Exploring Career Aspirations of Chinese-American Faculty Members at Selected Higher Education Institutions in New York State

Yang Zhao
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Abstract
This research study is an exploration of career aspirations of Chinese-American faculty members at selected colleges and universities in New York State. The purpose of this study is to understand what influences Chinese-American faculty members’ career paths and to determine whether their higher education experiences have any lasting effects on their career aspirations. This study is guided by Lent, Brown and Hackett’s (2000) Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT). This research study is a qualitative, narrative study that utilize a three-dimensional space approach and semi-structured interview instrument. Seven qualified participants were chosen from three selected colleges and universities in New York State. The study identified that Chinese-American faculty members aspire more to be the best faculty and/or researcher in their field instead of pursuing a senior-level administrative position in higher education. Moreover, the study indicates that organizational socialization, cultural sensitivity, and family influence impact Chinese-American faculty members’ career aspirations and their career choices. The study demonstrates that the underrepresentation of Asian Americans in the senior level leadership positions did not make a significant influence on Chinese-American faculty members’ career aspirations. Recommendations are made for future research with a larger sample of Chinese American faculty from different geographic areas and focusing on how different levels of parents’ educational background affect family members’ career aspirations.

Document Type
Dissertation

Degree Name
Doctor of Education (EdD)

Department
Executive Leadership

First Supervisor
Mary S. Collins

Second Supervisor
Gerard Rooney

Subject Categories
Education

This dissertation is available at Fisher Digital Publications: https://fisherpub.sjfc.edu/education_etd/14
Exploring Career Aspirations of Chinese-American Faculty Members at Selected Higher Education Institutions in New York State

By

Yang Zhao

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the degree
Ed.D. in Executive Leadership

Supervised by
Dr. Mary S. Collins

Committee Member
Dr. Gerard Rooney

Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. School of Education
St. John Fisher College

August 2012
Dedication

I dedicate my dissertation work to my family and many friends. To my husband, Gary, who helped me to make my American dream come true, for it would not have been possible without his unconditional support, love, encouragement, and belief in me during the past 28 months. To my parents, who raised me to value life-long learning, to be the best, and to never give-up. These values have truly made this journey possible.

I dedicate this dissertation to my Dissertation Chair, Dr. Mary Collins, along with Dr. Gerard Rooney, who guided me through this transformational process and challenged me to achieve my greatest potential. Also, special thanks to my adviser, Dr. Arthur Walton, along with the faculty members and program coordinator, Betsy Christiansen, in the Ed.D. Program for their constant support during this journey. I also dedicate this dissertation to all my study participants who were willing to participate in my research and who gave me the opportunity to complete this process.
Biographical Sketch

Yang Zhao has been an International Student Academic Advisor at Center for Global Education of Keuka College since 2007 and is currently assistant professor of the Business Division at Keuka College in Keuka Park, NY. Ms. Zhao attended Shandong University of Finance in Ji Nan, China and graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in Economics. She attended Dongbei University of Finance and Economics in Da Lian, China and graduated with a Master’s degree in Economics. Ms. Zhao attended Keuka College in Keuka Park, NY and graduated with a Master of Science in Management in 2007. She came to St. John Fisher College in the summer of 2010 and began doctoral studies in the Ed.D. Program in Executive Leadership. Ms. Zhao pursued her research in higher education with the special focus on career aspirations of Chinese-American faculty members under the direction of Dr. Mary Collins and Dr. Gerard Rooney and will receive the Ed.D. Degree in 2012.
Abstract

This research study is an exploration of career aspirations of Chinese-American faculty members at selected colleges and universities in New York State. The purpose of this study is to understand what influences Chinese-American faculty members’ career paths and to determine whether their higher education experiences have any lasting effects on their career aspirations. This study is guided by Lent, Brown and Hackett’s (2000) Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT).

This research study is a qualitative, narrative study that utilize a three-dimensional space approach and semi-structured interview instrument. Seven qualified participants were chosen from three selected colleges and universities in New York State. The study identified that Chinese-American faculty members aspire more to be the best faculty and/or researcher in their field instead of pursuing a senior-level administrative position in higher education. Moreover, the study indicates that organizational socialization, cultural sensitivity, and family influence impact Chinese-American faculty members’ career aspirations and their career choices. The study demonstrates that the under-representation of Asian Americans in the senior level leadership positions did not make a significant influence on Chinese-American faculty members’ career aspirations. Recommendations are made for future research with a larger sample of Chinese-American faculty from different geographic areas and focusing on how different levels of parents’ educational background affect family members’ career aspirations.
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Chapter 1: Introduction

Problem Statement

According to 2009 data from the National Center for Educational Statistics, some 6 percent of college and university faculty were Asian/Pacific Islander (based on a faculty count that excludes persons whose race/ethnicity was unknown), 7 percent were Black, 4 percent were Hispanic, and 1 percent were American Indian/Alaska Native. About 79 percent of all faculties were White. Staffs who were Black, Hispanic, Asian/Pacific Islander, or American Indian/Alaska Native made up about 19 percent of executive, administrative, and managerial staff (NCES, 2009). With the 5.8% of U.S. population (2010 Census), Asian Americans remained under-represented in senior level leadership positions. Neilson and Suyemoto (2009) stated that since an increasing number of racial/ethnic minorities have assumed leadership positions in higher education, research scholars should focus more attention on the experiences and trajectories of administrators of color. However, the population of Asian American faculty members has not received enough attention from researchers.

Vital information about career aspiration of Asians, especially Chinese-American faculty members, towards senior-level leadership positions is lacking. The paucity of information about Chinese-American faculty members’ desires to become senior-level administrators has left several questions unanswered. What were the career aspirations of these Chinese-American faculty members? Did Chinese-American faculty members aspire to leadership of senior-level positions in higher education institutions? Did
organizational socialization, cultural sensitivity and family influence impact the development of career aspirations of Chinese-American faculty members at selected higher education institutions in New York State? This study helped senior-level leaders understand how career aspirations affect career advancement of Chinese Americans in higher education institutions.

In 2006, 1.9% of all senior administrators in higher education were of Asian American descent (ACE, 2007). Neilson (2002) stated that although Asian Americans are relatively well represented in the faculty ranks in higher education, the reverse was true in administration. Compared with other racial groups and compared with their participation as faculty members, Asian Americans remained under-represented in administration and management. Fouad, Kantamnenia, Smothersa, Chena, Fitzpatricka and Terrya (2008) constructed a qualitative study of Asian Americans and found that external influences such as organizational social factors, cultural, and family influences were salient in their occupational development according to the social structural influences. How the external influences impacted career aspirations of Chinese-American faculty members in higher education became more important to understanding their career development. The research focused on career aspirations of Chinese-American faculty members at selected higher education institutions in New York State.

According to the U.S. Census (2010), the Chinese American community was the largest ethnic group of Asian Americans, consisting of 22.4% of the Asian-American population. This group constituted 1.2% of the United States as a whole. In 2010, the Chinese-American population numbered approximately 3.6 million. They held 38% Bachelors degree or higher compared to 22% for the national average. As of 2010
Census, Asian Americans had the highest educational attainment level and median household income of any racial demographic in the country, and they attained the highest median personal income overall.

The U.S. Census (2010) indicated that Chinese American was often broadly defined to include not only immigrants from Mainland China, Hong Kong, Macau, Taiwan, and their descendants, but also immigrants and descendants of overseas Chinese people who migrated to the United States from places as diverse as Malaysia, Singapore, and other countries in Southeast Asia. According to the U.S. Census (2010), there were three metropolitan areas with the largest Chinese American populations: the Greater New York Combined Statistical Area with about 666,000 Chinese Americans, the San Jose-San Francisco-Oakland Combined Statistical Area with about 562,000 Chinese Americans, and the Greater Los Angeles Combined Statistical Area with about 495,000 Chinese Americans. New York City was home to the highest Chinese American population of any city proper (446,714), while the city of Monterey Park, California in Los Angeles County had the highest percentage of Chinese Americans of any municipality, at 43.7% of its population, or about 26,700 people.

Since Chinese Americans are the largest ethnic group of Asian Americans, the research on the career aspirations of Chinese-American faculty members helped people to understand Asian Americans’ career development in higher education. Baruch (2004) stated that career aspirations were strongly related to an aspect of career development and its underlying values, such as ethics, attitudes, internal needs motivation, identity, and what motivates people to choose or remain in a certain career, job, and lifestyle.
According to the U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (2009), among all employees in degree-granting institutions in the United States, 5% of total were Asian/Pacific Islander. About 75% of all faculty members and 79% of all executive, administrative, and managerial personnel were White; Asians made up 6% of all faculty members and 3% of all executive, administrative, and managerial personnel. Hispanics made up 4% of all faculty members and 5% of all executive, administrative, and managerial personnel. Blacks made up 6% of all faculty members and 10% of all executive, administrative, and managerial personnel. Compared to other ethnicities, Asian Americans are underrepresented in senior-level leadership positions. The proportion of total Asian faculty members was similar in public four-year and private four-year colleges (6%). The proportion of Asians serving in an executive/administrative/managerial role was similar at public 4-year and private 4-year colleges (3.5%). Table 1.1 shows this distribution of employees.
Table 1.1

*Employees in Degree-granting Institutions by Race/Ethnicity and Primary Occupation:*

*Fall 2009*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Primary occupation</th>
<th>Total¹</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>Hispanic</th>
<th>Asian/Pacific Islander</th>
<th>American Indian/Alaska Native</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All institutions</td>
<td>3,723,419</td>
<td>2,586,098</td>
<td>366,324</td>
<td>220,794</td>
<td>208,842</td>
<td>21,994</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional staff</td>
<td>2,782,149</td>
<td>1,983,921</td>
<td>207,335</td>
<td>123,718</td>
<td>169,582</td>
<td>14,415</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Executive/administrative/managerial</td>
<td>230,579</td>
<td>182,459</td>
<td>21,828</td>
<td>11,486</td>
<td>7,782</td>
<td>1,288</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty (instruction/research/public service)</td>
<td>1,439,144</td>
<td>1,078,392</td>
<td>95,095</td>
<td>57,811</td>
<td>86,308</td>
<td>6,934</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate assistants</td>
<td>342,393</td>
<td>174,127</td>
<td>13,511</td>
<td>12,436</td>
<td>23,891</td>
<td>1,595</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other professionals</td>
<td>770,033</td>
<td>548,943</td>
<td>76,901</td>
<td>41,985</td>
<td>51,601</td>
<td>4,458</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonprofessional staff</td>
<td>941,270</td>
<td>602,177</td>
<td>158,989</td>
<td>97,076</td>
<td>39,260</td>
<td>7,579</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Studying the career aspirations of Asian American senior level leaders in higher education institutions has become more common in the past ten years; however, very little research on Asian American, and especially Chinese American, faculty members
was found. Betts, Urias, and Betts (2009) stated that the pipeline to administrative leadership at four-year private colleges was primarily situated in three branches: academic affairs, administrative or business services, and student affairs. According to results of the Nelson Diversity Surveys (2007), it demonstrated that most Chinese-American faculty members were concentrated in the disciplines of engineering and the sciences. Chinese-American faculty members may have different career goals from other ethnicities, their career aspirations and development may be affected by different social organizations, cultural environments and familial influences.

**Conceptual Framework**

Nauta, Epperson, and Kahn (1998) investigated the predictors of senior-level career aspirations (i.e., aspirations to a higher level within a specific field) and defined career aspirations as “the extent to which people aspire to leadership or advanced positions within their chosen occupation” (Nauta et al., p. 483). Litzky and Greenhaus (2007) had a similar definition of career aspirations that emphasizes the advancement to a higher level (i.e., senior management level) within an organization in contrast to an aspiration to a specific field. So, this form of aspirations which has been called senior-level career aspiration was the focus of this study.

Although there was a great deal of literature on aspirations to select careers, there have been few empirical investigations on factors associated with aspirations to advance to upper-level positions. Aspiration to a higher level position was not studied as much in professionals. In the 1980’s, career aspiration studies were frequently reported in the vocational literature (Farmer, 1985; Gottfredson & Becker, 1981) with a focus on aspirations to careers. More recent research (Flores & O’Brien, 2002; Nauta et al., 1998)
has examined career aspirations to leadership or advanced positions among college students. Overall, most of the studies of career aspirations were focused on college students and not so many were on working adults and factors associated with career aspirations.

The current study was guided by Lent, Brown and Hackett’s (2000) Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT). The SCCT was developed by Robert W. Lent, Steven D. Brown, and Gail Hackett first in 1994, and expanded upon in 2000. As Lent et al. (2000) indicated, the SCCT hypothesized that personal, contextual, and social cognitive factors influenced interest formation of career goals and that performance and background contextual variables influenced career self-efficacy. Lent et al.’s structure of SCCT on career development was primarily built on the social cognitive theory developed by Albert Bandura in 1986. Lapan (2004) summarized Bandura’s theory based on his self-efficacy expectations and outcomes expectations. Lapan explained that two expectations worked together between personal attributes and external environmental factors in order to motivate an individual to pursue long-term goals in the career development.

The SCCT theory took Bandura’s general social cognitive theory and connected it to career-related choices, plans, performance behaviors, and explorations (Lapan, 2004). It examined “how career and academic interests mature, how career choices were developed, and how these choices were turned into action” (Gibbons & Shoffner, 2004). According to SCCT theory, several cognitive-person variables (e.g., self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and goals) interacted with other aspects of the person and the environmental variables (e.g., gender, ethnicity, social support, and barriers) to help
shape the course of career development. Lent et al., (2000) found that individuals were more likely to pursue and be successful in occupations in which they had high self-efficacy and in which they believed they would have positive outcomes. Finally, they would set their goals to guide their behavior to increase the possibility of positive outcomes. Since the SCCT considered the impact of environmental barriers and support, it was useful to discuss the impact of organizational socialization on career aspiration and career development of Chinese-American faculty members in higher education institutions.

Powell and Butterfield (2003) explained that career aspirations referred to individuals’ desires for future employment. Their theory was supported by Bandura’s theory on outcomes expectations motivating an individual to pursue long-term goals. As stated by Powell and Butterfield, career aspiration was an aspect of internal dimension of career that determines the success of a career. Career aspiration essentially emerged from an individual, which, in turn, influenced one’s value, norms and beliefs. It was, therefore, influenced by the social context; namely, family, education, and social institutions. The influence of family values and cultural sensitivity on career aspiration is further discussed in chapter two.

Baruch (2004) stated that career aspirations gave impact to the professional’s performance since career aspirations were one of the criterion to be considered in a professional’s career management. The normative path to the presidency has been described as one that begins with an appointment to the faculty, followed by a position as department chair, followed by a deanship, then a vice presidency, and then the presidency (Birnbaum & Umbach, 2001). Therefore, the study on career aspirations of Chinese-
American faculty members in higher education helped explain whether these faculty members aspire to senior-level leadership positions in the institution. Also, it helped examine if the path to senior level leadership positions has been a traditional one. A visual formatting of the conceptual framework was developed as follows in Figure 1.1 by the researcher.

![Conceptual Framework](image)

**Figure 1.1. Conceptual Framework.**

Career aspirations were also formed through socialization processes where the values of a particular society were gradually inculcated through word and example by parents, teachers, and other adults (Astin, 1984). Astin stated that this process continued as individuals become socialized through experiences in school and work. Astin had suggested that the structure of opportunity, which included social factors such as family
structure, occupational structures, economic conditions and discrimination, impacts the creation of aspirations. Turnbull, Erwin, and Soodak (2006) suggested that family structures included four key components: (a) Characteristics of family members; (b) Their ways of interacting with each other; (c) Functions they performed for each other; (d) Ways they moved through various stages of their lives.

This study explored different career aspirations from Chinese-American faculty members’ cultural perspectives; specifically discovered other social factors and cultural sensitivities that influenced the aspirations of Chinese-American faculty members in higher education institutions.

**Significance of the Study**

This study was designed to understand and identify the career aspirations of Chinese-American faculty members at New York State institutions of higher learning and the factors that influenced their career aspirations. Findings from this study contributed new perspectives to the study of Chinese-American faculty members’ career aspirations and, in turn, these findings, conclusions and recommendations influenced their leadership perspective and practice.

From a research perspective, this study extended previous work by exploring more factors affecting Chinese Americans’ career aspirations, by examining whether there were cultural, social, or family differences for Chinese Americans from various racial/ethnic backgrounds. According to dynamic career aspirations and a multidimensional context, it was important to examine the implications of ethnicity and career development on how Chinese-American faculty members interpreted and exercised leadership in complex organizational contexts. This study helped to understand
how career aspirations affected career advancement of Chinese Americans in higher education institutions.

**Purpose of Study**

Given the gaps in leadership research of the Chinese-American population in higher education, the purpose of the study was to gain a greater understanding of the career aspirations of Chinese-American faculty members. Also, it was important to understand what influenced their college and university career path, what motivated them to pursue career development opportunities, and what determined whether their higher education experiences had any lasting effects on their career aspirations. More specifically, this study explored the factors that influenced Chinese-American faculty members’ development of career aspirations to leadership positions in higher education institutions, if appropriate. On a more global level, this research was designed to make an addition to career aspiration literature in higher education and contribute to cross-cultural research on Chinese-American faculty members.

