama et al., 2002)?	development.  Participants offered different strategies for acculturation to the U.S.
RQ2: Do the participants discuss their purpose as being central to their identity?	College and major choice for men was related to their ability to get a secure, high-paying job, with parents heavily involved in the decision-making process, while female participants considered more personal criteria and had less parental involvement.  Participants developed strong internal motivation to succeed academically and vocationally.  Motivation for success moves from external (parents) to internal (themselves) during high school and/or college.
RQ3: When discussing emotions, do they reflect the supposition that Asian Americans are learning how to identify and express emotions, as opposed to Chickering and Reisser's (1993) suggestion that students during this time work on managing emotions?	Most participants remained stoic even when describing emotional events, although two male participants expressed a great deal of emotion when recounting their life experiences.
RQ4: Do the participants discuss their journey as moving from interdependence to independence and autonomy, as compared to Chickering and	Participants generally reported being interdependent with their parents and families, with little movement toward independence or autonomy.

Table 2

*Summarized Research Findings*

Research Question	Findings
Reisser's contention that students move through autonomy toward interdependence?	
RQ5: What role do religion and the Korean church play in the psychosocial development of the participants?	While participants reported that religion and attending church were parts of their childhoods, none of them were able to cite specific examples of how religion or the Korean church impacted their psychosocial development.

***Participants described their cultural/ethnic identity as bicultural.*** All participants acknowledged that they are bicultural, but they differed in their levels of connection to each culture. For example, Christine described her ethnicity in this way:

I would say I'm just an American student currently who happens to be Korean... I still do have the attachment to Korea, but I know that the way I was raised, and even culturally and, like, my morals, my ideologies and things, they are very American.

However, Jennifer noted that her conceptualization of identity goes beyond ethnicity:

It's . . . almost... not that race and culture doesn't really matter, but I just really take . . . the experiences that one has gone through, and I think it's . . . really complicated because that can shape how you are, but then at the



same time how you respond to that is also based upon what kind of culture you are from, and it's very cyclical, and for me it's been just been really hard for me to just . . . see someone as this [particular] type of person.

Through this comment, Jennifer indicated that identity is much more complex than a simple representation of a person's ethnicity. To her, individual identity is created through the continuous interaction of culture and experience, with neither of these having a more significant impact on identity than the other.

Participants also noted the advantages that they see in being bicultural. For example, Eunice talked about how she is able to draw on the strengths of both Korean and American cultures:

I just like that as a Korean American I've been able to experience these two cultures. I think I've had the good of both, if that makes sense, like the good sides of being Korean and the good aspects of being American. I think I've had both. For instance, Koreans are very conservative, but growing up in America I'm glad that I've been exposed to an independent way of living. Americans are more understanding. Americans, I think, are more open-minded than Koreans on political issues, on just very many events, or worldly things, you know, things that happen in the world. You know, Americans give a lot of money for aid, and they volunteer a lot, and they look out for their community, and they reach out to people, which I really, really appreciate, whereas Koreans, the good things about them is

that they're very respectful, family is very important to them, and so I just enjoy that I can have . . . the good things in both.

Eunice added how she sees this ability to select the best from each culture as an advantage over monocultural individuals.

However, others noted the challenges of formulating one identity from two cultures. David said that he has not yet fully crystallized his identity because he has spent equal amounts of time in South Korea and the U.S.:

I think I'm very unique in the sense that I was exposed to both cultures in about the same amount of time within my short 22 years. And I think my identity is that I know both sides pretty well . . . . And because of that, I don't think I have a definite identity yet. I could go by either one, but I would like to associate myself more to being American than Korean, because the recent past years has been in the States at least nine years now. Also I plan to live here for the rest of my life.

Mitchell echoed this sentiment as well, noting that "sometimes you're caught in between the two cultures and you're caught in self, and you don't know who you really are. And I sometimes feel that way too."

Interestingly, the way in which Mitchell and David, the two 1.5-generation Korean Americans in the participant group, described their identity strongly supports Danico's contention that 1.5-generation Korean Americans may be lost in between cultures at times. When asked about where he describe as home, David responded:

That's a crisis that I went through when I was here as a younger age, but now I consider [the state where my family currently lives] as my home, mostly because I don't really go back to Korea nowadays, versus in younger ages we went back and forth a lot of times.

This confusion regarding home could easily be seen as representative of confusion he has regarding his identity. On the other hand, Eunice's statement regarding identity represents the other option for 1.5-generation Korean Americans (although she is technically second-generation), in that she believes she has been able to choose the best of both cultures.

Making decisions about these dual identities play out in varied ways for the participants. For example, Mitchell talked about his decision-making process to determine if he wanted to become a U.S. citizen:

First, I was really against getting an American citizenship, when I was young I was, like, "Oh, I'm a Korean citizen. Why . . . would I want to be an American citizen? I don't want to give up my heritage." But I don't know, I know I'm going to live here. I know I'm going to, you know, after graduating from [professional school], have my own practice here. I might want to retire and then probably live in Korea. I don't know. I haven't thought it that far, but I know for a fact that I'm going to be here for awhile, so I think having an American citizenship would be beneficial.

Mitchell's story highlights one particular conflict for 1.5 generation children.

Since they were born in Korea, they are Korean citizens. After they move to the U.S., they have to decide if they want to revoke their Korean citizenship and

become American citizens, since Korea does not allow emigrants to other countries to maintain dual citizenship.

One event that highlights the tension between identities that participants experience is when U.S. athletes compete against South Korean athletes. This experience is so significant that half of the participants discussed a situation like this before I was able to ask them about it. The most common example of this situation was a soccer match between the two countries in the FIFA World Cup. Three participants noted that they would root for South Korea, one said she would definitely root for the U.S., and the remaining two were torn. Of these two, one hoped for a tie as the best outcome, while the other simply could not answer the question. Perhaps Jennifer best expressed the conflict over loyalty to both countries in her response:

Whenever it's the World Cup we have one of the bigger TVs out of the relatives, (laughs) and so our relatives usually come in, and I believe it was the Korean versus U.S. game, and . . . when Korea scores . . . my grandmom's brother screams really loud. He's really excited. And then when the U.S. scores he's . . . like, "Ahhh, that's a good thing as well." (both laugh) So I think it's, like... it's definitely we go for our country first, and then . . . there's always . . . being faithful to your home country, and . . . where you were born, but I think it's also . . . we've learned . . . even within my grandparents and my dad . . . we've learned to love being here, and so we root for America as well.

This example highlights the strong connection to athletics reflected by the participants, while also showing the significance that sports in general have in the lives of Korean Americans.

***Participants described their experience as a 1.5/second generation Korean American as distinct from the experience of related peer groups.***

*Relationship with Korean international peers.* In their responses, participants clearly delineated how their experiences are different from three related peer groups: Koreans (including Korean international students), White American peers, and third- and fourth-generation Korean American peers. Perhaps the greatest barriers exist between the participants and Korean international students on their campus. None of the participants expressed any strong connections to these students; in fact, the opposite was more accurate. For example, Eunice described her interactions with Korean international students had been “none to very minimal,” adding that she did not initiate contact with them “because it’s very intimidating.”

Participants cited several reasons for their discomfort in interacting with Korean international students. According to Christine, “Language is the number one thing. I think that’s the biggest barrier.” Despite both groups technically being bilingual in English and Korean, there are differences in language skill level and usage. Philip observed that:

Primarily I speak to my Korean American friends in English, and the international students that come here, the only time they speak English is

in class, and outside of class they only speak Korean, so it's harder for us to connect with them.

Most participants said that they only spoke Korean to their parents, acknowledging that the version of Korean spoken by the international students was very different from what they spoke at home.

Participants cited issues related to showing respect as a second significant difference between Korean international students and Korean American students. Christine summarized the difference this way: "They also have a very big hierarchal respect type thing, like bowing, the way you talk, formalities that Korean Americans are very uncomfortable with, because in America each individual is an individual. You all deserve respect." Some participants explained that they did not understand the intricacies of showing respect to Korean peers, while others said that they understood these social rules but did not want to follow them. For example, Eunice explained that she is unfamiliar with the ways in which she might show respect to Korean international students:

Because in Korean culture . . . the older you are, you have to show them respect, and that's very, very prevalent in the international community. So younger students are always bowing to the older students, and they have to use honorifics. They have to show them respect, and that's just something that I've never been around, and I've only seen it on Korean television shows. And so it is just very different to me, and I wouldn't want

to be placed in that situation where I would have to show my respect to an older person.

For these participants, the Korean custom of showing respect to older peers appears to end with their generation, the first to grow up in the U.S.

The final barrier between Korean international students and their Korean American counterparts is financial. Eunice noted that, “They are very, very, very rich... their drinking culture is very, very different from our drinking culture too. People in their group feel pressure to spend a lot of money . . . drive certain cars, wear certain clothes.” Phillip added, “there’s definitely a financial difference between the kids that come from Korea and here, and . . . they can . . . just throw a lot of money out there, but for me, I can’t do that stuff.”

David suggested that social class differences might be at play in this situation as well, noting that, in his opinion, most Korean immigrants to the U.S. (which includes the parents of his fellow Korean American Emory students) come from lower socio-economic backgrounds:

The snapshot of the second-generation parents that you see in the States [are] only selected out of a certain type of group of people. By that, what I mean is, they were coming from hard financial hardship, the majority are . . . in a sense, coming from the same kind of poor population from Korea.

This supposition was supported by the participants’ stories. Nearly all of the participants described their family’s financial resources as somewhat limited.

Reflecting these differences, each group has a name for the other. The majority of the participants referred to the Korean internationals as “FOBs”, or

“fresh off the boat”. David defined a FOB as someone who “would like listening to only Korean songs, and watching Korean TV shows, and only talking to Korean students.” Conversely, Christine thought it was very amusing that Korean international students also had a nickname for Korean American students:

FOBs will use that [term], banana and twinkie, to refer to us, which I think is hilarious ... like, the ones who hang out among Koreans, they’ll still call... twinkie, because, to them, we’re [yellow on the outside and] White [on the inside]. So yeah... (laughs).

As one can see, participants have noted significant differences between themselves and their Korean international peers. However, White American students at Emory do not appear to notice these differences. Eunice highlighted this lack of understanding:

I think a lot of American students on Emory’s campus think that the international Korean students are, like...how do I explain this? Like, they categorize the Korean American students with the international students. But I feel like they should... I want them to know that all of us are very different.

Regardless of this inaccurate grouping, participants reported feeling greater connection to their White American peers than their Korean international peers.

*Relationship with White American peers.* Participants cited fewer quantifiable differences with their White American peers than their Korean international peers. The most common difference noted was the difference in



preferred social activities, as reflected in Mitchell's summary about why he did not like living in his fraternity house:

I realized that wasn't really for me. Again, going back to the whole party thing. Socializing, you know, every time Friday would come around, it would just be chaotic. Really loud, you know, and I understand that. A lot of people do that. You're in college; you're having a good time; it's Friday night; you would go out; but I was never interested in that kind of stuff, and then a lot of my Korean friends, they liked to party but in a different way. Like I said earlier, they liked to go to karaoke or go to someone's house, and just socializing, and . . . having fun there instead of just going wild out. And I didn't like that either. So in terms of that, I was caught in between the two.

Mitchell found that his interests lay somewhere between the White American students and the Korean American students, leaving him feeling outside of both groups.

More significantly, some participants talked about being aware of their ethnicity when they were around their White American peers. After learning about DuBois' (1903) concept of *double consciousness* in one of her classes, Christine spoke about becoming aware of the concept in her life:

I think the double consciousness thing is a big deal that I do, when I am with non-Koreans, there is a slight shield of where I am conscious of my role as a Korean in the group, and that's not anyone's fault, but I can't help that.

While she understands that her Korean American peers may view her behavior differently than her White American peers, she is still struck by this disparity: “Or even when we party. I’m considered the crazy one. I don’t know how appropriate this is, but I’m considered probably one of the crazier ones. I’m loud. When I’m in the non-Asian group, I’m the calmest...”

Perhaps due to experiences like this, participants have developed heightened sensitivity in social settings that enables them to move easily between worlds, as noted by Eunice:

We adjust to different situations really well, and we’re able to be active in different settings and . . . adjust to changes very well... I’m in a sorority, and so when I’m with my sorority sisters, I’m very good at . . . talking with them, talking about [the] sorority, planning things for the sorority, but at the same time when I’m with my Korean American friends, I’m perfectly fine talking to them about Korean things.

While she acknowledged the advantages of this flexibility, Eunice also commented that she sometimes wondered if she was not being true to herself by only showing certain parts of herself to different audiences. She referred to this phenomenon as *compartmentalizing* her life.

Finally, participants reflected the concept of the Other in their interactions with White American students and even in their own speech. Edward Said (1978) introduced the current concept of the Other in his book, *Orientalism*. In his book, Said proposed that Western scholars in the 1800s created a negative image of Asian culture and people for Westerners by evaluating Asian culture

and people through a Western lens, then labeling them as inferior and alien versions of their Western counterparts. This created a concept of Asians and their culture as the Other, to give Westerners distance from Asians and justify colonialism. This concept is reflected today in the concept of Asians as “perpetual foreigners” (Kodama et al., 2002) who may be citizens of the U.S. but as still not seen as American.

For example, David noted that when White students ask him where he is from, they are looking for a country, not a state, in his response. He told me that when I am asked that question, my experience is different from his. “What kind of European country are your parents from? They’ll never ask you that kind of question.” Christine acknowledged another way in which she feels Othered in her daily experience: “It kind of saddens me, because I feel like even if I affiliate myself as an American, not every American does, so that’s . . . the sad part.”

Participants reflected their sense of Otherness in their own word choice as well. Half of the participants referred to White Americans as simply “Americans” in their responses, even when discussing their own ethnicity and culture in comparison to White Americans. For example, Mitchell repeatedly did this, as displayed in this quote: “So I think that’s exactly the reason why it was just a natural thing for me to hang out with Koreans now, to have more Korean friends. It’s because . . . back in high school my American friends, they were great. . .” Despite their number of years living in the U.S., some participants may not yet fully see themselves as American, perhaps due to how they are viewed by their White American peers.

*Relationship to third- and fourth-generation Korean American peers.*

Participants reported limited contact with their third- and fourth-generation peers, but those who had interacted reported some stark differences. On a visit to California, Christine described her interactions with them as:

A huge culture shock . . . They just seemed very less . . . race conscious, which I don't know if it's a good or a bad thing, but it was . . . very strange. I guess [the barrier I felt with them was] almost like the barrier between internationals and first or second generation [Korean Americans]. . . . They didn't feel that same pressure, that kind of unspoken pressure, like, the parents' hard immigration, which is weird because that drives a lot of things that I do in my personal life.

