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PARENTAL EXPECTATIONS OF CHINESE IMMIGRANTS:
A FOLK THEORY ABOUT CHILDREN’S SCHOOL ACHIEVEMENT

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A dissertation submitted to
the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies
in partial fulfillment of requirements for
the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Education

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0-612-67967-5
To my parents

For their great expectations
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

It has been a long journey, from there to here. Before sharing my dissertation, I wish to acknowledge the contribution of the following individuals I have been fortunately known in the course of my four-year doctoral work.

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ABSTRACT

Guided by the sociocultural approach (Wertsch, 1998; Wertsch, Del Rio & Alvarez, 1995), the study explores the relationship between parental expectations of the Chinese immigrants and their children's school achievement by pursuing three objectives: (a) to depict how immigrant Chinese parents and children "do things on the basis of their beliefs and desires, striving for goals, meeting obstacles which they best or which best them" (Bruner, 1990, p.43); (b) to obtain a better understanding of how immigrant Chinese parental expectations are constructed in a given sociocultural and historical context; and (c) to examine the affordances and constraints of immigrant Chinese parental expectations on their children's school achievement.

With a qualitative grounded theory methodology (Strauss & Corbin, 1990), multiple data collection methods (open-ended interviews, researcher's journal, and document review) and multiple sources of data (parents, children, and other Chinese informants) were employed to ensure research trustworthiness. Seven recent immigrant Chinese families were primary participants in the study. The convergence and divergence of the accounts of the participants and other informants put forward an immigrant Chinese folk theory. The findings comprise four sections: (a) accounts of the parents; (b) accounts of the children; (c) visible minority experiences; and (d) role of parental expectations. Based on their cultural beliefs and life experiences, the parents mainly addressed their expectations in five areas, namely school achievement, career aspirations, integration of two cultures, moral character, and leadership role. The children expressed their perceptions of parental expectations, their anxious thoughts and feelings, and their self-expectations. All participants shared their thoughts on racial discrimination, visible minority ideology, and dreams of prosperity. Both parents and children
affirmed that parental expectations fostered goal orientation, mastery learning experiences, internal control beliefs, and study habits.

The study has demonstrated that the relationship between parental expectations of the Chinese immigrants and their children's school achievement is significantly shaped by the dynamic and complex interplay of multiple forces such as indigenous cultural expectations, personal life experiences, and the challenges of acculturation. High parental expectations and children's striving for excellence are rooted in Chinese cultural heritage and are situationally motivated and historically transformed in different ways in response to the demands of the Canadian sociocultural context.

By giving voice to this fastest-growing yet under-researched largest visible minority group in Canada, the study makes educational experiences of the Chinese immigrants intelligible to the general public as well as to policy makers. It lends insights to the importance and necessity of anti-racism education. It assists immigrant Chinese parents and children to achieve mutual understanding in the process of acculturation. It also helps teachers and counsellors understand the cultural and family factors involved in schooling for immigrant Chinese children, so as to provide more efficient social and academic mentoring for non-mainstream children, and ultimately to enhance future school-home collaboration.
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Research Background

Since arriving in Ottawa in January 1997, I have heard from members of the Chinese community that immigrant Chinese students are performing exceptionally well at school in spite of acculturation struggles and of English being their second language. I have been pondering the factors that have helped immigrant Chinese students achieve in a Canadian socio-cultural milieu, and more specifically, the role their parents have played in their school achievement.

In 1998, I had the privilege of discussing parental expectations with a White Canadian mother of four children and an immigrant Chinese father of two children. The White Canadian mother put her expectations in the following order: happy, helpful, and successful. The Chinese father, in contrast, said he would expect his children to be successful first, and that being helpful and happy were of secondary importance. He argued that if children were not successful, they would not be happy. Speaking from my own experience, I should say that the expectations of my parents, which I have gradually shared and valued, have a fundamental influence on my personal growth and academic success. Inspired by the interesting discussions with these two parents of different cultural backgrounds, and also by my personal experience, the study was born out of my desire to explore the relationship between immigrant Chinese parental expectations and children’s school achievement.

In the winter of 1998, I proposed this topic as a group research project in partial completion of a doctoral course, EDU 7190 (Qualitative Research). The proposal was enthusiastically embraced by our group, four graduate students from four different cultures. We conducted a qualitative study by interviewing an immigrant mother of our own cultural community about her expectations for her children. The four participants were immigrants from
Mainland China, East India, Iran and Greece. The findings of our interviews revealed that all the four mothers held high expectations for their children’s education and career. They also wanted their children to be proud of their home cultural heritage and to adjust to the Canadian context. A notable difference we observed was that the three visible minority mothers discussed racial discrimination in relation to their expectations, while the Greek mother did not feel any racial pressure. The oral presentation of our findings stimulated extended discussion in the class. A student approached me after the presentation and emotionally recalled high expectations and tremendous sacrifice of her parents when they immigrated to Canada from Europe: "Brian Adams sings to lovers that 'everything I do, I do it for you', I would say that's exactly what my parents did for us: everything I do, I do it for my children."

The responses our group received in the class convinced me that parental expectations are pertinent to everybody's experience and interest. We live our daily lives with varied expectations. Not to mention complex role expectations, speaking only within the context of a family, interpersonal expectations are an essential part of our daily life. When we are children, we experience expectations from our parents. When we become parents ourselves, we hold expectations for our children. In this sense, parental expectations are universal. However, since a family is a part of society, parental expectations, definition of success, and importance of achievement may vary from culture to culture. Particularly, when a family has resided in another culture for a long period of time, parental expectations may undergo a gradual change because of inevitable influences from the host culture. On an individual level, since parents have their own life experiences and goals, parental expectations among families within the same culture may be different. Therefore, parental expectations are universal phenomena with cultural variations and
individual differences. That is, the meaning of parental expectations may be defined and interpreted differently in different cultures and families.

Based on the above encounters and thoughts, I chose the topic of immigrant Chinese parental expectations and children's school achievement as my doctoral research. I began to work on my research proposal in the spring of 1999. The review of relevant literature has helped me clarify the research problem.

Statement of the Problem

In 1966, two of the most influential American newspapers, The New York Times and The News and World Report, featured articles on Chinese and Japanese educational and economic attainment, praising them as "hardworking, uncomplaining role models of diligence and achievement" (Liu, Yu, Chang, & Fernanzez, 1990). Since then, Asian Americans have been continually portrayed as 'the success story' and lauded as 'model minority' for almost four decades. Regardless of social class and family economic background, Asian students have higher SAT scores, higher grade point averages, more years of schooling completed and lower rate of dropout than European Americans and other minority groups (Cheung, 1982; Kim & Chun, 1994; Sue & Abe, 1995). In recognition of school success of Asian immigrant students, many researchers have been searching for explanations to account for this remarkable phenomenon (Chun, 1995; Hirschman & Wong, 1986; Kao, 1995; Kim & Chun, 1994; Peng & Wright, 1994; Sue & Okazaki, 1990; Takei, Clark, Shouse, & Chang, 2000). Two views have emerged from research discussions and debates. One ascribes their school success to Asian cultural values, and another, to the demands of acculturation.

In contemporary literature, immigrant Chinese children's exceptional school performances, especially in the realm of science and technology, have been well recognized. Previous studies have shown that the school achievement of immigrant Chinese students owes much to their cultural values and family support (Chao, 1996; Chen & Uttal, 1988; Kim & Chun,
1994; Schneider & Lee 1990). Their orientation in science and technology is not a reflection of their personal preferences and interests but an adaptive response to external constraints of societal reality (Chun, 1995), or a result of their cultural values and their visible minority status (Sue and Okazuki, 1990). However, detailed portraits of this phenomenon have remained rare.

Several studies have suggested that, of many family variables that contribute to children's school achievement, parental expectations is an important predictor (Hoge, Smit, & Crist, 1997; Kim & Valadez, 1995; Patrikakou, 1997; Peng & Wright, 1994; Seiginer, 1983). However, these results are based only on quantitative data, which have helped to identify a significant phenomenon, but are not able to reveal how parental expectations actually work in a particular cultural and family context. Sue and Okazaki (1990) have argued that building a sole relationship between two variables provides an incomplete picture of a phenomenon. We cannot say that parental expectations simply predict children's school success, since high parental expectations may have negative effects or have no effect at all. This study pursues a critical examination that goes beyond the traditional single-cause explanations (Gibson & Ogbu, 1991), and aims to explore the sociocultural context and multiple meanings of immigrant Chinese parental expectations.

The sociocultural context Chinese immigrants experience in Canada is essential in understanding their expectations and achievement. The Chinese is a very important ethnic community in Canada. The earliest Chinese arrived on Western coast in 1858. They made indispensable contributions to the construction of the new country and endured persistent institutional racial discrimination (Li, 1998). Over the last decade, a new wave of immigration from China has brought new energy to Canada. According to "Immigration Overview: Facts and Figures" released by Citizenship and Immigration Canada on August 31, 2001, Mainland China has been one of the top three source countries of immigration (all classes) since 1996 and has remained as the number one source country from 1998 to 2000. Canada admitted 19,779 Mainland Chinese immigrants in 1998, 29,110 in 1999, and 36,718 in 2000 (see Appendix A).
Unlike the early Chinese, the majority of these new arrivers are highly educated urban professionals who intend to permanently reside in Canada. However, very few studies have specifically focused on this population and little is known about recent immigrant Chinese families, particularly in terms of the role of parental expectations on children's school achievement. This doctoral research aims to address this gap.

The changing demographics and human resources of the immigrant Chinese community demand a more sensitive awareness of their cultural values and beliefs as well as their acculturation struggles. As the largest visible minority group in Canada (Statistics Canada 1996 Census: Visible Minority Population), the educational experiences of Chinese immigrants merit our research attention. Because the cultural adaptation of Chinese immigrants not only relies on their beliefs and resilience but also depends on the attitudes of the host society towards visible minority members, we need to examine both their cultural values and the price they have paid for their success. Only by uncovering both their cultural beliefs and acculturation experiences can we obtain a deeper understanding of the relationship between immigrant Chinese parental expectations and their children's school achievement.

Purpose of the Study

This study pursues three objectives: (a) to depict how immigrant Chinese parents and children “do things on the basis of their beliefs and desires, striving for goals, meeting obstacles which they best or which best them” (Bruner, 1990, p.43); (b) to understand how the parental expectations of Chinese immigrants are constructed in a given sociocultural and historical context; and (c) to explore the affordances and constraints of immigrant Chinese parental expectations on their children's school achievement. Both terms "affordances" and "constraints" are used in this study as potential positive and negative effects of parental expectations. Affordances stand for possible advantages and resources; whereas constraints indicate potential disadvantages and restraints.
To achieve these objectives, a sociocultural approach is employed "to explicate the relationships between human mental functioning, on the one hand, and the cultural, institutional, and historical situations in which this functioning occurs, on the other" (Wertsch, Del Rio, & Alvarez, 1995, p.3). In order to celebrate multiple realities and to avoid reporting a single, unified voice in which everything is said to everyone, the research problem is investigated with a qualitative methodology.

Bruner (1990) proposes the notion of 'folk psychology', referring to "a culture's account of what makes human beings tick" (p.3), or to "a system by which people organize their experience in, knowledge about, and transactions with the social world" (p.35). Like the expressions of folklore, folk music and folk arts, the organizing principle of folk psychology is narrative rather than conceptual (Bruner, 1990; Thomas, 2001). Inspired by the conception of folk psychology, this study attempts to develop a Chinese folk theory on the basis of the cultural beliefs and life experiences of a group of Chinese immigrants. A folk theory, or what Furnham (1988) calls a lay theory, is an informal, implicit, and common sense interpretation that people give to their everyday lives and practices. Hence it is very different from formal, explicit, and 'scientific' explanations of what actually happens. Unlike a scientific theory that is built, tested and refined by authorities and can be generally applied, a folk theory entails ordinary people's common sense beliefs and intuitive decisions that are shaped by their cultural and life experiences. A folk theory allows one "to make the best sense of everyday world and guide actions as successfully as possible" (Chater & Oaksford, 1996, p. 252-253). In one word, the folk theory of the Chinese immigrants that will develop in this study is not to prove something but to make sense of their experiences and to understand what matters in their lives.

The meaning of this immigrant Chinese folk theory lies in its specific cultural and personal interpretation of contextually grounded interview narrative data, including values, beliefs, wishes, intentions, and feelings. It can be served as "a valuable lens through which to view the members' shared thought processes" (Thomas, 2001, p.4). The folk theory emerging
from the accounts and stories of the participants in this study may be reflective of immigrant Chinese educational experiences in Canada but cannot be generalized as a guiding principle or a reasoned supposition that applies to every immigrant Chinese family.

In essence, the folk theory will take the form of 'empirical narrative' since "the narrative approach advocates pluralism, relativism, and subjectivity" (Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach, & Zilber, 1998, p.2). The reality will be viewed as multi-layered and interactive, and will be comprised of shared social and educational experiences of the immigrant Chinese parents and children who participated in this study. Hopefully, the characteristics of the folk theory will make this dissertation more enjoyable to be read. The folk theory will give voice to this previously silent minority group by providing a thick description of their cultural beliefs and life experiences on the one hand, and their determination to survive and succeed in Canada regardless of unfair competition due to overt and covert racial discrimination from the White dominant society, on the other hand.

In the coming chapters, I will begin with a review of literature in relation to parental expectations and children's school achievement, followed with a justification of the methodology employed in the research investigation. Then, I will present the findings of the study, the folk theory of the Chinese immigrants, and interpret the emerging themes by bridging their common sense beliefs and research literature. Lastly, I will conclude with a summary of the study and share what I have learned in my research journey.
CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The phenomenon of interpersonal expectations has been studied from both theoretical and applied perspectives (Blanck, 1993). This chapter reviews research literature on parental expectations and children’s school achievement following a line of argument from a micro psychological level to a macro sociocultural level. The psychological consequences of interpersonal expectations are examined first, followed by a review of studies on the relationship between parental expectations and children’s school achievement. An outlined examination of the sociocultural context of parental expectations will lead to a discussion of culture, cultural identity, Chinese cultural values, and acculturation dynamics. The chapter will conclude with a discussion of the research rationale and the overall approach used to frame the study and the research questions that guide the investigation.

**Expectation Hypothesis: The Pygmalion Effect**

Over three decades ago, an experimental demonstration of the power of teacher expectations, known as the ‘Pygmalion Effect’, surprised the educational and psychological community (Rosenthal & Jacobson, 1968). In this classic experimental study, Rosenthal and Jacobson found that "the change in the teacher's expectations regarding the intellectual performance of these allegedly 'special' children had led to an actual change in the intellectual performance of these randomly selected children" (p.viii). In other words, teacher expectations could actually serve as an educational self-fulfilling prophecy for student intellectual performances since a teacher might unconsciously communicate higher expectations to the students deemed intelligent.

Other empirical studies on teacher expectations have confirmed the ‘Pygmalion Effect’. A teacher's expectations could influence teacher-student interaction, and thus affect student beliefs, actions, and outcomes (Chaiken, Sigler, & Derlega, 1974; Cooper & Good, 1983; Good, 1987). For example, Chaiken, Sigler, and Derlega (1974) videotaped teacher-student interactions
in a classroom and discovered that the teacher favored 'brighter' children in subtle ways, such as making more eye-contact, smiling more often, and making more positive comments. A recent study conducted by Madon, Jussim, and Eccles (1997) refined the 'Pygmalion Effect'. They found that low-achieving children were more likely to be influenced by teacher expectations than high-achievers.

The 'Pygmalion Effect' has vast implications and influences in many fields. Studies on interpersonal expectations have been conducted in educational, family, legal, organizational, and other social settings (Blanck, 1993; Sigel, McGillicuddy-Delisi, & Goodnow, 1992). Hock (1999) points out that, although the self-fulfilling prophecy has not been proven in everyday life, in some areas the "Pygmalion Effect" does exist, "what you expect is what you get" (p.92). The basic assumption that person A’s expectations can potentially influence person B’s performances has been accepted both theoretically and empirically (Blanck, 1993).

Rosenthal and Jacobson's pioneering work has demonstrated the powerful consequences of teacher expectations. However, a teacher is not the sole source of expectations impinging upon a child’s behavior. Some studies have proposed a network of expectations, in which the expectations of parents, peers, significant others and children’s self-expectations jointly shape their intellectual performance (Finn, 1972; Schneider, Hieshima, Lee, & Plank, 1994; Shneider & Lee, 1990). Finn (1972) specifically points out that the network of expectations include "cultural traditions and demands as well" (p.395). The influence of expectations on children’s outcomes may be generalized to non-school situations such as families and cultural communities. If teachers’ expectations ('Pygmalion in classroom') can lead to children’s improved intellectual performance, can this self-fulfilling prophecy be applied to a family context and result in a phenomenon of 'Pygmalion at home'? To what extent do parental expectations affect their children’s school achievement?
Parental Expectations and Children's School Achievement

It has been suggested that, of many family variables that contribute to children's school achievement, parental expectation is the most salient one (Entwisle & Baker, 1983; Hoge, Smit, & Crist, 1997; Kim & Valadez, 1995; Peng & Wright, 1994; Patrikakou, 1997; Seiginer, 1983). In a longitudinal study, Hoge, Smit, and Crist (1997) assessed the impact of four family factors, namely parental expectations, parental interest, parental involvement, and family communication, on Grade Six and Seven children's academic achievement. The results revealed that parental expectations were the most influential. Parental expectations in specific disciplines had the greatest impact on children's achievement. The specific parental expectations in certain disciplines, such as how well their children should do in mathematics, had more impact on children's achievement than general parental expectations, such as how well their children should perform in school. Their study suggests that a distinction between general and specific parental expectations is helpful in examining the role parental expectations on children's school achievement.

After analyzing the data from 5643 adolescents with different cultural backgrounds who participated in 1988 American National Educational Longitudinal Study, Patrikakou (1997) reported that parental expectations and student perceptions of parental attitudes were essential in raising student academic expectations and thus their academic achievement. The result echoed Eccles' model (Eccles, 1983; Ethington, 1991) that student perceptions of parental expectations could function as a vital mediator in establishing a positive relationship between parental expectations and student academic achievement. Entwisle and Baker (1983) also found that children's school performance was significantly correlated with parental expectations, even after taking out other variables such as children's IQ, gender, ethnicity, and self-expectations.

According to Boocock (1972), "high achieving children tend to come from families who have high expectations for them, and who consequently are likely to 'set standards' and to make greater demands at an earlier age" (p.60). Based on an extensive literature review, Seiginer
(1983) highlighted a positive relationship between parental expectations and children’s academic achievement and further proposed that parental expectations could function both as cause and consequence of their children’s academic achievement. Both of them, however, only identified positive aspects of parental expectations and did not consider possible negative influences. In addition, their work did not make a distinction between ‘high parental expectations’ and ‘realistic parental expectations’. Unrealistic parental expectations could exert pressure and cause performance anxiety (Sigel, 1987). Yet few published studies have examined children’s stress under unrealistic parental expectations (Buck, 1991).

A number of studies found that children’s educational aspirations were inspired by their parents. The educational aspirations of parents motivated their children to set goals and pursue high academic achievement (Reitzes & Mutran 1980; Schneider & Lee, 1990). For example, Phillips (1992) reported that the goals parents set for their children were strong predictors of children’s achievement, especially for female, minority, and lower income students. Odell (1988) examined the educational and occupational expectations of rural high school students and found that student educational aspirations were strongly related to that of their parents. In another study, Beynon and Toohey (1995) interviewed 34 college students of Chinese and Punjabi-Sikh origin and uncovered that the career choices of these students were strongly influenced by the expectations of their parents.

More recently, Huang and O’Neil (1997) reported that student effort was derived from their perceived parental expectations, which further led to positive self-efficacy and higher school achievement. This study was guided by Bandura’s assumption that high self-efficacy would result in high outcomes (Bandura, 1997, 1995). However, how parental expectations are transferred to children’s efficacy beliefs remains unclear and begs further exploration.

Ablard and Parker (1997) examined the role of parental achievement goals and perfectionism in their academically talented children of grade six. They divided the parental achievement goals into two categories, that is, learning goal orientation and performance goal
orientation. The parents with a learning goal focused on how to nurture their children's continual interests and intellectual development on learning tasks; whereas the parents with a performance goal focused on how to encourage their children to obtain high levels of academic achievement, such as high grades and test scores. The results showed that "children of performance goal parents were more likely than children of learning goal parents to have a combination of high concern about mistakes, parental expectations, parental criticism, and doubts about actions" (p.660). Of the final sample of 127 pairs of parents, 92 pairs of parents adopted a learning goal, only 37 pairs of parents had a performance goal. The study refuted the popular belief that parents of gifted children tended to push them to accomplish academically by emphasizing predominantly on high grades.

Parental expectations may have a 'Pygmalion Effect' in a family context, but they do not automatically determine children's school achievement. Some studies have found that the importance of parental expectations lies in the hypothesized relationship between parental expectations and parenting practice. Helling (1996) investigated school-home communication and parental expectations and found that the parents who reported higher levels of expectations also reported higher levels of commitment to their aspirations and expectations. The parents also tend to adjust their expectations and commitment to those expectations on the basis of their children's school performances. Other studies have also revealed that when parents express their expectations and provide differential reinforcement and achievement support, their children are likely to achieve at a higher level (Cheung, 1982; Fuligni, 1997; Keith & Keith, 1993; Siu, 1994).