**Research Questions**

Several important questions then evolved as to what career aspirations of Chinese-American faculty members were in higher education institutions, including the relationship among career aspiration and organizational socialization, family influence, and cultural sensitivity. Also, some questions related to the challenges that Asian-American faculty members met when they were pursuing the senior-level leadership positions in higher education institutions.

The following questions had been developed to address the purposes of this study:
1. What were the career aspirations of Chinese-American faculty members at selected higher education institutions in New York State?

2. Did Chinese-American faculty members aspire to leadership in senior-level administrative positions at selected higher education institutions in New York State?

3. Did organizational socialization, cultural sensitivity and family influence impact the development of career aspirations of Chinese-American faculty members at selected higher education institutions in New York State? If so, how?

**Definition of Terms**

Following were key terms and definitions used for the purpose of this study.

*Chinese Americans:* Defined to include not only immigrants from Mainland China, Hong Kong, Macau, Taiwan, and their descendants but also immigrants and descendants of overseas Chinese people who migrated to the United States from places as diverse as Malaysia, Singapore, and other countries in Southeast Asia. U.S. Census (2010)

*Career Aspiration:* “The extent to which people aspire to leadership or advanced positions within their chosen occupation” (Nauta et al., 1998, p. 483).

*Cultural Sensitivity:* Being aware that cultural differences and similarities exist and have an effect on values, learning, and behavior. (Stafford, Bowman, Eking, Hanna, & Lopoee-DeFede, 1997)

*Family Influence:* The family ideal contains notions about the appropriate values, norms, and beliefs that guide the way family members relate to one another (Pyke, 2000).

*Organizational socialization:* The process whereby an organization teaches an individual the knowledge and skills necessary to assume his or her organizational role (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). It involves teaching newcomers the values, behaviors, social
knowledge, and necessary work place skills needed to successfully assume an organizational role and participate as an organizational member (Louis, 1980; Schein, 1968).

*Multi-dimensional*: Having, involving, or marked by several sizes or aspects (American Heritage® Dictionary, 2000); Multidimensional findings were defined by the researcher and indicated that participants’ career aspirations were involved with more than one dimension and one factor.

*Three-dimensional space approach*: The approach involves analyzing the data for three elements: interaction (personal and social), continuity (past, present, and future), and situation (physical places or the storyteller’s places) (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

**Summary**

Research has identified certain factors that affect the career aspirations of Chinese-American faculty members in higher education institutions, such as organizational socialization, family influences, and culturally sensitive issues. With the changing demographics, educational leadership at all levels should attempt to be reflective of the populations that they serve. With the under-representation of Chinese-American faculty members at senior leadership levels in higher education, little was known about and/or whether the career aspiration is encouraged of Chinese-American faculty members into senior-level administration positions. Given the small amount of existing literature on Chinese-American faculty members’ career aspiration, this study made an addition to career aspiration literature in higher education.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

This chapter examines extant literature pertinent to critical factors associated with career aspirations of Chinese-American faculty members in higher education. This literature review explores the research on the socio-cultural basis for Chinese-Americans’ career aspirations in higher education institutions. This review discusses whether Chinese-American faculty members aspire to leadership in senior-level positions in higher education institutions and how and/or if career aspirations are affected in regard to organizational socialization, cultural sensitivity, and family influence. This review will be surrounded with the following three research questions:

1. What are the career aspirations of Chinese-American faculty members at selected higher education institutions in New York State?

2. Do Chinese-American faculty members aspire to leadership in senior-level administrative positions at selected higher education institutions in New York State?

3. Do organizational socialization, cultural sensitivity and family influence impact the development of career aspirations of Chinese-American faculty members at selected higher education institutions in New York State? If so, how?
Career Aspiration in Regard to Organizational Socialization

Schoon and Parsons (2002) argue that career aspirations have a major influence on the process of individuals’ careers and employees’ motivation encourage themselves who have an ambition and desire to be successful in their organization. Ismail, Ramly, and Rasdi (2008) conducted a quantitative examination on the relationship between self-efficacy, organizational socialization, and continuous improvement practices with career aspiration among R&D professionals. The framework they were using was based on Schein’s Career Anchor Theory and Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) by Lent, Brown and Hackett (2000). Schein’s Career Anchor Theory indicated what makes up career aspirations, while the SCCT explains how the three factors (i.e., cognitive-person variables, external environment factors, and behavior) interact with career aspirations.

Quantitative Studies

Ismail et al. (2008) used questionnaires including questions on self-efficacy and organizational socialization for their study. The questionnaires were designed on career aspirations. The questionnaires Ismail et al. used were 20-item Organizational Socialization Inventory. There were a total of 49 respondents who were obtained personally from two public R&D organizations and three multinational companies. Of the respondents, 27 were males and 22 were females. The average age was 34 and ages of participants ranged from 22 to 60 years. For their educational attainment, 22 of the respondents held both bachelor degrees and master degrees, respectively; only 5 of the respondents held doctoral degrees. Only one respondent has worked as an R&D professional for more than 32 years, while the majority (36) had worked for less than 10 years. The variables of self-efficacy, organizational socialization, and continuous
improvement practices were analyzed for their relationships with career aspirations. The results indicated that only 24.5% of the respondents had a moderate level of career aspirations. The magnitude of the coefficients ranged from .286 to .436, indicating a low to moderate strength of relationships among the self-efficacy ($r=.286$, $p=.047$), continuous improvement practices ($r=.431$, $p=.002$), and organizational socialization ($r=.435$, $p=.002$) with career aspirations. The results showed a mean score of 3.65 with a standard deviation of 0.42, which demonstrated that the majority of the respondents (75.5%) experienced a high level of career aspirations. Therefore, this preliminary study confirmed past findings on the significant association of these variables with career aspirations.

**Qualitative Studies**

Lindholm (2004) did a ground theory qualitative study to examine how faculty viewed the linkages between themselves and their institutional work environments. Participants included 36 professors (12 women, 24 men) who held full-time, tenure-track appointments in one of four departments at a large public research university. Faculty members were sampled within one large department (i.e., a unit comprised of at least 20 full-time faculty members) within each division (humanities, physical sciences, social sciences, and life sciences) of the College of Letters and Science. Overall, 26% of those contacted were willing and available to participate in the study. Participation rates ranged from 17% in the social sciences to 35% in the humanities. All participants are categorized by gender and rank (assistant, associate, and full professors). Lindholm conducted semi-structured individual interviews to identify how faculty members chose their career paths. Special attention was focused on their personal attraction to faculty
work, the timing of their decision to pursue an academic career, and the people and experiences that were influential in shaping their career decision-making process.

The research results/findings reported by Lindholm (2004) were that: (a) Participants highlighted their personal needs for autonomy, independence, and individual expression and the general allure of the university work environment (p. 611). (b) Participants highlighted three general sources of influence in shaping their academic career aspirations: childhood experiences, undergraduate and graduate school training, and personal perceptions of competence (p. 614). (c) In general, the participants also shared a similarly expressed sense of interest in the nature of their disciplinary work and contentment with their current roles as university faculty members (p. 619).

Fouad, Kantamnenia, Smothersa, Chena, Fitzpatricka and Terrya (2008) used a modified version of consensual qualitative research design to examine how contextual, cultural, and personal variables influence the career choices of a diverse group of 12 Asian Americans, including 9 females and 3 males as participants. Fouad et al. used the research team to develop a semi-structured interview protocol. The team did an extensive literature review and team discussion before they conducted the interview. The interview questions included topics such as “work history, career aspirations, family influences on career choice, and decision making process; outside supports and barriers in entering chosen jobs; and mentors or role models” (Fouad, et al., p. 45 ). Fouad, et al. found that external influences were salient in their occupational development according to the social structural influences. For example, some indicated their minority status influenced their vocational development and some might have experienced discrimination in the workplace. Four respondents felt the need to work extra hard to be successful in order to
overcome discrimination in the workplace. Other findings included financial factors and social support influenced the participants’ occupational development.

Career aspirations are also formed through socialization processes where the values of a particular society are gradually inculcated through word and example by parents, teachers, and other adults (Astin, 1984). Astin stated that this process continues as individuals become socialized through experiences in school and work. Research has suggested that the structure of opportunity, which includes social factors such as family structure, occupational structures, economic conditions, and discrimination, impacts the creation of aspirations. Phinney, Dennis, and Osorio (2006) investigated reasons for attending college among minority students and students from immigrant families, with the goal of gaining a better understanding of differences in academic outcomes based on ethnicity. Their research found that students of color have more complicated reasons for seeking higher education than White students, such as helping family and proving self-worth. Their work explored not only ethnic group differences in reasons for attending college, but also other variables associated with ethnicity such as social class, generation of immigration, and cultural factors such as ethnic identity and family interdependence (Phinney et al.).
Career Aspiration in Regard to Cultural Sensitivity

Culture is a complex whole in which each part is related to every other part. It includes the customs, traditions, language, religion, values, and other important aspects that are associated with a way of life. Culture also encompasses the behaviors and beliefs that are learned and shared by a group of people (Galanti, 2004). Chinese cultural values are based on the blending of the teachings of Confucius. Confucius believed that humanity should behave in a princely way and could be characterized by five virtues (Lynch & Hanson, 1992). In Chinese, they were ren/jen, yi, li, zhi/chih, and xin. Ren/jen represented benevolence and humanism. Yi stood for righteous or morality. Li signified proper conduct. Zhi/Chih meant wisdom and understanding. Xin represented trustworthiness. His teachings had a high regard for education and learning, harmony, family, and collectivism. Harmony is the most important one. According to this virtue, one puts their own concerns and wishes behind those of the whole society. More than anything, Confucianism is seen as a way of living more than a religion. Although family support values the success of Chinese Americans, many of their career choices are influenced by the environment; career choices are a collective decision. According to these cultural values, Chinese-American faculty members would make different decisions if their career aspiration may hurt the feelings of their friends and former colleagues since it might break the harmony of the group in which they live.

Quantitative Studies

To examine the extent of the cultural adjustment difficulties and specific career aspirations, Reynolds and Constantine (2007) examined the extent to which two dimensions of cultural adjustment difficulties (i.e., acculturative distress and intercultural
competence concerns) predicted two specific career development outcomes (i.e., career aspirations and career outcome expectations) in a sample of 261 international college students from Africa, Asia, and Latin America. A demographic questionnaire was distributed that requested age, gender, country of origin, racial or ethnic heritage, and educational level. Also, the Cultural Adjustment Difficulties Checklist (CADC, Sodowsky & Lai, 1997), the Outcome Expectation Scale (OES, McWhirter, Rasheed, & Crothers, 2000), and the Career Aspiration Scale (CAS, O’Brien, 1992) were used to help the researcher analyze the results.

The predictor variables in Reynolds and Constantine’s study were the two subscales of the CADC (i.e., Acculturative Distress and Intercultural Competence Concerns), and the criterion variables were the OES and the CAS scores. The results of these analyses revealed by Reynolds and Constantine (2007) were that acculturative distress was significantly negatively predictive of African, Asian, and Latin American international college students’ career outcome expectations, $F(1, 258) = 6.55, p < .05, \eta^2 = .02$, where $\eta^2$ is the univariate effect size; that is, greater levels of acculturative distress were predictive of lower career outcome expectations. Reynolds and Constantine also found that greater intercultural competence concerns among African, Asian, and Latin American international students were predictive of lower career aspirations, $F(1, 258) = 17.31, p < .001, \eta^2 = .06$, and lower career outcome expectations, $F(1, 258) = 42.95, p < .001, \eta^2 = .14$. 
Qualitative Studies

Fouad et al., (2008) also found in their study that the cultural background or the mainstream culture influenced their career decision making. That is to say, the difference between the culture of origin and mainstream American was identified in expectations of work. Different expectations were involved in ways of communication, the treatment of elders, work values, and meanings made out of work. Cultural values and expectations also influenced how career exploration was formed. Seven domains of influences on career choices emerged including family, culture, external factors, career goals, role models, work values, and self-identity. Fouad et al. developed core ideas for every domain in each case. And they use cross-analysis to show that a desire to be a cultural representative influenced their occupational choice and the trust they had for individuals from the mainstream culture was very important.

Cultural formulation offers an organizing framework for counselors to consider cultural influences on their clients’ career issues and related interventions (Leong, Hardin, & Gupta, 2007). The cultural formulation approach (CFA) is proposed as an organizing framework for career counselors to consider cultural influences on their clients’ career issues, related interventions, and the working alliance (Arthur and Popadiuk, 2010). A case study conducted by Arthur and Popadiuk details common transition issues faced by an Asian student, while exploring unique aspects of cultural identity. The data was collected from an interview with a 21-year-old female Muslim international student studying at a Canadian university. The purpose of using a case study was to better understand the complex nuances of the participant’s lived experiences by gathering in-depth, detailed information about the phenomenon under investigation.
The study discussed self and cultural identity; self and cultural conception of career problems; self in cultural context; and shifting cultural identities. The findings suggested that career counselors need to pay more attention to the different cultures of their clients; alternatively, new cultural learning led to dissonance and a questioning of personal worldview, including views of academic and vocational plans; career counseling interventions can help international students integrate new learning into their established career plans or help them explore new options.

Leong, Hardin, and Gupta (2010) studied the career assessment and career counseling of Asian Americans by using cultural formulation approach (CFA). One of the CFA’s strengths is its flexible structure that allows practitioners to capture the complexity of Asian Americans’ career narrative according to their own preference of theoretical orientation (Heppner and Fu, 2010). The approach was illustrated by using the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders fourth edition (DSM-IV) outline for cultural formulations that consists of the following five dimensions, which are modified for career counseling (Heppner and Fu, 2010, p. 465): (a) Cultural identity of the individual; (b) Cultural conceptions of career problems; (c) Cultural contexts and psychosocial environment; (d) Cultural dynamics of the therapeutic relationship; (e) Overall cultural assessment.

A case study on an Asian-Indian American choosing his career path was used to explain how these five dimensions worked with the whole career progress. The study findings by Leong, Hardin, and Gupta (2010) were that all career choice factors should be investigated within the broader framework of the self, activities, attitudes, values, and behaviors among Asian Americans to determine the outcome of the career counseling
process. In the end, the therapist needs to be informed of the Asian cultural expectations, and values to be able to match with the characters of Asian-American group. The study also highlighted the fact that the level of acculturation is an important cultural variable to consider when understanding the career psychology of Asian Americans.

**Career Aspiration in Regard to Family Influences**

Career aspiration essentially emerges from an individual, which in turn influences one’s value, norms and beliefs. It is therefore influenced by the social context, that is, family, education and social institutions (Powell and Butterfield, 2003). Asian cultures value family. Hierarchy is imperative and the elderly are valued for their wisdom and experience (Lee & Lee, 2001). Asian and Hispanic families are more collective than individualistic, and the family or group takes precedence over the individual (Gordon, 2000). Familial influences were defined as the extent to which an individual’s family of origin and current family affected career decision making as well as the meanings and values placed on work. Familial influence on vocational development was pervasive and often extended into adulthood (Fouad et.al, 2008).

**Quantitative Studies**

To examine the relationship of family expressiveness, family cohesion, and family conflict to the career interests of Asian-American college students, specifically Chinese Americans, Leong, Kao, and Lee (2004) use survey and demographic questionnaire to study 228 participants including Chinese-American and European-American undergraduates enrolled in a mid-western university. Of the participants, 128 were European Americans (53 men and 75 women) and 100 were Chinese American (48
men and 52 women). The family income was also surveyed to link current career assessment tools with current assessments of family dynamics.

The instruments used by Leong et al. were Suinn-Lew Asian Self-Identity Acculturation Scale (SL-ASIA, Suinn, Rickard-Figueroa, Lew, & Vigil, 1987), Family Environment Scale (FES, Moos & Moos, 1994), and Vocational Preference Inventory (VPI, Holland, 1985). Demographic information was also collected. The findings showed that the more acculturated Chinese Americans have career patterns more like the European Americans. However, no other relationships were significant. There were no significant correlations between acculturation and investigative or social interest scores.