Phillip also noticed that parents of third-generation Korean American students at Emory appear to be more relaxed and flexible with their children:

They just have a more comfortable lifestyle, so they don't feel that urgency to make sure that their kids go and take a profession where they can take care of their family. . . . The first and second generation, their parents had to go through a lot, and they had to struggle in America, and their parents say, "Oh, you have to work hard, and this is a great opportunity for you to get to go to college, so make sure you make better use of it," but . . . their generation is, "Oh you can do whatever you want," basically.

For these two participants, the cultural differences that occur within one generation were quite large, with third-generation Korean American students more likely to reflect views of the dominant U.S. culture. In fact, Christine

reported that third-generation Korean American students talked about their reasons for attending college in a way that was “almost like I would say I hear White kids talk about it.”

In summary, participants were able to draw clear distinctions between themselves and related peer groups, emphasizing the uniqueness of the 1.5/second-generation Korean American experience. Eunice talked about how the overlap with these peer groups sets her and her 1.5/second generation peers apart:

Being Korean American, you have that connection to your ethnic background, but also you’ve grown up here in the States, and you’ve been around Americans and you’re able to connect with both. So being able to do so, you’re in this . . . own little world. So it’s very interesting.

Eunice’s description of being in in “this own little world” is a description that resonated through the stories of many participants.

***Participants differed with their parents on a variety of aspects of the participants’ lives.*** In addition to describing distinctions between themselves and related peer groups, participants listed a number of ways in which they are different from their parents as well. These differences led to parent-child conflicts of varying degrees. Jennifer somewhat jokingly underscored these differences when asked about what she thought united her friends in high school. She responded with a laugh, “I think we all really strongly complained about our parents.”

These differences appear to be both cultural and generational in origin. Eunice asserted that she felt as though her father were still living in the 1970s in Korea, noting:

I think a lot of Korean parents here who have left Korea are still in that mentality [that their family is living in Korea in the 1970s], and that's why their children have such hard times adjusting to their parents' wishes, but also trying to live their own lives in America.

Mitchell expressed similar sentiments. While he appreciated his mother's attempts to guide him, he felt very frustrated by these instructions as well. He spoke emphatically about these mixed emotions:

She's always been on my case, always complaining and nagging about things. "You need to do this or that. Don't do this." She's always teaching me, correcting me, and . . . it's annoying, but at the same time, I actually really think that . . . because of that, I grew up to be . . . well-mannered, [I] know how to respect others, and things like that. And if it wasn't for that, who knows, I may be rude, I may not know . . . social standards and other things... etiquette. So in terms of that I'm really thankful, but at the same time . . . little things . . . get out of hand. But I understand where she's coming from, but sometimes I'm, like, "Can you please just understand me?" I tell her all the time, "We're not living in the . . . '60s and '70s anymore, and . . . it's a whole different generation, a whole different world, and I don't think you understand, and you're never going to understand that."

When Mitchell's mother visited the Emory campus and saw the way that current Korean international students look and dress, she expressed shock at their appearance because they did not dress in a manner that she believed was appropriate.

So every time my mom comes here, and she sees them [Korean international students], she's always, like, "Wow, like, really?" She is always saying, like, "Oh my God, are they really, like, seriously?" She can't believe it . . . . She's like in shock. And so I don't think she understands that it's 2011, and things have changed drastically. And . . . the way our generations are living compared to the way my mom lived is completely different, and I think she's not used to it yet.

These comments underscore the two levels of difference, cultural and generational, that exist between Korean immigrant parents and their Korean American children.

These differences played out in a number of different ways in the daily lives of the participants. For example, Christine reported that she was never allowed to attend slumber parties with her friends when she was a child. Eunice was not permitted to attend high school football games, while also reporting that her father strictly prohibited her from getting a tattoo or body piercing, because those would mark a woman as "being promiscuous." Mitchell has endured years of disagreements regarding haircuts and clothing, as he noted in one particularly funny anecdote:

She's always been on my case with haircuts. She's never satisfied with my hair - long, short, she's never satisfied. And so one time I let her do it. I said, "What is your definition of appropriate hair?" And she started getting gels and she started doing my hair, and it turned out to be, like, wacky, and she's never touching my hair ever again. I was, like, "Do you call this appropriate? Are you kidding me? Do you not want me to have friends?" And it was so, like, 1970s hairstyle. Like, to her she thinks that's appropriate. It is appropriate if you like it, but that's not what the trend is now, especially at my age, that's not what the trend is.

While Mitchell laughed as he told me this story, it served as a reminder of the tension between him and his parents regarding how he lives his life.

These examples show how cultural and generational differences serve as an on-going source of friction between participants and their parents. Traditional Asian values of conformity to family expectations, deference to authority, and familial piety (B. S. K. Kim et al., 1999) discourage children from disagreeing with their parents and/or ignoring their directives, so these differences can cause significant, unresolved conflict in these relationships. David told me that he wished his mother understood the full degree of the difference:

But I want [my mother] to know that I am different from [her and my father], and I think they know that I'm different, but I don't think they know to the extent that how much I'm different as what they're expecting, so I think that's a big difference for me, that aspect.



***Participants generally formed the strongest friendships with other 1.5/second-generation Korean American peers than with other peers.*** While participants may have noted a number of differences between themselves and their parents, they were able to note many similarities with their 1.5/second-generation peers. In fact, most participants cited friendships with other 1.5/second-generation Korean American peers to be the most significant friendships of their high school and/or college experience. For example, Eunice explained how this felt for her during her college career:

I think no matter what race you are, I think you are inevitably drawn to people who are part of your race . . . . I can connect to people of all races, but I feel myself wanting to connect more with the Korean American community here, or making Korean friends, just because you have such similar views or you can share cultural similarities, but even though I wasn't growing up in a Korean community, I appreciate it a lot.

While he was in high school, Phillip moved from a community with few Asian Americans to a community with many. He preferred his Asian American friends in his new town for a number of reasons:

It was just easier to connect with them, and then . . . we talk about similar things, and we connect better, and . . . the foods we eat and stuff . . . that is similar, so it's easy to talk to them. That's why I think I connected better with Asians.

When pressed further, Phillip clarified that he did not have this connection with all Asian American peers, but mostly with other Korean Americans students.

Prior to attending Emory, Mitchell never lived in a location with a large Korean American population. However, when he began making friends in college, he also found he had a deeper connection with other Korean American students than non-Korean American students. Looking back, he realized that he had enjoyed spending time with his White American friends in middle school but they had grown apart as they progressed through high school:

In middle school we were too young...everyone had the same interests...we wanted to go play basketball . . . bicycles, you know, we would just go to the park, skateboarding, and things like that. Then in high school, just as you slowly start to grow, your interests start deviating away, and I think part of that is because I'm a Korean American, and . . . [my friend is] a pure American, and he's already adapted to the American culture. It might have been different if I was born and raised here, then I might enjoy the things that they like. We might have the same interests, but a lot of our interests conflicted as we grew.

Mitchell's mother told him that his friendship circle might change when he attended college as well:

My mom always told me . . . that this was going to happen, because she had heard from other mothers, you know, her friends' sons who have already gone to college before I did, saying that, "Oh, you know all they used to have were White friends and American friends, and now that he's in college he's always . . . hanging out with . . . these Korean people."

Mitchell's mother's observation, along with the experiences of most participants, suggests that shared cultural experiences may be the primary reason that 1.5/second-generation Korean American students form such strong friendships with each other. Participants noted that, in most cases, they did not intentionally seek out Korean American students as friends. Once they had interacted with both Korean American peers and non-Korean American peers, they found their commonalities with Korean American peers made for easier, more natural connections.

Two participants, however, offered a different perspective on the basis of their friendships. Jennifer found that she had more things in common with Asian American peers but not necessarily Korean American peers:

I used to say that I didn't really like hanging around other Koreans, and I find . . . as I'm in college, I kind of... not that I have more Korean friends, but I like having people who I can connect to on . . . the cultural level, but I still don't really choose Korean people over the friends that I have.

At the other end of the spectrum, David enjoys making friends who are not Korean American. "I've made a lot of friends from different races, and different backgrounds. That was a great experience for me," he noted. He acknowledged that he is unusual in this regard, questioning why other Korean American students seem to only associate with Korean American peers:

I don't understand why Korean Americans who were raised here, and they were born here, and they went through all this education system, and why

they...again, there are some exceptions, but . . . why are their friends the majority are Koreans? That's my question, but I don't know.

David's standpoint was unique among the six participants, providing further complexity to the understanding of friendships for 1.5/second-generation Korean American students.

Several participants noted that their stronger connections with Korean American peers led them to have different circles of friends based on ethnicity, with little interaction between the two groups. Eunice commented that her two circles of friends would find it "odd" to be together, despite the fact that everyone involved would have their friendship with her in common. However, she is able to tell which friends from each circle would be comfortable spending time with the other group:

Some of my friends, my Korean friends, only hang out with Korean American friends, but others have White friends, Indian friends, so those are the people that I'd feel more comfortable bringing along to a sorority event, because they're more open-minded. I wouldn't say the people who only hang out with Korean Americans are narrow-minded. It's just that maybe they're not comfortable to . . . reach out and make friends of other races.

When asked if she feels torn between the two groups, Eunice replied, "All the time," adding that:

It's really difficult, especially with scheduling. I feel like sometimes I have to give up one over the other, and it usually is giving up time with my

sorority to hang out with my Korean American friends. And I feel really bad when that happens, but it happens a lot.

Both participants who have experienced this said juggling the competing demands of two circles of friends is stressful and often results in feeling as if both groups are getting short-changed.

***Participants mentioned more traditionally Korean values than traditionally American values in their stories.*** In talking about their experiences, the values that participants cited as most important are ones most commonly associated with Asian cultures (B. S. K. Kim et al., 1999). These values included family, loyalty, duty, collectivism, diligence and achievement, respect, and education. Family was the most comprehensive value of all, standing on its own while also being reflected in many of the other values as well. For example, loyalty was more frequently discussed in relation to being loyal to one's family.

Jennifer expressed a typical sentiment regarding the importance of being with her family, a part of her experience that non-Korean American students do not understand, in her opinion: "I know families is . . . a big theme throughout any culture, but I think just how important and how big of a part it is is definitely something that I kind of wish people understood." Jennifer demonstrated how important her family is to her by assuming, without complaint, significant, additional family duties due to the significant illness of one of her parents.

Among their family members, participants expressed particularly strong positive feelings about their parents. All participants cited their father and/or their

mother as role models. Phillip is grateful for the support that he has received from his parents. "They always have my back. They're always supporting me. If it wasn't for them, I really wouldn't be here today. So yeah, they're by far my true role models." When asked about her parents, Christine choked up and said, "I always get kind of emotional when I talk about my parents. . . . Because I do know how much they do work, and I feel like they expect so . . . little in return." Eunice expressed great admiration for her mother in light of significant life challenges that her mother has overcome: "I'm amazed by the woman she is, and I wish I could be just like her. "

Relationships with others played a significant role in many of the most cited values. For example, several participants cited the importance of loyalty to family and friends. Eunice listed the following values as most important to her: "I think loyalty, respect, and love, you know, friendship. I don't think I could be alone in the world. I could not be disconnected from my friends or my mom." Phillip noted that for him, loyalty is a basic expectation of friendship:

I guess when people aren't loyal, it . . . makes me upset, because whenever I'm with someone, I'll be loyal to them, but then if I see someone that's not being loyal or not keeping their word . . . it upsets me.

Loyalty was the first value listed by half of the participants when asked about their important values.

Also related to family is the traditional Asian concept of duty. Participants talked about three different aspects of duty in their lives: responsibility to take care of their elders, responsibility to take care of their younger siblings, and

obligation to not disappoint their parents. Of all the participants, duty to take care of elders impacted Jennifer the most significantly. While she was attending junior high school, her mother was diagnosed with a terminal illness. “And then . . . starting from there, I was . . . her primary care taker, throughout middle school and high school, so that was a big thing. “ Being her mother’s primary caretaker involved numerous, time-consuming daily responsibilities. “It was definitely difficult at times, but . . . at the time it didn’t seem as momentous as it is.” However, these duties eventually took their toll: “by the time my senior year rolled around I was starting to get really burned out, just from having all the family responsibilities.”

These additional responsibilities complicated Jennifer’s life. “I remember being in a lot of conflicting situations where I’d have to choose how long I would stay out, because I knew that my mom needed me at home, but I knew that I was having a lot of fun, and I wanted to stay out.” Going to a college a significant distance away from her home provided her a break from her demanding schedule:

And those decisions that I made at the time . . . and the consequences that came out of it, I think they definitely shaped how I decide things, especially with . . . schoolwork and stuff like that. I actually find myself . . . choosing . . . what I want to do more versus what I have to do, because I think . . . I didn’t have that luxury back then, so I think I’m doing more of that now.

The two participants who are the oldest children in their families reported having additional duties to take care of their younger siblings. These duties ranged from defined ones, such as teaching younger siblings English before they started kindergarten or helping them with homework, to more abstract ones, such as setting a positive example for younger brothers and sisters, as Jennifer noted: “Whenever my dad calls me, it’s always like, ‘Oh, how are you doing?’ and, ‘Yes, I’m good.’ And [then my dad says] ‘I hope you’re doing well because . . . if you’re doing well then your sister and your brother will do well.’ This statement also includes the obligation to not let down their parents. Mitchell told me that his decision-making is guided by what his parents might think: “The last thing I wanted to do was to disappoint them, so I always try to make the best possible decision.” In talking about his decisions about dating, David added, “but as a son . . . I want to be a good child, and I also think about and consider what my parents think about, too.”

This desire to incorporate one’s parents’ wishes into one’s decision-making also reflects another commonly stated value, collectivism. Mitchell defined collectivism as “so you care about . . . and consider other people . . . . The individualistic tends to be all about me, me, me, whereas collectivists it tends to be about us.” Participants discussed collectivism as it pertained to their families as well as the larger Korean American community and society. For example, individual concerns within families are considered everyone’s concern, with all members committed to working together even if a solution is not possible. Eunice provided a poignant example of this when she talked about her father,



who has a serious psychiatric condition. Before his illness was diagnosed, Eunice had a great deal of anger toward her father and hoped her mother would seek a divorce. But after she learned of his diagnosis, she understood and supported her mother's decision to remain with her father: "When I found out my dad had an illness, I just felt guilty because if we left him, what would he become? Would he be a homeless person?" Even when it exerts a great price, family members take care of one another.

Participants also spoke of an obligation and willingness to help other people, especially other Korean Americans. Phillip noted that when he feels less motivation to study, he thinks about the good he will be able to do once he has graduated:

Even if. . . you don't like it right now. . . the studying is hard, and . . . you don't get to have as much fun in college, in the long run, you will be able to help out so many people, and you'll have influence in the community, and you can use that influence to help the betterment of other . . . immigrants if you want to.