However, not all parental expectations are fruitful (Steinberg, Dornbusch, & Brown, 1992). Phillips' study (1992) suggested that parent-controlled activities were negatively related to children's achievement. Other studies that assumed parental beliefs as predictors of parental actions led to disappointing results (Kochanska, Kuczynski, & Radke-Yarrow, 1989; Sigel, McGillicuddy-Delisi, & Goodnow, 1992). For example, Voelkl (1993) investigated the
relationship between student expectations and their school achievement using a sample of 2847 African American students. The study revealed that, among a group of underachievers, although both the parents and the students held high academic expectations, these expectations did not convert to better academic progress. For this study, we have to question if the parents transmitted their high expectations to effective parenting practice, and further more, if teacher expectations were in accordance with or in conflict with those of the parents and students.

The empirical data reviewed has provided inconsistent information on the relationship between parental expectations and children's school achievement. A possible reason is that these quantitative studies either took data from national census, or used surveys, questionnaires, and scales to collect data. By so doing, they rarely investigated how parental expectations actually worked in a particular family context of a given culture. We need to examine the sociocultural context of parental expectations since contextual difference might be a critical factor (Sigel et al., 1992).

**Sociocultural Context of Parental Expectations**

Bronfenbrenner (1979) has proposed that we human beings develop in an ecological environment, which is “a set of nested structures, each inside the next, like a set of Russian dolls” (p.3). From this perspective, a family is a micro-cultural unit that reflects the macro-cultural norms and beliefs of society in which it is situated. Since one grows up in a family, the family is located within a cultural group or community, and the community in turn is situated within a society at a particular moment (Fawcett, 1996), one is stamped with the specific brand of one’s culture to which one is exposed from birth. Therefore, parental expectations are rooted in their socially and culturally constructed world. Parental expectations on children's school performance may have different interpretations in different cultures (Okagaki & Sternberg, 1993).

Major advancements in the understanding of parental expectations, parenting practices, and children's school achievement in context have come from studies that compare parental
influences in different ethnic groups (Hao & Bonstead-Bruns, 1998; Okagaki & Frensch, 1998; Okagaki & Sternberg, 1993; Steinberg, Dornbusch, & Brown, 1992; Stevenson, Chen, & Uttle, 1990), and different socioeconomic status groups (Alexander, Entwisle, & Bendinger, 1994; Snow & Burnes et al., 1991). These studies have suggested that parental expectations and parenting practices result from a mix of personal, cultural, and historical sources. For instance, although parents from certain ethnic groups, especially those from lower socioeconomic status, also hold high educational expectations, their children’s school outcomes were not positive (Alexander et al., 1994; Snow & Burnes et al., 1991). Therefore, the different consequences of parental expectations and variations in parenting practices with different social, cultural, and economical conditions need to be further explored.

Despite the fact that students from some minority ethnic groups have difficulties in converting high goals into high school attainment, a positive relationship between high parental expectations and children’s high school achievement has been consistently reported in Asian cultures (Crystal, Chen et al., 1994; Hirschman & Wong, 1986; Kao, 1995; Kim & Chun, 1994; Peng & Wright, 1994; Schneider & Lee, 1990; Sue & Okazaki, 1990; Suzuki, 1995; Vernon, 1982). In what follows I will focus on Asians in general because existing studies usually portray Asians as a large community or a Confucian society on the basis of their shared characteristics.

Mau (1995) examined adolescent perceptions of parental expectations in different ethnic groups (Asians, African Americans, Hispanics, Native Americans, and White Americans). The result showed that Asian Americans perceived higher parental educational expectations than other ethnic groups. Okagaki and Frensch (1998) examined parental expectations for children’s ideal, expected, and minimal educational attainment in three ethnic groups (Asian Americans, Latino Americans, and European Americans). They found that Asian American parents held
higher standards for their children's school performances and expected them to obtain at least college education. Another study conducted by Peng and Wright (1994) also reported that, compared to other ethnic groups (African Americans, Hispanics, Native Americans, and White Americans), Asian American parents held the highest educational expectations. Around 80% of Asian parents expected their children to obtain at least a bachelor's degree.

In an international study conducted with more than 1200 student subjects from the United States, China, and Japan, Crystal, Chen, Fuligni, and Stevenson (1994) discovered an interesting phenomenon: Asian subjects (Chinese and Japanese) reported higher levels of parental expectations and lower levels of parental satisfaction with academic achievement than their American counterparts, yet reported less stress, academic anxiety, and aggressive feelings than American students. The results of the study indicate that parental expectations function differently in Eastern culture.

Steinberg, Dornbusch, and Brown (1992) examined ethnic differences (African, Asian, White, and Hispanic Americans) in adolescent achievement. They found no ethnic differences in the beliefs about educational reward. However, an awareness of the negative consequences of poor school performance seemed to significantly affect adolescent school engagement. Since the Asian American parents held high academic standards, the Asian American students were more likely to fear the negative repercussions of school failure and tended to attribute their school achievement to hard work. They also found that the Asian American students belonged to a peer group that encouraged academic excellence. The study suggested that "an important predictor of academic success for an adolescent is having support for academics from both parents and peers" (p. 727).

Schneider and Lee (1990) compared grade six and seven East Asian students and Anglo-American students in terms of their family background, their values towards education and occupation choices, their school performance, their social relationships, and extra-curricular
activities. The results showed that the academic success of East Asian students was related to the sociocultural and socioeconomic factors as well as interpersonal interactions. They suggested that parental expectations, teacher expectations, peer expectations, and self-expectations jointly influence students' effort and persistence, and ultimately their school outcomes.

In the United States, Asian Americans have obtained the highest level of college education of any ethnic group and have high enrollment in prestigious universities (Sue & Abe, 1995). The extraordinary educational achievement of Asian Americans has perpetuated an image of 'model minority' that is characterized as "hardworking, disciplined and academic inclined" (Mckay & Wong, 1996, p.586).

In searching for the explanation of the successful story of Asian immigrants, three explanations have emerged from discussions and debates. An earlier explanation is based on IQ tests. It assumes that Asians genetically possess superior intelligence and cognitive capacity (Vernon, 1982). While the hypothesis of heredity is challenged as problematic, another explanation, culture, has emerged as responsible for Asian educational attainment. Considerable research has supported the argument that Asian cultures, especially those values and beliefs influenced by Confucianism, such as emphasis on family cohesion, respect for authority, and stress on effort, are conducive to academic achievement and socioeconomic advancement. Takei, Clark, Shouse, and Chang (2000) have reviewed previous research on the 'remarkable success' of Asian immigrants and developed two cultural views. One view suggests that the Asian cultural value system facilitates their socioeconomic attainment and academic achievement, "the entire ethnic group is presumably influenced by the same traditional cultural values regardless of the social status of the family" (p.26). Another view stresses that family socioeconomic status (SES) is an important factor in enhancing children's academic achievement. After examining data obtained from a national longitudinal study on Asian groups, Takei et al. support the second view in that SES is more influential in children's school accomplishment.
A third explanation, which emphasizes situational factors of acculturation, is highlighted by ‘immigrant optimism’ and ‘relative functionalism’. Based on his comparative work of language and cultural minority groups in the United States, Ogbu (1987, 1992) proposes the notion of ‘immigrant optimism’. He contends that voluntary immigrants, such as Asian immigrants, come to the new country for better educational and economic opportunities. Therefore, what underpins their endurance of suffering and difficulties of relocation is an optimistic belief that, through education, their children will eventually succeed in the adopted country. Ogbu maintains that parental optimism serves as an important driving force for children's school achievement.

‘Relative functionalism’, proposed by Sue and Okazuki (1990), argues that both genetic and cultural interpretations are incomplete. The notion of ‘relative functionalism’ refers to the following two propositions. First, similar to the cultural explanation, ‘relative functionalism’ also assumes that cultural values and practices affect educational achievement. Second, when perceived opportunities in areas such as leadership, sports, entertainment, and politics are limited, Asians tend to count on academic attainment in science as a means of upward mobility.

The tendency of Asian immigrants to major in science and engineering is resulted from their awareness of racial inequality in North American mainstream society. Asian immigrant parents, therefore, generally expect their children to avoid fields such as social sciences and humanities and strongly encourage science orientation in order to enter or obtain a career in a ‘racially neutral’ field. Sue and Okazuki assert that Asian educational achievement is a product of a combination of their cultural values and their minority status.

Based on an extensive review of previous studies on educational success of Asian Americans, Kim and Chun (1994) summarize that the superior school performance of Asians and Asian Americans is related to biological, cultural, and acculturation factors. With a focus on examining cultural and acculturation factors, they highlight their contention as follows:
The educational success of Asian Americans can be attributed to their emphasis on effort, discipline, industriousness, frugality, a willingness to make sacrifices, and respect for authorities. Strong support from the family and ethnic communities has also contributed to their success. Psychological, social, and institutional discrimination are considered barriers (that) could be cleared through persistence and hard work....However,...societal discrimination does not allow them equal access to opportunities and rewards. The greatest discrimination occurs in the fields of social sciences and humanities, where evaluations are subjective and where English fluency is essential. As such, they choose a path of least resistance, a career in medical and applied sciences, where their performance could be evaluated more objectively, and that allows them to participate as equal partners....Narrow career choices of Asian Americans are due in large part to the existence of psychological, social, and institutional discrimination (p.336, 337).

Chun (1995) critically examined the myth of Asian American success and came to the conclusion that Asian Americans paid an injurious price for their so-called ‘model minority’ image. Their successful story is based on occupational segregation, political exploitation, and racial inequality. The external constraints and societal reality, such as pressure of assimilation and survival, are responsible for their lost identity.

The above brief overview of empirical studies and theoretical positions has highlighted the cultural specification as well as acculturation struggles of Asian immigrants. Clearly, the meaning of Asian immigrant educational experience is defined and shaped by cultural and acculturation circumstances. Hence we need to examine the notion of culture, cultural identity, and acculturation because it is of central importance in our understanding of the relationship between parental expectations and children's school achievement in immigrant Chinese families.

Conception of Culture and Cultural Identity

Undoubtedly, it is a challenging task to discuss the conception of culture since it has been defined in a variety of ways. Early definitions focused on customs and habits while contemporary definitions have interpreted culture as shared knowledge and belief systems (Bennett, 1999). The conventional concept of culture has been criticized as an all-encompassing notion that can reduce sociohistorical complexities to simple characterizations and thus obscure the moral and social contradictions that exist within and across communities (Duranti, 1997).
Furthermore, the traditional conception regards culture as if it is fixed and unchanging. Culture should be viewed as "more fluid and open, concerning relationships, interactions, and a matter of everyday activities which is continually shifting and changing" (Wetherell & Maybin, 1996, p.228). As Bruner (1996) states in his book *The Culture of Education*:

Cultures have always been in the process of change, and the rate of change becomes greater as our fates become increasingly intermingled through migration, trade, and the rapid exchange of information....Different cultures manage these matters differently. What they all have in common is the dilemma of imperfection: Keeping faith in the ability to change for the better while knowing that a final and settled end can never be attained. (p.97)

In discussing the nature of culture, Nieto (1999) points out, "cultures are always changing as a result of political, social, and other modifications in the immediate environment. When people with different backgrounds come into contact with one another, such change is to be expected even more" (p.49). She has identified seven characteristics of culture that encompass this complex and ever-changing reality. These seven characteristics are here discussed as the six themes that account for the immigrant Chinese experiences (I amalgamated contextually embedded and socially constructed characteristics into one theme). First, culture is dynamic and is always in a process of active changing. Second, culture is multifaceted, and "culture identifications are multiple, eclectic, mixed, and heterogeneous" (Nieto, 1999, p.51). Even in the same cultural group, there may exist many and often conflicting cultural identities. Third, culture is socially constructed and contextually embedded. It cannot exist outside social contact and everyday practice. Fourth, culture is learned, transmitted, and passed down from generation to generation. Fifth, culture is related to issues of power. It is influenced by social, economic, and political factors and conditions. Sixth, culture is dialectical and is full of conflicts and inherent tensions due to social, political, economic, and historical influences. In sum, Nieto's view of
culture demands an awareness and understanding of the contradictory nature of culture so as to develop a critical instead of a romantic perspective of culture.

Through interactions with the social and mental environment of a particular cultural group, one becomes a member of that cultural community. The process of becoming a full-fledged member of a particular cultural group is called enculturation or acquisition of culture. Enculturation enables one to acquire "what the culture deems to be necessary" (Berry, Poortinga, Segall, & Dasen, 1992, p.19) and further develops a sense of belonging or identity. Due to pre-existing salient features, values, meanings, and goals, one's identity is always, to some degree, assigned or prescribed by the community in which one grows up (Camilleri & Malewska-Peyre, 1997). In this sense, one's cultural identity is directed, shaped, and conditioned by the process of enculturation.

When relocating in a new country, people have to go through a process of acculturation, namely adjust themselves to the new culture and re-negotiate their identity. In differentiating enculturation and acculturation, Berry et al. (1992) state:

Enculturation is the process by which the group generally incorporates children into the culture and by which the children acquire the appropriate behaviours. In contrast, acculturation refers to cultural and psychological change brought about by contact with other peoples belonging to different cultures and exhibiting different behaviours (p.19).

Identity is about who we are, where we are coming from, and what we will become. Fitzgerald (1993) contends that identity should be posited as self-in-context since it cannot be separated from culture. When a person interacts with the social surroundings, "the self and its social environment are reciprocally determined" (p.59). The self also plays an essential role in one's constructed identity because it is this person who actively selects and interprets the cultural knowledge he or she acquires. In the process of enculturation and acculturation, people are dynamically constructing themselves to fit contexts and also constructing contexts to fit themselves.
Similar to the conception of culture, there have been constant debates about the understanding of identity. A traditional view of identity is ego-centered and universal. It claims that "all the dynamics (such as class, gender, race) operate simultaneously to produce a coherent, unified, fixed identity" (Sarup, 1996, p.14). Thus the essence of identity reflects a common historical experience shared by human beings (Hall, 1990).

Postmodernism has challenged traditional notions of identity for both its universalist conception and White male position. Postmodern theorists view the world as "heterogeneous, composed of a vast plurality of interpretations in which knowledge and truth are contingent" (Dunn, 1998, p.175). Or in Sarup's (1996) words, identity is "fabricated, constructed, in process...full of contradictions and ambiguities"(p.14).

Since one's cultural identity is constructed and reconstructed in a "threefold temporal delineation of past, present, and future self-orientations" (Dunn, 1998, p.201), it is a matter of becoming as well as of being (Hall, 1990). Thus the construction of cultural identity is never complete, always in process. Hall further elucidates:

Cultural identities....like everything which is historical... undergo constant transformation. Far from being eternally fixed in some essentialist past, they are subject to the continuous 'play' of history, culture and power. Far from being grounded in a mere 'recovery' of the past, which is waiting to be found, and which, when found, will secure our sense of ourselves into eternity, identities are the names we give to the different ways we are positioned by, and position ourselves within, the narratives of past (p.222).

Identity dynamics are essentially important in coping with cultural change such as immigration (Camilleri & Malewska-Peyre, 1997). Berry (1990) points out that cultural identity will inevitably change over the course of acculturation. One could maintain one's ethnic identity in which one is encultured, or adjust to mainstream culture with a small and simple shift at the very beginning of cultural contact. However, as the contact continues, ambivalent attitudes towards one's home culture and host culture, identity conflict and confusion related to acculturation stress are mostly expected. In immigrant families, parents may largely maintain
their established home cultural identities, whereas children may be more likely to identify themselves with the new culture. Therefore, the tension between immigrant parents and children may result from the clash of old and new identities as they negotiate their way among many choices and possibilities.

Immigration brings diverse cultural beliefs and practices of different ethnic groups, thus other cultures inevitably influence one's native cultural identity. In North American, minority immigrants experience identity struggles because of tensions and contradictions between their native culture and mainstream culture. Cultural identity is thus contextual, located with, and defined by the situated social and cultural complexity of the plural yet dominant society. As Pierce (1995) argues, cultural or social identity "must be understood with reference to large and frequently inequitable social structures which are reproduced in day to day social interactions" (p.13). In light of their experiences of change and transformation of immigration, how minority immigrant groups reconstruct their cultural identities within a racially dominant power structure begs our research attention.

The above discussion has significant implications in this study. We must view culture and cultural identity as multi-layered and changing in its situated historical, social, and political context. The core of Chinese cultural values acquired during the process of enculturation and the shifting of cultural identity during the process of acculturation may jointly contribute to immigrant Chinese parental expectations and children's school achievement. In what follows, I review the research literature on Chinese cultural values that underpin parental expectations.

**Chinese Cultural Values and Parental Expectations**

Historically, the Chinese have world widely resided. No doubt their migration experiences have largely influenced their thinking and lifestyles. However, in terms of education, those who identify themselves as 'Chinese', still share certain common cultural values and beliefs that may be different from those of other ethnic groups. Some core Chinese cultural values may remain essential to Chinese immigrants and serve as an important context to parent-
child interaction in immigrant Chinese families (Chao, 1996; Ho, 1994; Schneider, Hieshima, Lee, & Plank, 1994; Wong, 1995).

The Chinese values and belief systems are deeply ingrained in Chinese tradition and heritage. Confucianism, the source and core of the Chinese value system, has symbolized the essence of Chinese culture and is woven into every facet of Chinese life. The influence of Confucian philosophy in other Asian cultures has also been pervasive and long-standing. Kahn (1979) speaks highly of Confucianism and asserts that the economic success of Asian society can be accredited to "the creation of dedicated, motivated, responsible, and educated individuals and the enhanced sense of commitment, organizational identity, and loyalty to various institutions" (p.122).

*The Chinese Culture Connection*¹ (Bond et al., 1987) examined Chinese value systems with university students in 22 countries. A factor analysis of their survey data revealed four dimensions of robust Chinese values. First, group integration, such as tolerance, harmony, non-competitiveness, and filial piety. Second, human-heartedness, such as kindness, patience, and courtesy. Third, Confucian work ethics, such as persistence, personal steadiness, and a sense of shame and guilt. And forth, moral discipline, such as adaptability and moderation. We should note that although these Confucian values have profoundly shaped the Chinese way of life and colored all social relationships in Chinese society, indigenous themes of Confucianism have been changing to adjust to the new demands of modern society.

After examining how Confucian ethics become socialized in the Chinese cultural milieu, Ho (1994) proposes three socialization patterns in regard to achievement motivation, achievement attribution, and learning strategies. First, the Chinese children have strong academic

¹ The *Chinese Cultural Connection* is the name given to an international network of colleagues orchestrated by Bond, M.H., Department of Psychology, Chinese University of Hong Kong.
achievement motivation because of the Confucian emphasis on education. Second, the Chinese believe that effort is the main determinant of success or failure because they view hard work as the key to success. Third, the Chinese learning strategy is largely based on memorization because Confucianism encourages students to obtain knowledge by repeated practice. Ho's work has demonstrated that the socialization of Chinese children is in line with the demands of Confucian philosophy.

Previous comparative work on Eastern culture and Western culture has consistently reported that Chinese parents generally emphasize more the value of academic achievement than White American parents (Chao, 1996, 1994; Chen & Uttal, 1988; Lin & Fu, 1990; Stevenson & Stigler, 1992; Wong, 1995; Yao, 1985). Chinese parents have also expressed a lower level of satisfaction with their children's school performance than White American parents (Chen & Uttal, 1988; Stevenson & Lee, 1990; Stevenson & Stigler, 1992).

After comparing the beliefs of immigrant Chinese mothers of Taiwanese origin and European American mothers on the role of parenting in children's school success, Chao (1996) found cultural differences in parenting beliefs and practices. Immigrant Chinese mothers stressed both learning process and outcome while European American mothers emphasized learning process over outcome. The study suggests that Chinese maternal beliefs in education and effort are largely shaped by the Chinese tradition or Confucian ideology. Parental expectations, involvement, and investment are co-contributors to children's school achievement.

Wong (1995) examined the 1980 American "High School and Beyond" survey data obtained from three Asian groups (Chinese, Filipino, and Japanese) and a White American group. The Asian students scored higher than the White students in terms of educational expectations, science and technological career aspirations, and academic characteristics. The Chinese students scored even higher than the other two Asian groups on these categories. Wong's study suggests that the school success of Asian students, especially the extraordinary academic
attainment of Chinese students, is significantly influenced by their unique cultural traditions, high parental expectations, and direct parental involvement.

Many Chinese cultural values, especially those influenced by Confucianism, such as respecting elders, family obligation, deferred gratification, and belief in hard work, have been identified as conducive to children's school success (Ho, 1994; Siu, 1992). Confucian family values have been frequently cited to explain the myth of the Asian 'model minority' (McKay & Wong, 1996). Three Chinese values, namely high respect for education, beliefs in effort and hard work, and close parent-child relationship, have been consistently identified as strongly related to Chinese parental expectations (CCNC, 1992; Chao, 1996; Chen & Uttal, 1988; Ho, 1994; Lee, 1989; Lin & Fu, 1990; Ou & Mcadoo, 1993; Siu, 1994; Zhang, Ollila, & Harvey, 1998).

Chinese culture highly respects formal education. Historically, the Chinese value education more than money, and scholars are highly respected and admired (Chao, 1996; Zhang, Ollila, & Harvey, 1998). Before 1905, *Ke ju kao shi* (civil examination) was an important criterion for selecting civil officials. Chinese families generally viewed taking those examinations as the most important event in their lives. In contemporary Mainland China, examinations remain as a primary path for individual advancement. "Education is an only available channel of social mobility", argues Wong (1995, p.231). The annual National College Entrance Examination (NCEE or* Gao Kao*) is extremely competitive because it is vital in advancing one's socioeconomic status in society (Chen & Uttal, 1988). Anyone, in spite of his or her family background and social status, can achieve upward mobility through university education (Ho, 1994).