Fouad, Cotter, Fitzpatrick, Kantamneni, Carter, and Bernfeld (2010) did two quantitative survey studies with on development and validation of the Family Influence Scale (FIS). The FIS is designed to assess perceptions of how one’s family of origin influences career and work choices. According to earlier discussion, degree of family influence may differ across individuals, groups, or cultures, and currently there is no direct measure of how individuals’ family of origin influences their career and work choices. Therefore, two studies were conducted by Fouad et al. The first study by Fouad et al. (2010) identified the domains of family influence. A 57-item scale was completed by a sample of 205 college students. There were 101 men (49.2%), 100 women (48.8%), and 4 individuals who did not identify gender (2%). Ages ranged from 12 to 53 years with a mean age of 24.47 years (SD = 7.51). Ten self-identified as Asian American, 169 as European American, 6 as Hispanic/Latino, 13 as Black/African American, and 1 as Native American. Six participants did not identify ethnicity. They held high school, associate, bachelor and advanced degrees. Research team members identified five major
themes of family influence on career: family expectations, emotional support, financial support, informational support, and role models. Based on these five areas, research team members developed a 57-item scale, including 14 reverse-scored questions. Using a 6-point Likert-type scale (1¼ strongly disagree, 6¼ strongly agree), participants were asked the amount that they agreed with various statements about the role of their family in making career decisions. The findings stated that four factors were identified and accounted for 51% of the total variance: informational support (22.7%), emotional support (13.9%), financial support (9.0%), and family expectations (5.4%). The fifth factor, role models, was not presented as a distinctive factor in the factor analysis. However, some of the questions of role models loaded greater than .34 in first and fourth factors. Internal consistency reliabilities for these four factors were .90 (Emotional Support), .79 (Financial Support), .85 (Family Expectation), and .79 (Informational Support). Informational Support was positively correlated to Financial Support (r¼.39, p < .01) and Family Expectations (r¼.36, p < .01); Family Expectations was negatively correlated with Emotional Support (r¼.33, p < .01). The educational level of participants was negatively correlated with Information Support (r¼.18, p < .05) and positively correlated with Family Expectation (r¼.16, p < .05). In addition, older participants were less likely to perceive Information Support (r¼.35, p < .01) and Financial Support (r¼.28, p < .01) but were more likely to perceive Family Expectation (r¼.17, p < .05). Although it was not clear why older adults would be more likely to perceive Family Expectations, it seemed likely that overall family influences on career choices would be less salient for older compared to younger participants. There were no gender differences between the perceptions of family influence on their careers.
The second study by Fouad et al. (2010) was intended to refine the initial scale’s items and examine construct validity using a larger and more diverse sample. There were 537 participants recruited to participate in an online survey. The survey consisted of a demographic questionnaire, the FIS, the Parental Attachment Questionnaire, the Individualism/Collectivism Scale, the Career Decision-making Self-Efficacy Scale; and the Satisfaction with Life Scale, a measure of Well-Being. The second set of questions, providing evidence of convergent validity, focused on group differences on the FIS subscales and total score. Participants completed a demographic questionnaire that assessed age, gender, race/ethnicity, education level, and mother’s and father’s educational levels. The findings stated that a main effect for race/ethnicity was found for Family Expectations ($F(4, 484) = 5.532, p < .001, Z = .04$). Post hoc tests with Bonferroni correction indicated the largest difference was between Asian Americans and Blacks ($p = .004$) and Asian Americans and Whites ($p < .001$). The variables used in the study did, indeed, support the FIS scales in predicted ways with one exception. Well-being was positively related to perceptions of family influence. Viewing parents as a source of support was positively related to perceptions of family providing informational and financial support. Confidence in decision making was also related to perceptions that the family provided informational support.

**Qualitative Studies**

Whiston and Keller (2004) stated that people do not make their career decisions in a relational vacuum, but their family members are involved both directly and indirectly. They also reported that the family of origin influences career development in a number of expected ways, such as providing role modeling and emotional support. Gomez,
Fassinger, Prosser, Cooke, Mejia, and Luna (2001) did a qualitative design study on the career-life path of 20 notable Latinas, ages 34 to 60, that could best be described “as an implementation of the Self within an Immediate Context, such that both have been influenced by Culture and Family Background and Sociopolitical Conditions” (p. 297). Prosser et al. (2001) found that since family is so central in the Latino/Latina culture, these high-achieving Latina women reported that even though they relied heavily on their families for support, they also felt constrained and conflicted when forced to choose between their families and career opportunities.

Motulsky (2010) conducted a qualitative study with categorizing and contextualizing narrative analysis of 13 midlife women. The study included one African American and 12 White women ages 42 to 57 that were in career change in the Northeastern United States. The participants, by their own definition, had completed a career transition and had all previously taken a multi-week career exploration. The study was conducted with using the questionnaires, two in-depth interviews and relational maps. Each participant was asked to draw a relational map, based on Josselson’s (1992) relational space map, to illustrate her connections and disconnections with as many relationships as possible, specifically around the career process. The first interview explored participants’ sense of identity, family and career background, and career transition decisions. In the second interview, participants were asked about their experiences of being stuck, moving forward, and growth in the transition process as well as about the various ways people in their lives helped or hindered them in their career transition.
The findings reported by Motulsky (2010) in this study were that the relationships among level of involvement, significance to the changer, and level of connection in influencing movement or stagnation indicated not only that the complexities of connections for participants are important, but also that the sheer number of either connections or disconnections around the transition experience is key. In addition, the centrality of relational support and connectedness in moving forward was indicated through change and in experiencing developmental growth in the process. This affirmed the relational and cultural approaches that are gradually changing the traditional emphasis on career transition as a linear, rational, and individual process.

**Career path of Asian American Senior leaders in higher education in the U.S.**

Lee (2002) stated that Asian Americans usually have no problem gaining entry-level positions when they graduate from college; however, they experience abrupt plateau in their careers once they reach the point where a mid-or higher management position becomes the next logical promotion. Hyun (2005) pointed out that Asian Americans are growing 41% faster than any other demographic group yet hold only 12.5% of U.S. management positions.

Wilking (2001) used a qualitative method with standardized open-ended questions and conducted interviews with five current Asian-Pacific female presidents, provosts, and chancellor in higher education. The interviews were transcribed and produced into co-authored narratives to express these women’s career path with their aspirations. The co-authored narratives were selected as instruments for analysis of emerging themes for theory development. The themes indicated by Wilking were mother as role model, biculturalism and bicultural efficacy, unplanned pathways and Asian physicality and
invisibility, fracturing the glass ceiling, and positive attitude and strength. The finding was that the participation rate of Asian-American females in CEO positions within higher education was negatively influenced by the strict adherence to traditional Asian-American cultural values; however, its impact can be reversed by effective mentoring and networking.

Neilson (2002) also conducted a semi-structured qualitative research. Neilson interviewed ten Asian Americans holding senior administrative positions in nine public and one private four-year and two-year higher education institutions. The study explored the career paths and mobility from their academic positions to administrative positions. The findings of the study were that only one of the participants had a career plan to be an administrator; nine of them had mentors in their career paths. Seven of ten followed the occupational career paths; the other three followed organizational career paths. Identifiable cultural behaviors played a major role in the professional development of the participants. The participants’ actual lived experiences are Asian American cultural behaviors manifested in the values of hard work as moral obligation, collaboration as recognizing connections, and risk taking as sacrifice for the future. These behaviors reflect complex patterns of relationships, obligation, and authority; the sensitive regard for honor, image, and status; and an intense personal identification with the family unit. The study also identified the influence of culture and values as central in the career path/mobility stories of Asian-American senior administrators.

**Current Asian American Faculty Members in U.S. and NY State**

In New York State, there are 466 colleges/universities that are reported in Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS). According to the 2011
IPEDS Report, 107 of 466 reported that they have Asian-American faculty members (instruction/research/public service) in their institutions. Among the 107 universities/colleges in New York State in 2010, the number of Asian Americans in executive/administrative and managerial positions is 855 and the total number of full-time Asian-American faculty members is 3791, about 10% of total. Compared to other ethnicities, Hispanics have 1,416 in executive/administrative and managerial positions and 1,678 in full-time faculty status; African Americans have 1,804 in executive/administrative and managerial positions and 2,279 in full-time faculty status. The greatest percentage is composed of Caucasians who have 11,022 in executive/administrative and managerial positions and 28,715 in full-time faculty status.

Table 2.1 shows a breakdown of employees in degree-granting institutions by race, ethnicity, and primary occupation: 2010, in 107 universities and colleges in New York State.

According to the IPEDS 2011 Report in New York State, of 107 colleges and universities, which reported they have Asian-American faculty members, Asians made up 10% of all faculty members and 5% of all executive, administrative, and managerial personnel positions. Hispanic made up 4% of all faculty members and 9% of all executive, administrative, and managerial personnel positions. Blacks made up 6% of all faculty members and 12% of all executive, administrative, and managerial personnel positions. Compared to other ethnicities, Asian Americans are under-represented in senior-level leadership positions.
Table 2.1

*Employees in Degree-granting Institutions, by Race/Ethnicity and Primary Occupation: 2010, in 107 Universities and Colleges in New York State*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Primary occupation</th>
<th>Total(^1)</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>Hispanic</th>
<th>Asian</th>
<th>Native</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Executive/ Administrative/ Managerial</td>
<td>15,129</td>
<td>11,022</td>
<td>1,804</td>
<td>1,416</td>
<td>855</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty (Instruction/ Research/Public Service)</td>
<td>36,290</td>
<td>28,715</td>
<td>2,279</td>
<td>1,678</td>
<td>3,791</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


As for the disciplines of Asian-American faculty members at higher education, another survey of earned doctorates was done by the National Opinion Research Center in University of Chicago in 2006, 12.4% Asians are holding doctorate degrees in engineering, 8.1% are in life sciences, 7.0% are in physical sciences, and 5.1% are in social sciences. Table 2.2 outlines the disciplines of recipients of earned doctorates in 2006.
Table 2.2

Disciplines of Recipients of Earned Doctorates, 2006

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race/ethnicity</th>
<th>Business</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Engineering</th>
<th>Humanities</th>
<th>Life sciences</th>
<th>Physical sciences</th>
<th>Social sciences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>12.4</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>5.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>12.3</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>82.6</td>
<td>77.4</td>
<td>76.4</td>
<td>84.0</td>
<td>80.7</td>
<td>85.4</td>
<td>78.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Figures may not equal 100% because of rounding.
1. Includes degree categories not listed separately
2. Includes history
3. Includes psychology
4. Figures cover only those U.S. citizens who identified their racial or ethnic group. Figures for Asian recipients do not include Native Hawaiians and other Pacific Islanders. Those groups are in the "other" category, which also includes those who reported more than one racial group.
5. Figures include only those who responded to questions about postdoctoral status.
-- Data not disclosed to protect confidentiality.


According to this survey by National Opinion Research Center, University of Chicago (2006), most Asian-American faculty members are specialized in the discipline of engineering and sciences. To explore the career aspiration of Chinese-American faculty members in higher education, one must understand what their aspirations are and how their aspirations are formed in different social organizations, cultural environments, and family influences.
Analysis and Interpretation of the Literature

The social cognitive theoretical framework this study is using is rooted in Bandura's (1986) work and further developed by Lent, Brown, and Hackett (1994). Social cognitive theory as it is applied to career choices and development, termed Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT), hypothesizes that an individual's career choice processes and development do not occur in a social vacuum. A variety of background and contemporary environmental and person variables directly influence career choice process; that is, how interests turn into goals and goals to actions (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 1994, 2000). These processes are intimately and reciprocally connected to organizational (environmental) variables such as socioeconomic status, social support, family influences, and barriers, as well as cognitive person variables (e.g., self-efficacy and outcome expectations) and other personal characteristics such as ethnicity and gender (Lent, Brown, and Hackett, 1994, 2000).

Both qualitative and quantitative methodologies are given in-depth analysis based on the data/interviews/case study, for example. Most research reviews of career aspiration were focused on certain fields of higher education institutions, but not on particular faculty members/academics. Vocational research identified a number of factors, including culture, race, ethnicity, and gender, which may be related to whether and how families influence individual career development (Fouad & Kantamneni, 2008; Lent, Brown, and Hackett, 1994, 2000; Lent et al., 2003, 2005). However, career aspiration is related to the human internal factors and its underlying values such as ethics, attitudes, internal needs motivation, identity (Astin, 1984; Baruch, 2004; Powell and Butterfield, 2003). In addition, the career aspiration is influenced by all other external
factors such as ethnicity, culture, and family of participants (Gibbons & Shoffner, 2004; Lapan, 2004). The quantitative data can analyze the correlations between variables, but it is difficult to reveal how people aspire to their careers. The CFA framework does not directly address salient issues, such as the barriers and stigma associated with help-seeking behaviors across cultures, nor does it provide solutions to remedy the current challenge of making resources available and accessible (Heppner & Fu, 2010; Jorgensen, Boer, & Laugen, 2006).

Leong et al. (2007) describe how socio-cultural factors affect the formulation of cultural identity in different ways. First, the surrounding cultural context exerts an influence either directly (explicitly) or in more subtle ways (implicitly). Another gap is that it is hard to find first-hand career aspiration information/data with Chinese-American faculty members in one institution to compare with the whole academic/administrative environment (Nelson, 2009). However, the findings/data from students about career aspirations may be temporary and could change over time. Kirton (2009) suggested that interviewing individuals at a particular point in time only produces a snapshot, particularly when it comes to young people who might well have unrealistic and naive career aspirations that over time will be modified to reflect the evolving (ethicized and gendered) circumstances of their lives. Therefore, most quantitative interviews or case studies were used to analyze this particular focus group or single person. It is essential that the research took into account their unique life experiences, including educational level, immigration history and status, generation level, socioeconomic and class status, conditions in the home country, religious beliefs, work values, role models, and personal
characteristics, as well as how these variables may affect their career choices (Fouad et al., 2008, 2010).

Several limitations of these studies should be noted. One of those limitations is that results of some quantitative studies may have limited generalized ability by using convenient sampling. However, it might be hard to find a more random sampling based on the small number of participants within a certain ethnicity. Another limitation is that because of the cross-sectional and co-relational design of several studies, inferences cannot be made about causation (Hyun, 2005; Lee, 2002). For example, researchers could not assume that higher levels of informational support from family members necessarily lead to higher levels of career decision-making or self-efficacy, although theoretically this would seem likely (Fouad et al., 2008, 2010; Gomez, Fassinger, Prosser, Cooke, Mejia, & Luna, 2001).

Research on the career paths of Asian-American senior administrative positions was very vital in understanding how external factors play an important role in shaping faculty members’ career aspirations (Neilson, 2002, 2009; Wilking, 2001). Leong et al. (2010) stated that Asian Americans who have grown up in a predominantly European American environment may be more acculturated as a result of their frequent contact with the dominant culture.

Most studies did not examine the relationship between leadership and Chinese-American ethnic identity. Leong et al. (2007) emphasize that the cultural factor of individualism–collectivism is an important consideration in the therapeutic relationship. It is not uncommon for people from more collectivist cultures to have cultural norms about hierarchical relationships and expect counselors to assume the role of expert or
authority (Lee, 2001). Asian Americans have been struggling with their externally imposed and self-constructed identities. Cultural sensitivity analysis could not identify subgroups of Chinese Americans. The assessment of cultural identity includes learning about the degree to which clients adhere to relationship norms of their home culture and the degree to which they are acculturated to expectations in the local culture (Arthur & Popadiuk, 2010). They may display either relative weakness or relative strength in terms of both exploration and commitments in the leadership development. They frequently note being caught between two worlds. Based on the differences of cultural background, they may have different career aspirations.

Findings from the studies of the career paths of Asian Americans in higher education institutions suggest that both quantitative and qualitative studies are needed to further promote the understanding of the complexities of self-efficacy, race, ethnicity, and gender issues for Chinese Americans. Further research on educational administration and leadership preparation programs and on institutional issues were recommended.
Chapter 3: Research Design Methodology

Introduction

This study utilized a qualitative, narrative methodology with three-dimensional space approach to explore the career aspirations of Chinese-American faculty members at selected four-year colleges and universities in New York State. Three-dimensional space approach by Clandinin and Connelly (2000) involved analyzing the data for three elements: interaction (personal and social), continuity (past, present, and future), and situation (physical places or the storyteller’s places). Creswell (2007) stated that narrative researchers situate individual stories within participants’ personal experiences (their jobs, their homes), their culture (racial or ethnic), and their historical contexts (time and place). The purpose of the study was to gain a greater understanding of Chinese-American faculty members’ development of career aspirations to leadership positions in higher education institutions. Most qualitative methodologies utilize individual interviews or focus groups as an instrument for data collection based on different genders, ages and diverse ethnicities. The semi-structured interview was used in this narrative study. Seven qualified candidates were chosen for interviews. Field notes were taken during interview. As Connelly & Clandinin (2005) stated, the researcher started interviewing in the field with the participants, whether the field is a classroom, or a meeting place where stories were told, the researcher began to compose field notes. There are many styles of field notes, but all field notes generally consist of two parts: descriptive in which the observer attempts to capture a word-picture of the setting, actions and conversations; and reflective in which the observer records thoughts, ideas,
questions and concerns based on the observations and interviews. It was important to be attentive to situating field texts within the three dimensional narrative inquiry spaces, that is, capturing field notes with attention to the temporal, the personal and social, and place. During the past several years, both quantitative and qualitative methodological approaches have been applied to the research of career aspiration and its interrelationship with organization, culture, and family in higher education institutions (Neilson, 2009). There were not many prior studies pertaining to career aspirations of Chinese-American faculty members in higher education.

The researcher addressed the following questions:

1. What are the career aspirations of Chinese-American faculty members at selected higher education institutions in New York State?

2. Do Chinese-American faculty members aspire to leadership in senior-level administrative positions at selected higher education institutions in New York State?

3. Do organizational socialization, cultural sensitivity, and family influence impact the development of career aspirations of Chinese-American faculty members at selected higher education institutions in New York State? If so, how?

The research questions best fit narrative analysis through the interviews. As Pinnegar and Daynes (2006) suggest, narrative can be both a method and the phenomenon of study. It is best for capturing the detailed stories or life experiences of the lives of a small number of individuals. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) defined the methods of conducting a narrative study as not following a lock-step approach, but instead represent an informal collection of topics. Thus, narrative methodology focused on the organization of human knowledge more than merely the collection and processing
of data. It also implied that knowledge itself was considered valuable and noteworthy even when known by only one person.