Other participants talked about their involvement in mentoring programs for younger Korean American students, which they considered to be very important. Mitchell believes that this is a fundamental difference between Korean American students and other students:

You can always rely on [other Korean Americans], whereas I guess it's because Asian countries are collectivist culture, whereas here it's individualistic, and so whereas Americans it's more to themselves. If it

doesn't really benefit them, or if it doesn't really help them, they don't really care, no matter how good of a friend they are.

This distinct aspect of friendship provides a good example of how collectivism informs Korean American students' interpersonal relationships with others.

On a different note, participants also prized hard work and persistence. This value was especially reflected in the reasons they admire and look up to their parents. David told me that his father is his role model because "I do respect his work ethic. He's like a machine. He is a freaking machine." Koreans tend to view failure as a sign that one did not work hard enough to reach one's goals, as noted by Phillip: "That's . . . the mindset that a lot of people have. It's like, 'Oh, either you didn't work hard, or just didn't want it,' or something like that." Participants strongly believe that with hard work, any goal is achievable. According to Phillip, "Hard work is one of the values that I cherish, because I think hard work pays off, and so I've seen it pay off, so . . . if you work hard, you'll get your reward for it." And failure is not an option for Mitchell: "I'm determined, I'm always determined. I don't like failures, like, every time I fail at something I get angry at myself. I'm always determined to achieve whatever goal I set for myself."

This drive for success comes from parents as well as the larger Korean American community. Christine told me that this pressure extends beyond her academic work: "I always thought, especially with the stereotype of Asian people, I always thought it was that you have to do well academically, but my parents . . . pushed me to work hard in whatever it was I did." Her parents' constant

encouragement toward success has created additional, unexpected challenges for Christine: “So they’ve never set . . . specific things, but I feel like that’s more pressure, because now I’m running for this unknown, all time success, and I don’t know what it is... which is weird, because it’s a result of them being so constantly supportive.”

Failure may also involve the concept of duty as well. When asked if failing to achieve a goal would reflect on his family, Phillip replied, “I think it’s kind of wrong, but it ultimately does I feel like. It’s like, ‘Oh, how did they not support you,’ or stuff like that.” Pressure to succeed for participants originates beyond their families as well: “I guess it comes from . . . the whole community,” Phillip noted. From these statements, one can assume that failure could result in disappointing one’s parents as well as possibly reflecting poorly on one’s family. Thus, the pressure for participants to succeed is intense.

Another value participants acknowledged is respect for elders, especially parents. Phillip noticed a difference between Asian and non-Asian students at Emory: “I’ve . . . seen how sometimes [non-Asian American students] treat their parents different from us. I guess it’s a little bit less respectful than we treat our parents.” He reported being startled to hear non-Korean American students swear at their parents and vice versa. He stated a clear reason why Korean American children are unlikely to act in such a disrespectful way toward their parents: “You’d probably get beat.”

For Korean American students, respect for elders is reflected differently in actions as well as words. Mitchell explained one cultural difference that he encountered upon his arrival in the U.S.:

One major thing that I had trouble with is when you talk to somebody here, you look at them eye to eye. Eye contact, especially when you're getting punished or disciplined by your teacher or someone that's older than you, you have to look them in the eye, right? You can't . . . look down. You can't hide [or] avoid eye contact. That's disrespectful. Whereas in Korea, if someone is telling you something...when you're having a normal conversation, eye-to-eye contact is important, but if you're in trouble or . . . your parents are disciplining you, you can't look straight into their eye. You have to look down, and just say, "Okay, yes, yes," and just look down. That's a form of saying I'm sorry. It's a form of respect, and I was used to that.

When Mitchell began attending school in the U.S., this cultural difference became very apparent.

And so when I came here and I went to school, and you know, there were times when I would get in trouble, I would just naturally just look down and avoid eye contact, and . . . there was a lot of miscommunication, them saying, "Look at me. Why aren't you looking at me? Are you hiding something?" And that took me surprisingly a long time. To this day I think I have a hard time. I always have to focus, really focus, to look someone straight in the eye. Normal conversation . . . between you and I, it's fine.

But whenever . . . I'm in trouble . . . I have to make sure that I'm looking at them straight in the eye. So I think that was one of the harder things.

Mitchell's story provides one example of how difficult it can be for Korean immigrant children to adjust to the different cultural mores of the U.S.

Christine suggested that respect for elders might have an indirect impact on Asian American student academic success. "I feel like Asians in general have trouble talking to other professors, going to office hours. If they're struggling academically, they have much more difficulty reaching out to other resources compared to non-Asian kids." From her perspective, developing relationships with professors did not make sense. "When I first came to college, I didn't understand the point of office hours. I was, like, why do you need office hours? What would you go talk to them about? . . . I didn't get it. So now I . . . regret not taking advantage of them."

The final commonly mentioned value from participants was education. Parents of participants organized their lives to maximize educational opportunity. Mitchell told me that one of the reasons his parents emigrated to the U.S. was to take advantage of greater educational opportunities. Christine also noted that when her parents moved to the southeastern U.S., they chose a neighborhood known for having one of the best school systems in the state.

Parents also encouraged their children to attend the best college possible. Mitchell was set on attending the large state university in his home state, but his father had other plans for him:

And [my dad] said, "It's a once in a lifetime opportunity. There's a reason why Emory is known for their education, and [the state school] is not so well known for their education. It's not really about the money." These are the things he would tell me. "You have to go to a better school." He would just emphasize the fact that he wanted me to go to Emory. And pretty much I was forced here to go, and I didn't really like that. And I was pretty upset at the point at that time, and he was like, "Go. Just trust me. You won't regret it. You'll be happy that you listened to me."

College attendance was non-negotiable, according to Mitchell. "Now, I look back, and if I didn't go to college my parents would have kicked me out of the house, so being under an Asian parents, and . . . they would have really gotten upset."

In contrast to this long list of Korean-associated values, participants did not emphasize values more traditionally associated with White Americans, such as independence. In fact, the only participant to discuss independence in any detail was Jennifer, who had been assigned additional time-consuming and stressful responsibilities due to her mother's terminal illness. Independence was certainly part of her college selection decision:

But in the end I was in between [a nearby state university]. . . and Emory. And as much as I knew that being at [the state university] would be a lot . . . easier for my family . . . I've always wanted to go away for college . . . so I think . . . my thought process was . . . since I gave up so much, I just . . . didn't want to let this one slide.

Once she arrived at Emory and began college, she began to feel torn regarding her decision, though:

Yeah, there is definitely guilt along the way . . . . During my freshman year, I was definitely struggling...amongst all the joys that freshman year brings . . . from time to time I would feel really guilty. But I think actually my freshman year was the time I felt the least guilty. And then . . . my sophomore year when I finally got settled . . . I started feeling a little bit more guilty. And . . . I don't really know how I worked through that. It was . . . what my parents always used to tell me . . . even my mother . . . used to tell me . . . that . . . since I was the oldest . . . I had to be the strongest because . . . "If I die you have to take care of so and so," and things like that. And so that was the thing that kept me going, I think. And it was also the fact that . . . it is also the child's duty to . . . be the good student, make the best of your situation. And also I thought . . . it took so much trouble for me to get to this school, and so I might as well just stick to it and . . . get through it all.

Jennifer's story illuminates the complicated emotional response that can result from competing cultural values of 1.5/second-generation Korean American students.

The only significant American value to emerge from participants' stories was unanticipated, as it had not emerged in the literature review. All three male participants expressed the importance of sports, especially basketball, in their lives and personal development. Participants also reflected the significance of

sports in their lives in their discussions about sporting events involving the U.S. and South Korea. As previously noted, these contests had helped participants to identify and clarify the strength of their loyalty to each country.

Mitchell referenced his love of basketball throughout his interviews, even joking that this might be his ultimate career goal. While discussing the challenges he has faced in finalizing a vocational plan, he disclosed that his parents are aware that he does not feel passionately about any potential careers except for one: “But the fact that they know that I don’t know what I really like, other than playing sports, and that’s not an option, going to the NBA is not an option, right?” He also acknowledged that his love of sports most likely reflects the American side of his cultural identity:

I like sports, and I mean, I’m this kind of person now, and I . . . always sometimes think about . . . what kind of person would I have been if I never came here - if I was . . . still living in Korea. So that’s an interesting thought I always come across.

This comment suggests that Mitchell believes that sports would not be as important to him if he had grown up in Korea rather than in the U.S, while also implying that he sees sports as a stronger component of White American culture than Korean culture.

Sports were an avenue for David to fit in with his peers and combat negative stereotypes about Asian men. When he moved back to the U.S. during middle school, he encountered significant racism from some of his peers. He confided that his first two years in the U.S. were difficult but sports enabled him



to shatter their preconceptions of Asians as not athletic, while also helping him to become more accepted by his classmates:

The stereotype is that Asians are weak and sissies and feminine. . . .

When I was in high school, and I was trying out for the team, they didn't quite expect that I could perform at the level that I was able to play at and I think that one of the reasons they thought [this] was it was because I'm Asian . . . . Yeah, the coach didn't expect it. My players, my friends didn't expect it . . . They used to call me Super Asian. I played soccer for varsity. So soccer was my primary sport, and basketball would be the second.

Playing sports in high school enabled David to increase his self-confidence and create connections to his classmates.

***Participants expressed stronger feelings of Korean cultural pride than American cultural pride.*** Half of the participants stated strong feelings of cultural pride. In each case, these feelings were about their Korean heritage. Mitchell stated it most directly: "It's just that's where I was born. It's my motherland. It's me. It's my identity. I'm always going to be Korean, no matter what." Eunice told me that while she does have positive feelings about the U.S., she has a stronger, emotional response to Korea:

And it's funny because during the Olympics . . . when they play the national anthem for America, I feel really patriotic and I'm really happy to hear it, but when Korea's national anthem plays, I always tear up, and I always want to cry when I hear it . . . . I just feel so connected to my roots,

and I think it makes me think of my family back in Korea maybe, that whenever I hear the Korean national anthem, even not during the Olympics, I always get chills up my spine. I always tear up.

The Korean national anthem clearly has great emotional resonance for Eunice.

This connection to Korea was created and supported in several ways.

Family members have played important roles for some participants:

Whenever (my grandparents and I are) together, they, my grandmother especially, has established, this, you know, like, “You’re Korean,” and, you know, she’s told me all these stories, and just, she’s instilled that mentality in me that I think that’s how I’m so deeply connected to my ethnic background.

For other participants, media have played a vital role. Mitchell reported regularly watching Korean television shows with his parents while he was growing up, while Phillip talked about the role of Korean popular music (“K-pop”) in the ethnic identity of Korean American students at Emory:

Yeah, I think music is a big part (of Korean American culture) too, because when I was growing up with non-Koreans, I didn’t even know Korean music, but, like, once I got to Emory, and in high school, I think a lot of the Korean Americans only listen to Korean music. They listen to American music too, but a lot of it is Korean music, and it’s straight from Korea. . . . A lot of the girls like that. I don’t know about the guys. The guys mostly listen to American music, but a lot of the girls they keep up with the Korean shows, and they keep up with K-pop and stuff like that.

Family members and Korean media have helped participants to maintain strong connection and emotional ties to Korea, even while living in the U.S.

***Participants reported maintaining both English and Korean language skills, but feeling more comfortable with English and using English more***

***often.*** All six participants speak both Korean and English on a regular basis, generally using Korean to speak to their parents and English to speak to their siblings and friends. In some cases, language usage is fluid within the family, as Jennifer noted:

We mostly speak Korean. But between me and my sister we usually speak in English, and . . . since I've been to college my dad has been trying to speak to me in English more, but I'm taking Korean 101 . . . to increase my skills . . . so like I've been trying to get him to talk to me in Korean more . . . my grandparents are solely speaking Korean mostly...

So . . . I think all of us have been raised . . . bilingual, in the most sense.

Language choice is generally defined by generation as well, with participants reporting that they speak Korean to older Koreans and English to their Korean American peers.

Because of these usage patterns, Korean American students tend to speak Korean less often than they speak English, which may be one reason why Eunice noted that she is not as fluent in Korean as her Korean international peers. Another factor possibly affecting Korean American students' fluency in Korean is usage of specific grammar rules designed to show proper respect to one's audience. There are seven speech levels one can use to reflect the status of one's relationship with one's audience. Additionally, there are various suffixes or alternate words, called *honorifics*, which one must use to show respect to

elders (Sohn, 2001). These speech levels can be used by themselves or in combination with honorifics. Phillip offered a basic description of using honorifics to distinguish between speaking to Korean elders and Korean peers:

It's, like, two different ways of talking to people. When you talk to your friends, that was different, [from how] you talk to adults or somebody you don't know. . . . At the end of your sentence you add something else . . . when you're talking to adults or something, but when you're with your friends, you can just stop without adding anything, like, that extra syllable at the end.

Korean American students are more likely to be more familiar with speech levels and honorifics for adults than speech levels for peers, since most reported speaking Korean primarily with elders and rarely with peers.

Despite these challenges in the maintaining high fluency in the language, most participants are thankful that they have maintained some Korean skills. Eunice commented that she is thankful her father made her regularly read the Bible in Korean because it forced her to learn how to read the language. Mitchell is proud that he has kept up his Korean language skills, noting that many friends have not done so:

What [my friends] tell me is they have immigrated here later than I did . . . [at] the age of . . . nine, 10, 11 years old, and they don't know how to speak Korean. They completely forgot . . . they have no idea. They can't understand everything. They don't know how to write or really talk.

Phillip also acknowledged a gender difference between Korean American men and women: “A lot of the Korean American girls are better at speaking and writing Korean. But the guys, they lose it . . . completely . . . They only know how to speak it.” On a practical level, Mitchell acknowledged that without being able to speak Korean, he could not communicate well with his parents or other family members living in Korea. He also sees his bilingualism as a great asset in the business world after graduation.

In summary, participants all possess strong English and Korean language skills, with most participants acknowledging stronger English skills. Many, however, feel great pride in maintaining their Korean skills. Despite some challenges in maintaining their Korean language skills, they see personal and professional advantages in making the effort.

***Participants encountered varying amounts of racism during their lives, while also noting how Asian stereotypes affected their development.***

Participant encounters with racism and racial stereotypes served as powerful reminders of their Korean ethnicity, while also causing some participants to feel Othered. Two-thirds of the participants spoke directly about incidences of racism they had experienced in their lives. One type of incident that irritated and angered participants was when non-Asian people assumed they were from a different Asian country, such as China. Phillip experienced this after he moved to a small Southern town: “There was some bad stuff too, because they didn’t know, like, they thought I was Chinese or something all the time, and stuff like that, too.” This type of ethnic misidentification really bothered Mitchell:

I used to be really offended . . . I really did not want to be labeled as Chinese . . . . I used . . . to get really offended when I was young. But I think maybe part of that reason was because there weren't that many Asian people in [my town], and it wasn't even until college that I started making . . . Asian friends.