Consequently, Chinese parents tend to hold high standards for their children's school performance. Kit-fong Au and Harackiewicz (1986) examined the effects of perceived parental expectations on Chinese children's mathematics performance. They found that the children who perceived high parental expectations displayed better performance than the children who perceived low parental expectations. They suggested that parental expectations and parental
evaluation could affect children's performance "via a self-fulfilling prophecy mechanism...those who believe that their parents think highly of them may try harder in order to live up to their parents' expectations and they may actually do better" (p.385).

In North America, many Chinese tend to define their cultural identity in light of academic achievement (Siu, 1992). Immigrant Chinese parents generally believe that education is the most significant means for their children to improve their status in life because school achievement can bring career reward. The Chinese Canadian National Council (1992) interviewed 130 Chinese Canadian women, one of the themes was a belief they learned from and shared with their parents, "education was the most important thing" (CCNC, 1992, p.129).

Zhang, Ollila, and Harvey (1998) examined recent immigrant Chinese parental beliefs and values with regard to children's schooling in Canada. They found that the immigrant Chinese parents usually held high educational expectations for their children and believed that education was beneficial for both the well-being of society and the betterment of their children. The Chinese parents also stressed that a positive home environment was supportive of their children's learning.

The Chinese believe that good things do not happen by chance, and long-term plans and persistent effort are imperative in goal attainment. Therefore, it is diligence, rather than intelligence, that leads to success. Confucianism stresses that human malleability and self-cultivation can be actualized through effort and internal control. This philosophy has forged a firm Chinese belief in internal goals, or what Rotter (1990, 1966) refers to as an internal locus of control. The Chinese regard effort as an explanation of success and failure (Chen & Uttal, 1988; Hau & Salili, 1990; Hess, Chang, & McDevitt, 1987). As Chen and Uttal (1988) state, "innate ability may determine the rate at which one acquires new knowledge, but the ultimate level of achievement is attained through effort. Furthermore, there is always the possibility of improvement at any level of ability" (p.354).
In examining the effect of attributional feedback on students' learning, Schunk (1983) reported that American students were more likely to be motivated by 'ability feedback' ("you are good at this") than 'effort feedback' ("you have been working very hard"). Hau and Salili (1996) examined motivational effects of teachers' ability versus effort feedback on student learning in Hong Kong. They found that, in contrast to Schunk's study, both effort and ability feedback led to the highest effort expenditure by the Chinese students, and older students demonstrated a better understanding of the compensatory relationships among effort, ability and study skills.

In addition to the values placed on education and effort, Chinese culture also supports a closely-knit and hierarchical family structure (Lin & Liu, 1999). The Chinese value loyalty, obligation, and responsibility in family life. Each family member is supposed to work hard to bring honor to the family and not to disgrace or 'lose face' for the family. Chinese parents often link their children's school success or failure directly with the family's honor or shame. According to Lee (1989), "to many Chinese, academic achievement is the ultimate goal that will bring glory and respect to the family" (p.41).

In traditional Chinese families, the husband-wife relationship is regarded as secondary to the parent-child relationship (Hsu, 1971; Lin & Liu, 1999). The very emphasis on parent-child relationships motivates Chinese parents to make disproportionate sacrifices and investments in their children's education. Chinese parents generally ascribe the academic achievement of their children to successful parenting and view their children's school success or failure as a reflection of the whole family and community. As one Chinese mother stated in Chao's study, "academics is a family thing" (Chao, 1996, p.420). This Chinese collective orientation also nurtures children's strong sense of duty and responsibility to their families and their cultural heritage.

The close parent-child relationship in Chinese families is strengthened by two Chinese constructs derived from Confucian ethics: guan (parental discipline) and xiao (filial piety). Chinese parents generally use guan to discipline their children's minds and character (Chao, 1994; Stewart, Rao, Bond, McBride-Chang, Fielding, & Kennard, 1998). The Confucian
parenting philosophy of guan assumes that parents are more experienced beings and thus have the legitimacy of right and responsibility to exert authority over their children. This authority is unquestionable to both parents and children and usually results in close parental supervision of children's schoolwork in Chinese families.

The practice of guan has shaped a unique Chinese parenting style that significantly differs from Western culture. An authoritarian parenting style is usually related to children's poor school performance in Western culture. In contrast, although Chinese parents seem to adopt an "authoritarian" parenting style characterized by high parental control and relatively lower level of parental warmth (Lin & Fu, 1990; Steinberg, Dornbusch, & Brown, 1992), their children have displayed academic excellence in North America in spite of authoritarian parenting style (Chao, 1994). What have been experienced negatively by White children have been experienced positively by Chinese children. It appears that the authoritarian parenting style has a different meaning for Chinese children. As such, the school achievement of Chinese children needs to be investigated within its cultural and family context. Chao (1994) argues that, parental control or strictness, what is viewed by White children as control, hostile, and distrustful, may be equated with warmth, love, and caring by Chinese children. Therefore, the construct of guan is a culture-specific reflection of parental warmth and control in Chinese families. It should not be simply explained as authoritarian parenting because it is exercised in a highly supportive family environment and must be understood in its cultural context. Stewart et al. (1998) suggest that guan is also an age-specific reflection of parental warmth and control. Chinese parents usually apply guan to younger children because it is easier and more efficient to discipline children in childhood than in adolescence.

For centuries, xiao, the Confucian value of filial piety, has served as the moral foundation of intergenerational relationships in Chinese society. Xiao demands a series of obligations from children to parents. It demands that children ought to provide financial and emotional support and bring honor to their parents through educational and occupational achievement (Lin & Liu,
1999). As a guiding principle of Chinese society, xiao not only has a pervasive impact on Chinese child socialization (Ho, 1994), but also helps Chinese parents exert an expectation-conforming influence on their children. With the close parent-child bond, guan drives Chinese parents to make tremendous investments in their children's education. Likewise, xiao motivates Chinese children to try as best as they can to please their parents and to honor their families. Under this cultural and family climate, Chinese parental expectations are likely to be valued and shared by their children; and Chinese children tend to behave in ways that are consistent with the desires of their parents (Chao, 1994, Cheung, 1982; Fuligni, 1997).

Although the contribution of Confucian heritage to children's school achievement has been well recognized, some negative aspects, such as lack of cultivation of creativity, independence, and critical thinking, have also been noted. Under the pressure of excessive expectations and overemphasis on examinations, the academic excellence of Chinese children could be achieved at the expense of their mental health (Ho, 1994). Although Chinese children tend to align themselves with what their parents expect, parent-child conflict is not uncommon in Chinese families (Yau & Smetana, 1996). High parental expectations and excessive parental control inevitably cause psychological problems (Crystal, Chen, Fuligni, & Stevenson, 1994). Steward et al. (1998) reported that Chinese students did show evidence of negative reactions when they perceived excessive parental control, especially maternal control. High parental expectations may foster full potential in children, but expectancy pressure may also cause anxiety and even depression. Chinese students who fail to meet parental expectations may feel guilty when they perceive the sacrifices of their parents. Chung, Walkey, and Bemak (1997) compared the differences in educational and occupational aspirations of New Zealand Chinese high school students and their European counterparts. They found that student aspirations were consistent with parental expectations, but parental pressure from Chinese parents appeared to have a negative effect on Chinese students' perceptions of their abilities.
Yu and Yang (1994) propose a model of social-oriented achievement motivation, in which expectations, goals, standard of excellence, and fruits of one's effort, are shared by both parents and children. The model may help us understand the relationship between immigrant Chinese parental expectations and children's school achievement. Chen and Uttal (1988) also contend that collective identification contributes to children's academic achievement in Chinese families. In this sense, the school accomplishment of Chinese children reflects the effort of the entire family and community. To date, few studies have investigated this 'shared expectations' within the Chinese cultural context. This study attempts to explore how immigrant Chinese children come to share the beliefs and expectations of their parents, and how they reconcile two distinctive cultural value systems, that of their homeland reinforced by their parents and that of their adopted country pervaded in their everyday lives.

While adhering to certain deeply rooted family values of Chinese culture, I wonder how immigrant Chinese parents adjust their educational expectations to the legitimate cultural norms of the new country and to their visible minority status. Furthermore, I wonder how immigrant Chinese children negotiate their sense of selves in the co-presence of Chinese and Western culture during the process of acculturation.

**Acculturation and Immigrant Chinese Parental Expectations**

When different cultural groups mix, cultural change or acculturation occurs. Acculturation is "the psychosocial process of adapting to a new culture "(Chiu, Feldman, & Rosenthal, 1992, p.206). Theoretically, each cultural group is supposed to influence one another equally, but in practice, it is the dominant culture that tends to win out. In North America, White mainstream society constitutes the 'dominant group', and other ethnic groups, such as minority immigrants, refugees, native peoples, and sojourners, become the 'acculturating groups'.

Acculturation is an ongoing process that can result in changes at both a group level and an individual level. The course of change "is highly variable and depends on many characteristics of the dominant and non-dominant groups" (Berry, Poortinga, Segall, & Dasen,
Based on two acculturation attitudes, namely maintenance of one's original culture and interaction with the dominant culture, Berry (1990) identifies four distinct modes of acculturation practices: assimilation, integration, separation, and marginalization. Briefly defined, assimilation occurs when a minority member seeks daily interaction with mainstream society and does not wish to retain his or her own cultural identity. Integration involves strong identification and participation in both one's native culture and mainstream culture. Separation entails an exclusive involvement in one's home cultural traditions, coupled with little or no interaction with mainstream culture. Marginalization is characterized by a rejection or lack of involvement in both one's native culture and mainstream culture. Berry (1990) notes that acculturation can unevenly cross four modes. For example, "one may seek economic assimilation (in work), linguistic integration (by way of bilingualism), and marital separation (by endogamy)" (p.217).

Berry, Kim, Power, Young, and Bujake (1989) examined attitudes of first generation immigrants towards acculturation within a multicultural context. They found that integration was the preferred mode of acculturation of various ethnic groups. Sam (1995) studied the acculturation process of immigrant adolescents in a predominantly cultural homogeneous society, Norway. The result showed that integration and separation were the preferred acculturation modes, and perceived parental attitude toward cultural change was the most important single predictor of children's attitude towards acculturation.

For immigrant parents, how to adapt to a new cultural context and help their children learn to function effectively in the new society is a challenging task. Statistical data and previous studies have revealed that, overall, minority immigrant students in the United States are performing as well as or even better than their American-born counterparts despite the unique challenges they have to face in a new cultural and school system (Kao & Tienda, 1995). Fuligni (1997) examined the role of family background, parental attitude, peer support, and student attitude in the academic achievement of immigrant students. They found that the shared
emphasis on education by parents, students, and their peers was the most significant correlate of children's school achievement. Immigrant families tended to regard education as a means of overcoming their disadvantaged status in the host country.

According to Ogbu's theory (1974, 1987), Chinese immigrants belong to voluntary immigrant minority groups who move to another country in search of greater economic gains, educational opportunities, and political freedom. In the process of acculturation, they tend to adopt the strategy of 'accommodation without assimilation' (Gibson, 1987), or the mode of integration (Berry, 1990). This acculturation attitude entails a strong identification and involvement with the traditional Chinese culture as well as Western mainstream culture (Hayes, 1992; Ogbu, 1987; Rosenthal & Feldman, 1990; Siu, 1994).

Relocating themselves in a host country, the immigrants usually lose previous privileges in their homeland. Therefore, acculturation stress, such as identity confusion, uncertainty, anxiety, and even depression can be frequently present (Berry, 1990). Visible minority immigrants have to undergo a more tempestuous acculturation process than European immigrants because they are at risk of many potential stressors or negative experiences, such as racial stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination (Chun, 1995; Suzuki, 1995). Minority status itself is a stressor (Moritsugu & Stanley, 1983). The acculturation preference of Chinese immigrants is inevitably shaped by the historical and political context of the host society in North America defined by the power of White dominant culture.

Since their arrival in Canada in 1858, Chinese immigrants have made invaluable contributions yet suffered continuous institutional discrimination (Boyko, 1995; CCNC, 1992; Lai, 1988; Li, 1998, 1988a, 1988b). From the gold rush (1858-1880) to the railway construction (1881-1885), from the head tax (1885-1923) to the exclusion era (1923-1947), the early Chinese experienced persistent "racial oppression and societal alienation" (Li, 1988a, p.4). Aside from the
aboriginal people, no other ethnic group suffered such massive torture and destruction of their community in Canada (Li, 1998). Li asserted that the treatment the Chinese experienced in Canada has nothing to do with cultural misunderstanding but a result of institutional racial discrimination.

Since 1967, the majority of Chinese immigrants have comprised business investors and well educated urban professionals. According to Li (1998), although recent Chinese immigrants and Chinese Canadians have built an image of a community that is "upwardly mobile, financially successful, and culturally cosmopolitan" (p.141), the old view of the Chinese as "culturally distinct and racially foreign has become a deep-seated cultural stereotype in Canada" (p.142). The new Chinese immigrants continue to experience racial prejudice and discrimination in all sectors of Canadian society. After examining the data on the occupations of Chinese in the employed labor force of Canada between 1971-1991, Li (1998) found that the color of skin remains socially significant in Canada despite its multicultural propaganda. The Chinese are still regarded as less desirable by the White majority and thus less deserving of high status jobs. Despite the recent emergence of a Chinese middle class brought forth by the rapid expansion of the high-tech industry in Canada, Chinese immigrants are under-represented in other professional careers, such as managerial, scholastic, and administrative positions. Li (1988b) points out that "discrimination still persisted and remained as an obstacle for some Chinese as they ventured into other occupational sectors" (p.125). Perceived racial discrimination in the Canadian labor market may greatly influence parental career aspirations of Chinese immigrants.

Despite many disadvantages of their visible minority status, Chinese immigrants in general, and their children in particular, have successfully crossed cultural boundaries and adjusted themselves to a new language and a new cultural system. Their attitudes and beliefs, or their 'folk theory' of success, is a salient factor in their achievement because Chinese immigrants largely "interpret the cultural and language differences they encounter as barriers to be overcome
in order for them to achieve their long-range goal of obtaining good school credentials for future employment" (Ogbu, 1992, p.9). Most Chinese immigrants come to the new land with a dream of success. Parental expectations of social mobility play a significant role in facilitating the school attainment of Chinese children (Chao, 1996; Hao & Bonstead-Bruns, 1998; Kim & Chun, 1994; Rosenthal & Feldman, 1990, Siu, 1994). For example, Hao and Bonstead-Bruns (1998) reported that the immigrant status increased parental expectations in immigrant Chinese families.

When encountering a different cultural and social system, minority immigrants are subject to an identity crisis. In family life, different identities between parents and children are likely to cause generational conflict. With well-established Chinese identity, the first generation immigrant Chinese parents tend to hold a strong sense of cultural retention and ethnic maintenance. However, their children are more likely to develop an appreciation of the new culture because their views have been largely reshaped by the new social and cultural circumstances of their daily experiences (CCNC, 1992; Rick & Forward, 1992). 'Being Chinese' thus has different meanings for immigrant Chinese parents and their children (Mckay & Wong, 1996). This everyday reality of social change and cultural adaptation, then, can create a wide generation gap. Chu (1991) and Leung (1997) found different levels of acculturation between immigrant Chinese parents and their children. As a result of the generation gap, children's adjustment in school suffered (Lin & Liu, 1999).

Two movies "The Joy Luck Club" (1993) and "Double Happiness" (1994) have depicted this generational conflict in immigrant Chinese families. The deepest struggle of Chinese parents and their children is a reflection of the clash of two cultural value systems. Similarly, from the interviews conducted by CCNC (the Chinese Canadian National Council), themes like parents and education, identity crisis, and racism were common in all the stories told by the Chinese women (CCNC, 1992).

The length of residence in the host country also plays a significant role in the shifting of cultural values and identities of Chinese immigrants. The Chinese way of thinking and acting
may gradually be eroded as each successive generation becomes more familiar with mainstream Western cultural codes. Kao and Tienda (1995) examined the residential status of immigrant students and parents of different ethnic groups in the United States. They analyzed the adolescent educational performances of the first generation (immigrant children of immigrant parents), the second generation (native-born children of immigrant parents) and the native generation (native-born children of native parents). The result of the study supported their hypothesis. Both cultural resources and parental optimism were decisive in the school achievement of the first and second generation youth. Due to high parental expectations and higher English proficiency, the second generation youth were found to be better positioned to attain academic goals. However, this descriptive study neglected to consider the effects of generation gap between native-born children and their immigrant parents in contribution to potential cultural and identity conflict. In other words, native-born children may be reluctant or even refuse to adopt parental values and thus care less for parental aspirations.

The different identities espoused by two generations are likely to create parent-child tension. For immigrant Chinese children, "the issue of identity formation is complicated by their position between two cultures seemingly polarized on the issue of independence versus affiliation" (Lung & Sue, 1997, p.214). In Chinese culture, children's identity is situated in or affiliated to a family context that they would honor their family if they succeed, and that they would disgrace their family if they fail. In contrast, children of Western culture are encouraged to search for an identity outside the family. Thus, Chinese children have to develop strategies to reconcile parental pressure at home and societal influence from mainstream culture. In discussing gender issues of minority immigrant adolescence, Boson and Rurin (1999) point out that gender stereotypes and expectations are influenced by traditional cultural values in different ethnic groups. Female minority immigrant adolescents grow up in two different cultures at the same time, thus, they have to accommodate bicultural expectations. How immigrant Chinese
children of both genders learn to forge an integrated bicultural identity that maintains their ties with both Chinese and Western culture merits our research attention.

Parental attitudes towards their native and host language inevitably have an impact on their children's understanding of Chinese heritage and their adjustment to Western culture. Ou and McAdoo (1999) examined the cultural and language preferences of the immigrant Chinese parents for their American-born children. Four factors, namely maintenance of the Chinese language, pride in Chinese culture, belief in Chinese culture, and preservation of Chinese tradition, were mostly emphasized by the Chinese parents. They also found that the immigrant Chinese parents were significantly influential in transmitting Chinese language to their children. "The more strongly the parents were attached to their own people and culture, the more Chinese and the less English was spoken in the home; the less positive the parents' attitudes toward Chinese culture were, the more English and the less Chinese was spoken between parent and child" (p.275). This study suggests that positive parental attitudes toward Chinese culture and language appear to contribute to the positive ethnic attitudes of their children.

McKay and Wong (1996) conducted a qualitative study, examining ESL acquisition of four adolescent immigrant Chinese students in California. They traced how these immigrant Chinese students negotiated their dynamic, sometimes even contradictory, and multiple identities in light of the sociocultural complexity of their new country. The findings showed that the four immigrant Chinese students adopted an integrative attitude towards both cultures: not only did they voice strong Chinese language retention and a strong English acquisition, but also they expressed a strong Chinese cultural identity and a strong desire to become Americanized. McKay and Wong argued that the multiple identities of the immigrant Chinese students were shaped by the multiple discourses of American society and the relations of power in both school and society. This study established the necessity of a contextualist perspective in exploring the interrelations of discourse, language, and identity.
It has been found that although immigrant Chinese parents prefer to retain their cultural heritage, they are undergoing gradual acculturation as they adapt to the new cultural system. Chao (1996) reported that the immigrant Chinese mothers tended to employ Chinese culture to strengthen family life. They also engaged in a process of adjusting and accommodating to the values and practices of the new country. The Chinese mothers emphasized that their children must work harder to overcome their minority immigrant status.

Hess, Chang, and McDevitt (1987) conducted a comparison study among Mainland Chinese, Chinese Americans and White Americans. They found an attribution pattern in maternal beliefs. The Mainland Chinese mothers attributed their children's failure at school predominantly to lack of effort, whereas the American Chinese mothers considered effort and other sources as well. In contrast with the Chinese mothers, the White American mothers attributed the least to effort. This comparative study revealed that, while maintaining their cultural beliefs in effort, the Chinese American mothers were gradually adjusting their values and visions to the Western cultural context.

Chen and Lan (1998) examined the differences in adolescent conformity to parental academic expectations of American, Chinese-American, and Chinese students. The Chinese students were found to be more willing to accept parental advice and cared more about fulfilling parental academic expectations than did the American students. The Chinese-American students were influenced by both American and Chinese culture, and their attitudes towards parental academic expectations were more positive than their American counterparts but less positive than the Chinese students. These two comparative studies demonstrate that both the immigrant Chinese parents and children are negotiating or adjusting themselves to the demands of two cultures.

Lin and Liu (1999) examined how the Confucian tenet, filial piety or xiao, was adopted by Chinese immigrants of Taiwanese origin in the context of American society. They discovered that although xiao was still present in the immigrant Chinese community, it had undergone a
process of transformation. While the immigrant Chinese children strove to fulfill their filial obligation to their parents, they also made efforts to maintain their personal autonomy. Likewise, the immigrant Chinese parents seemed to acknowledge the struggles their children experienced in a new country, and thus were less insistent on demanding filial piety.

Chiu, Feldman, and Rosenthal (1992) investigated the influence of immigration and acculturation on parental behavior, adolescent distress, and the relationship between immigrant Chinese families residing in the United States and Australia, and non-immigrant families in Hong Kong. An interesting finding of their study was that parental control, such as rule-setting and decision making, appeared highly affected by acculturation. Immigrant Chinese parents tended to set more rules and make more decisions in order to control their children's change towards autonomy and independence. It is possible that the immigrant adolescents, who had been exposed to Western individualism and democracy, were less in favor of parental authority and thus rated their parents as more controlling than the non-immigrant adolescents did.