Most studies regarding Asian Americans’ career paths were conducted using the narrative study method. Narrative research has many forms, uses a variety of analytic practices, and is rooted in different social and humanities disciplines (Daiute & Lightfoot, 2004). Compared with qualitative methodologies, some quantitative methodologies may not fit well with the cultural concept of Asian-Americans. For example, when the Asian-Americans were asked to use the 7-point Likert scale, Asians tended to consistently choose 3s and 4s, which was affected by their particular culture and value systems (Leong and Leung, 1994). Leong and Leung stated that it was important to understand what constitutes ideal decision-making behaviors and attitudes of Asian Americans; it was also important to understand the characteristics of problematic decision-making attitudes and behaviors that may lead to difficulties in other related fields. In contrast to American individualists, Markus and Kitayama (1991) theorized that members of more interdependent cultures (i.e., most non-Western, and particularly East Asian, cultures) strived for interconnectedness and belongingness with their social in-groups, seeking to maintain harmony and endeavoring to fulfill the wishes of those groups. It was more useful to use qualitative methodologies to understand the effect of culture, family, and social organization on career aspirations of Chinese-American faculty members in higher education institutions.

In higher education, statistics demonstrated that Asian-American faculty members were under-represented in American colleges and universities (Varma, 2002). The Chinese-American community was the largest ethnic group of Asian-Americans,
consisting of 22.4% of the Asian-American population. This study explored the perceptions of Chinese-American faculty members regarding their career aspirations and opportunities as potential pipeline candidates for the senior-level administrators. The researcher hoped to explore the different influences that organizational socialization, cultural sensitivity, and family influences have aspirations of Chinese-American faculty members.

Research Context

This research was conducted at selected colleges and universities in New York State. The selected colleges and universities were four-year offering undergraduate and graduate study institutions. The statistics utilized in this study regarding institutional characteristics were found in the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) created by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), U.S. Department of Education. The IPEDS was the primary source for data on colleges, universities, and technical and vocational postsecondary institutions in the United States. In New York State, 466 colleges/universities reported their statistics to IPEDS, and 234 of those universities/colleges were four-year offering undergraduate and graduate study institutions. According to 2010-11 IPEDS collection, in fall of 2010, 89 four-year offering undergraduate and graduate institutions reported that they have Asian-American faculty members (instruction/research/public service) in their institutions. There were 3521 Asian-American faculty members in these 89 institutions (IPEDS, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System, 2011). The statistics in the IPEDS were reported by ethnicity, not by nationality. So the number of Chinese-American faculty members was not clear.
**Research Participants**

To better understand the influence of organizational socialization, cultural sensitivity, and family influence on Chinese-American faculty members’ career aspirations, the researcher chose seven participants who were from different disciplines, ranks, and tenured or non-tenured positions in the selected institutions. For example, some participating faculty members were tenured, some were non-tenured yet on a tenure track, and some were non-tenured and not on tenure track. The participants also had diverse academic, research, and professional experiences. To identify the cultural sensitivity and family influences on their career aspirations, the participants were different immigrant generations. For example, according to 2010 American Community Survey (ACS) (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010), some participants were first-generation Chinese-Americans (born and raised outside the United States and immigrated at age six or older), and some were second generation (immigrated at age five or younger or born in the United States, parents were first-generation immigrants). A detailed personal demographic questionnaire of participants was sent out before the interviews (see Appendix C).

**Data Collection Instruments**

The researcher used semi-structured interview for this narrative study. The researcher sent out the questionnaire to participants before the interview was conducted. The questionnaire allowed the participants to answer the same basic demographic questions, thus increasing the comparability of responses and facilitating the organization and analysis of data.
The potential participants’ names were found on the institutions’ web site through the faculty directory. Then, they were contacted via e-mail. The initial e-mail correspondence introduced the researcher to the prospective participant through an invitation letter (see Appendix A), summarized the purpose of the study, outlined the activities that participants would need to complete, and encouraged voluntary participation. Once notification of a participant’s intent to participate was received, the researcher sent follow-up correspondence via e-mail and regular postal mail (i.e., an informed consent form and a questionnaire of background) and proceeded to schedule interviews. The interview lasted one to one and a half hours. Interviews were digital audio recorded by the researcher and transcribed by a hired private agency.

The questionnaire of demographic background was used to obtain information and factors that may affect their career aspirations regarding participants’ gender, working institutions, years of working experience in the same institution, current faculty status, discipline, and generation of immigration (year and age entered in United States), language spoken at home, current family size, and number of generations in the home.

The informed consent form provided the participants with information regarding the purpose of the study, stated the requirements for participation in the study, outlined anticipated risks and benefits of participation, addressed compensation issues, and assured confidentiality of individual privacy unless permission was granted to use the participant’s real name. The consent form also stressed the voluntary nature of participation. The consent form provided the participants with researcher and institutional contact information.
The semi-structured interview questions were used in this study to inform the major research questions. The interview questions covered the following aspects: (a) Describe how you came to be in this current role/position; (b) Describe your career aspiration in the next three to five years; (c) Identify the factors that have affected your career aspiration; (d) Describe if these factors relate to your organization, family, and cultural background, and if so, how they relate to each other; (e) Describe which cultural values have the most influence on your career aspirations; (f) Describe how these values affect your career aspiration; (g) Identify salient issues for aspiring Chinese-American faculty members regarding their career advancement (see Appendix D).

Characteristics of Selected Colleges and Universities

The researcher purposefully selected three four-year offering undergraduate and graduate study colleges/universities in New York State. These three colleges and universities were categorized and identified through Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System in New York State and identified based on Carnegie Classification. The selected colleges and universities generally reflected the overall four-year colleges/universities in New York State. The selection was based on total full-time faculty size; Asian-American, full-time faculty size; and institution size and settings. The statistics in total number of full-time faculty size; and Asian-American, full-time faculty size were collected from Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS, 2010-11). The institution size and settings were identified by Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education research center (Carnegie Classification, 2010). The Carnegie Classification has been the leading framework for recognizing and describing institutional diversity in U.S. higher education for the past four decades.
The three selected institutions were identified as A, B, and C. As Carnegie Classification (2010) identified, the institution A is a medium, single-doctoral, four-year and graduate college. It had 214 full-time faculty members, including 13 Asian-American faculty members (IPEDS, 2010). The institution B is a comprehensive doctoral with high medical research activity university (Carnegie Classification, 2010). It had 1,642 full-time faculty members, including 213 Asian-American faculty members (IPEDS, 2010). The institution C is a science and engineering dominant and master’s college with a larger program (Carnegie Classification, 2010). It had 1,056 full-time faculty members, including 70 Asian-American faculty members (IPEDS, 2010). Table 3.1 outlined the characteristics of the three identified institutions.
Table 3.1

*Characteristics of Selected Four-Year and Graduate Institutions in New York State, by Student Enrollment, Full-Time Faculty, and Asian-American Full-time Faculty: Fall, 2010*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Institution A</th>
<th>Institution B</th>
<th>Institution C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Full-Time Faculty</td>
<td>214</td>
<td>1,642</td>
<td>1,056</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Full-Time Asian-American Faculty</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>213</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carnegie Classification</td>
<td>medium, single doctoral four-year and graduate college</td>
<td>comprehensive doctoral with medical high research-activity university</td>
<td>Science and engineering dominant and master’s college with larger program</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


**Procedures Used**

To ensure a qualified and diverse group of participants as well as a successful and accurate study, the researcher used faculty listings from the directory of selected colleges and universities on their web sites. The snowball sampling technique was used to find seven qualified Chinese-American faculty members. Penrod, Preston, Cain, & Starks (2003) stated that snowballing was based on social network logic whereby people were linked by a set of social relationships and contacts. Penrod et al. (2003) stated that
snowball sampling, or chain-referral sampling, involved the nomination of other potentially eligible people through study participants. Asking respondents to name or mention other people whom they had some type of relationship with, according to inclusion criteria defined by researchers, for the purposes of putting the researcher in touch with others identifies these linkages.

After the potential participants were identified, an initial invitation letter was sent out to explain the purpose of the study, outline the activities that participants would need to complete; explain the importance of each selected faculty member’s participation, and encourages voluntary participation (see Appendix A).

After the participants agreed to participate, an informed consent form (see Appendix B) and a questionnaire regarding demographic background (see Appendix C) were mailed to each participant prior to the interview. When the consent form was received, the researcher asked each participant to set aside one to one and a half hours for an interview conducted by the researcher at the convenience of the participant. Participants were encouraged to ask questions or raise any concerns regarding the interview process or research projects prior to the interviews.

**Data Analysis**

The data collected in a narrative study needs to be analyzed for the story they tell (Creswell, 2006). The digital audio recording at the interviews was transcribed and coded. According to Corbin and Strauss (2008), the coding process should be followed in developing data-driven codes involved and identifying themes within convenient samples. Each of seven participants had one interview session and completed the background questionnaire. Some follow-up questions were asked of participants after the
interviews were transcribed. Open and axial coding methods were used in reviewing and analyzing each transcript. Open coding referred to a process of analyzing the transcripts and generating initial categories and themes that fit the data. A later stage of axial coding then identified consistent themes and relationships within each interview related to the research question or sub-questions. Themes from the interviews were then compared to identify commonalities and differences. A narrative description summarizing the results of the analyses was then prepared which serves the basis for the narratives presented in the next chapter.

The questionnaire of personal demographic background provided a biographical analysis of each participant, including gender, immigrated generation, institution, faculty status, family information, and language information. The researcher summarized the important background of participants’ family, cultural, and organizational socialization and create a file for each participant. The biographical analysis helped the researcher gain a better understanding of the participants’ cultural origin, career path, and historical context of their career aspirations. Three-dimensional space approach was used, which involved analyzing the data including interaction (personal and social), continuity (past, present, and future), and situation (physical places or the storyteller’s places) (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000). The following visual formatting was created and used to analyze the data as Table 3.2 by the researcher:
Table 3.2

*Visual Framework of Three-dimensional Space Approach Analysis*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Three-dimensional space approach</th>
<th>Organizational socialization</th>
<th>Cultural sensitivity</th>
<th>Family influence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interaction (personal and social)</td>
<td>Data Analysis</td>
<td>Data Analysis</td>
<td>Data Analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuity (past, present, and future)</td>
<td>Data Analysis</td>
<td>Data Analysis</td>
<td>Data Analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Situation (physical places or the storytellers’ places)</td>
<td>Data Analysis</td>
<td>Data Analysis</td>
<td>Data Analysis</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Summary**

The research was a qualitative, narrative study with a three-dimensional space approach that explored the career aspirations of Chinese-American faculty members at selected four-year private, not-for-profit colleges and universities in New York State. Three institutions in New York were selected for study. The study used an interview instrument to collect data from seven Chinese-American faculty members at selected colleges and universities in New York State. The data collected was analyzed to determine what their career aspirations were; if Chinese-American faculty members aspired to leadership of senior-level administrative positions in higher education institutions; and whether organizational socialization, cultural sensitivity, and family influence impacted the development of career aspirations of Chinese-American faculty members at selected higher education institutions in New York State. This study was designed to provide important career aspiration information this ethnic group to senior
level leaders at four-year colleges and universities. The findings proved beneficial to
career development programs for ethnically diverse faculty members in higher education.
Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

In 2006, 1.9% of all senior administrators in higher education were of Asian-American descent (ACE, 2007). Neilson (2002) stated that although Asian-Americans were relatively well represented in the faculty ranks in higher education, the reverse was true in administration. Asian-Americans remained under-represented in the senior level leadership positions since they represent 5.8% of U.S. population (2010 Census). Neilson and Suyemoto (2009) stated that since an increasing number of racial/ethnic minorities have assumed leadership positions in higher education, the research scholars should focus more attention on the experiences and trajectories of administrators of color. However, the population of Asian-American faculty members has not received enough attention from researchers in this regard. Compared with other racial groups and compared with their participation as faculty members, Chinese-Americans remained under-represented in senior-level administrative positions in higher education institutions. This study explored the perceptions of Chinese-American faculty members regarding their career aspirations and opportunities as potential pipeline candidates for senior-level administrative positions. The progression to senior-level academic and president administrators in higher education typically progresses from faculty members, to director/dean, to vice president of academic affairs, and to the president. The researcher hoped to explore the different influences that organizational socialization, cultural sensitivity, and family influences have on aspirations of Chinese-American faculty members.
This chapter presented a narrative analysis of the seven participants in this study. The seven participants were chosen from selected colleges and universities in New York State and included four male and three female faculty members in the colleges and universities. Mean age of the participants was 41 years old. Five were first-generation immigrants and the other two were second-generation immigrants. The selected colleges and universities were not-for-profit, four-year institutions offering graduate degrees. This chapter provided the results/findings of the participants’ identified career aspirations through their professional stories by using a three-dimensional space approach. The three-dimensional space approach by Clandinin and Connelly (2000) involved analyzing the data for three elements: interaction (personal and social); continuity (past, present, and future); and situation (physical places or the storyteller’s places). The researcher used three dimensions to find how participants’ career aspirations were impacted by organizational socialization, cultural sensitivity, and family influence. Three-dimensional narrative analysis of their career aspirations in this chapter was meant to capture and answer the research questions in this study.

The research questions were as follows:

1. What are the career aspirations of Chinese-American faculty members at selected higher education institutions in New York State?

2. Do Chinese-American faculty members aspire to leadership in senior-level administrative positions at selected higher education institutions in New York State?

3. Do organizational socialization, cultural sensitivity, and family influence impact the development of career aspirations of Chinese-American faculty members at selected higher education institutions in New York State? If so, how?
The researcher used a three-dimensional space approach to provide the results that influence career aspirations of Chinese-American faculty members in higher education institutions. The process researcher had used was analyzing the transcripts and categorized the contents of interviews based on coding and research questions. The researcher designed the visual framework as Table 4.1 according to the analysis of three-dimensional space approach. In order to situate the different parts of the contents, the researcher categorized three influences from organizational socialization, cultural sensitivity and family, and then used three dimensions to analyze the transcripts from continuity dimension, interaction dimension and situation dimension. Table 4.1 shows this visual analysis of three-dimensional approach regarding the research questions.

Table 4.1

*Visual Analysis of Three-dimensional Approach*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Organizational socialization</th>
<th>Cultural sensitivity</th>
<th>Family influence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Continuity-Dimension (Past/Present/Future)</td>
<td>Participants’ review of career aspiration</td>
<td>Participants’ review of career aspiration</td>
<td>Participants’ review of career aspiration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction-Dimension (Personal &amp; Social)</td>
<td>Participants’ review of career aspiration</td>
<td>Participants’ review of career aspiration</td>
<td>Participants’ review of career aspiration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Situation-Dimension (Place)</td>
<td>Participants’ review of career aspiration</td>
<td>Participants’ review of career aspiration</td>
<td>Participants’ review of career aspiration</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As demonstrated in Table 4.1, the interviews were analyzed within three dimensions. The narratives of seven participants were compared under each dimension
to explore how organizational socialization, cultural sensitivity, and family influence affected participants’ reviews of their career aspirations as Chinese-American faculty members.

**Overview of Participants**

By recognizing that these seven participants met with the researcher in person, a matrix summary of the participants’ backgrounds is presented in Tables 4.2 and 4.3. To maintain the confidentiality of participants, the researcher assigned the study participants with pseudo names to protect their identity.

Table 4.2

*Backgrounds of Participants*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Birthplace</th>
<th>Immigrant generation</th>
<th>Parents’ education Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bill</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>China</td>
<td>First</td>
<td>B.S.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>China</td>
<td>First</td>
<td>B.S.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frank</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>Asia</td>
<td>Second</td>
<td>Ph.D.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joy</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>China</td>
<td>First</td>
<td>B.S.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lily</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>China</td>
<td>First</td>
<td>M.S.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Max</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Asia</td>
<td>First</td>
<td>B.S.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shelly</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>U.S.</td>
<td>Second</td>
<td>Ph.D.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.3

Backgrounds of Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Faculty rank</th>
<th>Faculty rank status</th>
<th>Academic discipline</th>
<th>Length in the current institution (years)</th>
<th>Current administrative roles</th>
<th>Language spoken at home</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bill</td>
<td>Professor</td>
<td>Tenured</td>
<td>Engineering</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Director</td>
<td>Chinese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David</td>
<td>Associate Professor</td>
<td>Tenured</td>
<td>Engineering</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Chinese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frank</td>
<td>Associate Professor</td>
<td>Non- Tenure</td>
<td>Medicine</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Director</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joy</td>
<td>Assistant Professor</td>
<td>Non- Tenure</td>
<td>Statistics</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Chinese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lily</td>
<td>Associate Professor</td>
<td>Tenure- tracked</td>
<td>Chemistry</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Max</td>
<td>Associate Professor</td>
<td>Tenured</td>
<td>Engineering</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Chair</td>
<td>Chinese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shelly</td>
<td>Assistant Professor</td>
<td>Non- tenure</td>
<td>Science</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As demonstrated in Tables 4.2 and 4.3, the mean age of the seven participants was 41 years old. There were four males and three females. Four of the participants were
born in Mainland China, two were born in an Asian country, and one was born in U.S.
Five of the participants were first-generation immigrants (born and raised outside the
United States and immigrated at age 6 or older), and two of the participants were second-
generation immigrants (immigrated at age 5 or younger or born in the United States).
Regarding faculty rank, two participants were tenured associate professors, one was a
tenured professor, one was a tenure track associate professor, two were non-tenure track
assistant professors, and one was a non-tenure track associate professor. Three of the
participants were program directors and the other four participants were not in any
administrative positions. All participants held science doctoral degrees, which included
computer, medicine, biostatistics, and engineering. The mean current family size is four,
and all participants have children at home. The mean length of time in the current
institution for participants is 7.5 years. In the next part of this chapter, the researcher
provides a brief introduction of each participant.