These types of comments contributed to participants feeling Othered by people in their communities.

One participant, David, noted that he is experiencing less overt racism as he has grown older. However, non-Koreans still make jokes about race and ethnic backgrounds that sting:

You don't really get discriminated against nowadays, at least explicitly or blatantly outside, but I wish when they are making fun or making a joke out of Asians, I wish they knew how it would feel to be on the other side, at the receiving end of that joke, rather than the giving-out person, the person who was giving out the joke. Then I think the non-Korean people would be more ethnically sensitive, and they might be more careful how they act.

David's comment reflects the sensitivity that he has developed from the cumulative, negative impact of hearing insensitive jokes for many years.

Other types of racist comments contribute to a feeling of Otherness as well. Christine pointed out that perceived negative behaviors of people of color are often automatically attributed to their race or ethnicity, while this does not happen to White people:

One time we were in a movie theatre, and me and my friends were . . . accidentally blocking the door or something and White guys walked by, and they were, like, “F...ing Asians!” And stuff like that just happens, and I feel like for White people it wouldn’t ever be “F...ing White people.” It would be “F...ing rude people,” and not the automatic race origin. And there’s always the constant thing if you’re a non-minority you can be so...something, so Asian, so Black, so whatever. There’s never a “so White.”

Incidents like these take their toll on people of color. Reflecting on her experiences with White Americans, Christine commented, “I don’t know if this is wrong of me, but I feel like White people have less worries in general.”

Of all the participants, David appeared to have experienced the most significant racism. He reported that other students teased him about being Asian and did not allow him to join their friendship circles during the first few years he lived in the U.S. Luckily, his friendship with another immigrant student helped him cope with the racism he faced:

Middle school was not that great. . . the first two years were tough. . . . When I was in middle school, when I was very sensitive . . . I had this friend. He lived a block down from me. His family immigrated from Poland and . . . he was in a kind of similar boat in a sense, in that although he went through all the educational system here, starting from elementary school . . . He was really nice, and we were pretty tight. And every time I really couldn’t get into the circle, he and I were just buddies . . . . So he’s



different because he's White, but he was my good friend who knew where I was coming from . . . . So all four years of high school we were pretty tight. . . . He's just very light-hearted, and hanging out with him just makes me forget the negativity that I get from daily stuff, like when I was young. . . . Starting in high school it was better.

Even talking about this experience now was very emotional for David:

When I was younger, definitely, these experiences were hard, and I'm not going to lie that I've cried a couple of times, because it was a hard time. But then it's just... you become immune to it, you know, and then you just get to the point where you can enjoy it. Can we take a break?

At this point in the interview, David began to cry.

Many of jokes and taunts aimed at David during this time were based on negative Asian male stereotypes, particularly ones around sexual prowess:

People stereotype Asian people as, for males, they have small genitals, and Black people have big ones, and they just make fun of it, and it just bothers me. . . . Within our friends, we just joke about it, and I have my own way to get away from the joke, and get back at them, but...

David understood the implied meaning behind these comments as well:

"Dominance. I have more power than you. And I can influence more."

David and other participants had a variety of encounters and responses to the Model Minority stereotype as well. Phillip was surprised and confused when he first encountered this stereotype when his family moved to a small Southern town when he was in middle school:

But when we were in [this small town], I was . . . the only Asian person, and so it was kind of weird. I . . . got treated differently. . . . They thought I was smart and stuff. I guess it's . . . a stereotype, because they saw it on TV and stuff . . . and they were, like, "Oh, you must be so smart." I had no idea then that Asians are portrayed that way, until I was surrounded by people like that.

Phillip does not believe this stereotype caused people in that town to treat him badly, describing their reaction to him as "Mostly it was good different."

David experienced another angle of this stereotype during his Emory career. He told me about an experience he had while working as a peer tutor:

When I'm tutoring kids from . . . general chemistry . . . the eyes I will get from my students will be, like, "Oh, this guy is freaking smart!" And . . . I'm the same person, the same kind as you are. The only reason that I'm here teaching you is maybe I worked harder than you did. That's the reason that I'm here, not because I'm Asian. They have asked me how to do well on the exam, so I told them, "So, you look over your notes, do a practice exam, do the exam of the year before . . . Do all those questions that I gave you and review them. Be able to do that by yourself, not just looking at the answer, typical stuff." And then she goes, "I'm not as smart as you are," but I was thinking, "Are you saying that because I'm Asian?" Like... (sighs)... I'm sure there are a lot of White chemists.

David recognized several damaging outcomes from the Model Minority myth in this situation. Not only did his student likely underestimate her own abilities, she

also assumed David's success was not due to hard work. This assumption creates a barrier between Asian American students and others, which could lead to further Othering of Asian American students.

David is keenly aware of some of the stereotypes that non-Korean American students have about Koreans at Emory. When he enrolled at Emory, he tried to connect with several different Korean student groups, but did not feel comfortable in those settings. He acknowledged that stereotypes of Korean students at Emory impacted his feelings and choices:

It didn't seem cool for me to be in that group. I don't know if that makes any sense. And . . . here at Emory there's another stereotype . . . for Korean students. They would always come out to the Woodruff Library, and they would smoke and . . . I've seen a couple [of these students] in the first couple weeks of the school. Maybe I realized that, "Oh I don't want to go down that pathway, and I don't want my other . . . non-Asian friends, to be thinking . . . "Oh, he's one of those."

Not only did David recognize that a Korean stereotype existed, he also understood that it was negative and not one with which he wished to be associated.

In order to dissociate from this perceived negative stereotype, David decided to branch out and engage with different people and activities:

I think I try to be different . . . [and] deviate from the stereotype that's been established for Asian, specifically Korean students, because there are so

many of them, I . . . feel like I want to be different from them, and usually I find these stereotypes for Korean students kind of negative.

David found it quite empowering and exhilarating to engage in activities where he was the only Asian:

I think it just became my thing where I like to shock people. First . . . I [started] taking Spanish classes because of my GER [general education requirements] for graduation, but I ended up liking it . . . . When I got to . . . [the] 400 level of Spanish class, there would be White people who are interested in . . . international business, Latinos, maybe . . . a couple of Black people, but you don't see [any] Asian people . . . no single Asian person in the Spanish Department. I'm kind of curious to see the roster for the Spanish majors, but I'd probably be the only one, so my classmates are like, "What is this kid doing here?" But when I speak Spanish I am better than most of them, and they would be like, "Oh shit," (sorry for my language) but that's what I get usually. It's fun. I love it. I truly love it.

In his activities, David found a way to build his confidence while also expanding the boundaries of the stereotypical Korean American experience.

Mitchell discussed a different way of dealing with racist jokes and stereotypes during his childhood. In a style that reflects traditional Asian concepts of accommodation, patience, and non-confrontation (Uba, 1994), Mitchell's parents encouraged him to do his best to ignore them:

They're always like, "Don't give up. Work hard. Just ignore them. Try to make friends. You know, just laugh at it. You know they're not really serious. They don't really mean it." And . . . I took their word and I started making friends, and . . . at first those jokes were kind of harsh, but as I grew older I learned to cope with it . . . As you grow older everyone matures and the joking stops. So it was hard in the beginning but as I progressed it was not as hard.

Growing up in a southern town with few other Asians, Mitchell may not have had other viable options to deal with these kinds of comments.

As they grew older, participants recognized that they have the ability and power to challenge current stereotypes and create new identities for Korean Americans. Christine acknowledged this awareness in her daily life:

So when I'm in that [non-Korean] group, I feel like I need to do my best to fight stereotypes, or just be as awesome as I can, because I know in the future if they meet another Korean, they will be much more receptive to them if they have me as a reference and background. . . . So if I go to retail stores or something, I'm very polite, and, since I'm in the South, I [use] "Ma'am" or "Sir." And hopefully that will you know...carry on.

In order to deal with the challenges of racism and disempowering stereotypes in their world, Christine and David discovered proactive ways to push back against these constrictions. However, the reminders of their past painful experiences remain with them as they do this work.

***Participants offered different strategies for acculturation to the U.S.***

Two participants, Mitchell and David, explicitly discussed their plans and decisions related to their level of connection to their native Korean culture and White American culture. These plans and strategies, however, were not the same. Using Berry's (1997) concept of four acculturation strategies for immigrants as a guide, Mitchell appears to be using the Integration strategy, while David is following the Assimilation strategy. Berry defined Integration as maintaining a high level of contact with one's culture of origin while also developing a significant relationship with the new culture. For Mitchell, this strategy was strongly encouraged by his mother. "My mom emphasized that it's important to know both cultures. You always have to take pride in your own heritage, which is Korean, but if you're going to live here, you also have to be able fit in with those people." He repeatedly mentioned his mother's directives to maintain friendships with both Korean Americans and White Americans:

If you want to live here and do business here, you have to adapt to this culture and you have to know the people here. You can't just be hanging out with just your own kind, and just speak Korean, because it's just not going to happen. You have to know the American lifestyle, too.

In addition to these numerous references to building connections to the dominant American culture, Mitchell also talked in depth about his great pride in his Korean heritage. From this, one can assume that he plans to maintain a high level of connection to both cultures.

David, on the other hand, talked more about maintaining a high level of connection to the dominant U.S. culture, while letting go of some of his Korean heritage:

I'm going to be living in the States the rest of my life, and if I hang out with too many Koreans, my social circle will be limited to Koreans. While I can always come back to them, because my Korean is not going to go away, and I don't even need to talk in Korean too. So I guess that would be another reason that I was leaning toward hanging out with White people and non-Asian people in general.

David reflected that he began consciously thinking about this decision when he was a child:

I think I started thinking about this kind of stuff like as a very young kid. I knew that I couldn't go back. I know that Korea is a very competitive society. It's crowded, and the education system is fierce . . . . It's nothing compared to what we do in the U.S. And with my mentality, I didn't think I would be able to survive, and also I don't have that many friends, so I just felt like as a young kid that maybe this is a place I need live, and I might as well get soaked into that culture and try to survive and be better at it, if not be best at it.

Berry (1997) would label this strategy as Assimilation: maintaining a high level of contact with the new culture while letting go of connections to the native culture.

Mitchell and David were the only two participants to clearly outline strategies related to balancing their two cultures. (Interestingly, they were also

the two 1.5-generation participants.) In both cases, they saw the importance of and expressed enthusiasm for connecting with the dominant culture of the U.S. However, they differed in their views on the need for and desire to maintain their connections to their culture of origin.

**Summary.** Participants described their cultural/ethnic identity as bicultural, acknowledging both cultures when discussing their experiences. However, a slight majority of participants reported a stronger tie to their Korean culture than to their American culture. Participants noted challenges and advantages to being bicultural.

Participants were able to delineate clear differences between themselves and three other peer groups with which they share some aspect of their identity: Korean international students, White American students, and third- and fourth-generation Korean American students. Participants generally formed the strongest friendships with other 1.5/second-generation Korean American peers, feeling that they had more in common with those students. Participants also reported that their strong connections with other 1.5/second-generation peers often led to segmented social lives, with friendship circles that do not overlap and rarely interact with each other.

When discussing their most important values, participants almost exclusively mentioned traditional Korean values in their stories. The most popular values mentioned included family, collectivism and duty. The only American value consistently significantly mentioned was sports by the male



participants. A desire for independence from family appeared to develop only under extreme pressure from family responsibilities.

Most participants reported some encounters with racism during their lives. The reported impact of this ranged from minor annoyance to deep pain. The participant who reported the most significant emotional response to incidents of racism also reported the least level of connection to other Korean Americans. Participants reported a variety of responses to Asian stereotypes, including the Model Minority stereotype. Some felt the need to be an ambassador for Koreans, while one found enjoyment and empowerment in challenging these stereotypes. Finally, a few participants offered their strategies for acculturation to the U.S., both of which involved high connection and involvement with U.S. dominant culture.

**Research question #2: Do the participants discuss their purpose as being central to their identity?** Examining purpose and identity with Asian American college students involves looking at their educational experiences. According to the model by Kodama et al. (2002) that is being evaluated:

Identity and purpose are represented as concentric circles, closely interrelated and as foundations for other areas of development. . . .

Purpose may be central to students' reasons for attending college as well as how they identify themselves. The interface between identity and purpose is semipermeable, suggesting that an Asian American college student's identity may be filtered through the student's educational and vocational purpose; purpose may even serve as a protection against developing identity.

To answer this research question, I will look at four major topics within participant answers: rationale for college choice; rationale for selection of college major; rationale for vocational choice; and motivation to achieve and succeed.

***College and major choice for men was related to their ability to get a secure, high-paying job, with parents heavily involved in the decision-making process, while female participants considered more personal criteria and had less parental involvement.*** All three male participants discussed having a medically related vocational plan in place when they were deciding upon which college to attend. In most cases, parents were heavily involved in the decision, making it difficult to separate out participant interest from parent aspirations. The male participants (sometimes echoing their parents'

voices) cited financial compensation, stability, and helping others as criteria for their vocational selection.

For example, Phillip entered Emory with a clear plan for this future: “My parents wanted me to go into a health profession, because, first of all, they thought it would be a stable job, then . . . you could help other people, and then . . . you could support a family too.” He later reiterated that his vocational plan developed because of his parents’ input:

[I chose my intended career] mostly because of my parents, because they’re, like, “Oh, you should do something that is financially stable and then that can help other people, and you can have an influence in the community, and help people . . . that need your help,” because we’re . . . a minority.

Helping other Korean Americans was another common theme for vocational choice, which also ties back to the important cultural value of collectivism as discussed in the answers to the research question #1.

Mitchell cited similar reasoning for his career choice, putting emphasis on the fact that doctors are rarely out of work. His parents were heavily involved in his decision-making as well:

My parents also always pushed me to go to med school, or any medical related field, just because of the same reasons I that I had: it’s secure, it’s not risky . . . things like that. . . . You’re never going to have to worry about being unemployed, right?

As noted in the section about values in the responses to research question #1, Mitchell's father forced him to attend Emory against his wishes, citing Emory's academic reputation as the most important element in choosing a college.

While David was also interested in a medically related field, he emphasized getting excellent academic preparation as more important than a specific major or profession:

I was definitely looking for a college where I could get a good education, and somewhat reputable, so that I could get a good job. By the time I came into college I knew that I wanted to do something with the sciences, and I had just the idea that I wanted to go into medicine, but the idea . . . solidified as with the time in college, so like I said, I wanted to get a good education.

Unlike the other male participants, he did not mention his parents' role in his college selection process.