Zhang and Carrasquillo (1996) investigated factors that influenced the failure of four immigrant Chinese junior high school students. An analysis of their qualitative data indicated that the lack of parental support for acculturation was one of the reasons. In contrast, a qualitative case study conducted by Siu (1994) described how the working class Chinese-American parents prepared their only son for school success. The parents attempted to take what they thought as the best of Western parenting and combine it with the best of Chinese parenting to help their son fulfill their expectations. Lee (1999) investigated the relationship between cultural identity and academic achievement of the Chinese American students. The students who adapted to mainstream culture but preserved Chinese heritage had higher grade point average than those who tended to assimilate the dominant culture. These studies have demonstrated that the school achievement of immigrant Chinese children is related to their acculturation attitudes. Further studies need to explore how parental preference of acculturation influences parental expectations and children's schooling.
Rationale of the Study

As the review of literature has demonstrated, numerous studies have investigated the role of family, culture, and acculturation in children's education. Although a clear set of unifying themes of research findings has confirmed the importance of parental expectations on children's school achievement, there exist contradictory empirical findings as well. Several issues emanating from the existing research literature require further investigation. In what follows I briefly discuss these problems and develop a rationale for my study. The main brunt of my critique falls on methodological issues and theoretical positions of previous studies. I will address first methodological issues, then discuss the 'model minority' script, and further challenge the tendency of sampling Asians as coming from the same cultural origin and viewing Chinese as a homogeneous group.

Context-free Quantitative Data

Most of previous studies on parental expectations and children's school achievement were based on survey data, such as self-reported questionnaires and scales. These quantitative studies have been criticized for not being tailored to examine complex and subjective family values and cultural norms (Gilgun, Daly, & Handel, 1992). The data collected from different cultural backgrounds are likely to be somewhat paradoxical and beyond the 'scientific' explanation of positivist perspective and Western mainstream psychology. For example, in a cross-cultural survey study, Crystal, Chen, Fuligni, and Stevenson (1994) found that the Asian students (Chinese and Japanese) reported high parental expectations but less personal stress than their American counterparts. Only by a detailed examination of its sociocultural context can we uncover and understand how parental expectations function in a particular Eastern culture, and also, how this phenomenon relates to their unique cultural values and historical traditions.

The results obtained with quantitative studies are likely to generalize rigid views divorced from the cultural context. For instance, Asian immigrants, including Chinese immigrants, have been stereotyped by mainstream society as "low on social conscience, creativity, compassion,
intellectual curiosity and personal integrity" (Kim & Chun, 1994, p.336). All the while, they are portrayed as only focusing on science and technological fields and lacking in all-round liberal education. Is this phenomenon the fruit of Asian and Chinese culture or is it the product of American and Canadian culture? We need to examine this phenomenon with a qualitative lens that reveals what can be said about the educational experience of Chinese immigrants, "by whom, when, where, and how" (Mckay & Wong, 1996, p.579).

One-sided Information

Most existing qualitative studies on parental expectations only use one source of data collection, such as interviews with mothers or parents. As such, data collected are likely to be one-sided because the information from the children is either absent or insufficient. Since little research has been conducted from the perspective of children, we cannot ascertain the stress and anxiety children experience under high parental pressure. Moreover, these studies cannot answer how children perceive and understand parental expectations and how they come to share or reject these expectations. Previous research has been mainly interested in how parental expectations produce positive products and has paid less attention to the feelings and needs of children. A social phenomenon possesses many facets. In order to examine a complex issue such as the relationship between parental expectations and children's school achievement, it is essential to obtain information from children.

Ingrained 'Model Minority' Script

It has been argued that the 'successful story' of Asian Americans has been exaggerated in order to blame other minority ethnic groups, rather than the American social system, for their failure to 'succeed' in North America (Chun, 1995; Liu, Yu, Chang, & Fernandez, 1990; Suzuki, 1995; Takaki, 1998). The ingrained Asian 'model minority' script actually functions as a blur of social and racial inequality. This script also trivializes the social and mental health problems of Asian immigrants resulting from racial discrimination "either by implying that such problems are rare or non-existent, or by suggesting that Asian Americans are able to take care of these
problems 'on their own' "(Liu, Yu, Chang, & Fernandez, 1990, p.93). Consequently, it overlooks vast problems encountered by new immigrants, especially visible minority immigrants, in accessing equal employment opportunities and political rights. Suzuki (1995) contends that the 'model minority' script is misleading. Far from having succeeded in American society, "Asian Americans continue to be victims of White racism" (p.114). Asian American success is largely achieved by stripping them of their dignity and at the cost of psychological disorders "characterized by lack of confidence, low self-esteem, excessive conformity, and alienation" (p.114). We have to wonder for whom are Asian immigrants supposed to be a 'model'? Li (1988b) asserts that the achievement of Chinese immigrants has been overstated in order to excuse racism in Canada. Racial discrimination against the Chinese has strong historical roots and an institutional foundation in Canada. The survival and success of the Chinese immigrants in Canada are achieved at the cost of untold pain and psychological harm, and thus cannot be explained only by their cultural characteristics. To date, research on the impact of racial discrimination on immigrant Chinese mentality, Chinese parenting, and Chinese children's schooling is scarce.

**Chineseness**

Many studies have portrayed Asian immigrants as a homogeneous cultural group as if they think and behave in a uniform manner. Some studies collected data on the Chinese only to test a Western theory. Other cross-cultural studies collected data on the Chinese mainly to compare with other ethnic groups, rather than to analyze the meaning for the Chinese themselves (Ou & Mcadoo, 1999). In other words, Chinese immigrants have generally been sampled without any awareness of their diverse origins; and Chinese culture has been viewed as fixed and unchanging. Therefore, potential risk exists for the results to be misunderstood by readers and further create a label of 'Chineseness' that may be a far cry from their own experiences.

Chinese immigrants from Mainland China, Taiwan, and Hong Kong, and Chinese immigrants from other countries such as the Philippines, Malaysia, and Vietnam may employ
different parenting strategies because of the different political, historical, and economic conditions they have experienced. For instance, the emphasis on children’s math may stem from different expectations between Hong Kong Chinese parents in Vancouver and Mainland Chinese parents in Ottawa. Hong Kong Chinese parents may want their children to be good at math in order to succeed in their local business; while Mainland Chinese parents may want their children to be good at math so as to secure a career in the field of science and engineering. Their expectations are situationally or locally motivated. Since Chinese immigrants from Mainland China have lived through the ‘Cultural Revolution’ that largely destroyed key elements of ‘traditional’ Chinese culture (Watson, 1991), their life experiences are vastly different from the Chinese of other regions. This unique life trajectory may have deeply shaped the parental expectations of Mainland Chinese immigrants. Therefore, an appreciation of the similarities and differences in immigrant Chinese cultural backgrounds will enhance our understanding of Chinese parenting beliefs and practices. This study intends to specifically examine parental expectations of recent independent immigrants from Mainland China.

The research literature has revealed that the majority of studies on Chinese immigrants are conducted in the United States. As the largest visible minority group and the fastest growing population in Canada, the educational experience of Chinese immigrants merits our research attention. The experience of Chinese immigrants in Canada may be different from that of their Chinese American counterparts. We need to be among them, to listen, look, and feel so as to uncover the meaning of their unique cultural beliefs, life experiences, and adaptive strategies that have evolved in the process of acculturation.

In order to obtain a deep understanding of parental and cultural influences on immigrant Chinese children’s school achievement, we must investigate this phenomenon within its sociocultural context and from a qualitative lens. As quantitative data have reported the educational success of Chinese immigrants, qualitative studies can help us further learn about
them as well as learn from them. Hopefully, this study will provide prototypical narratives of cultural expressions of the Chinese community in Canada.

The Sociocultural Approach

Since this study attempts to explore a folk theory of Chinese immigrants by uncovering multiple realities of their cultural tradition and acculturation experiences, no specific expectation theory is assumed in the investigation. An overall approach - the sociocultural approach is embraced to lead the course of the inquiry and guide the interpretation of findings. The sociocultural approach has implications for every decision made in the research design and research process.

What Is the Sociocultural Approach?

The sociocultural approach, according to Wertsch, Del Rio, and Alvarez (1995), aims "to explicate the relationships between human mental functioning, on the one hand, and the cultural, institutional, and historical situations in which this functioning occurs, on the other" (p.3). It views reality as socially constructed, and regards individuals as cultural and historical participants in social activities.

The historical root of the sociocultural approach can be traced to the Soviet psychologist Vygotsky's original writings in 1920's and 30's. Vygotsky's cultural-historical psychology posits that human activities take place in cultural contexts, are mediated by language and other symbol systems, and can be best understood when investigated in their historical development (John-Steiner & Mahn, 1996).

Contemporary scholars such as Wertsch (1991, 1995, 1998) and Rogoff (1995) have specifically used the term "sociocultural" in their writings. Other researchers such as Bruner (1996, 1990) and Cole (1996) have discussed the sociocultural approach in connection with 'cultural psychology'. The sociocultural theorists have developed four assumptions from
Vygotsky's theory. First, individual development, including higher mental functioning, has its origins in social sources. Second, one of the basic ways in which the sociocultural setting shapes mental functioning is through the cultural tools employed. Third, mediation provides a formulation of how this shaping occurs. Forth, in order to specify how cultural tools exist and have their effects, it is essential to focus on human action as a unit of analysis (Wertsch, 1991; Wertsch, Del Rio, & Alvarez, 1995).

The sociocultural approach as "a general approach in the human science" (Wertsch, 1995, p.3) aims to solve the problem of the difficult interdisciplinary dialogue that has resulted from increasing specialization of disciplines and sub-disciplines. Wertsch (1998) contends that human phenomena involve many complex and interrelated dimensions. Therefore, focusing on one or another part of the phenomenon only provides a partial picture, like the three blind men with different images of the elephant. To take a sociocultural view of education, we need to move beyond the confines of one discipline and to appreciate a confluence of multiple disciplines.

Inspired by Vygotsky's notion of 'zone of proximal development', sociocultural theorists assert that the process of child learning and meaning-making is a process of culturally shared activity or a process of enculturation mediated by more experienced 'old timers' in apprenticeship and guided participation (Rogoff, 1990). In Lave and Wenger's vocabulary, it all begins in legitimate peripheral participation, "learners inevitably participate in communities of practitioners and that the mastery of knowledge and skill requires newcomers to move toward full participation in the socio-cultural practices of a community" (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p.29). Therefore, the sociocultural approach can help researchers and educators understand how

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2 "Zone of proximal development" is defined by Vygotsky as "the distance between the actual developmental level as determined through independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers." (Vygotsky, 1978, p.86)
children acquire cultural values and beliefs through the interaction with their family members and community networks.

Since the sociocultural approach is interested in exploring dynamic interdependence of individual and social processes, it does not pursue any causal relationships. Also, "it does not assume generality, but seeks to understand both similarities and variation according to the processes involved as people participate in cultural practices" (Rogoff, Radziszewska, & Masiello, 1995, p.128). In other words, sociocultural studies do not attempt to pursue generalizations but aim at providing an extensive or 'thick' description of the time, place, context, and culture of a research problem.

The sociocultural approach remains a minority worldview in the field of psychology and education but it is drawing increasing attention. Since it is part of a new and emerging theoretical framework, many notions have been used to clarify this approach, such as 'cognitive apprenticeship' (Rogoff, 1990), 'situated learning', 'legitimated peripheral participation' (Lave & Wenger, 1991), 'mind as mediated action' (Wertsch, 1995, 1998), and 'distributed cognition' (Salomon, 1993). Nevertheless, there is a general agreement among those multiple voices: individual, social, and cultural analyses are inseparable; a phenomenon cannot be separated from the context in which it occurs. This approach differs from merely seeking the delineation of the influence of culture on individuals. It emphasizes the interdependence of social and individual processes in the co-construction of knowledge, a view that has been neglected historically in the field of psychology and education.

Why the Sociocultural Approach?

Traditionally, educational research has been significantly influenced by behaviorism and cognitive psychology that are framed in a positivism paradigm. The underlying assumption of
positivism is a belief that the elements of the social world such as the human mind can be studied in the same way as the natural world. Consequently, experimental methods are borrowed from the natural sciences, and knowledge is viewed as universal and value-free. From a positivism perspective, the task of a researcher is to discover a universal truth and to seek causal relationships (Mertens, 1998). Since the focus of a positivist educational research is to discuss what kinds of cognitive processes and conceptual structures are involved in the heads of individuals, the environment is simply regarded as learning background. Obviously, this view fails to recognize the reciprocal and dynamic relationship between individual minds and social-cultural-historical situations. Despite its universalistic claims, most of positivist psychological and educational studies can only apply to White Western culture because they rarely consider individual change, cultural transfer, and societal practices.

The sociocultural approach examines what kind of social practices provide the proper context for human mind and action, and vice versa, how human beings construct that context. It challenges us to rethink the kind of educational research we need in contemporary multicultural and ever-changing societies. From the sociocultural perspective, the process of knowing is a direct reflection of what we have experienced in the social world. Our daily lives, for instance, are shaped by what we have seen, heard, and felt in our interactions with other people. Likewise, our own ideas and performances can affect others’ thinking and action as well. Therefore, the social context is not just a surrounding environment but an integral part of our performances and activities. In this sense, the sociocultural approach maintains that “knowledge is socially constructed through collaborative efforts to achieve shared objectives in cultural surroundings” (Salomon, 1993, back cover). Human knowing can be interpreted as a shared social activity unfolding in a culturally mediated setting.
The sociocultural approach promises to transcend disciplinary boundaries in order to conduct trustworthy research and obtain a deeper understanding of human mental functioning and action. This approach can help educational researchers to understand multiple sociocultural constructions of meaning and knowledge, and to interpret how a phenomenon is related to cultural, historical, and institutional settings in which it occurs.

Although the sociocultural approach does not see a dichotomy between quantitative and qualitative research (John-Steiner & Mahn, 1996), a qualitative research inquiry is favored. For example, we may examine an educational phenomenon with the sociocultural approach by using qualitative study traditions such as case studies, ethnographic studies, phenomenological studies, grounded theory studies or biographic studies (Creswell, 1998). The method selected by the researcher should be the most appropriate means to draw the most trustworthy picture of reality in a sociocultural framework.

Given its many advantages in educational research, I adopt the sociocultural approach to investigate the relationship between immigrant Chinese parental expectations and children's school achievement. First of all, this qualitative-oriented approach aims to examine educational phenomena with an interdisciplinary lens. It equips the researcher with a broad worldview that links thoughts, feeling, and actions of Chinese immigrants with cultural, historical, and institutional context. The sociocultural approach also helps us make sense of the sociocultural origins of parental expectations, and how these expectations function in an immigrant Chinese family.

The second advantage of using the sociocultural approach in the study of Chinese immigrants is to provide an insider's view and to avoid a Western mainstream interpretation. As a researcher from the same cultural roots, an immigrant from Mainland China, my intimate knowledge of Chinese culture is undoubtedly helpful in enhancing reciprocal understanding
between the researcher and the participants. To examine minority issues situated within a complex matrix, such as indigenous cultural values and norms, practices of power, and ethnic inequity, an insider’s perspective is critical since “with reference to his or her own group, the insider understands the meanings and motives behind in-group behaviors that may be misinterpreted or devalued by outsiders looking through the lenses of their own cultural values” (Greenfield & Cocking, 1994, p.xi).

The third advantage of this approach lies in its emphasis on the process of individual and social change. This strength helps us understand how parental expectations are formed in immigrant Chinese families; how they deal with the differences encountered when arriving in a new land; how they transfer life disadvantages into positive challenges in a dominant society; and how parents pass on their unique cultural values and beliefs to the next generation.

The fourth advantage of the sociocultural approach in guiding this study is that this approach does not assume generality (Rogoff, 1995). In the debate between qualitative and quantitative research, the former has been struggling with the issue of ‘generalizability’ and ‘transferability’ because it has been attacked by positivists as its primary weakness. The sociocultural approach implies situatedness, it thus does not attempt to generalize the findings of a study to different cultures, social situations, and historical conditions.

In essence, the sociocultural approach advocates mindful cultural awareness of diverse values and practices. This orientation may signal very different perceptions and interpretations of a research problem. As Langer (1997) states, "if we are mindful, we recognize that every inadequate answer is adequate in another context." In other words, if we value situated circumstances, many paradoxes or discrepancies will become comprehensible. Only if we examine a problem in context can we discover the meaning buried beneath what we have preconceived. Therefore, we need to examine immigrant Chinese parental expectations in its situated sociocultural milieu.
Research Questions

Inspired by the literature review and the sociocultural approach, four research questions have been framed to guide the research investigation:

(1) What expectations do the immigrant Chinese parents hold for their children’s school education? How do their cultural beliefs and life experiences shape these expectations?

(2) How do the children perceive and feel about parental expectations?

(3) How do their visible minority experiences affect the relationship between parental expectations and children's school achievement?

(4) What is the role of parental expectations on children’s achievement motivation, such as goal orientation, self-efficacy, and control beliefs?

This chapter has covered theoretical issues such as the literature review, the research rationale, the general approach, and the research questions. The next chapter will address the research methodology employed in this study.
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, I will address the research methodology at both a theoretical and a practical level. I begin with an introduction of the research paradigm, followed by a justification of the research design and a full description of the research process, including sampling, data collection, data management, and data analysis.

Research Paradigm

Researchers approach a problem from a certain paradigm or worldview; that is, a basic set of beliefs or assumptions that guide their inquiries (Creswell, 1998; Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Researchers with different paradigms may arrive at very different descriptions and interpretations of the same data because they examine the problem through different lenses. Denzin and Lincoln (1994) state that paradigms are "overarching philosophical systems denoting particular ontologies, epistemologies, and methodologies (that) cannot be easily moved between. They represent belief systems that attach the user to a particular worldview" (p.2).

Guided by the sociocultural approach, this study aims to investigate four research questions with a qualitative inquiry. According to Creswell (1998), the underlying philosophy of a qualitative study is shaped by the following four issues: (a) the nature of reality (the ontological issue); (b) the relationship between the researcher and the researched (the epistemological issue); (c) the role of values in the study (the axiological issue); and (d) the process of research (the methodological issue). In this qualitative study, the investigation is framed in an interpretivist paradigm (Sipe & Constable, 1996) marked by the following four features.

First of all, the interpretivist paradigm rejects one universal truth but advocates pluralism, relativism, and subjectivity. Reality is viewed as subjective and constructed by individuals in various social, cultural, and personal circumstances. In this study, the final interpretation of the
acquired data, namely the immigrant Chinese folk theory, intends to uncover and celebrate subjective meanings and multiple realities in a specific sociocultural context. Meaning itself is regarded as “fluid and contextual, not fixed and universal” (Riessman, 1993, p. 15).

Secondly, the researched are not viewed as subjects but as collaborators or valued ‘others’, whose perspectives and worldviews the researcher attempts to uncover (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, & Tarule, 1986). The process of the interview is regarded as a form of discourse and a co-constructed activity (Mishler, 1986), and is shaped and organized by queries and narratives. The research process involves an ongoing reciprocal influence between the researcher and the participants. The Chinese families in this study were labeled as participants not as subjects, interviewees, or respondents.

Thirdly, the study is acknowledged as value laden. As a researcher from the same cultural roots, I will openly discuss the values that shape the narratives of the participants and my interpretations since the construction of any work always bears the mark of the person who creates it (Riessman, 1993). I am aware of my cultural background and personal life experiences and intend to bring my own identity into the research process. This identity allows me to “do more sociologically and personally reflective work” (McMahon 1996, p. 320). Self-identity and personal reflection, which are favored in qualitative inquiries, will bring an insider’s view to the research investigation.

Finally, the methodology adopted in the study is a naturalistic qualitative inquiry that mainly involved open-ended interviews. Since a qualitative inquiry allows the data to speak out with their own authority, it can bring in unique and rich information that may not be obtainable from experiments, surveys, and observations. The patterns, categories, and consequently the Chinese folk theory, will emerge from the accounts of the participants.
Research Design

Since the objective of an inquiry determines the methodology of a study, the research design must best fit the purpose of the investigation and the requirements of the research questions. This study aims to grasp the meaning of parental expectations of the Chinese immigrants on the one hand, and to achieve an understanding of the children’s perceptions and interpretations of their parental expectations, on the other hand. In order to bring this reality to light and to examine the parent-child relationship of Chinese immigrants within a given personal, sociocultural, and historical context, the research design and research methodology should be tailored to the scope of the study. A qualitative design seems to best suit the nature of the investigation and best meet the requirements of the research questions. A qualitative inquiry interprets how people make sense of the meaning of their thinking and acting, and meaning cannot be explained causally (Bruner, 1990). A qualitative inquiry looks at relationships within a system or context (Janesick, 1994), thus it enables us to capture personal and social dimensions of a research phenomenon that cannot be quantified into numerical data (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

The grounded theory research, a qualitative method proposed by Strauss and Corbin (1990), is employed in this study because it focuses on developing an inductively derived grounded theory from qualitative data, using a systematic set of research procedures. The grounded theory study does not begin with a theory then proves it. Rather, it begins with an area of study and then analyzes what is relevant to that area so as to develop an emerging theory. The core of the grounded theory research is in accordance with the essence of the sociocultural approach in that human mind must be understood through mediated action and activities in a particular historical and cultural context.
According to Strauss and Corbin (1990):

A grounded theory is one that is inductively derived from the study of the
phenomenon it represents. It is discovered, developed, and provisionally verified
through systematic data collection and analysis of data pertaining to that
phenomenon. Therefore, data collection, analysis, and theory stand in reciprocal
relationship with each other. (p.23)

Given its very nature of exploration, the grounded theory study promises a discovery of
an immigrant Chinese folk theory through systematic analysis of empirical data. Strauss and
Corbin have differentiated substantive theory from conceptual theory. The emerging folk theory
of the Chinese immigrants is substantive because "it is faithful to the everyday reality of the
substantive area" (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p.23). Since the Chinese folk theory is derived from
the narratives of the research participants, not deduced from logical assumptions, it should be
comprehensible to scholars and laymen alike.