Bill

Bill is a director and tenured full professor at a 4-year science and engineering
dominant college. Bill joined this institution was hired as a tenure track faculty member
and program director after he worked in other countries. Bill was the first-generation
immigrant of his family (first generation: born and raised outside the United States and
immigrated at age 6 or older). He completed his bachelor’s degree in Engineering at a
well-known university in China, where his family lived. Bill did his master’s and
doctoral study at an Ivy League university. He worked at other universities in the U.S.
and in Asia before he came to the current institution. He lives with his wife and their
children. They speak Chinese at home.
David

David is a tenured associate professor at a 4-year science and engineering dominant college. David joined this institution after he worked in other countries. He was the first-generation immigrant of his family. He completed his bachelor’s and master’s degrees in Engineering at a well-known university in China, where his family lived. David continued his doctoral study in one of the European countries. After graduation, David and his wife moved to an Asian country and worked in an industrial field for years. After that, they moved to North America with their children before David joined this institution. They speak Chinese at home.

Frank

Frank is a director and non-tenure track associate professor at a 4-year comprehensive doctoral university with high medical research activity. Frank joined this institution after he finished his doctoral study at a well-known university on the West Coast. He became a program director later. Frank was born in the Midwest of the U.S. as a second-generation immigrant (immigrated at age 5 or younger or born in the United States). Frank completed all of his education in medicine in the U.S. He was a well-known expert in his field. Frank’s parents both had doctorates that were from Asia as the first-generation immigrants. Frank lives with his wife and their children. They speak English at home.

Joy

Joy is a non-tenure track assistant professor at a 4-year comprehensive doctoral university with high medical research-activity. Joy completed her master’s and doctoral study in U.S. She was hired by this institution as an assistant professor after her
graduation. Joy was born in China and gained her bachelor’s degree at a well-known university in China. As both being first-generation immigrants, Joy lives with her husband and they are expecting their new child this year. They speak Chinese at home.

**Lily**

Lily is a tenure track associate professor at a 4-year doctoral and graduate college. Lily was hired as an associate professor by this institution. She came to the U.S. as a first-generation immigrant. Lily completed her bachelor’s, master’s degree and doctoral study in Chemistry at a well-known university in the U.S. She worked in an industrial field as a manager for years before she switched her career to become a faculty member in this institution. Lily lives with her husband and their children. They speak English at home.

**Max**

Max is an associate professor at a 4-year science and engineering dominant college. He is also holding a department chair position for the engineering program he is in. Max obtained his bachelor’s degree also in engineering from a well-known university in an Asian country. He came to the U.S. to complete his master’s and doctoral degrees also in engineering from a well-known university. He is a first-generation immigrant to US with children and a wife, also a first-generation immigrant to US from Asia. They speak Chinese Mandarin at home.

**Shelly**

Shelly is a non-tenure track Research Assistant professor at a 4-year comprehensive doctoral university with high medical research activity. Shelly joined this institution as an adjunct instructor and became a full-time research assistant professor
later. Shelly was born in U.S. as the second-generation immigrant. She finished her doctoral study in Biochemistry at a well-known university in the West. She is living with her children. They speak English at home.

Seven participants were individually interviewed during a one and one-half hour time period. The participants discussed their career aspirations based upon organization, culture, and family with the researcher. The findings were demonstrated in a three-dimensional space in regard to organizational socialization, cultural sensitivity, and family influence as follows.

**Findings of Career Aspiration in Regard to Organizational Socialization**

*Continuity dimension (past/present/future).* In this space, continuity dimension was used to find out how participants analyzed their career paths backward and forward under the condition of organizational socialization. The findings from this dimension indicated that all seven faculty members showed that it was their personal preference to choose not pursuing a senior-level administrative role. Their personal preference and choice determined their career aspiration. When the participants were asked regarding the reason that they chose the academic faculty role, compared to an administrative role in higher education, they stated that they enjoyed working in the academic side and preferred to teach and research. They believed that their organizations would offer support and help if they chose to pursue career advancement to a more senior administrative role. However, their career aspirations were mainly to become the best faculty member in the institution where they worked. Even with holding current administrative roles in each institution, two directors and one chair were demonstrating more interest in teaching and collaborating with faculty colleagues on research than in
pursuing a higher administrative position. For instance, as a full professor and Director in a science and engineering dominant college, Bill described his rationale for entry into the higher education field:

When I was finishing my degree, I had offers with private companies or other industry, and research companies which offered me very high salary and bonus at the time. I chose to become a faculty at several well-known universities in the past years after graduation instead of going to industrial field. I did think personally I like to have this freedom to do things I like versus doing the things which were sort of like doing something for someone else.

Similarly, Frank, a program director at a comprehensive doctoral with medical high research activity university, in speaking of the dimension of continuity on his career path under the organizational socialization, predicted that he would stay in the higher education field if he needed to move to another city. Frank said:

I thought (my job) was (having) more interaction with other individuals. I thought I liked that ability to have that interaction. Otherwise, in medicine, you went into private practice and I thought you were a little more isolated in doing that. So I liked the shared pursuit and the camaraderie, the ability to interact with many people at the same time. I thought I also liked the option to do research and clinical care and teaching, you knew, had a more variety of activities. I thought that overall, academic institution was where I would like to stay, just the overall integrity, the altruism; I thought this was the best spot that people in this industry (medicine).
Speaking of the career aspiration and choices, Max made it clear why he chose his job and how the organization affected his career aspiration. Being a department chair in his department, Max illustrated his career path as follows:

I was not particularly inspired to climb the administrative ladder when I first joined academia. Being a faculty to teach and to do research in an energetic campus environment was the reason to join academia. As time went on, I was given leadership opportunities through committee work, development of programs, etc. As the opportunity arose when the previous chair person planned to step down, I was voted with confidence of the faculty, staff and the Dean to take on the position. I was the right person with the right skill sets and attitude to serve the department. Going forward, I would maintain the same attitude, not actively pursuing higher administrative position but will not shy away to take on responsibilities that suit my capabilities.

The other four participants were hired as faculty members without playing any administrative roles in their institutions. From the past and current experience, the other four participants spent an average of six years working as faculty members. They enjoyed the current career choice by having flexible schedules and a not so stressful life and would not move to administrative roles in the next five years.

**Interaction dimension (personal & social).** In this space, interaction dimension was used to find out how participants interacted with their colleagues in the organization when they made their career choices. This dimension also demonstrated how social interaction in the organization influenced their personal career aspirations. The finding from this dimension suggested that personality or personal characteristics played a role
when participants interacted with their social group in the institution. From a broader perspective, however, the social group in the institution did not affect the participants’ career aspiration when they made their career decisions in the long term. Speaking of interaction with colleagues in the organization, for instance, Joy, a research assistant faculty member at a 4-year comprehensive doctoral university with high medical research activity, speaking of her personality and career aspiration, she did not think she was ambitious about her career choice. She noted:

I thought it (working with Chinese or Caucasian) heavily depended on the personality. Like my mentor was Caucasian and we were getting along very well. So I didn’t really see a big difference between two groups, well, it was not by that ethnicity; it was more like who you were working with mostly and then the personality. I thought some people were very ambitious (career aspiration), I didn’t consider myself as one of them.

Another participant, Shelly, a research assistant faculty member at a 4-year comprehensive doctoral university with high medical research activity, had done a variety of things with her colleagues. The way she interacted with her colleagues made her enjoy the job she was doing. Shelly did not feel pressured to pursue a higher administrative position in the organization. She said that she was very happy to play a supporting role in the organization. She explained:

I did a variety of things, so I did something that it was not necessarily teaching, I did teach an undergraduate course, I did science outreach so I was in charge of a group of graduate students and post doc volunteers who wanted to go out and learn more about teaching and we went out to schools and did science visits for
5th to 12th grade classes. I did curriculum development, so that was a lot of grants that my director got for curriculum development grants. I wrote lessons for secondary school students and I did web design and media development. So I worked on the website, for the department, I worked on our Center website and whenever there were people in the department who had a website they need worked on they would often come to me.

Then she further confirmed:

I was actually quite happy. I happened to be if you wanted to know the difference between administrative, and a support person, I was happier being a support person. I liked my projects and to just do things and complete them and be done with them. I was less good at organizing large projects and ordering people around, that was not something I preferred.

David, an associate professor, who was from a 4-year science and engineering dominant and master’s college, speaking of interaction with his colleagues and his own interest in the organization, mentioned that he served on one of the college committees as the Chair. He noticed:

It was a pretty tough job; you had to decide that the colleague was ... it was tough, pretty tough. I managed well, but...I came here (this institution) not really for the leadership positions. I thought one of the things (developing my career aspiration) that really identified (my) ability, I thought what I had found was I was really good at research, at doing project and converting this into a paper. This was really easy for me.
Frank was hired by this 4-year comprehensive doctoral university with high medical research activity when he graduated from his doctoral study. Compared to his own interest and interaction with his mentor in the organization, he expressed his appreciation for the informal interaction with the mentor who recruited him to this institution. He mentioned:

When I came to this institution, it was my first job out of training. When I came here, I actually was meant to do more outcome research in public health. But after about a year working here with Dr. A., who at the time was the Chief, and who asked me to start this program, I switched into doing that so I put my research on hold and went to a lot more clinical and so then I became the director of this program. I thought it’s relatively enjoyable.

Frank believed that people in the working field had different personalities. He thought their personalities definitely affected their career aspirations. He further expressed:

I thought the people who were successful outwardly appear to be more aggressive, assertive and moving things forward, which I didn’t think I did as much, you know, it was a personality trait, I was more of a quietly, you know, silently getting things done versus a very ‘oh look what I’ve done’ kind of thing, which was what people did to get noticed and got moved up.

In this space, the interaction between participants and their social organization helped participants understand the organizational roles in the institution. However, the findings from this dimension suggested that personality or personal characteristics played important roles when participants made their career choices. The social group in the
institution did not affect the participants’ career aspiration when they made their career decisions in the long term.

**Situation dimension (place).** In this space, situation dimension was used to find how organizational situations affect participants’ career aspirations and choices. The finding from this dimension indicated that six of seven participants agreed that Asian-Americans were under-represented in senior-level administrative positions in their institutions. However, the under representation of Asian-Americans in senior level administrative positions did not have a significant influence on the participants’ career aspirations.

Joy was the only one of seven participants who did not even see the under-representation of Asian-Americans at senior-level positions in her department. Joy worked at a research based Department of the institution, where lots of faculty members were Chinese. They had two associate deans in the department, and one of them was Chinese. She did not think the number of Asian-American senior level administrators would affect what she would like to do in her career development. She worked well with both Chinese and American administrators in her department.

Joy’s organizational situation was different from other participants’ organizations. Bill was a director in a science and engineering dominant college. He explained when asked about the under-representation of Asian-American senior level administrators in his institution:

I meant a typical institute of science would at least have one third of Asian faculty and I actually complained to the president a few years back in my
institution. It was very small and it was unusually small. Asian was not considered as under-represented minority.

When Bill was asked if this affected his career aspiration, he said:

These were things which people had political aspirations, they wanted to be managers. I enjoyed working on my research, working with my students or post docs or other collaborators and really pushing forward science (development).

Frank was playing a role of director in this 4-year comprehensive doctoral university with high medical research activity. When was asked regarding the under-representation of Asian-American senior administrators in his institution, he confirmed with his observation at this institution:

If you got up to the first floor (of this institution), you walked down (the hall), there was a row of pictures of the Hospital Medical Center Board, the Board of Directors, and I thought there were 40 or 50 people. It has gotten better, but it changed every year the board membership changed and there was probably one Asian, one African-American, three women, and 50 Caucasian White males.

When Frank was asked why he chose the current administrative role and if this underrepresentation affected his career aspiration, he said that he did not think that he would have chosen the administrative role, but it kind of fell on him. He did enjoy being in charge and control now.

Max, as a chair in this science and engineering dominant college, he appreciated the opportunity that the institution had offered to him regarding the organization situation support. He said:
I was part of a committee to develop academic programs. I was given a lot of leadership opportunities as a very young faculty to do things like that, allowing me to see the structure of the department, the college and the institution. It also allows me to see at a high-level curriculum development and budgetary issues.

Regarding the influence of career aspiration by under-representation of Asian-Americans in the higher education field based on their own organizational situation, Shelly and Lily both stated that it did not bother them when they were making their career decisions. Lily even mentioned that Caucasians were minorities in her previous company. As a second-generation immigrant, Shelly identified herself as a totally Americanized person in her organization and her colleagues did look at her as different as others according to identity.

**Findings of Career Aspiration in Regard to Cultural Sensitivity**

*Continuity dimension (past/present/future).* In this space, continuity dimension was used to find how cultural sensitivity affected participants’ career aspirations from the past, present and future. In looking backward, the different immigrant generations that participants grew up in had different cultural environments and different cultural backgrounds. Continuity dimension was also identified to find how the past different cultural experiences affected participants’ current and future career aspirations. Findings from this continuity dimension suggested that cultural sensitivity had an influence on participants’ decision-making of career development from the past, present and future. The differences came from the first and second generation of immigrants. Frank and Shelly were both second generation of immigrants. They did not think the differences between Chinese and American culture had affected their career aspirations. Frank grew
up in the Midwest U.S. He believed that the culture from the Midwest U.S. influenced him more than any other cultures. He explained:

So for example, when I went to medical school in Midwest, I did my residency in New England area, I was with at a nationally known hospital which was an Ivy league university teaching institution and you knew pretty well ranked in terms of its prestige and a good place, so many of my co-interns were from very good medical schools on the East Coast and once I was doing my internship, and there were three interns and we had attending, and the two interns were both Jewish women, one from Boston, one from New York City and yak, yak, yak, talked, talked, talked, very nice, but they were just always talking, always talking, always talking. I was from Midwest and in Midwest you were quiet, you spoke when you were spoken to, and you spoke if you had something intelligent to say otherwise you didn’t say anything, that was just the style of the Midwest, we were quieter, but my attending who was from Midwest, you knew, halfway through the rotation you’d sit down and talk with your attending and you discussed how you were doing, and he said you knew, you were not in Midwest anymore, on the East Coast if you didn’t speak they thought you were stupid, if you spoke even if you said something stupid, at least you were speaking.

Frank reaffirmed that the cultural differences did influence people’s career aspiration. The cultural differences could be from different countries and it also could be from different regions of same country. Also a second-generation immigrant, Shelly was born in a small village on west coast. Shelly explained that she did not want to be the head of an organization that was the hegemony that oppressed all other people. She said
that she treated herself as very Americanized and hardly identified herself as Chinese. She also thought that her new life really started after she enrolled in college and left her traditional Chinese parents who were the first generation. Shelly explained:

I was the only Asian student until the 5th grade. There was no Chinese church where I grew up, nor were my parents religious. There was no Chinese student association in high school. These people were in the minority, you knew, my mother was told to go back to Vietnam and she was not even, and so I thought it had a lot to do with how you grow up, and so for me I had no, my cultural identity was very low because there wasn’t a lot to support it. You knew we went to Chinatown to get food.

As the first-generation immigrants, the other five participants made different comments regarding the relationship of their cultural sensitivity to their career aspirations. Joy worked as a non-tenure track assistant professor in a comprehensive doctoral university with high medical research activity, where almost half of faculty members in her department were Chinese due to the nature of the work. Joy did not think the cultural differences and similarity inherent in her organization impacted her decisions on career development. Joy did mention:

I felt that you knew I meant people had this (cultural sensitivity) in mind and always had this notion that if I didn’t get something, is it really that I was not good enough or I was discriminated. So the basics were kind of double-edge sword. It was like sometimes because of that notion that oh maybe I got discriminated, then you actually overlooked the other factors. Probably it just this time it was not because of that but it was kind of easy way to blame, that was the
easiest reason that I could get excused because I was discriminated so I wasn’t successful.

David worked as a tenured associate professor at this 4-year science and engineering dominant college for more than six years. He had worked in different countries for years before he got hired by this institution. He believed that networking in different cultural environments was extremely important for career development. He stated:

I thought the biggest barrier was the culture. To become a dean’s level you really didn’t deal with the scientific technology, you dealt with the people, you dealt with the community and that you did have to think about this, in China a lot of material discussion, but it didn’t happen here, you just … I did think that it was the real problem, culture. If I grew up here in the United States and in high school, even my Bachelor’s and Master’s degree were done here. It would be different because you were part of the society; you could easily move up.