In contrast, the female participants' criteria for college selection and aspirations for college were much more varied. Christine was relatively pragmatic, with her story most similar to the men's stories. Her primary goal was financial, although personal exploration was also relevant:

I wanted a degree. I wanted something that would guarantee that I would get a bigger paycheck. I wanted to figure out what my life's goal was . . . . Maybe I wasn't sure . . . what I wanted, but it was mostly just a degree . . . . I knew that college was a must, and hopefully it would add to the total sum of my paycheck eventually.

Similar to the male participants, Christine entered college hoping to go to medical school.

Eunice's and Jennifer's hopes and goals for college were not financially- and career-oriented but more focused on personal development and exploration. Both were leaving homes with parents who had debilitating illnesses, so their home lives before college were different than other participants. Eunice identified the size of the institution, the Korean presence on campus, and the academic reputation as her primary criteria for selection. She seemed ill at ease to tell me that she researched the Korean student representation on the campuses she considered:

I also looked at the diversity on campus. That was very important to me, and I... actually this is a little embarrassing, but I made sure that every college that I applied to had . . . a Korean organization . . . I Googled it. Her first choice was a private university in the South that is similar to Emory, but after visiting it she rejected it because "it seemed very... White." From these responses, it appeared that finding a Korean American community on her campus might have been Eunice's top priority.

Jennifer's most important reason for selecting a college was unique to her and strongly rooted in her life experience. After years of serving as her mother's primary caretaker, she was looking forward to change:

The biggest factor was that I would get away from home. So I definitely have achieved that. (laughs) I . . . wanted a place where [I would] be academically challenged, and that I have also achieved. (laughs) But I

also wanted a really new experience. I . . . felt like my life for . . . around five years was definitely a routine . . . and that also came from my mom being sick and we had . . . a structured schedule. And so I . . . wanted a break from the routine, something really different, and I think, looking back on that now . . . I've definitely accomplished . . . what I've been looking for.

The three female participants each had different criteria for selecting their college, with their plans much more open-ended and less focused on a particular career goal.

During their undergraduate careers, both Christine and Eunice found that making a great deal of money became less important to them. Christine acknowledged this explicitly when talking about how her post-college goals have changed over the past four years: "I think how it's differed is that maybe I've lost the focus on the financial aspect of it. A degree is still important. I must graduate." Eunice acknowledged the irony in coming to Emory with plans to make a lot of money after graduation, and then discovering her passion in a field that probably will not yield those large rewards: "That's a funny thing. I want to do [a health-related field] so I've accepted the fact that I'm probably going to be poor for the rest of my life."

One interesting difference in the stories of the male and female participants is their eventual major at graduation and their eventual career plans. All three male participants graduated with their science-related majors in May 2012 and will be entering their intended professional school programs within the next year. However, the two female participants who graduated in May 2012 left

the sciences during their Emory careers to explore other options. Christine found exploring other fields to be helpful to making a final decision:

[I started] out as a chemistry major, and [then] I was looking into Spanish, maybe. I thought I had to do science. And [I found] I didn't. I left science, and I became much happier. I found other things that I wanted to do, and I also found out that I can . . . still get a job in those fields.

Christine acknowledged that her parents were more flexible and understanding of her desire to change from a pre-medical track than many Korean parents are.

In fact, most participants reported that many parents of Korean American students at Emory are inflexible in their expectation that their children to go into law or medicine. Christine told me about the pressure facing some students that she knows:

There's a friend I know who was working on a pre-med track, and recently he decided he's not going to med school. And he has no idea how to tell his parents. There are kids who... like, when I see them devastated about . . . their chem paper or whatever, or chem test, because "How am I going to get into med school?" And I feel bad for them because I only feel like half of them have this med school mentality, because they genuinely want to. A lot of them came to Emory because of the med field, because that's what their parents expect from them.

David also confirmed the significant role Asian parents play in career choice at Emory, while disagreeing with it: "A lot of Asians students are forced to go to law school, med school, or get some specialized jobs, but I do really think that people

should be able to do whatever they like to do.” He told me that he has been fortunate in this regard; his parents have applied very little pressure for him to enter any particular field.

The stories of the other two male participants, however, reflected this strong parental role in career decision-making and inflexibility in making changes. Phillip acknowledged that his parents were very firm in their plans for his future, but he trusts that they know best:

I feel like there was a lot of pressure from my parents. Now that I look back on it, it was probably for the better, because they knew that this was a stable job and things like that. I guess they knew that already, because they've gone through life already, but . . . I felt like there was a lot of pressure on me and my brothers to go on a path like that has . . . these three criteria or four criteria that my parents tried to instill in us.

Phillip's acceptance of his parents' wishes and trust in his parents' judgment possibly reflect the traditional Asian values of conformity to family expectations, maintenance of interpersonal harmony and familial piety (B. S. K. Kim et al., 1999). These values make it especially difficult for Asian children to disagree with their parents over decisions such as career choice.

These expectations and inflexibility played out in a significant conflict for Mitchell. Like many Korean American students, his parents strongly encouraged him to go into medicine but he was not certain it was the right fit for him:

A lot of people . . . are in the same boat as I am, where their parents have pushed them to be in one particular field, and then they realize, “Oh, I



know this is not right for me.” And so they change to another field, and their parents let them. I feel like I was in the same situation, where my parents have pushed me into one particular field [and] I really didn’t think it was for me. I’ve always did well in science classes, but didn’t really enjoy them, so [I thought] maybe I should change careers, so I went to the business school . . . . I thought I liked it... and so I was interviewing for jobs and internships for a while and then I realized I didn’t really like it that much. [I] kind of missed the science aspect. So I went back, and so it was really complicated and confusing.

Even as he neared the end of his undergraduate career, Mitchell still expressed doubts about whether he was entering the most suitable field:

And so I’m hoping I’m making the right decision . . . . I’m kind of jealous, because you see a lot of students who know what they’re doing and are really passionate [about] one thing. . . . But . . . even today . . . sometimes I don’t really know if I’m going to like [my chosen field] or not. . . .

While he is thankful that he attended college, his biggest regret is not investigating other possible fields of study:

Now that I look back . . . I’m glad I went to college . . . . That’s what I would have done if I were to go back to do it again. But [if I could do it again, I would] explore what I really like . . . . Since [childhood] I had a narrow-minded goal of saying, med school, med school, med school, and that’s the only thing. If I don’t get into med school . . . there’s no other option for me . . . . I can’t do anything else . . . it was either med school or

nothing. Now . . . I wish I could have explored different areas and . . . find out what I really like.

When I asked Mitchell if he believed his parents would let him change to a different major, he was not certain: “I don’t know . . . . If I really wanted to. If I was really passionate.” Much like Phillip, Mitchell’s career decision making process involved the traditional Asian values of conformity to family expectations, maintenance of interpersonal harmony, and familial piety (B. S. K. Kim et al., 1999). However, it also involved the more American values of independence and career exploration, creating an intense inner battle resulting from conflicting values from each culture.

***Participants developed strong internal motivation to succeed academically and vocationally.*** Participants all described themselves as strongly motivated, especially regarding academic success. David told me that he spent most of his first two years at Emory studying:

I studied all the time pretty much Monday through Friday. And Friday night I would go out for basketball, so I would get some exercise in. And it felt like I was studying 24/7, but... I was trying to get . . . two or three times a week . . . get some exercise, go outside for cardio exercise. But I wasn’t involved in activities or clubs on a regular basis . . . . I was too preoccupied with my schoolwork, that I felt like I wouldn’t be able to be committed to the club or the organization that I would be interested in.

Eunice described herself similarly:

I always pushed myself and I think that because I was so determined to go to a good university, I always made decisions to do well in school and be active, and that's brought me here, where I've also continued to do that.

David's and Eunice's stories are representative of the stories told by each participant: they all reported high levels of self-motivation.

The sources of motivation vary somewhat from participant to participant. Like most participants, Mitchell talked about his guilt and gratitude for the tremendous sacrifices that his parents have made to help him succeed:

And they want to see . . . me . . . succeed, and I realize that, and I'm very proud of them, and at the same time, I feel very sorry because I wasn't able to help them out. I guess it's my turn now, once I go off to [professional] school [and begin working], it's my turn to help them, but . . . they came here with pretty much nothing and they worked their butt off to feed our family and especially for me to get a great education and go to college, and establish a good lifestyle here in America, and they did that for me and nobody else. And when I realize that, it gives me goose bumps, and I really am thankful for having the parents that I have.

Christine also talked about her parents' "hard immigration" story serving as "kind of unspoken pressure . . . that drives a lot of things that I do in my personal life."

Others talked about their parents instilling this work ethic in them from childhood. Phillip remembered receiving these instructions from his childhood: "Early on, it was my parents . . . They [told us], 'Oh, get good grades, because that teaches you . . . responsibility and . . . work ethic,' and stuff like that." David

learned about the importance of hard work from the example that his father provided:

I learned that from my dad, how hard he works, and how organized he is. I saw that from an early age. . . . And when I got to college I actually had to do that, otherwise I wouldn't be able to survive here, so I learned to do that.

Through both words and actions, parents taught their children about the importance of hard work and achievement.

Other participants may have internalized these parental messages so deeply that they are unaware of their origin. Mitchell attributed his motivation to his core personality, suggesting that he has always felt this internal pressure to do his best academically:

I've always valued education, and I had a personality where if I don't get stuff done that I have to do, I feel really uneasy, and I get really nervous and anxious, so I think a lot of my success comes from my personality, just because if I fail to turn in my homework . . . I freak out, or if I don't study for a test . . . I feel really uneasy, so part of that is due to my personality.

He also felt that he learned from and was motivated by his very challenging immigration experience:

I think about [my immigration experience] every time I face a challenge or an obstacle . . . . I tell myself that I've been through it once and that was probably one of the hardest challenges that not only me, but anybody else

can possibly face. Culture shock is a huge thing. It's like transition from one part of the world to another. It's a huge thing, so I tell myself, "If I was able to overcome that, I feel like I can do anything," so I use it as a motivational tool a lot of times.

When he did not get the kind of grades he wanted during his first semester at Emory, his motivation to improve was entirely internal:

Then I got my grades for first semester, and I'm like, "Wow . . . I have to change. I've got to do something about it," and then from then on, the library has become my second home, if not my first home.

Like most participants, by the time he was in college, Mitchell spoke about his motivation as being predominantly or entirely internal.

***Motivation for success moves from external (parents) to internal (themselves) during high school and/or college.*** As participants matured and grew older, they reported assuming control for their academic performance and life responsibilities. Phillip recalled how and when this transition happened for him:

So I think [my parents] instilling that at a young age . . . played out as I got older. And when they didn't have . . . direct contact with me, especially . . . in college . . . it just helped me find my own motivation to study. . . .

When I was applying to colleges, I think that was when I first was, like, "This is about me. I have to do this for myself. I'm not doing this for my parents." So that's when I realized that.

David recounted a similar story about developing personal accountability during his first two years at Emory, in order to be able to perform at the academic level he wanted:

[The] most important lesson of my life that I learned at Emory... because before coming to college, I was an okay student, and I would just cram the night before or two for the exam. But here, it's a complete different story, and I learned to come up with a schedule, how I'm going to study, how I'm going to manage my time, how I'm going to socialize with my friends, and I learned to build up systematic mechanism of how I'm going to digest all those schedules. . . . It came with time. As I said, the first two years . . . I had just a . . . good idea, I mean, it sounds really good . . . that's going to get you a lot of things done. I knew that even in high school, but then when I was in college, I had to do it, otherwise I cannot do anything, you know? So I guess my first two years, that cutthroat experience just helped me . . . absorb that regimen.

At this point in their lives, Phillip and David have internalized the lessons from their parents regarding hard work and success, and understand that their success or failure is primarily their own responsibility.

Eunice further supported this concept of personal accountability, even when things did not turn out quite the way that she had hoped. She felt that her motivation toward academic success declined in college:

I was very internally motivated in high school, and in college I think a little bit of that motivation just died out. Maybe I was just burnt out, but I think

in college I just let myself just act based on how I felt. If I wanted to do this, if I wanted to really work in this class and get an A, then I pushed myself to do it. But if I didn't really care about this class, then I just half-assed did it. Excuse my language.

Reflecting back on those experiences, Eunice expressed some remorse while also accepting the positive and negative consequences of her choices.

I regret it now that I think about it. I've thought about my college experience this year, because I can't believe I'm already a senior and graduating. So I've thought it and I really wish that I pushed myself harder in some of my classes, just because I'm, like, "Why didn't you study harder? Why didn't you show up to class?" I've gotten so many A-minuses because of my attendance. But I really wish that maybe I should have pushed myself harder in some of my classes. But I can't cry over spilt milk, so I'm just happy that whatever I did accomplish in college I did it well, and I'm writing an honor's thesis so that's an accomplishment.

As she prepared to enter her final semester, Eunice accepted both the positive and negative aspects of her college career. She felt some regret about not doing her very best, but she was still able to be proud of all she had been able to achieve.

**Summary.** As suggested by the model, the driving force behind most participants' current identity is their intended career. Many participants noted that their decisions regarding college and future plans were initially driven by a desire to obtain a secure, well-paying job after graduation. Additionally, many

participants noted examples of gaining insight into who they are through their academic experiences, both positive and negative. Participants' parents were generally heavily involved in college selection, college major selection, and vocational choice. However, female participants reported less parental involvement in all three decisions and more freedom to change these decisions during their college careers. The purpose of female participants appears to be slightly less vocationally driven than their male counterparts as well. All participants reported developing strong internal motivation by the time of their interviews. Perhaps related to the greater freedom that they experienced, female participants also reflected a greater willingness to change their decisions and accept the consequences of their actions.

**Research question #3: When discussing emotions, do they reflect the supposition that Asian Americans are learning how to identify and express emotions, as opposed to Chickering and Reisser's (1993) suggestion that students during this time work on managing emotions?**

This area is more difficult to analyze because participants shared little information regarding their emotions. Participants may have been learning to manage emotions during their college careers, but I did not receive enough information to confirm or describe this. Only one participant directly addressed her feelings about sharing emotions with others. Without a prompt from me, Jennifer introduced the topic by bringing up how she feels about talking about feelings with her parents:



I don't . . . know if this has been touched upon, but . . . talking about emotions or feelings with your parents. It wasn't really prevalent when I was growing up . . . I think my dad has been . . . trying to get me to talk to him about that, but I almost felt uncomfortable too. And I don't know, I think . . . throughout it was definitely weird for me to open up and . . . be emotional and talk to people about my feelings . . . especially to my parents. And so I think that was . . . not because I was putting up a front...maybe it was...but it was more of a . . . keeping it to myself type of thing. I don't know if that's come up, but I think that's something.

She acknowledged that talking about each day's events was not something that happened in her family, and she is not certain why that is: "I don't know. It's almost like this weird mentality that that's . . . something that you should be dealing with yourself almost. I don't know, but at the same time . . . I know it's good to talk about it."