In order to arrive at a convincing immigrant Chinese folk theory, multiple data collection
methods (including open-ended interviews, researcher’s journal, and document review) and
multiple sources of data (data from different informants: the parents, the children, and other
Chinese immigrants) are employed to ensure research trustworthiness or to establish research
triangulation.

Open-ended interviewing is highlighted as the dominant data collection method in this
qualitative study because it helps us get voices from the heart and uncover reality beneath the
surface (Riessman, 1993). Mishler (1986) offers that, “questioning and answering are ways of
speaking that are grounded in and depend on culturally shared and often tacit assumptions about
how to express and understand beliefs, experiences, feelings, and intentions” (p.7). Open-ended
interviewing is a meaning-expressing and meaning-understanding process, which enables the
researcher to listen to various voices and then to examine them within the sociocultural and
historical context. It also assists the researcher to understand the thoughts, intentions, and feelings of the participants as they unfold naturally during the process of interviewing as well as to grasp the cultural values and beliefs underlying their everyday practices.

In this study, the process of interviewing is regarded as an activity co-constructed by both the researcher and the participants because no analysis of human action is complete unless it attends to people's own notions of what they are doing. Since people's thoughts and feelings are always influenced by their ethnicity, biography, gender, social situation, and historical context, the relationship between parental expectations of the Chinese immigrants and their children's achievement is also shaped by "a congeries of social, political, cultural, economic, ethnic, and gender factors" (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p.110). Therefore, through open-ended interviewing, we can have a deeper understanding of parental expectations of Chinese immigrants by accessing not only "the individual identity and its systems of meaning but also the teller's culture and social world" (Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach, & Zilber, 1998, p.9).

Too often in examining the interrelationship among parental belief systems, parenting practices, and child achievement, only parenting practices are considered measurable and influential. In reality, parental expectations may not be observable in parent-child interaction because they are largely communicated in tacit consent or subtle ways. The strength of employing open-ended interviewing as the primary data collection method lies in its potential in eliciting life experiences and reflections of the participants. This research method can help us uncover how parental expectations are conceived and transferred to parenting practice, which in turn shape children's expectations and beliefs, and consequently influence their school outcomes.

Another advantage of using open-ended interviewing to gather information is its technical strength. Because qualitative interviewing refers to the personal, face to face, and
immediate communication between the researcher and the participants, any misunderstanding on both parts can be verified immediately. This strength ensures the validity of the research.

Research Process

Participants

According to Creswell (1998), “the purposeful selection of participants represents a key decision point in a qualitative study” (p.118). Poor sampling decisions may threaten the trustworthiness of the findings. Patton (1990) also suggests that the logic and power behind purposeful selection of informants is that the sample should be information rich. This study intends to develop a folk theory based on the educational experiences of the Chinese immigrants in Canada. The sample selected should be able to provide rich and relevant information so as to lay out the folk theory.

A theoretical sampling strategy is employed in the study because it is featured in grounded theory research. According to Strauss and Corbin (1990), theoretical sampling is “sampling on the basis of concepts that have proven theoretical relevance to the evolving theory” (p.176). In other words, theoretical sampling procedure is cumulative with an increasing depth of focus. It involves sampling events and incidents, and not persons per se. The fieldwork may stop when no significant new information emerges from the participants. Unlike a quantitative study, whose sample is representative of the entire population to which the researcher intends to generalize, theoretical sampling aims to discover if the events and incidents are saturated enough to develop a convincing theory.

In October 1999, I began looking for potential participants. In order to test if the interview questions were well framed and understood by both parents and children, and also to test whether the interview questions could elicit extended responses and stories from the participants, I conducted a pilot study with one of my Chinese friends' family. The interview
with the parents went very well; however, the interview with their nine-year-old daughter proved difficult. I had to improvise many sub-questions on the spot because her speech was very telegraphic. Obviously she was too young to reflect on her perceptions of parental expectations. The pilot study suggested that the age would be a factor to consider in choosing child participants.

In order to develop a better understanding of the research problem, it is essential to obtain children’s accounts and reflections. Therefore, I came to believe that the ideal immigrant Chinese families for this study should have adolescent children who are able to clearly articulate their thoughts and express their feelings. Furthermore, adolescents are likely to perceive clearer parental educational expectations and career aspirations because high school performance is crucial for college admission.

Two basic criteria were pre-set in the recruitment of information-rich participants or research families. First, the parents should be recent independent Chinese immigrants from Mainland China, who have lived in Canada less than fifteen years. An independent immigrant, by definition, is “a person with specific occupational skills, experience, and personal qualifications, who meets Canada’s selection criteria and is accepted to immigrate to Canada” (Immigration Canada: Guide for the independent applicants, 2001, p.3). According to Immigration Canada, the government accepts three types of immigrants, namely independent class immigrants, business class immigrants, and family class immigrants. Independent class immigrants are selected by their knowledge, skills, and experiences needed in Canadian labor market. Business class immigrants include investors, entrepreneurs, and self-employed immigrants. Family class immigrants are sponsored by their close families in Canada.

The strategy of using recent independent Chinese immigrants from Mainland China is mainly motivated by two reasons. Firstly, Mainland China is the number one source country of
skilled workers who immigrated to Canada from 1998 to 2000 (see Appendix B). Secondly, given their educational and professional qualifications as well as immigration conditions, they are more likely to provide rich and fresh information for the research problem. Although all Chinese immigrants move to a distinguishably different language environment and cultural context as a visible minority, independent immigrants have the greatest potential to provide highly informative data because they restart a completely new life from scratch without financial resources and family support. They have to go through eventful difficulties and struggles. Therefore, recent independent immigrants are ideal participants for this study.

Another criterion in sampling is that the Chinese families who participate in the study should have adolescent children of either gender, who were born in Mainland China and are currently living and attending high school or junior high school in Canada. The strategy of recruiting adolescents as participants is motivated by the fact that children at this age become more independent, thus they are likely to articulate their thoughts better. The study purposefully recruited the Mainland-born Chinese children because they have lived in both Chinese and Canadian cultural context. Chinese children who were born in Canada are not recruited because they are predominantly influenced by Canadian culture whereas this study aims to examine the interplay of Chinese culture and Canadian culture.

Different search strategies were used to sample potential participants. Initially, some friends and colleagues introduced a few Chinese parents to me but it did not work out because of time constraints and their lack of interests in the study. I sent letters of invitation to a few high school Chinese students but received no response. I went to the following local Chinese community sites to contact immigrant Chinese adolescents: a Chinese summer camp, a Chinese Saturday Mandarin school, two Mandarin churches, and a public high school. Before November
1999, I obtained around 30 phone numbers of Chinese families from various local Chinese community sources.

I made initial telephone contact with these families to ask if they were interested in participating in my study. After introducing the research topic, I described the role of the participants and the length of the interview. I assured them of the confidentiality of their participation. I also mentioned a potential benefit of participating in the study; that is, given my years of teaching and research background and academic expertise, I would be available whenever they needed for consultation about their children’s education.

The responses via telephone contact were varied. Some parents warmly invited me to interview them in their homes. Some parents politely refused, saying that they could not find time. In three cases, one parent agreed to participate but the other parent or the child was reluctant to be interviewed and tape-recorded. In two other cases, the parents and children agreed first and phoned later, informing me that they had changed their minds. The worst response that I encountered via telephone contact occurred when a parent was disturbed by my call. I heard the mother yelling to her daughter, “tell her I do not have time!” I felt more sad than upset by her attitude because her daughter was very interested in participation. A few parents asked if they would be paid for the interview. Needless to say, those families were discarded. Eventually, I was able to recruit a total of nine immigrant Chinese families, including the family I interviewed in my pilot study. These families volunteered their time and energy to participate in the study, and none of them quit the research project.

Although I interviewed nine immigrant Chinese families, only seven families were identified as the primary participants because the children of the other two families were at the threshold of adolescence (nine and ten years of age), and the information obtained from the two
children was limited and insufficient. The background information of the seven primary family participants is presented in Table 1.

The majority of the parent participants were at the middle phase of their lives and were highly educated professionals. Eight of them have Ph.D. degrees. In Lun, Yong, and Mei’s family, both parents are doctorates. Eight parents obtained their post-secondary or graduate degrees in Canada, which is a testimony of their English proficiency. Two families spent a few years in the United States before they came to Canada. As a consequence of the only child policy in China, five families only have one child. Two families have two children, and the younger ones were born in Canada. The child participants include three female and four male adolescents with an age range from 12 to 19. All of the children were above average students at school. All of the four male adolescents were enrolled in gifted programs in high school.

Although a qualitative study does not pursue a representative sample to fulfil the purpose of generalization, the sample should be reflective of the immigrant Chinese community. At first glance, the participants seem to belong to an elite group that is biased towards highly educated parents. After closely examining the qualifications of independent immigrants, reviewing relevant literature, and consulting my Chinese colleagues, I was assured that the sample reflects the makeup of recent independent Chinese immigrants.

First of all, the highly educated parent participants best represent the population of recent independent Chinese immigrants since the majority of them were educated outside Canada and immigrated to the new country on the basis of their educational and professional qualifications (Li, 1998). According to Immigration Canada, the independent category in its current format is ‘point oriented’; that is, it generally grants permanent resident status to applicants who possess
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Years in Canada</th>
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<td>Lun's family</td>
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<td>Mother</td>
<td>43</td>
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<td>Researcher</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>M..D., Ph.D.</td>
<td>Researcher</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lun (m)</td>
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<td>Grade 10</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yong's family</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>40</td>
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<td>Researcher</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Ph.D.*</td>
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<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yong (m)</td>
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<td>Grade 10</td>
<td>Student</td>
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<td>Grade 9</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>1(3)</td>
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<td>Grade 11</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>4(5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bo's family</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>B.Sc.*</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Father</td>
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<td>B.Sc.</td>
<td>Retired professor</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
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<td>Student</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xia's family</td>
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<tr>
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<td>B.Sc.</td>
<td>Homemaker</td>
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<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Xia (f)</td>
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<td>Grade 8</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

m= male. f= female. ( ) = years spent in US. * = degree obtained in Canada
 ⊙ = only child □ = enrolled in gifted program.
required employment skills and experiences, and who are likely to independently establish themselves in Canada. Typically, individuals with an undergraduate, graduate, or post-graduate degree in engineering, mathematics, computer science, and business administration have the best chance to obtain permanent resident status under the Canadian immigration policy. Consequently, the majority of independent immigrants are well-educated urban professionals.

Based on the routes they took for immigration, recent independent Chinese immigrants could be generally grouped into three categories. First are the independent immigrants who came directly from China to fill a rapid growing demand of high-tech job market in Canada. These independent immigrants generally have science and technology background, who are able to find jobs in a relatively shorter time to support their families and establish themselves. Second are the graduate students who entered Canada on student visa. In order to be eligible to work in Canada after completing their studies, a large number of Chinese graduate students obtain permanent residence status through independent immigration. Third are the Chinese intellectuals who came to Canada as visiting scholars. They extend the length of their visa by pursuing advanced studies in their fields and then change their status to landed immigrants.

It is clear that for recent Chinese immigrants, no matter what routes or paths they took, high education is a ticket to successful independent immigration. In other words, Canadian immigration policy has resulted in a highly educated immigrant Chinese community. Therefore, the research sample recruited in this study is reflective of this given population. Since recent independent Chinese immigrants belong to mainstream society in China, how they reconstruct their identities as a visible minority in Canada needs to be explored.

Secondly, the highly educated immigrant Chinese participants best meet the expectations or the criteria of this qualitative study because their educational qualifications enable them to
provide the required information for the research problem. Qualitative interviewing is a jointly constructed discourse of the researcher and participants (Mishler, 1986). It demands that research participants provide active responses, such as addressing their motives and beliefs, narrating their experiences and events, describing their dreams and ambitions, and even developing logical arguments. Needless to say, a highly educated sample is more likely to meet these requirements and produce ideal products. In addition, the highly educated parents understand the nature of the research since they have gone through a similar research process in their graduate studies. They are willing to cooperate with the researcher in the interviews because they are not afraid of being heard. In this respect, we can expect authentic voices from this well-informed sample.

Thirdly, the highly educated immigrant Chinese parents and their highly achieving children best meet the expectations of the study because they are more likely to provide rich information for the research problem. In Chinese culture, children's school achievement is highly valued and is viewed as a source of family pride. The parents of highly achieving children agreed to participate in the study because they were proud to talk about their children’s school accomplishment and to discuss their cultural beliefs and parenting practices. This cultural characteristic coincidentally fits the purpose of the study. Hence, the families recruited in the study are qualified as information rich participants because they are willing to tell and have something to tell.

Data Collection

Multiple open-ended interviews.

The predominant data collection method of this study is multiple open-ended interviews with the seven immigrant Chinese families. This data collection method best meets the
expectations of the study since "the goal of unstructured interviewing is understanding" (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, p.367).

In approaching these Chinese families, I sought a low-profile entry to encourage their active participation. In order to build rapport and trust with my participants, I talked with each family over the phone a few times before scheduling an interview. First of all, I informed them about the purpose of the research and their role in the study. Secondly, I guaranteed that their names would be kept anonymous in the dissertation to protect their privacy and confidentiality, and that their cultural values and religious beliefs would be respected as well. Thirdly, I assured them that they had the right to terminate their participation anytime, and that they had the right to decide what language would be used during interviewing. Finally, I offered to provide a short summary of the findings upon request. These verbal promises were written in the consent form (see Appendix F and G), which the parents and the children signed before the interview.

Wherever the site of the interview, it took place in a quiet, closed room where the participants felt that they could talk freely and confidentially. Three interviews were conducted at the homes of the participants, two in a Saturday Mandarin school, one in a Chinese church and another at my home. As the participants wished, the majority of interviews were conducted in Mandarin except for three interviews with children that were conducted in English.

The interviews proceeded from one family to another. The parents and the children were interviewed separately to ensure confidentiality, especially to encourage the children to talk independently. The interviews with parents and children were framed by different guidelines (see Appendix D). Restrictive, leading, and loaded questions were avoided in order to allow the participants to express their opinions and narrate their experiences with ease.

In order to obtain authentic data, I did not strictly follow the interview guidelines or
interrupt the responses of the participants to keep them on track. In this way, their thinking could flow freely, which helped them to extend their answers. From time to time, I improvised probes and sub-questions on the spot to achieve more clarity in the stories or to encourage the participant to continue his or her narrative.

During the course of the interview, the participants refreshed their memories and recounted their beliefs. The interviews probed how they made sense of their past and present as well as how they planned their future. The data were rich and diverse. In three cases, two parent participants and one child participant were so eloquent that I only asked a few questions, their narratives flowed naturally and covered all the questions outlined in my interview guide.

The data collection lasted five months, from October, 1999 to February, 2000. Each interview with parents lasted approximately 60-90 minutes, excluding the time spent on filling a questionnaire (see Appendix C). Except for one interview with a female adolescent which lasted 75 minutes, the majority of the interviews with children lasted approximately 30-45 minutes, including a scale answer check (see Appendix E).

The interviews were tape recorded on the spot and subsequently transcribed and translated. Regarding data transcription, Strauss and Corbin (1990) suggest that in grounded theory research, one can transcribe only the data that are needed. I considered myself an inexperienced qualitative researcher and believed it would be better to transcribe more than less. Therefore, I translated and transcribed all of the interviews with the primary participants. The interviews conducted in Mandarin were translated to English word for word, including repetitions, incomplete utterances, pauses, and emotional expressions such as laughs and sighs. Three interviews with children conducted in English were completely transcribed. The English translations and transcripts resulted in 260 single spaced typed pages.

To guarantee accuracy, all vignettes that were selected into findings were compared with
original tape-recorded conversation.

To verify the accounts of the primary participants, the interviews with two families who have younger children were considered as supplementary data. Additional information was also obtained from other Chinese immigrants through casual chatting, email exchange, and telephone conversation. Field notes of these conversations were recorded in my research journal.

The researcher’s journal.

During the research process, I made regular entries in a journal, usually twice a week. I left margins on each page of the journal in order to have enough space for later comments and critiques. From October 1999 to March 2000, the content of journal was mainly about the fieldwork, such as observation of the participants or casual conversation with other informants. From May 2000, the journal writing mainly focused on reading notes and reflections.

Overall, the research journal served the following purposes: (a) to document the field notes; (b) to record additional information I obtained from other informants through casual chatting, email exchange, and telephone conversation; (c) to write down my own reflections on the fieldwork and relevant readings; (d) to document each decision made during the research process, not only for my own relocation, but also for others to inspect the research procedures and protocols; (e) to capture occasional flashes of insight and seminal ideas that were pertinent to the research problem from the discussions with my advisor, thesis committee, and other colleagues.

Document review.

In addition to open-ended interviews and the researcher's journal, document review is also an important source of data in this study.
Since the study intended to examine parental expectations in context, I kept a close eye on the local (Ottawa) Chinese newspapers, looking for articles addressing Chinese immigration and educational experiences. I saved several paragraphs from these newspapers I reviewed.

Originally, I had planned to study the logs or diaries of the participants, parent-child letters, or family albums when possible. The majority of my participants told me that they maintained regular correspondence with their extended families and relatives in China. One of the main topics of family letters was about their children’s education. However, I was not able to access these data as planned (except for some family photos) because of privacy concerns of my participants. I was only offered a few published articles of one male adolescent participant and a painting drawn by another female adolescent participant.

In searching for Chinese experiences in Canada, I found a book called Jing Guo: Voices of Chinese Canadian Women (CCNC, 1992). The book is a collection of the oral testimony of Chinese Canadian women, based on interviews with 130 Chinese women across Canada over a six-year period. The Chinese women interviewed ranged in age from 19 to 85. Their voices and stories were of historical and educational significance. Some themes identified in the book such as cultural identity, parents and education, were highly relevant to this study. I included some of their interview narratives in the interpretation of findings.

In addition, I searched relevant information on TV and radio as well. I tape-recorded an interview series "Are We There Yet" (2000) from CBC radio station one. The series portrayed the life of new immigrants in Canada. The interviews with Chinese immigrants in this series served as a supplementary source of data.
Data Management

The fieldwork generated a considerable amount of data because I used different data sources as well as different data collection methods. Huberman and Miles (1994) point out that a good storage and retrieval system is critical for keeping track of the available data in order to permit easy and flexible access to the information obtained. To systematically store the data, I kept a floppy disc copy of all interview translations, transcripts, and my reading notes. I also had a physical filing system to keep interview tapes, hard copies of transcripts, raw journals, and relevant documents respectively for the convenience of retrieval and reanalysis. In addition, I used color labels, index cards, and file folders to distinguish different data.

Data Analysis

Since the number of the participants was small, I did not use any qualitative computer software to assist data analysis. Furthermore, I believe that the meaning of the data demanded in-depth analysis beyond the function of a computer software. Therefore, the data collected from the interviews of the seven immigrant Chinese families and other informants, along with the information obtained from document review and my research journal, were handled by hand.

For data treatment, the grounded theory study requires that the next phase of data coding should be based on the preliminary results of the previous data analysis. The data analysis of the study was divided into three phases of coding: open coding, axial coding, and selective coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). The data were analyzed during and after the fieldwork so that concepts, categories, and relationships could accumulate through the interplay of theoretical sampling, data collection, and data analysis.

Open coding, the first phase of the data analysis, “pertains specifically to the naming and categorizing of phenomena through close examination of data” (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p.62).
This coding process could give guidance to the analysis of the upcoming interviews by discovering and naming categories. The first three interviews were subject to the open coding, during which the key concepts were identified and developed. The completed translation materials were broken down into discrete parts and then were closely examined and questioned to compare and categorize their similarities and differences. This step led to new discoveries in axial coding.

Axial coding, according to Strauss and Corbin (1990), is "the process of relating subcategories to a category" (p.115). Similar to open coding, axial coding is a complex process of inductive and deductive thinking by making comparisons and asking questions, but the process is more focused and geared towards discovering and making connections between categories. The next two fully translated interviews were involved in the phase of axial coding. In this stage of data analysis, key categories were identified in order to formulate emerging patterns, which served as the basis for selective coding.

Selective coding is a process of "selecting the core category, systematically relating it to other categories, validating those relationships, and filling in categories that need further refinement and development" (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p.116). In this coding process, the last two fully translated interviews, along with the data gathered from other informants and other sources, such as document review and my research journal, were completed to enrich the categories developed earlier or to refine those categories. At this in-depth level of data analysis, all categories were integrated to form a grounded folk theory by a procedure of four steps. First, explicating a story line, or a core category; that is, the central phenomenon around which all the other categories were integrated. Second, relating other categories to the core category until they fit the story. Its purpose is to provide an analytic version of the story. Third, uncovering patterns,
namely the repeated relationships among categories, to systematize connections. Fourth, laying out the folk theory.

The data analysis of the seven primary participant families proceeded as follows: after completing interviews with the first three families in November 1999, I translated the interviews from Mandarin to English, and identified basic concepts, categories, and patterns on the basis of my first reflection of the data. Afterwards I conducted interviews with the fourth and fifth family using the same strategy as for the first three cases. The data obtained from the two families were compared with the initial identification of categories. Then I moved to the last two families in the same manner. As the fieldwork progressed, accumulated data on each successive family were compared until the seventh interview was completed. Finally, the data from all seven families were examined closely for an in-depth analysis, which included the identification of concepts, the development of categories, and finally, the surfacing of the folk theory.