Lily made the cultural sensitivity issues more simplified regarding the language skills. She mentioned the chemistry industry she worked in. Most of the scientists were Chinese, Indians, and some maybe Eastern Europeans, and American males were the minorities. Once she made movement to the field of education, she said that she probably would be more confident if she had better language skills regarding her career development. Language skills were emphasized by some other participants when the researcher discussed this with them. Bill, a program director, said:

In terms of culture, language, communication skills I meant so we were not part of the old boys club, you knew, that all wasp group, so that I meant basically we
were short changed on both sides. You knew we were not considered the person to be promoted and that we were not considered by the major as their own.

Same as a department director in a science and engineering dominant college, Max did not think any cultural background affected his career decision. He believed that some Chinese-American faculties had problems on occasion, but that problem was not necessarily just language but could also due to social/cultural differences. He further explained:

The population of Chinese in academic leadership position seems to be smaller than other ethnicity. This could be my biased perception. In terms of being able to take on an academic administrative position, it is challenging and requires good personal and management skills, along with success in teaching and research. If you are not good at these skills, whether you are Chinese or not, you will not going to be successful in a leadership position. The western-eastern cultural difference could be a factor in the population of Chinese faculty in academic leadership position, but I am in position to judge whether it is true or not. In my opinion, who to be chosen to lead in academia is determined based on skill sets but not based on ethnicity; though the cultural difference could be a reason the percentage of faculty in different ethnicity having the proper skill set.

Speaking of the relations between language skills and cultural communication, participants had different opinions, but all agreed that cultural sensitivity did have an influence on their career aspirations and development. As a first-generation immigrant, Frank paid more attention on his cultural environment when he was growing up in the Midwest of the U.S. Shelly never treated herself as Chinese-American outside of her
parents’ house regarding the cultural influence. Joy did not think the current cultural environment she worked at bothered her even though the workers were half Americans and half Chinese. Lily and David were more focused on their experiences from past and current cultural comparison. Finally, speaking of these influence of cultural differences, Bill summarized:

If you didn’t understand American culture, I meant if every time you talked to someone you talked about the same topic after two or three times. You had to know the American politics, you had to know the sports or you had to know the movies or whatever, that’s when you had common topics. So I always said learn the language which was secondary to learning culture but if you learned the culture your language could catch up soon.

Findings from continuity dimension identified the influence of cultural sensitivity based on participants’ past, current experience and future expectation. These experience components all affected participants’ current and future career aspirations.

**Interaction dimension (personal &social).** In this space, interaction dimension between personal and social was demonstrated to find how personal and social cultural interaction affected participants’ career aspirations and their career development. Findings from this interaction dimension indicated that personal preference played more important roles when the participants chose their career paths. However, deep cultural roots also had certain influences on their career aspirations. Frank, as a very famous expert in his medical field, said:

I thought there were certain attributes where there were definitely people who looked to become chiefs of divisions and chairmen of departments, and then
wanted to be deans or CEOs. I didn’t think that I had that drive to do that versus some people and I didn’t know if it was partly cultural or personality, but I didn’t feel that I had that. I felt like I didn’t want the headache, I didn’t want to give up more family life to do that. I thought there may be some cultural reasons why Chinese-Americans didn’t pursue those things quite as much.

As a second-generation immigrant, Frank thought it might be more from his own personality. However, it might involve with his family influence. Lily was an associate professor, who majored in the chemistry field at a 4-year doctoral and graduate college. Speaking of personal preference and cultural influence on her career aspiration, she also affirmed that it was her own personal preference whether to pursue the senior level administrative position. She stated that networking and common topics were very important if you wanted to mingle with the group who was in the senior level administrative positions. However, it wasn’t her interest towards that direction. She would prefer to spend more time in teaching and researching in order to better serve the students and make her best contribution to the institution.

David also believed that cultural integration was very important. David did not think the administrative position was something he would enjoy doing. He said, “If a position didn’t give you joy then what was the purpose of life?”

Shelly admitted that she did not have a strong cultural identity. She wanted to have free time and was happy with the balance that she had achieved. Related to career aspirations, Shelly explained more:

I really thought my forte was to have someone send me out somewhere to tell people something and that was what I did best, not be the puppet master at the top
and training all these, you knew, and that was one way to think of it like I trained masses of people to behave like I do and then I would send them out into the country and then I would be like happy about this and that didn’t really appeal to me.

Joy worked as assistant research faculty at a 4-year comprehensive doctoral university with high medical research activity, where she had a high percentage of Chinese-American colleagues. She mentioned that some people got along better than with their own ethnicity due to a similar cultural background. Joy was more inclined to describe her personality compared to her colleagues’ personalities based on her social interaction with them:

I thought I was generally a more reserved person so I was not very good at talking to different people especially those who I didn’t know very well. I was comfortable with people I was familiar with but not like say everybody I could talk to. So I thought that it was one of the basic skills you should assume if you were taking leadership.

Bill, as a director, said he was well known for his outspokenness among his colleagues. Bill said that he was not seen as a traditional Chinese since usually the image of Chinese was very quiet and did not speak up or get involved in anything. Bill still preferred to do more research with his students instead of further pursuing the senior-level administrative positions.

Bill also loved sports, and it was very easy for him to socially interact with his colleagues because of it. Max was proud of where he came from, who he was in terms of his cultural identity. Similar as Bill, because of genuine interests in sports, he fit quite
well in American culture and interacted with his colleagues in social occasions. He did not think that his pride of having the Chinese root have affected his career aspirations. He said:

I didn’t see race or ethnicity to be an issue for academic career. In fact, I had spent much time traveling since I was a kid, living in and visiting different Asian countries I was very proud to have the Chinese root, and would like to pass on some of the traditions to my children.

Findings from interaction dimension suggested that personal preference played important roles when the participants chose their career paths. Cultural interaction had included language, social skills, and personality. Speaking of better interacting with others in the organization, participants were more concerned about fitting others’ cultural perspective with their own. That being said, participants preferred to follow their internal drive to choose their own career paths. The internal drive came from their personal preference and cultural roots.

**Situation dimension (place).** In this space, cultural situation dimension was analyzed to find how participants identified their career aspirations based on their unique situation. Participants believed that each circumstance and each relationship dictated the environment that they lived by. Their response to a situation may change based on what was happening in that moment and who was involved. Frank stated that the number of Asian Americans in these medical positions was quite large in hospitals and medical schools, but in terms of the filtering out to senior level leadership, it was relatively small.
He also admitted,

There was prejudice against Asians just like there was some prejudice against women, prejudice about African-Americans, there was definitely prejudice even in medicine where it was a fairly enlightened group. There was prejudice in the country, but then because you were a doctor, you knew, there was a lot of credibility that you had. Now I thought if I had an accent that really altered that. There was a lot more prejudice if you had an accent.

Speaking of cultural situation, Lily came to the U.S. for her college education. Lily always had the impression as a first-generation immigrant that she needed to work hard on this different cultural situation. She emphasized the difference between the two generations of immigrants when she was asked about situation dimension regarding cultural sensitivity. Lily said that the first-generation immigrants had some disadvantages and had to overcome many hurdles, however, second-generation immigrants probably were more open for administrative type of roles.

Shelly, as a second-generation immigrant, who was born and grew up in a small village on the West Coast, mentioned that Asians were shockingly under-represented in her science education field considering that Asian students tended to be higher performing in science, technology, engineering, and math. From her own experience as she grew up, she said:

It was hard as I thought growing up in a very Chinese-centric household in an Americanized community. So it was kind of like we were weird and there was everyone else, and so I thought it fostered a lot of poor social development.
Joy said that although half of her colleagues were Chinese in her department, they were all first-generation immigrants. Even at work, she occasionally spoke Chinese with her Chinese colleagues. Joy felt that her job security and career development were more dependent on the funding everyone could get, not focusing on different cultural identity. She explained:

I felt different in this department, because as you know soft money thing was on everybody’s mind, so if you were funded you felt like okay you were more like permanent, like member of the department. And you knew you should express more or something like that.

Cultural situation dimension demonstrated that different situation could alter the perspectives of participants’ career aspiration. Different generation of immigrants saw different opportunities and challenges regarding the relationship between cultural sensitivity and career aspiration.

Findings of Career Aspiration in Regard to Family Influence

**Continuity dimension (past/present/future).** In this space, continuity dimension was demonstrated to find how family influence affected participants’ career aspirations. Looking at past experience from parents, comparing to present family members and future expectations from parents, spouse, and children, the participants had their own opinion on the development of career aspirations. The findings from this dimension indicated there was unspoken expectation from participants’ parents for them to attain a college degree. Regarding parents’ education level, four parents held bachelor’s degrees; one parent had a master’s degree, and two other parents had doctoral degrees. Bill grew up in a very academic family. His parents both were famous scientists and worked in a
well-known university in China. Bill thought his mother was more successful in the science field than his father since his father eventually moved up to a senior-level administrative leadership position. However, his parents were both well respected by their students. He recalled:

My father got into other things so he really didn’t do a lot of research later in his career. But anyway so what happened was that, but I thought he was extraordinary person… So I thought in a way it was really how important that we would be to the next generation.

Shelly grew up in a very traditional Chinese family on west coast as a second-generation immigrant. Speaking of parents’ influence, her father holds a PhD degree and her mother has a master’s degree. Shelly had a hard time dealing with her family, especially her mother. Shelly described her relationship with her mother when she decided to go to medical school:

So I’d say my mother was the type of person who would say that you didn’t go to medical school and marry a doctor. Women should not publicly hold positions of power, women were subservient to their men in public and only in private should she control the money and the household, but in public she should always be one step behind her husband, blah, blah, blah. She used to get on my case for being so, I was very boisterous and very sort of out there and open and it drove her crazy.

Shelly gave another example of her mother’s reaction when she spoke of her current career path, she said:
I had to say; my mom recently said to me, weren’t you a professor yet? She was like you had been in this position for 8 years now, and why weren’t you a full professor yet? Because I was not a tenure track, and I was like because I didn’t want to be right now, you know, I was not ready for it and I didn’t know if I wanted to. Well, I just want to know why? She wasn’t pressuring me but I was kind of like, were you serious?

Similar to Shelly, David did not listen to his father when he was trying to make his career decision. However, he regretted that he did not follow his father’s suggestion. Explaining his career choice and development, David recalled his father, who was a college professor in China, he said:

My parents always wanted me back (China). I remembered my father told me when parents were still here you shouldn’t stay too far away. I never listened to him until he was very sick and so I realized how difficult it would be when you had to travel back and that was always a generation way we never listened to our parents.

Different from Shelly and David by not listening to their parents’ suggestion, as family influence, Lily said that she thought her mother was correct to work in the education field. Lily’s mother worked in academia and liked academia. Her mother had always said to her that the academic jobs are great. Lily felt much happier since she quit her previous job in the industrial field and moved to higher education field and became an educator.
As a second-generation immigrant who grew up in the Midwest, Frank also spoke of his parents’ influence. His parents both held doctoral degrees and were professors in a well-known university in Taiwan. Frank said:

I knew my parents didn’t train me or raise me to say we wanted you to be in charge, you know, it was more we want you to be as good as you can be at what you do and be the best in your field.

Besides parents’ influence, participants also emphasized their own family, spouses, and children at home. Frank also said that he would be afraid anything else he took on would be taking him away from his family more than it already was. Max talked to his family before making the decision to take on the department chair position. He also talked about the impact of the department chair position to his family:

I thought that it was important to talk to my family because I expected to have more responsibilities and will be busier. My wife was very supportive, which made me feel more comfortable taking on the position.

Joy, who had worked as an assistant professor for six years, was expecting her new baby this year. She said that her husband would appreciate it that she would have more time when the baby came, and this faculty job gave her lots of flexibility.
**Interaction dimension (personal & social).** In this space, interaction dimension was used to find how family influence made an impact on participants’ personal preference on career aspiration and social involvement in their career paths. The findings from this interaction dimension suggested how participants interacted with their family in a socio-cultural system regarding their career aspirations. Speaking of family values, Bill said:

I always heard my father said that you need to be a good person first; good caring person and that was number one. Anything else was really nothing in comparison to this and you cared about your family, you cared about other people and the second thing I always said, well, you need to be honest...And the third thing I would say was you really need to do the best you can. I meant you didn’t have to be the best but you need to do the best that you can, not necessarily by other people’s standards.

Frank lived with his wife and their children. As a second-generation immigrant who grew up in the Midwest, Frank had a lot to share, he mentioned:

Probably you knew if you had the subtle ways to exert your will on your children. I thought there was a way to push that a little bit more. I definitely had people I went to medical school with who you could almost predict that they were going to be a chairman of the department some day because you could see that type of drive from their family influence.

Lily came to U.S. when she completed her high school in China. She said that all her cousins held American doctoral degrees. She had no choice but studied hard to attain her doctoral degree. When asked how she wanted to pursue her future career, Lily
explained that one of reasons she choose was due to her self-control personality, and the other was from family. Lily’s husband was very busy at daily work. Lily wanted to spend more time taking good care of her kids when they were growing up. She said:

I liked things that I can control. I didn’t like chaos, I didn’t like working with things that I had little control over and things that were not predictable. Part of the reason I left industry was because it was chaos. I couldn’t predict what I need to do, what I was going to do in two months. I liked academia, the best part of academia was the planning, you knew what you were supposed to do in terms of teaching in the year, you already knew, and next semester what I was going to teach. I loved that because then you could plan other things, plan for the unexpected things in life, right? So if you had to do administrative work there was always more unexpected things can happen, right, then you manage people their expecting, you had to count on other people and all those things. Right now I just wanted stability, I wanted predictability in my workplace because I had kids at home, a lot of unpredictable things already, but for work I wanted predictability.

Lily’s family expectation as a busy working mum who would like to spend more time with her kids, she chose to stay in the academic field. David had his father who worked in the education field for years and set a good example for him. David had worked in this current position for more than five years and he wanted to set a good example for his children as well.

Speaking of spouse and children as family influence, Max, as a department chair, commented:
We (my wife and I) both agreed that I could contribute significantly to my department, allowing myself to also grow in such environment. As expected, my chair position did turn out to be extremely busy, and my time at home became more limited. Fortunately, faculty job is inherently flexible and I try my best to work from home.

**Situation dimension (place).** In this space, situation dimension was demonstrated to find how family influence and expectation played a role when participants decided to change their careers based on location and family members’ issues. The findings from this situation dimension indicated that all seven participants had experienced either moving from another country to this country or moving out of the area from where their parents lived. The family influence and expectations varied from their parents mostly to their own family. Seven participants all agreed that they preferred the flexibility they had and more valuable time with their family. The flexibility was also mutual expectation from participants themselves and their current family. Joy said that for faculty positions her bosses did not evaluate her for how long she stayed there, but they evaluated her by how much work she had done and the work she could sometimes do at home. Lily and her husband both worked in the industrial field before she switched into the higher education field. Lily mentioned why she decided to leave her previous industrial field, she said:

> We (my husband and I) were both in those high stress jobs and something had to be done because otherwise we were just, I meant the family would fall apart. So I talked to him, he was not willing to quit, so I said okay I would see if I could find something alternative. So this was the perfect solution.
Speaking of family influence regarding the situational changes, Bill mentioned that he was offered to be a chief in another university a few years ago; he declined it because his kid was entering another school. Bill did not want to affect his kid’s school choice because of his career development. Similar to Bill’s family influence on personal career choice, David agreed that it was very difficult to balance career and family. Frank, as a program director, totally agreed that family is more important when he made any career decision. He said:

I thought we looked at it what would be the overall best for the family, you knew, if it was a financial step up that was sometimes an option, if it would give me more time with my children at home or family home, that might be worth it. Shelly moved out of the area, from the West Coast, where her parents lived after she graduated. When was asked how the career choice could be changed based on different family influence and expectation, Shelly stated:

When I first arrived here at the time, I was looking for a stable job, so it was the classic second job scenario where I needed to find a job and I had just had my second child, so I was not interested in doing a post doc… I wasn’t actively looking for a faculty position like this. I wanted to work with my current boss somehow and she was gracious enough to open this position for me and I kind of walked into it.

Multi-dimensional Findings of Career Aspiration

As discussed, a three-dimensional space approach was used to find how participants’ career aspiration related to organizational socialization, cultural sensitivity, and family influence. Some interviews and conversations between researcher and
participants involved several dimensions or aspects. Multidimensional findings indicated that participants’ career aspiration was involved in more than one dimension and one factor. Participants reflected these facets on organizational socialization, cultural sensitivity and family influence at the same time. For example, participants had mentioned lifestyle, community involvement, policy, and financial and social status. These reviews were intertwined in the three-dimensional space. Lifestyle was treated as reflecting on cultural background, also influenced by participants’ grow-up experience with their parents. Community involvement implied that organizational socialization was intertwined with cultural sensitivity and family influence. Policy was not only related to organizational but also to cultural understanding. Financial and social status showed the connection between cultural sensitivity and family influence. More details were as follows.

**Lifestyle.** Lifestyle was mentioned by one of the participants when the researcher was asking the balance between personal life and career development. Most participants agreed that they prefer more flexible time with their family when they were choosing career paths, which were more related to family expectation and cultural values. Some participants also mentioned that they loved sports not just because of interaction with their colleagues, but the personal preference as their lifestyle. For example, Lily, who was from an industrial field as a senior manager before she joined a 4-year doctoral and graduate college, shared her comments based on her life style regarding her current career choice:

I thought my mom probably maybe we were related in that way was she also felt as you got older just you realized the title was not really that important. It was
really, I didn’t know, this sounded really bad, but as we aged we just, health was number one. If you had healthy lifestyle, exercise, you knew, did physical activities, outdoors; I did skiing a lot, which made me feel good. So other title about work, as long as I thought I was doing productive work that I was satisfied.