She does feel comfortable opening up, but she is selective in deciding to whom she will talk about her feelings:

But I think for the majority [of times], I'm not really open about a lot of things to a lot of people. I'm definitely open to things with . . . select . . . people, so I think that's also a difference between some of my friends [and me] . . . But I don't really know if that's a common theme with Koreans or if it's just my family.

The fact that only one participant mentioned talking about feelings (or, more specifically, how she does not talk about feelings) suggests that Jennifer's family is not unusual in this regard.

However, if one looks beyond simply talking about emotions and explores the actual emotional content of the participants' responses, one can glean more information. Five of the six participants talked about significant, life-changing situations they experienced which might typically evoke a strong emotional response. These situations include severe, long-term parental illness; culture shock after immigration; significant family financial hardship; and an extended battle with racism. How participants discussed these situations and their emotional responses to talking about them varied significantly. Surprisingly, the male participants displayed a much greater emotional response than the female participants did.

All three female participants told me about at least one example of a significant life experience. Christine's parents experienced some severe financial hardships during the economic downturn of the past few years. As she related a particularly difficult aspect of this story to me, she choked up and cried for a moment and then quickly regained her composure as we moved on to the next topic. This was the most significant emotional response from any of the three women I interviewed.

The other two female participants are living with parents who have significant illnesses. Eunice's father has a severe psychiatric disorder that has resulted in unusual behavior for many years, including deep, literal religious faith

and explosive anger. Because of his behavior, she never invited friends to come to her house. When I asked her how she coped with this situation she told me:

I don't know. High school, I would say, was pretty normal for me because I would block out all the stuff at home. At school my friends thought everything was fine. I was fine. I was very active in my high school, very active in extracurriculars. I got good grades. . . . I just blocked everything out, and my mom was very supportive.

She never talked to anyone about the situation while she was in high school, including her mother. When she finally opened up to a friend in college about her father, she felt as if she were "being attention-needy." During college, she sought help from a counselor to help her address her feelings of anger, sadness and loss. As she recounted details about her father in her interviews, she remained calm and emotionally composed throughout the conversation.

The illness affecting Jennifer's mother is physical, not mental, but it has also added a great deal of stress to her family. As previously noted, Jennifer became the primary caregiver for her mother, which added both great responsibility and time constraints to her schedule. When we discussed this situation, she minimized both the impact it had on her and her contributions to the family:

I don't think it actually really set in until much, much later, just because I wasn't expecting to have the role of being her caretaker. . . but . . . it definitely gradually built upon that . . . . I've had social workers come talk to me . . . [to] see if I'm doing okay... and I think I was. It was definitely

difficult to . . . balance between my school and . . . having friends and . . . being at home for my mom, but I don't think it was . . . let me try to explain it so I don't sound like a saint, but... It was definitely difficult at times, but . . . at the time, it didn't seem as momentous as it is.

Like Eunice, Jennifer remained calm and stoic throughout this section of the interview.

In contrast, the most emotional and expressive participants were both male. When Mitchell emigrated to the U.S. in first grade, he was overwhelmed by the change in his world:

I didn't know . . . the [U.S.] existed, other than Korea, so I was kind of surprised, and then we're in the airplane, and 17 hours later, here we are, and I'm seeing . . . all these... I'm used to seeing all these Oriental [*sic*] people and now I'm seeing . . . people with blond hair and green eyes and . . . dark skin African Americans and they just freaked me out. And so I was pretty upset.

Initially, attending school was equally frightening from his perspective:

When I started school, when I got here, it was . . . the most terrifying thing in the world . . . I was really scared. One, because . . . I wasn't familiar with the area, and two, I couldn't communicate with anyone, and three, I didn't know anyone, so I felt really lonely . . . My mom came to school with me for . . . a couple of months, because I was . . . crying and . . . would not let my mom go, and I was just terrified.

As Mitchell conveyed these stories to me, his affect matched the words: he varied his pitch and loudness and gestured to help express the emotions that he felt at that time.

In addition to these situations, Mitchell used expressive, emotional words to describe his reaction to events. When his grandmother passed away, he “was really traumatized by the whole experience.” When we later talked about his mother attending school with him at first, he acknowledged this was necessary because “I was so anxious, and I had anxiety problems, too . . . because . . . I was at an age where . . . I was very sensitive to a lot of things.”

Perhaps the most significant expression of emotion in a participant came from David, when he discussed how difficult his experiences in junior high were. As previously discussed, fellow students shunned him and teased him with racial slurs during those two years. After recounting to me what appeared to be a very painful time, David cried, revealing how challenging it was to talk about these incidents years later.

These emotional revelations and expressions are all the more remarkable considering that Korean men tend to be very emotionally reserved. Mitchell mentioned this when talking about the kind of father he hopes to be:

Korean males, especially . . . the fathers, don’t really know how to be very loving, unlike Americans, where dads are . . . very caring and they’re very touching and very loving. Korean males tend to be very bold and . . . strict, and they don’t really display that behavior.

The male participants' display of emotion as compared to the female participants' lack of emotion was one of the more notable aspects of the interviews.

**Summary.** Participants did not reveal much direct information about how they talk about or manage emotions during the interviews. Only one participant directly discussed how she feels about talking about emotions, and her comments support the supposition made in the model that Asian American students are learning how to express emotions rather than learning how to manage them. Several participants did display stronger emotional responses during their interviews, which suggests that they have learned how to express emotions on some level. Interestingly, the male participants displayed more emotion than the female participants did when sharing their stories with me.

**Research question #4: Do the participants discuss their journey as moving from interdependence to independence and autonomy, as compared to Chickering and Reisser's contention that students move through autonomy toward interdependence?** Responses from participants in this area strongly suggest that they are nearly all interdependent with their families. This is reflected in the values they cited as most important (in research question #1), which were family, loyalty, duty, and collectivism. Ensuring the well-being of family members is intrinsic to their experience, as Phillip noted:

[I wish that non-Koreans understood] just how important family is.

Because I think sometimes they don't understand why we all live together . . . . Nursing homes for grandparents . . . that is not so familiar a term for us, because we always . . . live with our parents until they are really old

and they eventually pass away . . . . It's our duty. I think it would be kind of weird to send them off to a nursing home . . . . They raised you so once they get older and they can't do stuff by themselves, it's our responsibility to [take care of them].

The importance of relationships with parents, siblings, grandparents, and other relatives came up repeatedly throughout each interview, even in the stories of participants who had experienced great stress within their family unit.

In her story, Jennifer offered perhaps the most significant indication of how participants value interdependence more than independence. As previously discussed, Jennifer has significant family responsibilities due to her mother's illness. She spoke longingly at times of her desire to have greater freedom and fewer responsibilities:

[If my parents had allowed] me to be the kid that I probably should have been, maybe I wouldn't have had... not that I had a hard transition [to college] . . . not that I'm saying that I've never known what fun was like, but I've never known . . . the freedom of fun, if that makes sense. And I think that is something . . . that I kind of wish that [my parents] knew, because obviously I'm self-motivated.

Regardless of these regrets, however, emotional connections and her sense of duty compel Jennifer to stay closely affiliated with her family. While acknowledging the difficulty of her situation, in the end her family is still a central priority in her life:

And . . . home is maybe not the most fun place to be, but it's nice. It's just good to be back once in a while, and so I think [when I'm] away for too long I kind of feel bad, and so I try to be back when I can, even when it doesn't really make sense, like me going back in November when I could go back three weeks later.

Even when the participants have mixed or confused feelings about their parents and their childhood experiences, they still reflect a strong desire to remain connected with their families.

**Summary.** In their responses, participants indicate a high level of interdependence, which supports the first part of this section of the model. However, none of the six participants reported any significant movement toward full autonomy or independence from their families. In fact, they clearly stated their current intentions are to remain interdependent with their families.



**Research question #5: What role do religion and the Korean church play in the psychosocial development of the participants?** All participants reported attending church at some point during their lives. The level of each family's religious faith evenly ranged from deep to non-existent. Church attendance for participants declined over time, with only one participant reporting any church attendance during college. Finally, their current levels of religious faith run the gamut from strong to non-existent as well. While religious faith and church attendance played a role in participants' lives, none of them were able to offer any concrete examples of how their faith impacted their development.

**Summary.** Although all participants discussed church membership and/or religious faith as part of their upbringing, none of them discussed these experiences with any significance. Therefore, I am not able to offer any significant insights into this research question.

### **Chapter Summary**

This study attempted to validate the model of Asian American psychosocial development proposed by Kodama et al. (2002) for 1.5/second-generation Korean American students. I conducted two interviews each with six Korean American students currently enrolled at Emory University to gather data about their experience in order to compare it with the model designed by Kodama et al.

From their model, I developed four research questions to guide my study. I also added a research question about the impact of religion and the Korean church in the psychosocial development of the participants, due to the high level

of church attendance by Korean immigrant families (Min, 1992). In general, participant interview data supported the model for the 1.5/second-generation Korean American student experience.

Participants reported that various aspects of their identity and experience were situated at different locations on the continuum between Korean culture and White American culture. Participants cited more alignment with Korean cultural values, while stating they are more comfortable speaking English than Korean. Their closest friendships tend to be with other Korean Americans of the same generation, as Korean internationals view them as too Americanized and White Americans, through racism and stereotypes, remind them of their Korean heritage on a regular basis.

Due to generational and cultural differences, participants expressed frustration with their parents' rules and guidance. However, participants cited family as the most significant value in their lives. In particular, all participants cited their parents as their primary role models and one of the most significant sources of their motivation to succeed.

As suggested by the model, participants discussed their current purpose as closely related to their academic and vocational goals. Female participants appear to have more freedom and less parental involvement in academic and vocational decision-making. All participants reported high levels of self-motivation that have shifted from external to internal sources.

Female participants generally adhered to traditional Asian cultural values of self-control and restraint (B. S. K. Kim et al., 1999) in talking about their life

experiences, while, somewhat surprisingly, two male participants exhibited a high level of emotion, both verbally and non-verbally, in their interviews. Participants provided little direct information regarding their comfort level in talking about their emotions. These findings generally (but not totally) support the model's suggestion that Asian American students are learning how to express, rather than manage, their emotions.

As previously noted, the importance of family was central to the stories of all participants, which supports the model's proposal that Asian American students are more interdependent than independent or autonomous during their college years. Kodama et al. (2002) suggested that Asian American students may need to learn how to see themselves as individuals outside of their families during these years. Again, none of the participants indicated any movement toward that direction.

Finally, the data from participants yielded little information regarding the impact of religious faith and the Korean church on the participants' psychosocial development. While all participants attended church at some point during their childhoods, none of them was able to offer any significant information regarding the relationship between these variables.

In the next chapter, I will suggest some implications for practice derived from the findings of the study, outline possible limitations of the study, and finally, offer recommendations for future research.

## Chapter 5

### Discussion and Implications

I think a lot of Asians make jokes about Asia (laughs) or about being Asian, and . . . like, “Oh, that’s how Asian parents are.” Or . . . “I do this because I’m Asian,” type of thing. So I think that’s . . . where it comes from. And some of those like funny jokes are actually kind of true and stuff. (Jennifer)

The six participants in this study painted a complex picture of what life is like for 1.5/second-generation Korean American college students. The purpose of this study was to compare their experiences against the model for Asian American student development that was proposed by Kodama et al. (2002), in order to determine if and how their experiences reflected the ways in which these authors suggested Asian American students may experience Chickering and Reisser’s (1993) vectors. The variety in the participant stories serves as a reminder that there is no single experience for these students. The rich data provided by participants, however, did allow for some significant analysis and meaning making.

In this chapter, I will first review the findings while providing some context and interpretation for them. I will also discuss ways that we can incorporate

these findings into practice, outline some possible limitations of the study, and offer suggestions of areas for future research.

I decided to conduct research into the 1.5/second-generation Korean American experience after having several lengthy conversations with Korean American students and gaining an understanding into how complex and layered their lives and experiences were. I hoped that conducting this study would provide information about their experience for educators at Emory University and other institutions, in order to help them provide culturally sensitive and appropriate support for these students while they are enrolled on their campuses. This is especially important for campuses such as Emory that have relatively low ratios of Asian American faculty and staff members compared to students because non-Asian American faculty and staff are less likely to have a thorough understanding of Asian cultures than their Asian and Asian American counterparts.

### **Analysis of Findings**

**Identity.** Participants clearly classified their identity as bicultural. The manner in which their two cultures play out in their lives is both intricate and wide-ranging. They described distinct differences in values, culture, language and behavior between themselves and four groups who share parts of their identity: White American college students, Korean international college students, third- and fourth-generation Korean American college students, and their parents (see Figure 3).

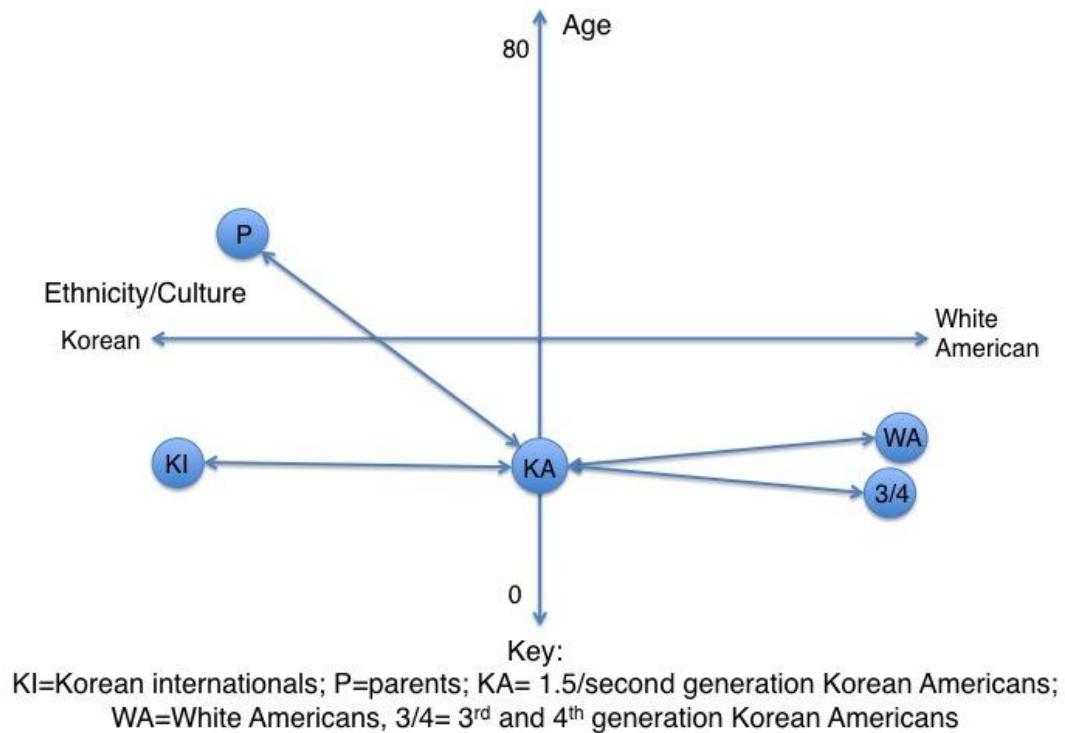


Figure 3:

### Gaertner Korean American Relationship Mapping Model

The identity of the 1.5/second-generation Korean American participants intersects with the identities of these four other groups on two separate axes: culture and generation. Intersections and differences between these groups' identities lead to varying levels of connection and/or conflict for the groups' members. While White American college students, third/fourth generation Korean American college students, and Korean international students are culturally distinct from 1.5 and second-generation Korean American students, they all share a generational status (that is, they are all approximately the same

age). Meanwhile, participants' parents are generationally distinct, and they may be somewhat culturally distinct as well. While participants noted that they share many aspects of Korean culture with their parents, they also reported significant differences. In particular, several participants described their parents' concept of Korean culture as fixed to the time at which they left South Korea to move to the U.S. Both of these points highlight how the parents of 1.5/second-generation Korean American college students are both culturally and generationally distinct from their children.