To summarize, guided by the sociocultural approach and the interpretivist paradigm, this study employed a qualitative grounded theory methodology to examine the relationship between immigrant Chinese parental expectations and children's school achievement. Research trustworthiness was assured by multiple data collection methods and multiple sources of data. The narratives obtained from the open-ended interviews with the seven recent independent Chinese immigrant families were the primary sources of the folk theory.

The findings of the study are presented in the next chapter.
CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

The data obtained from the seven recent immigrant Chinese families were rich and highly informative. On the one hand, the study probed the beliefs, aspirations, and ambitions of the parents with reference to their children's future in the new land; on the other hand, it uncovered various tensions, contradictions, and hesitations both parents and children encountered in the process of acculturation. The convergence and divergence of their narratives provided a fertile ground for developing an immigrant Chinese folk theory. The stories told were unique from one family to another, but the meaning of the patterns that emerged from these stories reflected a commonality beyond their individual experiences.

In order to protect the confidentiality of the participants and to avoid unnecessary confusion that may result from giving 20 fake names to 20 participants, I assigned seven fictitious names to the seven children and named their parents as 'the mother' and 'the father'.

A strategy featured in grounded theory research is to develop an argument with a clear thread. The presentation of the story line respects the chronological order of the seven families interviewed. The supplementary data obtained from other informants and relevant documents also serve as an important source to enrich the findings.

To illustrate how culture, history, and other contextual forces and personal circumstances have shaped parental expectations and children's school achievement in immigrant Chinese families, the findings were selected and organized under the guidance of the sociocultural approach. In echoing four research questions, I organized the findings into four sections to provide a thick description of the participants' accounts: (a) accounts of parents; (b) accounts of children; (c) visible minority experiences; and (d) role of parental expectations. The core category or story line, namely parental expectations and underlying cultural beliefs and life
experiences, is filled with an integration of children's accounts, minority experiences, and role of parental expectations.

To avoid confusion caused by many categories and sub-categories identified in the data, I provide the following figure to illustrate the structure of findings before the stories of the participants are told in details.

Figure 1: Structure of Findings

- **Section 1:** Accounts of Parents
  - **Content:** School achievement, Career aspirations, Integration of two cultures, Moral character, Leadership role
  - **Source:** Cultural beliefs, Life experiences
  - **Communication:** Parent-child dialogue, Parental modeling

- **Section 2:** Accounts of Children
  - Perceptions of parental expectations, Anxiety, Self-expectations

- **Section 3:** Minority Experiences
  - Racial discrimination, Visible minority ideology, Dreams of prosperity

- **Section 4:** Role of Parental Expectations
  - Goal orientation, Mastery learning experiences, Internal control beliefs, Study habits
Section 1: Accounts of Parents

This section of the findings recounts the narratives of the parents in their response to the first research question. Three categories have emerged from their accounts: (a) content of expectations; (b) sources of expectations; and (c) communication of expectations.

Content of Expectations

The content of parental expectations provides answers for the first part of the first research question: What expectations do immigrant Chinese parents hold for their children’s school education? All seven families expressed their expectations in the following four areas, school achievement, career aspirations, integration of two cultures, and moral character. In addition, four families discussed their expectations on leadership role. Let us meet with each of these families one by one.

Lun’s Family

The interview with Lun’s family was conducted in Mandarin on November 6, 1999. Both parents have Ph.D. degrees. Their only son, Lun, was fifteen, a grade ten student in the gifted program of a prestigious public high school in Ottawa. At the time of the interview, the mother had been in Canada for eight years while the father and Lun had arrived in Canada six years ago. Both parents were outspoken and expressive. Each parent played an equivalent parenting role.

The parents expressed their expectations in all five areas.

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3 During the interview, I observed three modes of parenting reflective of the role each parent assumed in the family. They are as follows: (a) dominant parenting role, namely one parent mainly takes control of their child’s education and daily routine while the other parent assists. (b) divided parenting role, namely one parent is responsible for their child’s education while the other parent is responsible for the child’s daily routine. (c) equivalent parenting role, namely both parents equally share all parenting duties.
School achievement.

Lun's parents were satisfied with his schoolwork. They repeated that they did not "worry about his studies at all" since he had always been the number one student in all schools he had attended. The mother said they never demanded high school marks:

We never say to our son that he must get 100% percent correct in exams or he must be the number one student in his class....As parents, we never put any pressure on him.... We only want him to try his best. (p.2)  

Although the parents did not verbally press their son to be the number one student, they showed their attitudes in their feedback to his schoolwork. For example, the parents would be disappointed when Lun made a careless mistake in an exam and would be very happy and usually celebrate the highest mark obtained.

The parents expected Lun to be excellent in both arts and science, to become a person who "is close to perfection." They encouraged him to take part in all kinds of activities, such as participating math contests, writing competitions, playing musical instruments, and joining a basketball team. They also advised him to choose as many courses as he could in high school to broaden his knowledge and perspectives. Consequently, Lun became versatile and excelled in many areas.

Career aspirations.

Presently, the parents did not entertain any concrete career goals. They were open to alternatives and would respect Lun's choice. The mother explained, "we think it's too early to decide what specialty for him to focus on. We hope he can set a broad and solid base in high school so he can go to any university he wants in the future. In choosing a faculty and department, we will respect his own decision." The father did not think that Lun conceived any

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4 The page number in each excerpt refers to the English translations or transcripts of the specific family or child interviewed.
career plans, "he only mentioned that he wanted to become an important person, to do important things. I agree with him."

In the discussion that followed, the parents showed their career preferences. The father wished that his son would pursue a career in business management. The mother did not encourage him to study medical science because of anticipated workload, she explained:

Both of us have majored in medical science but we do not encourage him to pursue studies in our field. We are not like the majority of parents who want their children to study in their own field. We think it's too hard to study in medical science, too much work. Many people think that to be a doctor is a good career with a good salary. We do not view it this way. We only wish him to study what he likes. If he wants to play basketball or soccer, no problem. He will do a good job if he likes it. (p.3)

Integration of two cultures.

Reflecting on the advantages and disadvantages of Chinese and Western culture, Lun's father opened his discussion with some comparisons. He attributed the different cultural priorities and practices to the different education systems:

In Chinese culture, we are encouraged to work harder and to practice more. We believe that practice makes perfect (shu neng shen qiao, qing xue ku lian). In Western culture, they are encouraged to invent new technology to compensate the defects of human beings (bu duan fa ming, yi qiao bu zhuo). The two different philosophies result from the two different educational systems. Most of the inventions are technological and the majority of Nobel Prize winners are Western people. It's not only a problem of language, it's a problem of educational system. (p.23)

The mother focused on her discussion in Chinese culture. She stated her dislikes first, which mainly entail fierce competition and complex social relationships:

I would like to discuss the disadvantage of Chinese culture first. This disadvantage is related to China's population. Fierce competition has resulted in tense interpersonal social relationships. Chinese children are pushed too much. Consequently they become very defensive. Furthermore, in Chinese culture, everybody wants to be better than others. In the process of their upward pursuits, people tend to exclude others....Some Chinese are very exclusive, they can use any means in competition. (p.21)
The mother also expressed her pride and appreciation of Chinese heritage:

I like some elements of traditional Chinese culture, such as modesty and achievement motivation. We have such a long history that has nurtured the rich and glorious Chinese culture. We have so many stories, fairy tales, poems... this heritage will outlast our lives. (p.21)

In retrospect, the parents felt that their perceptions on Western education had gradually changed. The father recalled their first experience in Canada:

We were very sad and were afraid that our son might become stupid because he learned nothing at school. You know, many people in China and new Chinese immigrants have biases against the Canadian school system. They think that all Chinese students suddenly become very smart after coming to Canada. It indicates that Canadian students are very stupid. (p.22)

Gradually, the parents began to recognize the strength of Western culture, especially its stimulation of children's creativity and originality. The father illustrated his increasing appreciation of Western education by sharing a 'science fair story':

When we were in Winnipeg, our son participated in a science fair. This activity encouraged children to choose a project independently, and then to do library research and to make a poster. The competition started at a class level, then extended to local schools, and finally went to a provincial level. For example, they made cakes with 2 kg flour, they put two, three, four, and five spoons of yeast in the flour respectively to see how big the cake became. Through a series of design, observation, and discussion, they concluded that 2 kg flour needs 4 spoons of yeast to make the best cake. Another grade five child, he bought all kinds of batteries in the market and checked which one had the longest life and which one provided the most powerful light. By doing this project, he provided very important market information. Maybe even those battery factories had not done that before. See, those students were very creative. At the time he entered this school, such an activity had been held for 25 years. Each year, more than 900 projects in the region were selected to participate in the provincial competition. You see, how many little Edisons will be born in that activity? At the end of 1997, I read in the China Daily that Qing Hua University was holding the first contest on science and technology projects. In Winnipeg, they had already held the same activity from grade 4 to grade 6 for 27 years. A huge difference! Many of those children may become inventors later. Their grades and marks may be not that good, but they are very creative. I really appreciate this aspect of Canadian education. Many Chinese have biases. They only expect their children to have good grades, especially in math. That's why Chinese students always win in math contests. In fact, no matter how fast you calculate, you can never beat a computer. There has been a big change in my values since I came to Canada. (p.22-23)
With their increasing appreciation of liberal education in Canada, the parents encouraged Lun to make Canadian friends so as to become quickly acquainted with mainstream culture. The father explained, "there are always good and bad things in a culture, he needs to know how to differentiate them and learn good aspects from Western culture." According to the mother, Lun had been impressed by two merits he observed in White students. One was their open-mindedness and the other was their honesty.

**Moral character.**

For Lun's parents, being a good person was of first importance in all of their expectations. They wanted him to be respectful, modest, altruistic, and loyal to their motherland. Lun was meritorious in many respects but the parents were most proud of his moral character.

One of the moral precepts highlighted by the parents was modesty. The mother stressed the importance of respecting people:

> I told him not to look down or to be jealous of other students. Everybody has his or her own strengths. He should try to recognize their strength. If one aspect of a person is better than him, he should learn that aspect from that person. (p.6)

As a top student in the gifted class, Lun did not develop arrogance and was always open to learn from others. He won many awards and prizes but never exhibited them. When I interviewed him, I took a quick notice of his room decoration and did not see any awards, certificates, or medals displayed.

The second moral character emphasized by the parents was altruism. The mother recalled, "for so many years, we have always expected him to consider other people first." According to the father, Lun was always ready to help others, "he always considers others' feelings first and gives no thought to his personal gains and loses." Lun would lend his notes to
other students before an exam, and would yield to an inexperienced player when playing basketball.

The third notable moral character in Lun was his patriotism. According to the parents, Lun held deep admiration for Chinese heritage and had always wanted to return to his homeland. He displayed his patriotism in different ways, such as speaking Mandarin, making Chinese friends, studying Chinese texts at home, decorating his room with a Chinese map and Chinese paintings. He also created his personal homepage in Chinese. The father commented on his son's radical patriotism, "he gets mad at anybody who says bad things about China, no matter that person is a Chinese or a Canadian." For a long time, Lun refused to make any contact with the Chinese students who did not speak Chinese. He insisted that Chinese students should at least keep their mother tongue.

The mother was very proud that Lun's morals and his strong Chinese identity earned respect and friendships from his peers:

My son is not only good at academic studies but also good at music and sports. That's why his classmates respect him. Secondly, He is very modest. He knows how to behave and conduct himself. All human beings share the same nature. If you respect others, others will respect you as well. (p.18)

Lun had an article published in China Daily, which described his new life in Canada and his friendships with Canadian students when attending an elementary school in Winnipeg. The father told me this story to illustrate the importance of moral character and excellence:

When our son left his school in Winnipeg, Canadian children, more than ten, spontaneously organized a farewell basketball party for him without letting him know in advance. It was a four-hour party, two hours for playing basketball and two hours for chatting. Those children bought a basketball and signed their names and messages on it. They also made a big banner, "we are going to miss you." After our son came to Ottawa, they kept contact by sending each other emails. Some of his old friends even came to Ottawa to see him. When he first went to school in Winnipeg, some children were very unfriendly to him because he was from China.... However, because he did exceptionally well on everything and also
he was very generous, gradually many Canadian children liked him and wanted him as a friend. He earned their respect. (p.17)

When I probed them on moral education in the home, the father told me an ‘orange story’ that happened in mid-1980s in China when Lun was only one and half years old:

It was Chinese New Year, our extended family were chatting and eating fruits together. My son picked up the largest orange for himself. I was not happy when noticing this. I asked him, “the largest orange should be given to whom?” He was too young and did not understand me. Now I think I was too tough on him. Then I said, “give it to grandma.” He did not listen to me and continued to peel the orange. You know, because of “ge dai qing” (grandparents and grandchildren are closer than parents and children), his grandparents always give everything to him first. I felt that I should set rules at the very beginning. I said again, “didn’t you hear me? Give the largest orange to grandma!” He murmured “I like this one.” I remember it was winter, he had a thin coat on. I threw him into the nanny’s room, turned off the light, and then closed the door. I told him, “remember, whenever we have fruits at home, it should be offered to older people first, then to younger people." He did not talk to me. I said, “you think it over, you cannot get out until you understand my words.” I closed the door and walked away. He was crying. My mom wanted to comfort him. I lost my temper and stopped my mom. I said to her, “I want to resolve his selfishness today." My mom was crying too. The situation was heart breaking, but I insisted that I could teach him a lesson by doing that. He cried and cried until exhausted. I asked him when he came out, “were you wrong?” “I was wrong,” he nodded. Then I said, “from now on, I need to set a rule for you, whatever we eat, the order is from old to young. It means that grandparents the first, aunts and uncles the second, old cousins the third, you the fourth, we are at the end. Do you remember, you are the last one except us (parents).” He might not understand my words, but he remembered the rule forever by heart. After that, whenever the family or friends are getting together, he always yields to others. See, I solved the problem once and for all. (p.7-8)

This story reflected a typical Chinese way of parenting: we parents have rules, you children must follow them first and then try to understand and digest the meaning of these rules. The parents were democratic and flexible in many respects; however, "if a decision has been made by us, he must abide", the father stated firmly.

Leadership role.

Lun’s father felt sad that the majority of highly educated Chinese immigrants became high-tech workers in Canada. He viewed this reality as the consequence of their visible minority
status. He wished that his son would pursue a professional career in business management instead of working as a technician. The parents believed that their emphasis on moral character building would enhance his leadership abilities and help him assume a leadership role in the future.

**Yong’s Family**

The interview with Yong’s family was conducted in Mandarin on November 9, 1999. Both parents have Ph.D. degrees. Their only son, Yong, was fifteen, a grade ten student in the gifted program of a local prestigious public high school. At the time of the interview, the father had been in Canada for ten years, and the mother and Yong had moved to Canada six years ago. Each parent assumed an equivalent parenting role.

The interview gave me an impression that the couple shared a common point of view in their parenting. For example, when I asked for a clarification on an idea expressed by one parent, many times it was the other parent who provided the explanation. Although the primary narrator was the mother, she always invited her husband to express his opinion. The father generally responded, “you have said what I wanted to say.” The mother explained:

> In terms of parenting, we always agree with each other. Even though sometimes we have disagreements, we never show it in front of our son. We think that if parents do not agree with each other, you say one thing and he says another, the child will easily get confused. Especially when he was young, he did not know who was correct and what he should do. (p.15)

Yong’s parents expressed their expectations in four areas and did not address leadership role.

**School achievement.**

Regarding their son’s education, both parents expected that Yong would attend a prestigious university in the near future. They were confident that he would have no problems to
fulfill these expectations because "he knows what he is doing and also knows what he wants to do in the future." The mother was in favour of Chinese education and was discontent with the weaker academic training in Canadian schools:

For me, I think the elementary and secondary school education in China is better than that of Canada. You know, children go to school to learn something, but sometimes the school system in Canada does not provide sufficient service.... As a teenage boy, he is curious and eager to learn many things, but the school system here cannot provide what he wants. (p.1)

The mother told me that both of them were sent to rural areas to receive re-education during the Cultural Revolution (1967-1977) in China. They did not have the opportunity to obtain academic training in their adolescence and missed their "golden age" (Chinese expression: the best time) for acquiring knowledge. Therefore, they wanted their son to make full use of his "golden age" years. To a certain extent the parents were disappointed since they felt that Canadian schools did not provide enough challenge for children's intellectual needs.

Career aspirations.

In terms of career preference, Yong's parents held similar attitudes as Lun's parents. They would be happy if Yong could "go to a university he wants and study in a department he likes." They had pondered some career options and offered advice to their son. Originally, the mother wanted him to major in medical science because she was a medical doctor herself in China. However, she did not coerce him since she sensed that Yong was not interested in this profession:

Our son did not like it. Therefore, we did not push him towards this direction. It will be miserable if he has to do something he doesn't like. When we were in China, we did not have many choices. We chose a specialty we liked but later we might find it did not suit us. Our child is lucky here because he has many opportunities. (p.6).
The parents wished that Yong could study in a field that would not only hold the promise of a professional career but also meet his personal interests. The mother explained:

Last week his French teacher asked the students to write a paper on what they are going to do in the future. My son wrote that he wanted to be an electrical engineer. He gave a lot of reasons to back up his ideas. Maybe it's just a vague idea, but we often talk about the topic. In choosing a specialty, not only should he like it, but also he needs to consider other factors as well. For example, if he studies electrical engineering, it is easier to find a job, and the job pays well. It's also possible to develop in other related fields. However, if he studies software engineering, his knowledge is limited to software programming. High technology is rapidly changing. Maybe ten or twenty years later, the market won't need software programmers anymore. As parents, we talk about those things and also give him some advice because he has never worked and does not have these experiences. He takes our suggestions seriously...In order to set up a foundation for a university engineering program, we suggested that he should choose relevant courses in high school to develop interests in engineering. He likes our ideas. (p.5-6)

The parents were wisely guide their son towards a marketable profession on the basis of their own experiences and perceptions. Obviously, their advice had an impact on Yong's career aspirations.

Integration of two cultures.

When comparing the two cultures, the mother was evidently in favor of Chinese education. She said that the majority of Canadian parents "adopt a let-things-drift attitude (fang ren zì liù) in their parenting...children do what they want...some parents do not educate their children." The mother suspected that it might explain why Canadian students were in general not doing as well as immigrant students:

Canadian children, uh, I cannot generalize it to all Canadian children, some of them are also excellent. But in terms of percentage, the majority of them are just not doing as well as Chinese students at school. They say that the majority of Chinese children are excellent students. Why do they excel in Canadian schools? It must have something to do with Eastern education, including those children from Mainland, Taiwan and Hong Kong... Chinese culture and education is good for children. We are used to Chinese culture and education. We should parent our child in a Chinese way. (p.9)
In contrast to the mother's perspectives, the father's discussion was more dialectical. He was keenly aware that the strengths and weaknesses of the two cultures had historical roots and pointed out a trend in integrating Western and Eastern culture:

In Chinese culture, we stress that a certain amount of pressure is necessary for children's success while Western people value children's natural development. In fact, I think both cultural and educational systems have their own problems. That's why there is a tendency to combine two cultures. For example, in China, the government is trying to lessen student workload. In Canada, there is a trend to increase student workload. Hopefully, it is going in the right direction. The disadvantage of Eastern education is that students do not get hands-on experiences because it focuses on classroom training and exams, while Western culture stresses how to express oneself. I think it has something to do with history. In Chinese history, you do not need to say things but you have to show what you have done. In Western culture, people evaluate you by what you said more than by what you did. That's why they try as hard as they can to express themselves. (p.15-16)

Although Yong's mother and father expressed a different outlook on Chinese and Western culture, they generally agreed that Yong should learn from both cultures so as to function with ease in a bicultural environment. The mother recalled, "he was born in China and spent his childhood there. At the very beginning, he could not adapt to the Canadian environment. It's hard for us to raise and discipline him here because he had too much pressure and anxiety from the new language and culture...." The father clarified, "that's why we need to help him negotiate the cultural differences and learn good things from both cultures."

Moral character.

The mother was pleased that their son took their suggestions seriously. She was proud of her son's modesty and open-mindedness:

My son is a good kid, he listens to us and understands us....When we discuss or remind him of something, he is willing to listen, to think, and to take actions....He knows that he should be open to learn from others. For example, if someone is excellent in his studies, he knows that he should learn from him on academics. If someone is helpful to others, or is active in social activities, he knows that he should learn from him on social abilities. Everyone has his or her own strength. He can find different strengths from different friends by comparing himself with
them. He knows what to learn from this friend and what to learn from that friend. We are satisfied with him to this point. (p.7)

In terms of character building, Yong's mother asserted that children needed to be disciplined at an early age, "children are children, they are not adults. Nobody is born with knowledge and moral values or know how to behave." She revealed that she used physical punishment in his early years, "when he was young, sometimes we spanked him … in some cases if you do not punish him physically you could not get the effect you want. Not everybody listens to your verbal advice, sometimes you need to use a certain amount of punishment."

Mei's Family

The interview with Mei's family was conducted in Mandarin on November 14, 1999. The family moved to Ottawa from the United States three years ago. At the time of the interview, they had been in North American for six years. Both parents have Ph.D. degrees. They have two daughters. The older one, Mei, who participated in my research project, was fourteen, a grade nine student in a prestigious public high school in Ottawa. Each parent assumed an equivalent parenting role.

Mei's parents expressed their expectations in four areas except for leadership role.

School achievement.

In the mother's words, all parents want their children to be "you chu shi" (to be successful). The bottom line of their educational expectations was a university education. According to the father, "she needs to choose a good university and a good department… It does not matter if she continues her graduate studies or not, which depends on her own development."