Community involvement. Speaking of the difference between Chinese and American faculty members on career aspiration and development in higher education institutions, as a director, Bill was more concerned about the shortcomings of some Chinese Americans, which were more related to community involvement. Bill suggested that Chinese faculty members should get more involved in bigger picture and global micro influx. Bill mentioned that Chinese faculty members did have good traits such as hardworking and a never-give-up type of mentality from the Chinese side, and he thought that was important. Bill further suggested:

One thing was remembering, I already said, I did hope that the Chinese-American faculty had a bigger impact beyond their own work, their own immediate inference. I did think that this both in terms of really made some more positive, or some broader positive impact on higher education but also I did think it was also really an inference other people’s view of Chinese-Americans.
**Policy.** Compared to organizational socialization, some other multi-dimensional findings were discovered in some institutions. For instance, an unspoken policy related to organizational hiring was brought up by some participants. This was related to ethnicity identity, socialization and cultural sensitivity. For instance, Max spoke about the promotion of minority hiring in academia:

> In principle, it was great to promote minority hiring, providing opportunity for those who might have a disadvantage. However, in practice, guidelines could be misinterpreted. For example, while we provided the support environment for Native-American, African-American, and Latino-American, shouldn’t we also concern about supporting the faculty from Poland or Egypt?

**Financial and social status.** Financial and social status got involved among organization, cultural sensitivity and family influence. It was discussed by some participants during the interview. For instance, some participants didn’t think it would be worth it to pursue a senior-level administrative position if that role would not even bring up more financial benefits. Frank did not think financial benefits were the major reason for him to choose his career paths. Bill even said “It was not about money”. Lily mentioned when she was asked regarding the topic,

> I thought right now I had found my niche; I was happy where it was. I didn’t want to shake the boat for the next five years, I just wanted to take it easy, balance work and life and enjoy life a little and that was my plan. I would do some useful research that could make me marketable. My research also can make better contribution to the institution. I would not put myself in those positions where I got so stressed out to have the financial benefit.
David said that he did see the differences regarding the financial status in his department among faculty members. Furthermore, he thought that the culture and people’s behaviors were highly dependent on their financial stability. And the financial and social status determined the cultural communication.

**Summary**

This chapter focused on the findings of seven participants’ career aspirations as Chinese-American faculty members in the higher education institutions. The findings were identified in a three-dimensional space in regard to organizational socialization, cultural sensitivity, and family influence. The use of a three-dimensional space approach helped the researcher obtain rich information and narrative stories of each participant. The Chinese-American faculty members interviewed had been attempting to adjust to organizational socialization, cultural value, and family challenges and met the expectations of their own family, culture, and organization. Findings were summarized in the following paragraphs.

First, according to literature review and this study’s interviews, Chinese-Americans were underrepresented in senior-level leadership positions in higher education institutions. However, the underrepresentation did not have a significant influence on participants’ career aspiration in higher education institutions.

Second, organizational socialization suggested that participants would get organizational training and support if they aspired to a higher-level leadership position, however, it was participants’ personal preference to remain in their current roles for career choice. Participants stated they “prefer to be the best professor and/or researcher
in the academic field compared to moving up to a senior-level administrative position” in higher education institutions.

Third, cultural sensitivity including different immigrant generation and cultural characteristics such as age, language and communication skills have affected participants’ career aspiration from the past, present and future based on career opportunities and challenges. Chinese-American faculty members’ career aspiration has been affected by being in different immigrant generations, parents’ background influence on their career choice and their own grow-up cultural experiences.

Fourth, family influence suggested that an unspoken family expectation played important roles in participants’ education. It was explicit that parents asked participants to do the best in their own career field. Participants’ family social status and expectation from current family members also influenced their career aspiration when they were making career choices. All participants have young children at home so they prefer to have the flexibility of the faculty work to have more time with family Participants traced back and looked forward to their family influence on their career aspirations.

Last, multidimensional findings such as lifestyle, policy, community involvement, social status from the organization, culture and family demonstrated that participants should rethink their career aspirations regarding the direction and development of their career paths whether they want to move up to the senior level leadership positions. New trend of lifestyle, organizational policy settings, community interaction, social and finance status have intertwined with Chinese-American faculty members’ cultural and family influence. How to balance personal preference and all these aspects are still considerations of Chinese-American faculty members in higher education institutions.
Chapter 5 Discussion

Introduction

This chapter is divided into five sections. Section one provides a general introduction of the study. Section two provides a discussion of the implications of the findings. The findings are presented based on the three-dimensional analysis of organization socialization, cultural sensitivity, and family influence. Section three discusses the limitations of the study and identifies opportunities for future research. Section four presents recommendations based on an analysis of the research findings and the literature review. Section five provides conclusions based on an analysis of the research literature review and how the findings of this study examine the implications of ethnicity and career development of Chinese-American faculty members in higher education institutions.

According to the U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (2009), among all employees in degree-granting institutions in the United States, 5% of total were Asian/Pacific Islander. About 75% of all faculty members and 79% of all executive, administrative, and managerial personnel were White; Asians made up 6% of all faculty members and 3% of all executive, administrative, and managerial personnel. Hispanics made up 4% of all faculty members and 5% of all executive, administrative, and managerial personnel. Blacks made up 6% of all faculty members and 10% of all executive, administrative, and managerial personnel. Compared to other ethnicities, Asian Americans are underrepresented in senior-level leadership positions. A review of the literature indicated that vital information about career aspirations of
Asians, especially Chinese-American faculty members, towards senior-level leadership positions is lacking. Given the gaps in leadership research of the Chinese-American population in higher education, the purpose of the study is to gain a greater understanding of the career aspirations of Chinese-American faculty members and what influences their college and university career path and development.

Most research reviews of career aspiration are focused on certain fields within higher education, but not on particular faculty members/academics. Betts, Urias, and Betts (2009) stated that the pipeline to administrative leadership at four-year private colleges was primarily comprised of three branches: academic affairs, administrative or business services, and student affairs. Faculty members from academic affairs compose the major pipeline to senior-level leadership positions.

This study is designed to understand and identify the career aspirations of Chinese-American faculty members at selected New York State institutions of higher education and the factors that influence their career aspirations. Vocational research identified a number of factors, including culture, race, ethnicity, and gender that may be related to whether and how families influence individual career development (Fouad & Kantamneni, 2008; Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 1994, 2000; Lent et al., 2003, 2005). Given the gaps in leadership research of the Chinese-American population in higher education, the purpose of the study is to gain a greater understanding of the career aspirations of Chinese-American faculty members. Three research questions are developed as follows:

1. What are the career aspirations of Chinese-American faculty members at selected higher education institutions in New York State?
2. Do Chinese-American faculty members aspire to leadership in senior-level administrative positions at selected higher education institutions in New York State?

3. Do organizational socialization, cultural sensitivity, and family influence impact the development of career aspirations of Chinese-American faculty members at selected higher education institutions in New York State? If so, how?

The current study is guided by Lent, Brown and Hackett’s (2000) Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT). The SCCT was developed by Robert W. Lent, Steven D. Brown, and Gail Hackett first in 1994, and expanded upon in 2000. The SCCT hypothesizes that personal, contextual, and social cognitive factors influenced interest formation of career goals and that performance and background contextual variables influenced career aspiration. The SCCT theory took Bandura’s general social cognitive theory and connects it to career-related choices, plans, performance behaviors, and explorations (Lapan, 2004). It examined “how career and academic interests mature, how career choices were developed, and how these choices were turned into action” (Gibbons & Shoffner, 2004).

In order to gain a greater understanding of Chinese-American faculty members’ career aspiration, a qualitative, narrative study with three-dimensional space approach is used in the research. Three-dimensional space approach by Clandinin and Connelly (2000) involved analyzing the data for three elements: interaction (personal and social), continuity (past, present, and future), and situation (physical places or the storyteller’s places). Because many qualitative methodologies utilize individual interviews or focus groups as an instrument based on different gender, ages and diverse ethnicities, the semi-structured interview is used in this narrative study. Seven qualified candidates are chosen
for interviews from three selected four-year and graduate colleges/universities in New York State. The researcher purposefully selects three four-year and graduate colleges/universities in New York State. These three colleges and universities are categorized and identified through the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System in New York State and identified based on the Carnegie Classification. The selection is based on students’ enrollment; total full-time faculty size; Asian-American, full-time faculty size; and institution size and settings. The questionnaire of demographic background is used to obtain information and factors that may have affected the career aspirations of Chinese-American faculty members.

The narratives of seven Chinese-American faculty members were compared under each dimension within three-dimensional space in order to explore how organizational socialization, cultural sensitivity, and family influence affect participants’ review on their career aspirations as Chinese-American faculty members. Multi-dimensional analysis is also used in the analyzing process. The study had prevailed major findings. Several findings are as follows:

First, according to the literature review and this study’s interviews, Chinese-Americans are underrepresented in senior-level leadership positions in higher education institutions. However, the underrepresentation did not make significant influence on participants’ career aspiration in the higher education institutes.

Second, organizational socialization suggests that participants would get organizational training and support if they aspired to be higher-level leadership position, however, it is the participants’ personal preference towards career choice whether to choose a leadership position. Instead, participants stated they prefer “to be the best
professor and/or researcher in their academic field compared to moving up to a senior-level administrative position” in higher education institutions.

Third, cultural sensitivity including different immigrant generation and cultural characteristics such as age, language and communication skills have affected participants’ career aspiration from the past, present and future based on opportunities and challenges. Chinese-American faculty members’ career aspiration has been affected by being in different immigrant generations, parents’ background influence on their career choice and their own grow-up cultural experiences.

Forth, family influence suggests that unspoken family expectation plays important roles in participants’ education. It is explicit that parents ask for participants to do the best in their own career field. Participants’ current family status and expectation from current family members also influence their career aspiration when they are making career choices. All participants have young children at home so they prefer to have the flexibility of the faculty work to have more time with family. Participants trace back and look forward to their family influence on their career aspirations.

Last, multidimensional findings such as lifestyle, policy, community involvement, social status from the organization, culture and family demonstrated that participants should rethink their career aspirations regarding the direction and development of their career paths whether they want to move up to the senior level leadership positions. How to balance personal preference and family influence, cultural sensitivity and organizational socialization are still considerations of Chinese-American faculty members in higher education institutions.
Implications of the Findings

This research study explores the career aspirations of Chinese-American faculty members at selected four-year and graduate colleges and universities in New York State. Findings indicate that Chinese-American faculty members are more interested in collaborating with colleagues in the education/research field than aggressively pursuing senior-level leadership positions in the higher education institutions. Compared to becoming senior-level administrators, Chinese-American faculty members would rather be the best faculty in their own field. The influence from organization, culture, and family play an important role when Chinese-American faculty members make their career decisions.

Organizational socialization. Findings from organizational socialization suggested that participants would get organizational training and support if they aspired to be higher-level leadership position, however, participants’ personal preference and value determined their career aspiration. The participants prefer spend more time in teaching and do researching with colleagues. They believe that is their better contribution to the institution.

The study’s literature review identifies that organizational socialization is the process whereby an organization teaches an individual the knowledge and skills necessary to assume his or her organizational role (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). It involves teaching newcomers the values, behaviors, social knowledge, and necessary work place skills needed to successfully assume an organizational role and participate as an organizational member (Louis, 1980; Schein, 1968). The findings of this study suggest that Chinese-American faculty members perceive the career aspirations to senior-
level leadership positions as people’s personal choice. Participants believe that they make career choice based on their internal interest instead of being affected by the organization. They believe that their organizations will offer support and help if they would like to pursue this career advancement. The findings also identify that participants’ personality or personal characteristics played a role when they interact with their social group in the institution. From a broader perspective, however, the social group in the institution does not affect the participants’ career aspiration when they make their career decisions in the long term. The research literature review clearly identifies that career aspiration is one of the human internal factors, and its underlying values such as ethics, attitudes, internal needs motivation, and identity are what motivates people to choose or remain in a certain career, job, and lifestyle (Astin, 1984; Baruch, 2004; Powell & Butterfield, 2003). The findings confirm that Chinese-faculty members understand that Chinese-Americans are under-represented at senior-level leadership positions in higher education institutions; however, this doesn’t affect their career aspirations regarding career advancement.

This research study is guided by Lent, Brown and Hackett’s (2000) Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT). Social cognitive theory as it is applied to career choices and development, termed SCCT, hypothesizes that an individual's career choice processes and development do not occur in a social vacuum. The social environments changed people’s career decisions regarding the nature of working environment. The findings from the study indicate that Chinese-Americans hold different career aspirations as they move to the field of higher education from other industries. Financial conditions and socioeconomic status influence people’s career choices, too. These processes are
intimately and reciprocally connected to organizational contextual (environmental) variables and barriers, as well as cognitive person variables (e.g., self-efficacy and outcome expectations) and other personal characteristics such as ethnicity and gender (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 1994, 2000). The findings from the study confirm that Chinese-American faculty members’ career aspirations reflect mostly on how they strive to become the best faculty member including teaching and or research in the institution. Chinese-American faculty members feel more satisfied about themselves by pursuing the outcomes of being the best faculty in the next five years. They believe that they make more contribution to the students, the institution, and the community by being better faculty members.

**Cultural sensitivity.** Findings from cultural sensitivity including immigrant generations and cultural characteristics such as age, language and communication skills which affected participants’ career aspiration from the past, present and future based on opportunities and challenges. Chinese-American faculty members’ career aspiration has been affected by being in different immigrant generations, parents’ background influence on their career choice and their own grow-up cultural experiences.

Cultural sensitivity means that people are aware that cultural differences and similarities exist and have an effect on values, learning, and behavior (Stafford, Bowman, Eking, Hanna, & Lopoes-DeFede, 1997). The research literature review suggests that career aspiration is influenced by all other external factors such as ethnicity, culture, and family of participants (Gibbons & Shoffner, 2004; Lapan, 2004). The findings from the study indicate that culture has a complicated influence on Chinese-American faculty members not only by gender, but also by generations and regions in U.S. as well. Leong
et al. (2010) stated that Asian Americans who have grown up in a predominantly European American environment may be more acculturated as a result of their frequent contact with the dominant culture. For example, the second-generation Chinese-American faculty members mostly focus on regional cultural influence since they were either born in or moved to the U.S. before they were five years old. The first-generation Chinese-American faculty members are mostly concerned with their social network, language skills, communication, and cultural background. Based on differences between genders, discussions inclined males to topics of sports and females to topics of family activities. Males thought the participating in conversations about sports activity helped them connect well with their colleagues socially; females were more focused on children. Both female and male Chinese-American faculty members agreed that culture does play an important role in their career aspiration.

According to the research literature review, the cultural formulation approach (CFA) framework does not directly address salient issues, such as the barriers and stigma associated with help-seeking behaviors across cultures, nor does it provide solutions to remedy the current challenge of making resources available and accessible (Heppner & Fu, 2010; Jorgensen, Boer, & Laugen, 2006). This narrative study identifies cultural challenges that Chinese-American faculty members face when they make their career decisions. Challenges are from background of family and organizational cultural, communication, under-representation, and acknowledgement as minority. Language skills, personal preference, lifestyle, and cultural interaction in the organization are also the factors that influence Chinese-American faculty members’ career aspirations.
**Family influence.** Findings from family influence suggest that unspoken family expectation plays an important role in participants’ education choices regarding careers. It is explicit that parents ask for participants to do the best in their own career field. Participants’ current family status and expectations from current family members also influence their career aspiration when they are making career choices. Participants trace back and look forward to their family influence on their career aspirations.

According to the conceptual framework of this study, Powell and Butterfield (2003) explained that career aspirations refer to individuals’ desires for future employment. Their theory is supported with Bandura’s Social Learning Theory on outcome expectations motivating an individual to pursue long-term goals. Findings from this study demonstrate that family expectation influenced all seven participants’ educational and career preparation from past to current situations. Most participants mention that their parents expected them to be the best in their field. Some parents’ working experiences in higher education have impacted participants’ career aspirations. Asian cultures value family. Hierarchy is imperative and the elderly are valued for their wisdom and experience (Lee & Lee, 2001). Based on findings from first- and second-generation immigrants in this study, hierarchy from elder family members plays more explicit roles in the first-generation immigrant family than the second-generation immigrant family. One elder first-generation participant shows his regrets that he did not follow his father’s suggestion when he made his career choice; however, another second-generation younger participant thought her real life did not start until she moved out from her parents’ house and entered college.
As this research literature review demonstrates, Asian and Hispanic families are more collective than individualistic, and the family or group takes precedence over the individual (Gordon, 2000). All participants in this study agreed that they always consult with their spouse before they make any career decisions. Since all participants have children at home, they also put preference on children’s education and a career decision which would be the best choice for their children.