In order to reflect the complexity of the relationships between Korean American students, their peers, and their parents, I created a diagram that includes these two axes to reflect the cultural and generational differences. The horizontal axis reflects the differences in culture from Korean to White American, while the vertical axis reflects differences in age and generation. Differences on two axes (both cultural and generational) may create more significant and complex conflict than differences on one axis (either cultural or generational). From this diagram, one could propose that conflict that Korean American students may experience with their parents may be more complicated than conflict they may experience with their White American peers, their Korean international peers and their third/fourth-generation Korean American peers.

The location of Korean American children and their parents on these axes is fluid and variable within their lifetimes, depending on a number of factors, including but not limited to: the cultural/ethnic backgrounds of the people in the environment in which they grew up, the cultural/ethnic backgrounds of the people

in their current environment, and their current levels of acculturation and assimilation. Increased distance on these axes between 1.5/second-generation Korean American students and their parents may be correlated to higher levels of stress, since close family relationships, respect for elders, and maintaining harmonious relationships are valued in Korean and Korean American cultures (Kim et al., 1999).

The uniqueness of the experiences of 1.5/second-generation Korean Americans is further supported by the deep, multi-faceted connection that most participants reported feeling with other 1.5/second-generation Korean American students, as also noted by Park (2009). The strength of the connection they feel toward other 1.5/second-generation Korean American students is further clarified by the distinct boundaries they often feel between their Korean American friend groups and their non-Korean American friend groups.

Participants' relationships with their parents may be the most complex and significant relationships in their lives. They look up to their parents as role models, admire their work ethic and persistence and, in some cases, openly communicate their thoughts, feelings and experiences to them. They recognize and deeply appreciate the sacrifices their parents have made. This recognition and appreciation often leads to great pressure to succeed academically and vocationally, in order to please their parents and represent their families well.

However, they also feel great pressure to succeed, which is generally defined as acquiring a high-paying, prestigious, secure job after graduation from undergraduate or graduate school. They also wish that their parents understood



that they were Korean American and not simply Korean. These cultural differences often seemed to stem from what is considered proper appearance and behavior. For example, participants discussed how their parents disagreed with their choices of hairstyles, clothes, and friends. Many also expressed a desire for their parents to give them more freedom in their choices.

Echoing the findings of Park (2009), all participants described significant barriers between Korean American and Korean international students on the Emory campus. None of them reported frequent interactions between themselves and Korean international students. One said she was “intimidated” by Korean international students, while another offered that they did not want to associate with anyone who wasn’t “purely Korean”. This disconnection between Korean international students and participants underscores the dramatic cultural shift that occurs in the first generation of Koreans who grow up in the U.S. and not in South Korea.

While participants split between reporting more affiliation with their Korean and American identities, the cultural values they cited as important to them were nearly all Korean in origin. Duty, collectivism, and family relationships stood out, with all of these values reflected together in the importance that participants placed in taking care of family members. Additionally, participants with the strongest feelings of cultural pride felt greater connection to Korean culture than American culture. So, paradoxically, participants appear to have stronger connections to their Korean identities, yet the cultural gap between them and

Korean international peers is wider than the gap they report between themselves and their White American peers.

In summary, Korean American students related to both their Korean international peers and their White American peers, but never fully fit with either group. One recent Korean American student described her position on campus as never being “Korean enough” from the viewpoint of Korean internationals or “American enough” from the viewpoint of White Americans. This feeling of separation leads Korean Americans to form their own identity apart from those groups, while fostering stronger relationships with other Korean Americans as well.

**Importance of sports.** One aspect of the cultural shift that 1.5/second-generation Korean American boys and young men experience is the importance of sports in their lives. For example, basketball figured significantly in the stories of several of the male participants. Playing the game appears to be one of the strongest links that participants have to the dominant American culture. Playing basketball and other sports also helped participants to combat what they described as Asian stereotypes of overly intellectual, non-athletic men. In particular, the response of Asian American men to Jeremy Lin, who “emerged from seemingly nowhere to become the toast of New York and Asian-Americans everywhere with his surprising star turn for the (New York) Knicks” (Luo, 2012) seems to indicate that these participants are not alone in their passion for basketball. Interestingly, though, I did not find any references to this aspect of Korean American culture in my review of the literature about 1.5/second-

generation Korean Americans, suggesting that this may be a relatively new aspect of the culture.

Female participants did not reference sports nearly as often as their male counterparts, though the size of my sample does not enable me to assume that their experience represents all Korean American female students. Different cultural expectations for boys and girls may play a role in their involvement in sports. Christine, the female participant who did talk about sports, noted that Korean females are “very prim and proper” and she is considered a “tomboy” for a Korean woman, which suggests that perhaps Korean women are not encouraged to play sports in order to maintain a prim and proper image.

**Racism and stereotypes.** While nearly all participants reported encounters with racism in their lives, none reported experiences that happened while they were students at Emory. Also, only one participant reported significant emotional pain resulting from racism. While it is possible that participants did not encounter much racism during their Emory careers, research data and a recent racial incident at Emory (including follow-up conversations with Korean American students) would suggest that overall this is not accurate. This lack of reporting may be due to discomfort participants might have felt in talking about such a potentially painful subject with a White American. Additionally, cultural factors may have played a role, as traditional Asian cultures discourage people from complaining. This is reflected in the Chinese word *chiku*, which translates into “eating bitterness” (Loyalka, 2012), as well as in the traditional Japanese

proverb, *Deru kui wa utareru*, which translates into “the stake that sticks up gets hammered down” (Smith, 1985).

Participants reflected the effects of internalized racism in several ways throughout their stories. Several participants referred to White Americans as simply Americans when talking about them. This suggests that while they see themselves as Americans on one level, they attribute the generic term *American* to be shorthand and an unspoken synonym for *White American*.

The participants’ use of such terms as *FOB*, *banana* and *twinkie* revealed some potential internalized oppression as well, although their usage may be more complicated than that simple explanation. According to Tatum (2003) *internal oppression* occurs when members of stereotyped groups accept and believe the larger society’s inaccurate messages about their own group. From this perspective, Korean Americans using the term FOB to describe Korean international students and recent immigrants appears to reflect that they view some assimilation into White American culture as being superior to being culturally Korean. However, the fact that Korean internationals use the terms banana and twinkie to refer to Korean Americans seems to show the same view in reverse: in their eyes, being purely Korean in culture is better than being Americanized. Perhaps a better example of internalized racism was Mitchell’s story from high school, when he talked about wishing that he weren’t Asian and wishing that he had blond hair and blue eyes.

Asian stereotypes also figured significantly in the lives of the participants. Some noted that because of these stereotypes, they felt as if they were

ambassadors for Koreans and Korean Americans each time they met a new non-Korean person. Others appeared to have internalized negative stereotypes about Koreans and Korean Americans and may have disassociated themselves from other Korean and Korean American students to avoid being viewed by others as another example of the existing stereotype. On a positive note, one participant expressed great delight and found empowerment in engaging in activities that went against the stereotype.

**College and career choice.** As suggested by Kodama et al.'s (2002) model, participants reported that their selection of college, initial college major, and initial vocational choice were principally driven by their parents' and their hope for a secure, high-paying, well respected job after college. Securing this type of work was their primary purpose in attending college. While the male participants' selection of college major and intended careers reflected these factors, two of the female participants diverted from this path, changing their majors to liberal arts fields during their college career. Some of the male participants also reported conflict and doubt about the suitability of their intended vocation as well, while the female participants did not.

The greater degree of freedom experienced by the female participants may be an aberration due to the life experiences of sample members and not necessarily representative of the larger Korean American experience. However, it is possible that the rigid gender roles in Korean culture may be inadvertently responsible for this difference. If parents hold traditional Korean values that the husband's role is to provide for the family and the wife's role is to take care of the

children, then it is possible that parents view the future career path of their sons as more important than the future career path of their daughters. Daughters may make the most of this difference, knowing that they intend on pursuing a career while possibly raising a family at the same time without making this plan explicitly clear to their parents.

**Managing emotions versus identifying emotions.** Kodama et al.'s (2002) model suggested that Asian Americans work toward identifying and expressing their emotions during their college years. Therefore, I expected my participants to exhibit emotional control during our interviews. Interestingly, while female participants generally conformed to this assumption, their male counterparts did not. Even when discussing such painful experiences as parents' mental and physical health issues, female participants maintained composure, while the only participant who asked to stop an interview due to emotional response was male. Another male participant used vivid emotional language to describe the painful challenges in his journey from immigrant child to college student. Male participants also expressed greater concern for my well-being and about the helpfulness of their contributions than the female participants. These two results suggest that my sex may have impacted the reactions and responses of male participants differently than female participants.

The explanation for this difference may lie in the individual characteristics of the participants rather than signifying a gender difference in 1.5/second-generation Korean American students. The two female students who maintained composure experienced their personal challenges within their families, while the

male participants encountered their challenges outside of their families. The traditional Asian values of duty and familial piety may have directed the female participants to sublimate their feelings for the benefit of their families.

Additionally, I may have had a special connection with the male participant who cried when he told of his experiences with racism. He cried after he told me about his closest friend during this difficult time, who was a White male as I am.

Another possible explanation is connected to traditional gender roles. In general, women are more likely to talk about their feelings than men are. Perhaps the men opened up because my interviews gave them permission to talk about their feelings and provided them with an opportunity they do not usually have. One of the female participants provided feedback and insight into this difference during member checking:

As far as males being more emotional/more open, [this] may have been due to the fact that they have never had the opportunity to speak to anyone about such stresses and personal experiences. So your questions and your genuine interest in their thoughts may have played a significant role in their responses. Moreover, having the opportunity to speak to someone so invested in their responses in addition to the manner in which the interviews were conducted probably was extremely overwhelming (in a positive way).

Regardless of the actual cause of this unusual finding, however, I recommend that future researchers explore this aspect of emotional expression.

**Autonomy.** One of the more significant differences between Chickering and Reisser's (1993) theory and the Kodama et al. (2002) model is how students develop autonomy. Participants strongly reflected the reverse direction that Kodama et al. (2002) suggested – nearly all described their current orientation as interdependent with family and significant others, with little movement toward independence or autonomy from their families. Only one participant (who had been assigned highly taxing family responsibilities due to a parent illness in high school) expressed any desire in or movement toward more independence. This is consistent with Wong and Mock's (1997) suggestion that emotional separation from parents for Asian Americans happens in their thirties if at all.

Kodama et al. (2002) suggested that, for Korean American students, movement toward autonomy and independence is more likely to take the form of seeing oneself as a separate entity from one's family. Another possible way that autonomy and independence manifest themselves for Korean American students is through surrendering aspects of their culture of origin that have less value or significance and adopting dominant American values that have more relevance in their place. For example, Eunice noted that one benefit of being bicultural was being able to pick the best of each culture to integrate into her own. The first aspect of American culture that she cited as incorporating was independence, which supports the concept that her form of autonomy and independence may be in terms of culture rather than family.

**Significance of religion.** While all participants attended church during their childhoods, participants did not cite significant examples of how religion or



their involvement in the church had a significant impact upon their development. The most notable finding from this research question is that nearly all participants stopped attending church by their college years, and several felt that people attending church for social reasons without having strong religious faith was hypocritical. However, because of the significance of the Korean church in Korean American life, a future study solely focused on the role of the Korean church and religious faith in 1.5/second-generation Korean American student development may yield more substantial findings.

### **Implications for Practice**

There are a number of implications for best practices suggested by my conversations with the participants. First, I will address implications for practice for scholars and professors, then I will suggest ideas for staff members working in counseling centers, multicultural offices, residence life and housing departments, and intramural departments, as well as faculty members.

The first, most significant implication for scholars is great is the need for research into different Asian American ethnic groups. Past researchers, including Kodama et al. (2002), have generally offered models and tips for Asian Americans as a group. Focusing on specific ethnicities not only honors the cultural differences these groups carry, but also provides clearer, more insightful data into the lives of members of each group. Students from these different ethnic groups need and deserve our attention on both a group and an individual level, as noted by one of my participants during member checking: "Thank YOU

so much for making me feel like Korean American students matter. It really means so much to me personally.”

Second, the model I created to reflect Korean American students’ relationships with peers and parents provides a framework for scholars to further examine and understand the complexity of these relationships. Relationships appear to be one of the most important ways that Korean American students create a self-identity, as participants provided clear examples about how they distinguish themselves from members of the other groups. Anyone teaching about the experience of Korean American students could utilize this model to explain how both culture and age can be related to stress in relationships for these students.

The data analysis model I used appears to be somewhat unique, so I would encourage other scholars to critically examine it to suggest modifications to strengthen the process. In particular, the data analysis method developed by Ruona (2005) provided an excellent framework to organize the interview data. I hope that other researchers might utilize this method as I believe that there is great benefit to using qualitative methods to test theories and models.

Both scholars and practitioners should note the significance of the openness of my participants. Because of cultural values discouraging the sharing of personal information with people outside of their family (C. Yeh & Wang, 2000), I was concerned that I would not be able to get my participants to share personal details about their lives and experiences. However, my experiences were almost the opposite – in several cases, my interviews ran more

than 50% longer than I had initially scheduled. Therefore, I question the assumption that 1.5/second-generation Korean American students will not talk to adults about their experiences. In fact, most of my participants thanked me for the opportunity to talk about their lives. One even asked me to think of more questions at the end of the second interview just so we could continue! This assumption regarding participant reticence may hold true for Asian international students, but I did not experience it with my participants.