Unlike other Chinese families, Mei's parents did not unduly push her for high grades. The mother told me that sometimes Mei criticized them for not paying attention to her studies, "she challenges us that other Chinese parents care so much about their children's marks, why don't
you care?" The mother explained that they did care about her studies. However, based on their
evaluation of her intelligence, they did not regard high marks as the only goal:

I was a paediatrician before. I believe in human intelligence. I think that if the child has high IQ, she can achieve a high level. However, she is average or a little bit above average....I believe children are in different IQ levels, so it's not necessary to push all children to reach the same level. Therefore, for our child, we do not expect her to be a top student. We know she is just above average\(^5\), we will be happy if she can achieve the best of her talent potential. (p.1)

The father held the same beliefs and stressed that parental expectations should match their children's potential talents. He pointed out that some immigrant Chinese parents valued high marks because they adhered to what they believed in China and did not adjust their expectations to the demands of the new culture and changing society.

Career aspirations.

The parents did not hold any concrete career aspirations but they were aware the career their daughter desired. The mother told me that Mei used to have many career dreams but the only persistent profession she retained was to become a medical doctor.

The parents showed some apprehensions about their daughter's career aspirations. First, they were concerned that pursuing a medical career would require many years of studies. Second, they were concerned that it would be very difficult to get a medical doctor's license as a visible minority person. Regardless of their worries, the parents did not thwart her career ambitions. The mother told me that they had considered alternative options in case Mei failed in her pursuit:

She can start in medical science. If she fails, she can always switch to another relevant field, such as biology or pharmacology. If all of these fail, she can go to study engineering when she is around thirty. Her road is much broader than the first generation immigrants. (p.13)

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\(^5\) For Chinese parents, children's academic performances are evaluated as top, above average, average, below average and poor.
Integration of two cultures.

Mei's parents held a neutral and open attitude towards the two cultures. According to the mother, "we never say that she must learn mainstream culture or keep our Chinese culture...but I think since she lives in Canada, at least she needs to adapt to some Canadian cultural norms and customs." She illustrated their attitudes through a ‘dance party story’:

There was a dance party at school. None of the Chinese students went. One of the reasons was that there was a fee for the party. Maybe Chinese parents did not think they should spend money for a dance. She did not go either. There came another dance party, we told her that if she wanted to go, she could go, and not to worry about money. She still chose not to go. She said she did not want to go because other Chinese students did not go. And also, I think, she did not know how to dance and did not know how to act.... She might be afraid of encountering an embarrassing situation. I did not say anything when she decided not to go the first time, but I encouraged her the second time....I encouraged her because it was a mainstream cultural activity....I think that you live in this environment, you should learn how to adapt to this culture. Do not be always rigid in your own ways (ge ge bu ru). We do not go to parties because of our language barriers and our age. We felt uncomfortable there. However, I did not say that she must go, no, I did not push her. (p.10-11)

When comparing the school systems in Canada and China, Mei's parents generally preferred Western education to Chinese education. They pointed out that the strict academic training in China helped children develop good study habits but oriented them towards the same academic journey in spite of their own interests, talents, and abilities. The mother criticized Chinese school education for evaluating children only on their grades:

For example, when we were in China, my daughter was viewed as an honor student because she got very good grades. While those students who were not good at math or physics were marked as poor students (cha sheng). They were also good kids with good moral character. The Chinese expectations are, when you study math, you should study like a mathematician; when you study physics, you should study like a physicist; when you study chemistry, you should study like.... It is not correct. (p.18-19)

The parents were impressed by the inclusive and open school system in North America. The mother told me an ‘art exhibition story’ to illustrate this openness:
My daughter is not good at painting. From kindergarten to elementary school in China, whenever the school exhibited student artwork, my daughter's painting would not be chosen. We went to see the exhibition, always only two or three students' paintings were presented on the wall because those were evaluated as excellent products. The work of other students was not chosen. For our daughter, her painting would not be chosen even if half of the paintings of her class were presented. She was weak at painting. Usually she painted poorly. Her painting was never chosen for presentation. After we arrived in the States, she invited us to the school lobby in the first week. Surprisingly, one of her paintings was presented on the wall! It was not because she painted better after she came to the States, but because all the paintings were exhibited (laughs). In this way, my daughter became very proud of herself. Everything she did, she could show it to other people. She did not feel embarrassed about her poor painting. She felt that her painting was appreciated by others. We did the same school project, and our work was equally presented on the wall. Our work is the same but the ideas may be different. Maybe you draw a cat this way but I want to draw a cat that way. We have different ideas, mine is not worse than yours.... Uh, I think it's a drawback of Chinese education to show only good ones. (p.19)

The parents also acknowledged that the flexible Western education fostered children's natural development but did not provide enough guidance to lead children on the right track. The father had pondered the advantages and disadvantages of the two different education systems for students of different talents:

I think that top students can do well anywhere, either in North America or China. However, it's better for average students to study in China where they can be pushed to their full potential. For those weaker students, it's better for them to study in North America because they won't feel as much pressure....For those bottom students (the parents used this expression in English), they should not study in China, their lives would be very miserable there. (p.20)

Although the parents wanted their daughter to learn from Canadian culture, they were happy that she maintained a strong Chinese identity. The mother commented, "if she changed completely to a Canadian girl, we would not feel comfortable about that."

**Moral character.**

Since the family moved to North America, the parents were always very defensive of their motherland whenever they heard any negative remarks about Mainland China. Growing up
in this family environment, Mei developed a strong sense of patriotism. The mother told me the following story:

Once a friend came to visit us. When we were chatting, he said many bad things about China. My daughter became so angry that she put him in an embarrassing situation by criticizing him right in front of us, "China has so many shortcomings, then why you only talk about them in Canada, why don’t you go back to construct our homeland, to make it better?" We felt very sorry for our friend. We did not expect that she would make such comments at that moment. (p.11)

According to the parents, Mei loves China and always wants to return to China as a medical doctor.

Ling’s Family

The interview with Ling's family was conducted in Mandarin on December 5, 1999. Both parents were well educated. The mother holds a Master's degree and the father a Bachelor degree. At the time of the interview, the family had been in North America for ten years. Their only daughter, Ling, was sixteen, a grade eleven student in a local public high school and a member of Youth Canada. I was only able to interview Ling’s mother.

Ling's mother expressed her expectations in all five areas.

School achievement.

The mother repeated that she did not worry at all about her daughter's studies because she was a top student in her class. She believed that Ling was smarter than her and thus expected a higher degree from her, such as a Ph.D. However, the mother did not push her daughter since she perceived that Ling was not interested in a high academic standing:

She did not answer my question directly, so I think I cannot force her to pursue a Ph.D. degree. It also does not matter if she wants to get her master's degree or not. At least she should get a bachelor's degree and become a well-educated person (p.2).

The mother explained that the reason she pressed Ling for high grades was to help her win a university scholarship and thus reduce family financial pressure:
The only reason I push her to get high grades is that I hope that she can win a scholarship at a quality university or go to a co-op program. If so, as parents, we do not even have financial pressure anymore. We do not need to pay for her tuition fee and living expenses. (p.10)

In order to help Ling adapt to Canadian culture, the mother kept regular contact with the school and adjusted her expectations to the teacher’s suggestions. For example, informed by the teacher that Ling was strong in academics and relatively weak in social activities, the mother began to focus more on encouraging her to participate in youth organizations.

**Career aspirations.**

Ling’s mother held specific career aspirations. She wanted her daughter to choose a career that would bring financial reward. In her mind, a good career meant a well-paid high-tech job. She did not encourage Ling to study law or medical science because these two professions would demand lengthy studies and were dominated by the White majority. Perceiving Ling’s passionate love for arts, the mother expressed her worries:

> She likes arts. I always remind her that if she chooses arts as her career, she will run into financial problems. That’s not a career for a secure living, looking at those artists who paint in the street. I hope that she only regards arts as one of her hobbies. (p.2)

The mother also knew that Ling was interested in sales and marketing; however, she discouraged her in this endeavor. She strongly recommended her to pursue a career that combines arts and technology, such as computer animation, to secure a decent living:

> Last year I took her to Toronto. We visited Sheridan Art College. She likes that school.... The college only recruits 25 students into the computer animation program each year. This specialty has a good future. It is different from fine arts. She can get training in both arts and engineering. I support her to pursue this career because it promises a good future. Both Disney World and Hollywood industry need those talents. I heard that the students (who) graduated from that college would get a good salary. So it’s a good career for a living. Now she is clear that she wants to study in a discipline that has something to do with arts. I am guiding her towards this direction. I hope she will go to university to study computer engineering first, and then transfer to computer animation. (p.2)
Integration of two cultures.

Ling's mother was positive about both Chinese and Canadian culture, "you can always learn something from another culture, because each culture has its own strength." She appreciated Chinese culture for valuing formal education but disliked rote memory reinforced in Chinese teaching and learning. She appreciated Western education for nurturing children's natural development but disliked limitless freedom offered by parents and society. She contended that the freedom given to children should be accompanied by boundaries because children need guidance from adults:

For teenage students, they face many choices because nobody tells them what they can do or what they cannot do. Parents and teachers in Canada do not inform children on what they should not do, mostly they encourage children to try everything. This leaves the responsibility on children's shoulders. They have to make their own decisions. (p.15)

The mother encouraged Ling to make friends of diverse cultural backgrounds. When noticing Ling's preference for Chinese or Asian friends, she worried, "this is her weakness. It is also our Chinese weakness. We like to stay within our own culture not because we don't like other cultures but because we feel more comfortable with Chinese friends."

The mother was optimistic about the future of the second generation immigrant Chinese children. She believed that they would have more opportunities because of their double heritage, "they have two oases (da hou fang) to live and to search for opportunities... My daughter is lucky, she has at least three choices for her future: Canada, the States, and China." On their return to Canada from a summer vacation in China, the mother and the daughter had an interesting dialogue:

Last summer we spent one month in China. On our return flight to Canada, I asked my daughter, "do you like China?" "Yes, very much." "Did you enjoy your summer vacation?" "I enjoyed it very much." She asked me the same questions. I
told her that I like China. Then I asked, “why are we going back to Canada?” She said, “I do not know”. (laughs). (p.8)

**Moral character.**

Ling's mother expected Ling to be *pin xue jian you* (to achieve excellence both morally and intellectually). She regarded all-round development as a combination of moral character, academic excellence, and a good health (*de zhi ti quan mian fa zhan*).

The mother disliked Canadian youth culture, such as drinking, smoking, and especially dating and having sex at an early age. Therefore, she set up rules and introduced Christian faith to her daughter. She was pleased that Ling was not involved in popular Canadian youth culture:

In order to morally keep her on the right track, I did not allow her to date at an early age, like those White girls, to learn how to smoke, drink, and drive etc. I won't like it if she starts to learn those things. No, I do not think that she should learn smoking and drinking. I always tell her, “if you have a baby as a teenager, you will lose your opportunity for a university education. You won't have a future any more. So you choose, to go to university or to be a teenage mother?” I began to remind her about this when she was eleven or twelve. Later I introduced her to the church and eventually she became a faithful Christian. At church, she received systematic Christian moral values. So I do not worry about her morals. I believed that if she meets a boy, she won't do anything stupid. (p.3-4)

**Leadership role.**

Following the suggestions of the teachers, the mother encouraged her daughter to participate in different social activities and to assume various leadership roles. Ling had been active in the student council, the yearbook committee, and worked as a facilitator for Youth Canada. The mother proudly mentioned that Youth Canada organized an activity called "*walk against violence*", and her daughter was selected as one of the five speakers to address high school students.
Bo's Family

The interview with Bo's family was conducted in Mandarin on December 11, 1999. Both parents were well educated. The father has a Ph.D. degree and the mother has a B.Sc. degree. Their only son, Bo, was twelve, a grade seven student in the gifted program of a local public junior high school. At the time of the interview, the father had been in Canada for eight years while the mother and Bo had arrived in Canada five years ago. Even though the mother talked more than the father during the interview, her remarks largely reflected the ideas of her husband. The father mainly supervised Bo's studies while the mother was in charge of his daily needs. The mother described their divided parenting roles as follows:

The way we love our son as a father and as a mother is different. My husband does not care much about our son's daily routine, such as food, clothes etc. I take care of that. He mainly focuses on his plans and studies. Our family is like a typical traditional Chinese family: lan zhu wai nu zhu lei (men take care of things outside and women take care of things inside). (p.10)

Bo's parents expressed their expectations in all five areas.

School achievement.

The parents attributed their high educational expectations to their family tradition because all members of their extended families were well educated. Furthermore, since the father was also the only son in his family, Bo became the one to continue the lineage, or to keep the family's surname, the gen (the root) in the extended family. "You can imagine our expectations for him, two generations!" said the mother.

Bo's parents always demanded high grades. They expected that Bo would achieve at least at a master's level. The mother was very proud of his academic accomplishment, "my son is always number one in his class on any exam... but it would be better if he can exceed our current expectations. All parents want their children to be higher and better."
While maintaining high academic standards, the parents were adjusting their expectations and parenting practice to the Canadian context and emphasized all-round development. The mother explained:

Uh, either in Canada or in China, we expect our child to be the best student at school. In addition to his academic studies, he should take part in other activities as well, such as sports, social, and community services. From our experiences in Canada, it's not good to focus only on academic studies. He must have other interests and hobbies to become a versatile person. Those top grade students in China are not popular anymore after they come to Canada. They could not integrate into the Canadian society. So he should be good in all aspects. As a boy, he should be especially good at sports. That's why his father often takes him to play sports and chess. Now he is very good at basketball, soccer, and chess. (p.1)

**Career aspirations.**

Since Bo was only twelve years old, the parents felt that it was too early to plan any concrete career goals. They generally mentioned that they expected him to become a manager or a professor. In terms of specialty, they would be open to his personal interests and choices.

**Integration of two cultures.**

Bo's parents spoke highly of primary education in China because it effectively promotes positive outcomes and "students can have a good grasp of basic knowledge." They also criticized traditional Chinese education for its rigidity. The mother gave an example, "knowledge is transmitted to students with a forced-feeding (tián yìa) method. Everything has an absolutely right answer. If you do not give that answer, you are wrong."

The parents appreciated the free and open learning environment in Canada, and praised Canadian education for fostering children's independent thinking and creativity. However, like Yong and Ling's mother, they also felt that there was "too much freedom" and not enough guidance in Canadian parenting.
Based on their reflections on the two cultures, the parents strongly promoted cultural integration. They registered Bo in a Saturday Mandarin school to learn Chinese culture. In the meantime, they encouraged him to make Canadian friends to learn Western culture.

**Moral character.**

Both parents emphasized the importance of morality. The mother commented that Bo's success in being selected into the student council was in part a function of his good moral character. Bo had a good relationship with both his teachers and peers because he was always helpful and cooperative. The mother was very proud of his son, "he is happy and healthy with good moral values. He is very clear about what he should do and what he should not do."

**Leadership role.**

The parents expected Bo to excel in all aspects of life, especially in leadership and organizational abilities. The mother told me how they helped their son to participate in the student council:

Recently he participated in a student council election campaign. Actually he had wanted to do that when he was in grade six....The school council competition here is like a real political campaign. The candidates have to give public speeches to win votes. He asked us how to do it. We gave some suggestions, such as the function and duty of the school council, connection with teachers and students, community activities etc....On Thursday, he phoned me about his good news. He told me that there were five candidates for that position at the beginning. One was sick and two were eliminated in the first round of the election. He and another girl did very well. Perhaps my son’s grades were higher so he was regarded as exceptional. Eventually he won the majority votes. We encourage him to participate in the school council because he will have a chance to develop multiple abilities, especially leadership and organizing abilities. We support him. We do not need this kind of ability ourselves but it’s very important for him. Definitely he needs the ability for his future. He needs to develop in both broad and deep levels. As a member of the school council, he attends school meetings, knows various events, and organizes all kinds of activities. It’s good for his personal growth. (p.7)

The parents believed that his leadership role in the school council could help him assume a management position in his future career.
Feng's Family

The interview with Feng's family was conducted in Mandarin on January 9, 2000. The father, a retired professor and the mother, a housewife with a high school education, have two children, a nineteen-year-old son and a nine-year-old daughter. Their son, Feng, a freshman at a university, participated in the study. At the time of the interview, the father had been in Canada for fifteen years while the mother and Feng had moved to Canada thirteen years ago. The father played a dominant role in the family and was in charge of their children's education and daily life. The mother did not assume an equal or a divided parental role mainly because of her poor health. The primary narrator was the father.

Feng's father expressed his expectations in all five areas.

School achievement.

Both parents held high educational expectations and were satisfied with Feng's academic achievement. The father told me that his son had been the number one student in the gifted class of a high school for five years and was admitted on a full scholarship to the computer engineering program at a prestigious University.

The father was very open and shared his family problems with me. Having taught in university for many years, he initially intended to tutor his son after school so that he could be academically better informed than other students, "if I was in China, I would teach him by myself. If other kids could go to university at the age of eleven, I wanted him to achieve that too. That's my ideal."

The father recalled that, in the first few years in Canada, Feng's grades were a bit below the average, far from his expectations. He responded to his son's poor school performance by scolding and blaming. His harsh criticism resulted in a tense father-son relationship and he was
entirely rejected by his son. Although he tried very hard, he admitted that his tough love
approach was a total failure:

I was not patient and was tough on him. I blamed him for not doing a good job at
school. After that, he became afraid of me and was never close to me. He did not
want me to help him with his studies because if I helped with his homework, I
would find his weakness and criticize him more. My parenting was not correct
and almost a failure. I was very confused also. I wanted to help my only son, I did
not understand why he rejected my offer. I believed that parents should teach and
discipline children, otherwise why are we parents? (p.2)

Being afraid of his father, Feng turned to his mother for help whenever he had difficulty
in his studies. The father criticized him even more for not consulting him, the more
knowledgeable parent in the family:

It even caused more conflicts between us. The conflicts usually ended up with my
scolding. It did not solve any problems. I was really frustrated....I was a professor
in the department of Physics but I was just useless for my son in his studies. So in
his eyes, there was no difference between an illiterate farmer and me....See, a
professor can teach university students but he cannot teach an elementary kid.
Even though you are full of knowledge, but if the child does not listen to you, it's
useless, right? (p.3-4)

Since Feng rejected his help, the father tried another strategy. He asked his friends and
colleagues to help him with his studies. It turned out to be successful. The father reflected:

It was a lesson for me. If you want to teach your child, you should earn his love
first. You should not make him to be afraid of you. I was not patient at all. Once
the relationship was established like that, it's difficult to change it....the tense
father-son relationship resulted from my incorrect parenting. I should not have
done that. It's impossible to expect him to achieve everything in one day (wang zi
cheng long tai ji). (p.3-4)

Although Feng refused any academic help from him, the father believed that his values
had been gradually passed to his son through constant directives, including criticizing and
scolding:

I always tell (guan shu) them that they should be a qiang zhe (a strong person),
leading a meaningful life. I always say that they should be able to contribute
something good to society. In this way, they can earn what they deserve to
support themselves. If necessary, they should contribute as much as they can to
society. They will be rewarded later. When they were very young, I told them that Western society is a competitive society, a winner-takes-all society. Therefore, we should be ambitious (zhì qì), especially as new immigrants, we should do better than others. (p.1)

I repeated and repeated those values everyday (he sang lian jīn), such as how to become a successful person and a good person. He accepted these values. Since he was very young, my son always wanted to be the best, that was a belief I passed on to him. These values were very strong, almost immersed into his blood. After years of exposing to my directives, now my son holds these beliefs as well. However, my daughter does not care if she does better than others. I guess my son was born in China, he has a strong sense of betterment. He always wants to be the best. (p.4)

In responding to his father’s continuous criticism, Feng demonstrated incredible resilience and excelled at school. The father commented:

The beliefs are so strong in him, even though I criticize him every day, he won’t get depressed. Many friends say I put down on him too much that he won’t excel. You see the result? He is getting stronger and stronger. (p.25)

The father regretted his tough love approach and did not use the same parenting strategy to his daughter:

I learned a lesson from my son…. I am not that tough on my daughter anymore. I realize that I should not force them to do things. When they grow older and become more mature, they will know what to do and how to do their schoolwork. (p.9)

Career aspirations.

Feng’s father stood firm that he had a significant influence on his son's interest in science and his career choice in computer engineering. He stressed the importance of being realistic and practical in making career choices:

I always tell him, in Canada, he should consider the job market first because success is inseparable from the demand of society. For instance, some students like astrology, or palaeontology. If they get good grades, they may win scholarships to study these subjects in a university. But after university nobody will give them grants to support their research in those fields, right? You know, many immigrants did not have a correct specialty. They have to change their field after coming here because what they learned in China is useless in Canada. (p.6)
When attending junior high school, Feng aspired to become a medical doctor. The father discouraged him because he had concerned that pursuing a medical profession would be too long and unstable.

If he studies medical science, it will take him 10 to 12 years to become a physician, and 16 years to become a specialist. Let me count, if he goes to university around 19, he won’t get his license until 35, too old....There also is a risk of being eliminated.... For example, one of my friends' daughter was advised to study in another discipline when she was in her second year of medical school. She changed to biology. But what she is working on now has nothing to do with her degree in biology. (p.11)

The father told me, Feng did not take his suggestions seriously until a Chinese medical specialist recounted many struggles in pursuing his career. Feng's father was very satisfied that his son finally chose to study computer engineering at university.

**Integration of two cultures.**

Feng’s father wanted his children to maintain core elements of Chinese cultural and learn good things from Canadian culture. He evaluated the primary education in China as more academically solid than that of Canada. From his perspective, the strength of Chinese primary education lay in its sound foundation for acquisition of knowledge. He supported his statement with the fact that all top ten students in his son's class at university were the immigrant Chinese students. The father appreciated Canadian education for nurturing children's "operational and inventive abilities" but disliked their computer dependency. He pointed out that students in Canada were so dependent on computers that they did not know basic scientific principles.