Another aspect of the literature review indicates that the family of origin influences career development in a number of expected ways, such as providing role modeling and emotional support (Gomez, Fassinger, Prosser, Cooke, Mejia, & Luna, 2001; Whiston & Keller, 2004). Compared to other ethnicity female groups, which felt constrained and conflicted when forced to choose between their families and career opportunities, Chinese-American female faculty members do not feel constrained and conflicted when they make their career decisions. More interestingly, Chinese-American female faculty members are willing to spend time with family and children and enjoy the flexibility they have in higher education institutions. Multidimensional findings indicated that participants’ career aspiration involved more than one dimension and one factor. Participants reflected these facets on organizational socialization, cultural sensitivity and family influence at same time. Multidimensional findings such as lifestyle, policy, community involvement, and social status from organization, culture and family have made participants rethink their career aspirations regarding the direction and development of their career paths.

**Implications from three-dimensional findings.** Creswell (2007) stated that narrative researchers situate individual stories within participants’ personal experiences
(their jobs, their homes), their culture (racial or ethnic), and their historical contexts (time and place). This narrative study of Chinese-American faculty members has analyzed their personal experiences regarding their career choice, family status, and cultural experience as an ethnic group in the Western-dominated cultural environment. Three-dimensional space approach is used to analyze Chinese-American faculty members’ career aspiration development.

Clandinin and Connelly (2000) divided three dimensions as three elements: interaction (personal and social), continuity (past, present, and future), and situation (physical places or the storyteller’s places). The findings of this study have implicated that interaction and continuity dimensions have more influences on participants’ career aspiration development. Chinese-American faculty members value interaction with colleagues both personal and social involvement. However, it is difficult for them to attain social engagement with a broader community based on limited network in the society. This may create barriers for Chinese-American faculty members to have more aggressive career aspiration towards achieving senior-level leadership positions. As they perceive, the senior-level leadership positions involve more communication skills and social networks. As for the continuity dimension, Chinese-American faculty members focus on the past, present experiences with their family, culture, and the connections in between. That being said, parents’ expectations and grow-up cultural experiences have shaped Chinese-American faculty members’ career aspiration in a historical context. They seek for connection among past, present, and future career development in a less aggressive way. The implications of the findings have revealed that balancing career development with family and organization is more important for this ethnic group. That
might be why they prefer to be the best faculty instead of moving up to senior-level leadership positions. They see the procession of moving up as creating more conflicts between themselves and the family or organizational environment based on more sacrifice with such things as timing, lifestyle changing, and social skills building.

**Implications for senior-level leaders.** Findings from the study have implied that Chinese-American faculty members’ career aspirations have been impacted by organizational socialization, cultural sensitivity, and family influence. The implications are very important for senior-level leaders in the higher education institutions to take an active role in supporting Chinese-American faculty members in their career development. As the literature review and participants’ comments indicated, the under-representation of Chinese Americans has existed in the past. Findings of this study significantly reveal that selected Chinese-American faculty members did not treat the under-representation as moving-up barriers when their career path developed. Participants have been experiencing opportunities and challenges as they move forward to their career goals based on their personal preference or leadership skills; for example, communication and network. For senior level leaders, some recommendations should be considered from these implications:

First, a professional survey of career aspiration should be used and conducted by all faculty members in the institution. The results of the survey will help senior-level leaders understand what Chinese-American faculty members’ career aspirations are in the institution. The survey also can be used to analyze what the challenges and opportunities are that they have been experiencing in the past and present organizations during their career development.
Second, an intervention plan should be developed to focus on stimulating and building Chinese-American faculty members’ self-efficacy for those who aspire to be at senior-level leadership positions. Some career motivation workshops and leadership skill set building programs should be conducted especially by successful Asian leaders. This could be effective to improve the self-efficacy of faculty members who do not think they have enough leadership skill sets to advance their career aspirations.

Third, an institutional teaching or research program should be built for those who prefer to pursue their career development in the teaching and research fields. This will help this ethnicity group understand that they will have organizational support if they would like to move up to higher levels in the teaching or research field. These types of programs can assist senior-level leaders build connection between different ethnicity groups with the major dominant group in the institution.

Last, leaders at senior-level positions need to understand that the career aspirations of Chinese-American faculty members are mostly related to cultural background. Based on this study, different immigrant generations may have different opinions regarding the career development. Senior-level leaders should be aware of the cultural differences and sensitivity among the different groups. Specific advice and encouragement from senior-level leaders may encourage Chinese-American faculty members in different immigrant generations to aspire to their career achievement in different directions.

Limitations of the Study

This study is conducted in a narrative analysis by using the instrument of interviews. The interviews are completed by the researcher and individual Chinese-
American faculty members from selected colleges and universities in New York State. Some limitations of the study are listed as follows

First, as a first-generation Chinese-American faculty member, the researcher may have some limitation to understand the second-generation faculty members’ cultural background. However, the educational background of participants gave similar cultural experiences which the researcher has gone.

Second, this research literature reviews mostly focused on Asian-Americans instead of Chinese-American faculty members as a whole group. There was little specific information in the literature focusing on career aspiration of Chinese-American faculty members in higher education institutions.

Finally, this study included seven Chinese-American faculty members as participants from three selected colleges and universities based on Carnegie Classification. The seven Chinese-American members were conveniently selected based upon their willingness for participation. The education level of participants’ parents were contingent upon all college level or above. The expectation on participants’ education and career choice from family may be higher than other families. This may have created limitation based on a highly educated parental sample of this study regarding family influence on participants’ career aspiration.

Recommendations for Future Research

Depending upon the goal of the research inquiry, future research could continue to concentrate on specific disciplines and include study participants from the same faculty status of college or university. Additional research with a larger sample of Chinese-American faculty members from a broader geographic area could be considered. A
comparative study might be comparing Chinese-American faculty members’ career
aspiration with other Asian-American faculty members, such as Japanese or Filipino.

This study demonstrates that Chinese-American faculty members’ career
aspirations are affected by organizational socialization, cultural sensitivity, and family
influence. Therefore, future research should look into the stability of career aspirations
over time; for example, if the structure of family changes or cultural communications are
improved, how career aspirations change accordingly. Also this study states that most
participants’ parents have advanced degrees, which significantly influenced Chinese-
American faculty members’ career aspiration. Future research could focus on how
different level of parents’ educational background affects family members’ career
aspiration.

This study identifies that age, gender, family status and, immigrant generations
have implications on Chinese-American faculty members’ career aspirations. Further
study should examine the association among gender, generation, and the personal,
organizational, socioeconomic, and professional factors with career aspirations in order to
comprehend the formation of individual career aspirations.

This study also demonstrates implications from three-dimensional findings for
senior-level leaders in the higher education institutions. Further study could focus on the
development of leadership motivation or a mentor program for Chinese-American faculty
members in higher education institutions. Also, a study focusing on cultural exploration
of leadership development for this specific ethnic group might help senior-level leaders to
understand more regarding Chinese-American faculty members’ career aspirations.
Summary and Conclusions

In this study, career aspirations refer to the predictors of senior-level career aspirations (i.e., aspirations to a higher level within a specific field) and the extent to which people aspire to leadership or advanced positions within their chosen occupation (Litzky & Greenhaus, 2007; Nauta, Epperson & Kahn, 1998). Neilson and Suyemoto (2009) state that since an increasing number of racial/ethnic minorities have assumed leadership positions in higher education, research scholars need to focus more attention on the experiences and trajectories of administrators of color. Specifically, the population of Asian-American faculty members has not received enough attention from researchers. According to the U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (2009), among all employees in degree-granting institutions in the United States, 5% of the total was Asian/Pacific Islander. About 75% of all faculty members and 79% of all executive, administrative, and managerial personnel were White; Asians made up 6% of all faculty members and 3% of all executive, administrative, and managerial personnel. Compared to other ethnicities, Asian Americans are underrepresented in senior-level leadership positions.

This study is guided by Lent, Brown and Hackett’s (2000) Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT). Lent et al.’s structure of SCCT on career development was primarily built on the social cognitive theory developed by Albert Bandura in 1986. Bandura theorized that self-efficacy expectations and outcome expectations worked together to motivate an individual to pursue long-term goals. The SCCT theory takes Bandura’s general social cognitive theory and connects it to career-related choices, plans, performance behaviors, and explorations (Lapan, 2004).
A qualitative, narrative study with three-dimensional space approach is used in this study to explore career aspirations of Chinese-American faculty members at selected four-year and graduate colleges and universities in New York State. Seven qualified participants who are from different disciplines, ranks, and tenured or non-tenured positions were chosen from three selected colleges and universities in New York State. The three-dimensional space is composed of three elements: interaction (personal and social); continuity (past, present, and future); and situation (place). The researcher uses three dimensions to find how participants’ career aspirations are impacted by organizational socialization, cultural sensitivity, and family influence. Participants’ background questionnaires and semi-structured interviews were used to collect data.

Research questions have been answered through the entire study. This study demonstrates the similarities among Chinese-American faculty members’ career aspirations. As faculty members in higher education institutions, Chinese Americans prefer to be the best faculty in teaching or research in their field compared to pursuing a senior-level administrative position. Moreover, the study indicates that organizational socialization, cultural sensitivity, and family influence impact Chinese-American faculty members’ career aspirations and their career choices. Further analyses reveal that overall career aspirations are significantly influenced by internal factors, such as personal preference, family satisfaction, and cultural values. The study demonstrates that the under-representation of Asian Americans in the senior level leadership positions did not make a significant influence on Chinese-American faculty members’ career aspiration. The Chinese-American faculty members strongly believe in their ability to control the direction of their career development.
References


Appendix A

Official Letter of Invitation to Participate

Study Title: Exploring Career Aspirations of Chinese-American Faculty Members in Colleges and Universities in New York State

Date

Address

Dear ___:

My name is Yang Zhao. I am a doctoral candidate in the Ed.D. program in Executive Leadership at St. John Fisher College, Rochester, NY. I am also currently employed as an International Student Academic Advisor and Adjunct Faculty at Keuka College, Keuka Park, NY.

As my dissertation research, I am exploring career aspirations of Chinese-American faculty members in selected colleges and universities in New York State. I am researching the influence of organizational environment, culture, family, and other factors on Chinese-Americans regarding their career aspiration as faculty members in higher education institutions.

I am conducting this research study as part of the requirements of my doctoral degree in Education, and I would like to invite you to participate. The participation in the study is voluntary. Involvement in the study would entail: (a) Completion of a demographic background questionnaire (5-10 minutes); (b) Participation in a sixty- to ninety-minute interview.

The questionnaire will need to be sent back via e-mail prior to the interview. The interview will require a sixty- to ninety-minute block of uninterrupted time with you at a
mutually agreed upon time and place. The interview will be audio taped so that I can accurately reflect on what is discussed. The tapes will be reviewed by the hired confidential agency that will transcribe and analyze them and by me. They will then be destroyed. If you feel uncomfortable answering some of the questions, you do not have to answer any questions that you do not wish to. Participation is confidential.

Your willingness to consider this invitation is greatly appreciated. As you may know, minimal research is focusing on the career aspirations of Chinese-American faculty members in higher education institutes. Your participation in this study will benefit research and aspiring Chinese-Americans in higher education as well as individuals who make hiring decisions in organizations.

Thank you for your consideration. For your convenience, I have enclosed a reply form indicating your willingness to participate in the study. If you would like to participate, please sign the attached form and return it to yz09115@sjfc.edu.

With kind regards,

Yang Zhao

Work e-mail: yzhao@keuka.edu

Student e-mail: yz09115@sjfc.edu

Enclosure: Reply Form for Participation
Date:

To: Yang Zhao, Researcher

From:

I have received and read your invitation to participate voluntarily in your dissertation study regarding Career Aspirations of Chinese-American Faculty Members at Selected Colleges and Universities in New York State.

My response is as follows:

_____ Yes, I will participate.

_____ No, I am unable to participate.
Appendix B

Informed Consent Form

St. John Fisher College

Title of study: Exploring Career Aspirations of Chinese-American Faculty Members at Selected Colleges and Universities in New York State

Name(s) of researcher(s): Yang Zhao

Faculty Supervisor: Dr. Mary Collins  Phone for further information: 585-385-8397

Purpose of study:

The purpose of this study is to explore the influence of organizational environment, culture, family, and other factors on Chinese-Americans regarding their career aspiration as faculty members in higher education institutes. The conduct of this study is expected to make an addition to career aspiration literature in higher education and contribute to cross-cultural research on Chinese-American faculty members.

Approval of study: This study has been reviewed and approved by the St. John Fisher College Institutional Review Board (IRB).

Place of study: at a mutually agreed upon time and place, Length of participation: 1-1.5 hours Interview

Risks and benefits: The expected risks and benefits of participation in this study are explained below:

This study has no risk of possible invasion of privacy. If you decide to participate voluntarily, you are free to decline any questions or to withdraw from the study at any
time. In that case, your information will not be used. Your participation in this study will benefit research on Chinese-Americans and add to the literature on aspiring Chinese-American faculty members in higher education.

**Method for protecting confidentiality/privacy:**

Participation is confidential. The results of the study may be published or presented at professional meetings, but your identity will not be revealed unless permission is granted to use your actual name. The digital recording will only be reviewed by the researcher and the hired confidential agency that will transcribe and analyze them; then they will be destroyed.

**Your rights:**  As a research participant, you have the right to:

1. Have the purpose of the study, and the expected risks and benefits fully explained to you before you choose to participate.
2. Withdraw from participation at any time without penalty.
3. Refuse to answer a particular question without penalty.
4. Be informed of appropriate alternative procedures or courses of treatment, if any, that might be advantageous to you.
5. Be informed of the results of the study.

I have read the above, received a copy of this form, and I agree to participate in the above-named study.

Print name (Participant)    Signature    Date

Print name (Investigator)   Signature    Date

If you have any further questions regarding this study, please contact the researcher listed above. If you experience emotional or physical discomfort due to participation in this study, please contact the Office of Academic Affairs at 385-8034 or the Wellness Center at 385-8280 for appropriate referrals.
Appendix C

Personal Background Questionnaire

Personal and Social (Interaction) Dimension:

Name: ________________________ Institution:___________________   Gender:_____

Birthplace (city/country):______________ Age: _____ Marital Status:___________

Faculty Status (tenure track/non-tenure track):__________________

Faculty Rank (assistant/associate/full professor):____________________

Academic discipline/Specialized in:____________________

Type of degrees completed with majors:

B.A./B.S._____________ College/Major____________ Date Attained_________

Masters_____________ College/Major____________ Date Attained_________

Doctorate_____________ College/Major____________ Date Attained_________

Place (Situation) Dimension:

What generation Asian-American are you?

_____ First Generation (born and raised outside the United States and immigrated at age 6 or older). If appropriate, what age did you immigrate to the U.S.? ________
Second Generation (immigrated at age 5 or younger or born in the United States)
Third Generation (parents are second generation)
Fourth Generation or higher generation

If you speak more than one language, what language do you mostly use at home?

What is the highest level of education your parents have completed?

What is your current family size? If appropriate, do you have kids and how old are they?

Past, Present and Future (Continuity) Dimension:

How long have you been employed at this institution?

How long have you been at your current faculty status?

Have you ever been at any higher-level management position before? If so, what are they?
Appendix D

Interview Questions

Past, Present and Future (Continuity) Dimension:

1. What attracted you to pursuing a faculty career?

2. Please describe how you came to your current positions and responsibilities.

3. As a Chinese-American faculty member, do you/did you aspire to leadership in higher-level positions in higher education institutions?
   3.1 If yes, please describe how you came to your current/former higher-level position role.
   3.2 If not, please describe why you would not like to pursue higher-level position role.

4. Please identify your career aspirations in the next three to five years?

5. What factors have affected you to develop your career aspiration?

Place (Situation) Dimension:

6. Career aspirations in regard to organizations where you work/worked:
   6.1 Do/Did the organizations where you work/worked prepare you for the requisite values, behaviors, social knowledge, and work place skills needed to
successfully assume an organizational role and participate as an organizational
member? If so, how?

6.2 Do you think you can get organizational support/help when you decide to
pursue higher-level positions in your organization? If yes, please describe how
your organization will support you. If not, please describe if this will affect
your career decision-making.

6.3 Does your organization have any Chinese-American higher-level
administrators? Have you planned or prepared yourself for higher-level
administrative positions in your organization? Please explain.

6.4 Do you think Chinese-American faculty members are under-represented at
senior-level positions in your organization? If yes/no, does this under-
representation affect your career aspirations related to pursuing a higher-level
position in your organization?

**Personal and Social (Interaction) Dimension:**

7. Career aspirations in regard to cultural values which your demographic/ethnic
background has been combined:

7.1 Do you think these cultural differences and similarities influenced your career
aspiration to higher-level administrative positions? If yes/not, why?

7.2 How do you think your combined cultural backgrounds impact your decision
making regarding your career path?
7.3 Have you experienced any language or communication barriers? Do you think this will affect your career aspirations to higher-level administrative positions?

7.4 How have cultural differences and similarities inherent in your organization impacted your decisions and your career development?

8. Career aspirations in regard to family influences:

8.1 Have you experienced family support in your career path? Please explain.

8.2 Have your family members influenced your career decision making? If yes, how do/did they influence you?

8.3 Do family expectations influence your career aspiration to higher-level administrative positions? If yes, how? If not, why?

8.4 How do you think family values/beliefs influence your career aspiration to higher-level administrative positions?

9. As an aspiring Chinese-American faculty member, do any other salient impacts or extenuating circumstances, impact your career aspirations and/or your career advancement? If so, please describe.