My ethnicity may have played a different role in encouraging the participants to talk than I initially conceptualized. While I was concerned that not being Korean might cause participants to share less information, the opposite may in fact be true. Follow up conversations with participants during member checking confirmed that they felt they were more comfortable sharing information with me because I was White than if I had been Korean American. Several participants noted that they felt I might have judged them if I were Korean American, while another noted that if I had been Korean American I would have likely reminded him of his father. He noted that since he rarely talks about personal experiences with his father, it was likely he would have felt less comfortable talking to me if I had reminded him of his father. Finally, several participants suggested that they described their experiences in greater detail for me because they knew I did not come from their cultural background. They wanted to ensure that I understood their stories. This may have encouraged them to share more information as well.

Career counselors should take note of the extreme pressure that the male participants described about their major and vocational choices. Cultural values discourage children from disagreeing with their parents, so traditional notions of “following your dream” in career exploration may not be suitable advice for these students. Additionally, an understanding of the level of pressure these students might be facing would be helpful for career counselors to have. While my female participants did not describe the same level of pressure, this may not be the experience of all 1.5/second-generation Korean American female students.

Staff members who run offices supporting Korean American students could benefit from a deeper understanding of the complex relationships between these students and their peers. Additionally, the high level of support that participants received from other 1.5/second-generation Korean American peers should encourage multicultural offices to find ways to encourage greater peer group interaction and peer mentoring. However, these staff members should remember that not all Korean American students might want to participate in these programs.

Because of the strong link between basketball and male participants, collaborations between multicultural offices and intramurals could provide unique and powerful opportunities for Korean American students to connect while challenging current Asian American male stereotypes. At Emory, Korean American students have already established their own informal basketball league, as I learned after completing my interviews. Each Saturday morning during the past academic year, a large group of Korean American male students

participated in “The League of Extraordinary Ballers” (as they dubbed themselves). Providing opportunity for participants to make meaning of this experience as it pertains to competence and identity could be especially potent.

Since participants reported not initially understanding why it might be advantageous to talk to faculty members outside of class, both faculty and faculty members should more explicitly explain the advantages of connecting with adult members of the campus community. It might be beneficial for them to reach out to Korean American and other Asian American students who are struggling academically and/or personally as well, since it may be difficult for the students to make the first contact.

## **Limitations of the Study**

Although qualitative studies are not designed to be generalizable to larger populations, I must note the limitation of the relative homogeneity of my sample: in addition to all being 1.5/second generation Korean American college students, all attend the same university. Many of my participants were recruited through and were members of the Korean Undergraduate Student Association (KUSA) at Emory University as well. A student's membership in a group like KUSA might reflect a stronger cultural identity than a Korean American student who was not involved in such an organization.

Participants' family structures may have impacted their experiences as well. In reviewing the number and gender of participant siblings, I realized that none of my female participants had an older brother, while none of my male participants had a sister. Korean families traditionally provide a great deal of attention and assign additional responsibility to the oldest son. However, none of my participants grew up in families with both boys and girls with a boy as the oldest child. I believe this limited the impact of gender role stereotypes on my participants to some degree, although it is difficult to assess how much of an impact this may have had. However, due to the significance of sons in Korean families, I believe this is worth noting, especially for my female participants.

Although I personally did not feel this, one must be cognizant of how cultural values might have played out in my interactions with my participants. My participants all cited more traditionally Korean values as most important to them, which suggests that other traditional values, such as deference to elders, might

have some into play. Other values, such as harmony and accommodation, might have prevented participants from talking about negative experiences with White people in an effort to avoid making me feel uncomfortable. Several participants checked with me in their interviews to make sure I was not offended by their language or topics being discussed, leading me to suspect that pleasing me and not offending me were important to them.

Finally, not being a member of their cultural group, it is possible that I might have missed some nuances of the participants' stories. I used the technique of member checking with the participants as well as a theme and findings review by one Asian American co-worker who specializes in Asian American culture to attempt to avoid this. Questions and comments from my participants during member checking were especially helpful to my meaning making.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

My findings suggest a number of areas for further exploration. First, since participants described themselves as distinctly separate from both Korean international students and third- and fourth-generation Korean American students, creating a stand-alone model for 1.5/second-generation Asian American psychosocial development appears to be worthwhile. Alternatively, investigating the differences between 1.5/second generation Korean American or Asian American students and their third- and fourth-generation counterparts might provide clarity to assist student affairs professionals and faculty members to assist each group more effectively.

Furthermore, the findings suggest that breaking out 1.5-generation from second-generation Korean American students in research is advisable. As noted by Danico (2004), 1.5-generation students face several additional hurdles that their second-generation peers do not. In particular, they generally speak English with an accent, marking them as immigrants and perhaps making them more likely targets for teasing and harassment; and they are not US citizens and lack the legal rights of second-generation Korean American students. Both of my 1.5-generation participants noted that they experienced significant racism, culture shock and other hurdles during the first few years that they lived in the US, and they were the only two participants who described clear strategies for acculturation. Both of these factors support the concept that 1.5-generation experiences may be distinct from (and perhaps more challenging than) the second-generation experiences.

I strongly recommend that other researchers further investigate the Gaertner Korean American Relationship Mapping Model that I created to represent conflict in relationships for 1.5/second generation Korean American students. A larger, quantitative study could explore this further to see if the model is supported for a larger sample. I would also recommend that other researchers explore how my relationship conflict model reflects the experiences of 1.5/second generation students from other cultures. Each culture is unique so the manner in which age and culture play out for the children of immigrants could be distinct.



Personally, I am very interested in replicating this study with other 1.5/second generation Asian American college students, such as Indian American, Chinese American and Filipino American students. A meta-analysis comparing the results of studies of students from each of these groups might provide scholars and researchers with further clarity into the similarities and differences of Asian American students from different cultures.

Conflict between 1.5/second generation Korean American students and other groups was a significant theme running through participant responses. Examining how these students manage stress from interpersonal conflicts with parents, White American students, Korean international students and third/fourth generation Korean American students might yield helpful information, especially in light of their cultural emphasis on harmony and accommodation. Other possible topics for research in this area include self-reported stress levels of 1.5 and second generation Korean American college students, especially related to interpersonal conflict; and stress relief and coping mechanisms used by 1.5/second-generation Korean American college students.

Although previous research supported this finding, the significance of the gap between participants and Korean international students still surprised me. Since research exists on how Korean American students view Korean international students, it might be helpful to understand how Korean international students view their relationship with Korean American students. Cultural and language differences could be significant in this study, however, so it might be best conducted by a researcher well-versed in Korean culture, dominant

American culture, and Korean American culture and is also fluent in both Korean and English.

I was surprised by the significant role of sports, especially basketball, in the lives of my male participants, as this had not been acknowledged in previous research. A deeper exploration into the role of sports (basketball in particular) in the development of bicultural identity and male identity of 1.5 and second generation Korean American students could yield powerful results. Although the topic did not emerge from my female participants, it might be even more powerful to include both men and women in the sample to see if this phenomenon crosses gender lines and/or impacts men and women in different ways.

Another noteworthy finding was the difference in experience between men and women in relation to college major selection, vocational selection, and parental involvement. Do 1.5/second-generation Korean American female college students feel more freedom to change majors and select non-traditional vocations than their male counterparts? If so, what are the causes of this?

Finally, the lack of findings related to the impact of religious faith and the Korean church on participant development was surprising. Because of the significance of the church and religion in the lives of Korean immigrants, this area appears to be relevant. Perhaps a research study focused solely on that topic might find more significant results.

## **Conclusion**

As I attempt to summarize more than 13 hours of interviews into a few paragraphs, several adjectives come to mind when I think about these

participants: strong; disciplined; motivated; helpful; kind; resilient; insightful; and complex. However, these words barely begin to describe the full experience of what it is like to be a 1.5/second-generation Korean American student at Emory University. All six participants have excelled academically at a highly selective university, overcoming numerous hurdles on their way: parental illness, severe racism, immigration, acculturation, and poverty, just to name a few. Five of the six graduated at the end of the spring 2012 semester. At least two completed senior theses and graduated with honors.

The journey of each of these students began with parents who cared so deeply for their children's futures that they uprooted their families from their native South Korea to embark on a new life in the United States. These students carry the hopes and dreams of their parents with every step. One cannot fully comprehend the experience of these students without understanding that part of their experience.

The results of this study generally support the model suggested by Kodama et al. (2002), with a few minor differences. Future research into emotional expression, career decision-making, development of autonomy, stress management, and religious faith for these students will provide an even clearer picture into their experience. I hope that this study will encourage other researchers to more deeply explore these areas.

Perhaps the greatest finding of this study is that these students want to explore and discuss their experiences. These conversations may not happen spontaneously, as cultural values generally discourage Korean American

students from approaching elders and talking about their lives without a direct invitation. Administrators and faculty simply need to make time, find appropriate settings, and ask the questions. We have much we can learn from these students.

In closing, I have been deeply touched by my participants' stories, their trust in me, and their willingness to share these stories. Their strength, courage, and concern for others moved and inspired me. I learned almost as much about who I am and what I value as I did about the participants and their experiences. I know that the powerful feelings from this experience will remain with me long after the individual words have been forgotten. A Korean saying reflects the lasting impact of this experience for me:

머리는 지운 것을 심장이 기억한다.

This translates into English as: Whatever the head forgets, the heart remembers.

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## Appendix A

### Recruitment Email

Frank Gaertner, an Emory University Residence Life staff member and doctoral candidate in the College of Education at the University of Georgia, is seeking Korean American undergraduate students currently enrolled at Emory for participation in a research study on human development.

Participants must have junior or senior class standing at the time of participation. Participants must be 1.5 or second generation Korean American students (meaning born in the United States or emigrated to the United States before age 14) and must be at least 19 years of age.

If selected for participation in the study, participants will complete one 30-minute introductory meeting and two one-hour interviews with Frank.

Participants will receive a \$20 iTunes gift card for successful completion of both interviews.

If you have questions regarding the study and/or are interested in participating, please contact Frank at [fgaertn@emory.edu](mailto:fgaertn@emory.edu).

## Appendix B

### Participant Consent Form

I, \_\_\_\_\_, agree to take part in a research study titled, “A Validation Study of Asian American Psychosocial Development”, which is being conducted by Frank Gaertner (hereafter referred to as “the researcher”), a doctoral candidate in the Department of Counseling and Human Development at the University of Georgia, (telephone number 404-727-1695) under the direction of Dr. Diane Cooper, Department of Counseling and Human Development (telephone number 706-542-4120). My participation is voluntary; I can refuse to participate or stop taking part at any time without giving any reason, and without penalty. I can ask to have information related to me returned to me, removed from the research records, or destroyed.

I understand that the purpose of this research is to be able to provide a clearer understanding of how Korean American students develop while they are in college. The results of this study may provide researchers, as well as college faculty and staff, with a greater understanding of the experiences of Korean American students at a university like Emory. I understand that I most likely will not receive any direct benefit from the study, although I may find it helpful to reflect upon my own personal experience in college during my interview.

I will have three meetings with the researcher during the course of the study. During the first meeting, the researcher will ensure that I meet the criteria for the study, and then he will explain to me an overview of the second meeting. I will have the opportunity to ask questions about the study. The first meeting will last for approximately 15-30 minutes. During the second and third meetings, the researcher will ask me questions about my life experiences. Both of these meetings will last approximately 60 minutes. I understand that I will receive a \$20 gift card for participating in this study.

I understand that there are no anticipated discomforts or stresses from participation in this study. However, if I experience any discomfort or stress, I understand that I can stop the discussion at any time. I understand that there are also no anticipated risks from participating in this study.

The only person who will know that I am a research subject is the researcher. No individually-identifiable information about me, or provided by me during the research, will be shared with others, except if necessary to protect my rights or welfare (for example, if I am injured and need emergency care); or if required by law.

Any individually-identifiable information about me will be kept confidential. An exception to confidentiality involves information revealed concerning suicide, homicide, or child abuse which must be reported as required by law or if the researchers are required to provide information by a judge.

I understand that a professional transcriber who lives in another state will transcribe my interview. The file of the interview conversation will be labeled with a pseudonym so that the transcriber will not see my actual name.

I understand that the researcher will destroy the recording of my interview as well as the key that identifies my name with my pseudonym within six months of my interview. This key will be kept in a locked file cabinet in the researcher's home until it is destroyed. The document containing the transcription of my interview will be password protected as well.

The researcher will answer any further questions about the research, now or during the course of the project, and can be reached by telephone at 404-727-1695.

My signature below indicates that the researcher has answered all of my questions to my satisfaction and that I consent to volunteer for this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

You must include one of these statements above the signature lines.



Participant Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Researcher Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Please sign both copies. Keep one and return one to the researcher.

Additional questions or problems regarding your rights as a research participant should be addressed to The Chairperson, Institutional Review Board, University of Georgia, 629 Boyd Graduate Studies Research Center, Athens, Georgia 30602; Telephone (706) 542-3199; E-Mail Address [IRB@uga.edu](mailto:IRB@uga.edu)

## Appendix C

### Interview Protocol 1

#### A Validation Study of Asian American Psychosocial Development

Frank Gaertner

Interviewer: Thank you for agreeing to meet with me today. I'm looking forward to our conversation. I anticipate our interview lasting for approximately one hour. If at any time you feel uncomfortable and wish to stop the interview, please let me know immediately.

### Interview Questions

- Q1 How old are you?
- Q2 When and where were you born?
- Q3 Where do you consider home?
- Q4 How many children are in your family?
- Q5 What is the order and age of the children?
- Q6 Tell me about your family.
- Q7 Looking at your childhood, teenage years, and college years, what are the most significant events of your life?
- Q8 What decisions have you made in your life that you think are the most critical to helping you to be who you are now?
- Q9 Who are your role models? Why did you choose them?
- Q10 What values are most important to you? Why?
- Q11 What are the most significant challenges that you have faced in your life? What did you learn from them, if anything?
- Q12 Is there anything else you'd like to talk about today?

## Appendix D

### Interview Protocol 2

#### A Validation Study of Asian American Psychosocial Development

Frank Gaertner

Interviewer: Thank you for agreeing to meet with me again today. I'm looking forward to continuing our conversation. Like the first time, I anticipate this interview lasting for approximately one hour. If at any time you feel uncomfortable and wish to stop the interview, please let me know immediately.

Q21 Since we last talked, have you had any additional thoughts about the topics we discussed in that conversation?

Q22 How do you define who you are?

Q23 What do you hope to gain from your college experience?

Q24 What do you wish that non-Korean students understood about you without you having to explain?

Q25 What do you wish that your parents understood about you without you having to explain?

Q26 What role (if any) has religion played in helping you define who you are?

Q27 In what ways do you think non-Asian Americans are different from Asian Americans?

Q28 Is there anything else about your identity that we haven't discussed that you think would be important for me to understand?

Q29 If the US played South Korea in a soccer match, who would you root for?