Drawing from his own parenting experiences, Feng’s father felt that traditional Chinese parenting constrained children's natural development because of the lack of patience and encouragement. However, he felt Western parenting "encourage children too much... everything is good, nothing is bad." He pointed out that the East and the West should learn from each other.
The father observed significant differences in Chinese and Western culture:

Chinese beliefs are just the opposite of Western ideology. Western people are interested in enjoying the present. They say that life is short, so play hard. See, our cultural background and life philosophy are entirely different. People say that the Chinese are intelligent.....the main reason for Chinese success is not intelligence but diligence, self-discipline, and self-regulation. They have standards and they strive for their goals. (p.14)

While lauding the positive aspects of Chinese culture, the father expressed his discontent with popular Canadian peer culture. He was pleased that Feng does not smoke and drink but disliked his materialistic tendency and his 'fever' for famous brands:

Now he wears everything in famous brands....not only shoes, even underwear. I did not criticize him because he bought them with his own money, but I think it's a bad influence of Western culture. I cannot imagine what he would buy if he had more money. Western culture values materialistic things too much....When he was in high school, I asked him what he planned to do in the future. He said, I would earn 6 digit salary per year. See, even though he was only a high school student and did not have too much money, he did not think $30,000 or $50,000 was a good salary. You know, he does not like what I bought for him. He has higher standards. I don't think it's a good thing. He likes expensive stuff. You know, everything he uses is the best in our family, including toothbrush and mouth rinse. What he has learned from Western culture is to enjoy materialistic things.
(p.22-23)

With those worries, the father constantly reminded his son "not to discard good things of Eastern culture and pick up garbage from Western culture." He asserted that a combination of Eastern and Western culture would be beneficial for children's healthy growth.

Moral character.

When noticing that Feng developed a certain arrogance and tended to look down on others, the father was determined to spend time and energy on moral character building:

My son is like this, he only admires people who surpass him on all aspects. Otherwise.... I told him that no one is perfect. If this person has a strength, you should learn from him on that aspect. My son tends to look down on others, saying that they are not as good as him.... He exhibits all his awards in his room. When talking about his classmates, he is always saying this one is not good, that one is not good. It seems that he is the only good student.... I remember once he talked about someone like this, "she is in a regular class with a regular grade."
You know what he meant? He looked down on other students. I was really upset and criticized him a lot for his arrogance. I told him that he was not that good.

(p.9; p.18)

The father referred a Chinese motto, *shan wai you shan, tian wai you tian*, to teach his son to be modest. The motto implies that whatever one achieves, there are always some people are doing better. Feng did not believe in his father and did not take his suggestions seriously. Having been the number one student in high school for five years, he did not see anyone was academically better than him. It was only after entering university that he began to understand the meaning of this Chinese motto. Although he worked very hard at university, he only obtained average grades. Feng learned a lesson and gradually became modest. The father recalled:

Last Christmas he came back home and told me that he recognized his weakness. It was a big progress.... Now he could tell and face his weaknesses.... he was not like this before. If his grades were not very good, he would not let me know. If he got a good report card, he would show it to me and was very proud of himself. Now he is doing better and is starting to realize his drawbacks. In the meantime, he is becoming modest. He regrets that he did not learn from me. Since he changed his attitude, he is getting closer to me. We are talking with each other more and more. (p.6)

The father felt that Feng acted differently outside and at home. He shared an example.

Feng had a summer co-op job at Nortel before entering university. His manager was so fond of him that he invited Feng to work for Nortel after graduating from university and promised to pay for his MBA tuition. The father sensed that, to earn the affection and preference from his manager, he must have been modest, respectful, and diligent at work. He criticized his son for being double faced and did not respect his parents. However, the father failed to make connections between his son’s behaviour and his harsh parenting:

I always criticize him for not paying as much respect to his parents as to others. You know, he is afraid of me and rarely listens to me. For his mother, he thinks that she is not well educated. Sometimes he tends to look down upon her. I told him that he should respect her just because she is his mother. When he was young, he asked his mother to help his math tasks and did not come to me. Certainly I would be much better than his mother, but he did not ask me. Later, I
sent him to study Chinese language and still, he asked his mom not me. See, he behaves differently outside and at home. (p.21)

**Leadership role.**

The father was pleased that Feng was elected to the student association in his first academic year at university. He felt that his instruction on social relationships had helped his son cooperatively interact with others and eventually assume a leadership role:

I told my son to be smart on big issues, not to be clever on small things. If a person is clever on small things, he could not make any friends. If he could yield to others on small things, he is likely to achieve in the future.... I taught my son not to focus only on academic studies but to develop leadership abilities. He should be able to unite people around him, including those who are not as capable as him. I taught him that, if a person is better than him on one aspect, he should be willing to learn from him on that aspect. I also taught him that, when reporting the accomplishments of the group, he should mention everyone’s contribution, no matter how small it is. In this way, people are happy to work with him. If he is not a good team worker, he cannot achieve what he wants to be. (p.13)

**Xia's Family**

The interview with Xia's family was conducted in Mandarin on February 5, 2000. Both parents were well educated; the father has a Ph.D. degree, and the mother a bachelor's degree. Their only daughter, Xia, was thirteen, a grade eight student in a local junior high school. At the time of interview, the father had been in Canada for six years. Xia and her mother had arrived in Canada five years ago. Each parent clearly assumed a divided parenting role. The father was in charge of her studies and the mother was responsible for the family's daily routine and household chores.

Xia's parents expressed their expectations in four areas except for leadership role.
School achievement.

When I opened the topic of parental expectations, Xia's mother responded immediately, "actually we don't have any expectations." I further probed specifically about their daughter's schooling, the father answered:

I hope she can get good grades at school....if she wants to survive here, school achievement is a must. Other things.... about what she should do in the future, we do not have any specific expectations. We only hope that she can get a university education. I don't think she will have problems getting her bachelor's degree. (p.3)

Although the mother initially said that they did not hold any expectations, her discussion followed showed her basic standards – she would not accept a college diploma:

I think at least she should get a university degree. It's up to her to decide whether or not to go on pursuing a graduate degree. A university education is basic and a must. If she does not have a university education she can do nothing in the future. I mean, she won't be able to survive in this society. She needs the required abilities and skills to support herself. For me, it's quite simple, I want her to go to university. I haven't thought other things. (p.1)

The mother further indicated that their expectations were only basic standards, which means that Xia was free to choose the life she wanted:

We do not hold high expectations. We don't want her to do something significant. As for what she wants to do in the future, I think it has nothing to do with our expectations. It might not be the same thing.... It's impossible for us to choose a life for her. It's like that my parents and his parents could not decide what we would do in our lives. (p.2)

For financial and practical reasons, the parents preferred their daughter to attend a local university because it would save them money. However, the mother added, "we also told her that if one day she is accepted into prestigious universities such as Harvard or Stanford, we are willing to sell our house to support her."

In discussing the importance of being realistic, the mother stressed that their expectations should be aligned to Xia's motivation:
As a parent, I never think I can decide what she will do in the future. I am different from our friends. Some of them hold strong and high expectations, that their children should act in certain ways, should do this, should do that. In my opinion, if you push your child but she does not want to study, what can you do? If she is willing or interested in doing something, you don’t need to push her. As parents, we do the best we can to support her to get the best education but we do not force her to do what we want. My attitude is always the same. Now she is growing up and getting more and more life experiences. I always say the same thing to her. See, being realistic is very important. If you tell her that she must become a senator, is it possible? (p.12-13)

To foster all-round development and multiple interests, Xia's parents registered her in different extracurricular classes, such as painting, piano, singing, and Mandarin. The mother explained:

I do not think a good student should be necessarily a top student. It's better to train the child with broad thinking than to get good marks. Certainly I want her to get good marks and to be one of the top students, but the most important thing is to develop many interests. (p.13)

Career aspirations.

The parents did not think they should plan a life for their daughter or hold ambitious career aspirations, "we do not expect her to become a doctor, a lawyer, or a famous person, such as a movie star..." Since Xia was interested in music and singing, they registered her in private piano lessons for years. However, they did not encourage her to become a musician. The mother was firm," this is just for her entertainment, not for her specialty."

Integration of two cultures.

Xia's parents observed a significant difference in two cultures. They commented that Chinese culture has "too many limitations not enough freedom" while Canadian culture offers "too much freedom not enough guidance." The father indicated that primary schools in Canada did not provide efficient academic services to meet children's intellectual needs, "the teaching method here is too loose, especially in elementary and secondary schools." His view echoed the accounts of Yong's mother, Ling's mother, and Feng's father.
The parents mainly focused their discussion on Chinese culture. The mother pointed out that high Chinese cultural expectations placed on children's academic accomplishment were detrimental to children's mental health, "in China, some schools label students by their grades. It has a great impact on those students who do not do well in school. It may damage their confidence for life long." She asserted that academic inclination in Chinese culture hindered the development of multiple intelligences, "many Chinese students are only good at academic studies, they do not know other things, and do not participate in other activities."

The father reflected that, since Chinese cultural expectations exerted pressure on parents, Chinese parents tended to pressure their children:

Now parents in China only wish their children to achieve academically. Children do nothing else at home but study. Like my nephew, before he went to university, the only thing he did every day was studying. His parents did not ask him to do any cleaning or other house chores. Chinese ideology xue er you ze shi (excellent academics lead to a high social status) is to force children to study, study, and study. It’s really not necessary. (p.18)

In spite of their criticism of Chinese culture, the parents deeply appreciate the positive aspects of Chinese education. They believed that the school achievement of immigrant Chinese students should be largely attributed to the education they received in China. The mother reflected that, compared to Canadian schools, the challenging learning environment in China could help children become more motivated:

For a child, if you put him in a playful environment, he may step back and learn nothing. In Canada, parents and teachers do not push children....If a child is not interested in school and nobody pushes him, he may not want to study. That's it. In China, the strict learning environment pushes him, he has to step forward and learn more things. The situation in China is very different. If you do not want to study, your parents will discipline you, your teachers will push you. You have to study. Maybe after a while, you will become interested in learning and catch up to other students. (p.18)

The parents insisted that, in the process of acculturation, Chinese immigrants must retain their cultural heritage. Both parents placed a great value on the maintenance of their home
language. They believed that a good mastery of the Chinese language was beneficial for her future, whether Xia would stay in Canada or go back to China. The father explained:

To be bilingual in English and French is not good enough. She should be also good in Chinese.... In Canada, most students are bilingual in English and French. So it's important for her to have another language - Chinese. If she loses her Chinese, she only has the same two languages as other Canadians. She won't have any advantage.....If she wants to go back to China, she has three languages, that's something to be recognized. I mean she stands out.... I think it's almost like an instinct. We are Chinese, I want our daughter to keep our mother tongue. Who knows if it's useful in the future? (p.14)

In discussing how to provide a nurturing educational environment for students of different abilities, Xia's mother's ideas mirrored Mei's father's discussion:

For average students, Chinese education is very helpful because if you push, they learn more. For top students, Canadian education is useful. In Canada, everything depends on yourself, you must be self-motivated and make an effort. Here the textbooks are very good and the content is rich, but nobody cares if students learn or not. The teacher teaches in the classroom but does not push students at all. It's up to them to learn or not. So Canadian education is good for motivated students. (p.18)

**Moral character.**

The parents did not extensively discuss their moral expectations. They generally wanted her to become a good and useful person. They were concerned about the possible negative peer influences from Canadian culture, such as smoking and teenage dating. Xia was not allowed to do those things in her teenage years.

So far, we have learned the content of parental expectations of the seven immigrant Chinese families. The parents mainly expressed their expectations in five areas, namely school achievement, career aspirations, integration of two cultures, and leadership role. Next we trace the sources of these expectations.
Sources of Expectations

What follows provides answers to the research question one on how cultural beliefs and life experiences shape parental expectations of the Chinese immigrants. Let us listen to their responses.

Lun's Family

Both parents took pride in their cultural heritage, especially the moral instructions of Confucian ethics. The mother commented, "many things in Confucian philosophy, such as modesty, human malleability, diligence, and respect for teachers and seniors, are very good. We like them."

Confucian ideology was very strong in the father’s parenting spirit. He joked that they kept some "feudalism remnants." He insisted that parents were responsible to "set up rules for children, the earlier the better." The 'orange story' presented earlier reflected the father's beliefs in Confucian heritage zun lao ai you (respect for the elder and care for the young). "I think those 'shining' characteristics", the father summarized, "such as being compassionate, sympathetic, or what he calls yi qi (being loyal to friends) are very precious. I am really proud of him."

Lun's parents recalled that, their strong expectations of being a good person, stemmed from their own childhood experiences. The father described how the morals were transmitted to him through modeling of his own parents:

Although my parents held high positions at work, they were very modest and generous to others. I was impressed by their performances. You can learn from others, you can learn indefinitely from your parents. For example, my father did not have any hobbies, so he offered as much help as he could to the people in need. My mom was the same. Both of them were very polite, kind, and respectful. Whenever somebody was in a difficult situation, such as food or other things, they always lent a hand. They set a good example for us. In fact, if you want your child to learn something, you do not need to say what you should do or what you should not do. You show them how to do it. (p.11)
The mother also based her parenting strategies on what she had learned from her parents:

I agree. I think most of the things I learned from my parents were through what I saw and heard. My parents were very demanding on my studies but they were generous to me on other things. They were very kind to their colleagues and neighbors. I grew up in that environment. I was rarely scolded or ordered like 'you must do this or that'. We treat our son the same way. (p.12)

Yong's Family

Yong's father viewed the values placed on education as the essence of Chinese culture and Confucian heritage:

Our five thousand years of Confucian heritage (ru jiao) transmit a firm belief wei you du shu gao. This influence is fundamental to both the Chinese in Mainland China and to the Chinese overseas. Education is the most important thing in a person’s life cycle. That’s probably why Chinese parents are willing to invest their money and energy in their children’s education. (p.2)

"Wei you du shu gao" is a famous Confucian tenet. It means that nothing is more important than formal education. The father regarded it as a fundamental force that drives high parental expectations and passionate parental support.

The mother used another Chinese motto sha shui kan da, qi sui kan lao to illustrate her ideas on predicting one's adult life from one's childhood. She asserted that family environment in one's early childhood and school education after were critical in shaping one's being and becoming.

In recalling their experiences during the Cultural Revolution, Yong’s mother said that although the political context at that time was not conducive for schooling, her parents were very supportive of their academic studies, "our family and community environment encouraged us to focus on our studies.... and we did not waste our time doing nothing. Probably that's why we successfully passed the university entrance exam after the Cultural Revolution."

Born into a large family, the mother did not get much attention from her parents but she perceived their expectations from their attitudes. She shared this childhood story:
I remember when I was in grade seven, one day I told my mom that I felt I did not do well on a math exam. You know what? My mom did not go to the regular teacher-parent meeting. She asked my grandma to attend that meeting instead. Actually I did very well on that exam. (laughs). (p.3)

She explained that her mother did not attend the meeting because she did not want to lose face or be embarrassed in front of other parents if her daughter received a low mark.

The mother pointed out that their immigration experiences also greatly contributed to their high educational expectations. Having gone through eventful difficulties and struggles as a new immigrant, she felt that her language barriers did cause misunderstanding and hinder her professional development. She was confident that Yong would have a better chance to succeed in Canada because he did not have language problems as she had.

**Mei's Family**

Mei's parents were in favour of Western development theories and were disturbed by excessively high Chinese cultural expectations placed on children's academic achievement. The mother pointed out that, since "academic success is highly valued" by mainstream culture and government propaganda in China, the Chinese context did not nurture peace of mind:

It seems that children are pushed towards one direction. Few parents realize a simple fact that, if our children are not good at academic study, we should allow them to develop in their own ways so they can have a happy life. If a child feels that the task matches his ability, he will be happy to do it. Otherwise he will feel guilty and sorry to face his parents and his teachers because he thinks that he is useless and incapable. (p.22)

Learned from their life experiences, Mei's parents believed that high marks did not equate to good problem-solving skills. Therefore, they held realistic expectations and did not demand high grades. The father explained, "we are high achievers in our field but our knowledge of other fields is poor. We do not want our daughter to make the same mistake."

Having experienced much difficulty in finding a professional career in Canada that would match their Ph.D. qualifications, the parents did not encourage Mei to pursue graduate studies.
According to the father, "we got our doctorate degrees, but in Canada, it is difficult to find a job with a high degree. Therefore, we think it is not necessary to pursue a graduate degree. We do not encourage her to do so."

Ling's Family

To illustrate high educational expectations of Chinese parents, Ling's mother shared what she observed in China:

The parents always sit beside their kids when they are doing their homework. They hire tutors to help them. They send their kids to training classes on the weekends. They spend money and time for one purpose: helping their children to pass the National College Entrance Exam. (p.9)

Because of the value placed on academic achievement, the Chinese parents are willing to do anything to provide their children a good education. Ling's mother told me a real story that similar to a classical Confucian story, "mong mu shan qian" (the mother Mong moved three times in order to provide a better learning environment for her son). Before Ling entered high school, the parents inquired in the Carleton School Board about the quality of teachers, students, school mission, and school facilities. They moved to the vicinity of the high school they chose afterwards so that Ling could obtain a better education.

Reflecting on her life trajectory, the mother felt that many factors had contributed to her expectations. She told me that she came to North America after the age of thirty with a strong Chinese identity, "the education I received in China, the Chinese cultural environment, especially the Chinese Cultural Revolution I went through, the way my parents taught me.... All those experiences have shaped my own way of thinking and acting, including my parenting."

The mother also recognized the significant influence of Canadian culture in her parenting and considered herself as a flexible parent:

I guess I have two mixed cultures in my parenting. If I was a traditional Chinese parent, I would have set many rules. I don't think I am a very strict parent. I give
her lots of freedom. I always point out many choices for her, "you have these choices, you choose the one that is suitable for you." I want her to make her own decisions because she wants to be an independent thinker. (p.3)

Ling's mother's career aspirations were significantly influenced by her job search experiences in Canada. She obtained two master's degrees in North America but could not find a job in her field of study because either there was a low demand for such skills or her area of study was dominant by the White Canadians. Her husband, in contrast, found a job in a major telecommunication company immediately after obtaining his bachelor degree in computer science. Therefore, she always used their North America experiences as a lesson to help Ling understand the demand of Canadian labor market and the constraints of their visible minority status, "your father majored in computer science, which is what Canada needed. He found a good job immediately after university. Therefore, as a minority member, your choice of specialization is crucial for your future employment."

Bo's Family

Compared with Canadian families, Bo's parents felt that the parental expectations of Chinese immigrants were higher and were more likely to be shared by their children. The mother believed that their shared expectations were linked to a Confucian ethic: xiao, "we Chinese value fidelity, which makes parent-child relationship stronger." She pointed out that other traditional Chinese values, such as the emphasis on working hard, were also helpful in family relationships.

Their parenting philosophy and practices were largely derived from Confucian tenets:

One of the advantages in Chinese culture is that parents are very demanding. Such bian zi di xia chu xiao zi, lao qi jin gu, tou xuan liang, zhu ci gu. We believe that accomplishment is a result of tough discipline and hard work. We always tell him, if he did not study hard, he would not have become the top student at school. Our demands, including the extra homework we assigned to him, are an important factor in his success. If we let him develop naturally, we won't get ideal results. (p.23)
Learned from the father's life experiences, they believed that a person would become stronger in a difficult environment. They concerned that good living conditions in Canada might become a negative factor in Bo's growth. Therefore, they assigned him house chores and encouraged him to volunteer in the community. The mother explained:

He does these things so that he can understand a simple idea: he should contribute first and then he can get and enjoy the product. We do not agree to give children everything....That's why we assign some housework to him to prevent possible negative effects of good living conditions. In helping out with house chores, he has learned that nothing is easy, so he needs to work hard. (p.16)

Both parents experienced high parental expectations in their own childhood. The mother reflected that their expectations for their son were closely related to their family tradition and their life experiences. She viewed reasonable parental pressure as a 'driving force':

Our parents taught us that we should be able to stand out in society. The source is deeply embedded in our family roots and our life experiences. We grew up with high parental expectations. They were very demanding when we were children. They did not scold or spank us, but we could feel high parental expectations. To describe it with the word we frequently use today, I would say that their expectations were a pressure, but the pressure was effective and useful. Maybe the word 'pressure' is not a good word now, but at that time it was positive for us. The pressure is what we Chinese call 'the driving force' (dong li). Therefore, our expectations for our son are the same as our parents' expectations for us. Looking back at the journey we went through, from China to Canada, I should say that we did very well in the past. What we have achieved in our lives could not have been done without our parents' expectations. (p.2) ...For example, my husband's parents expected him to pursue Ph.D. and to become a professor. He had achieved that in China and exceeded their expectations. Now he has succeeded professionally and economically in Canada.... Because the father has surpassed the expectations of his parents, naturally he held high expectations for his own son. (p.15)

The father recalled that, during the Cultural Revolution, the whole country was in chaos. His parents usually locked him at home for safety reasons. At that time, he was especially interested in telecommunication. Whenever alone, he read science and engineering books. This experience facilitated his logical thinking. The father told me that his father was a teacher and
was very tough and demanding. In retrospect, he was grateful to his parents, "my parents cared for me and disciplined me when I was very young. Otherwise I could not have done that." The mother also commented that her husband's success was a credit to his parents.

Having lived in Canada for several years, the mother felt that their expectations had gradually changed:

If we were still in China, we would expect him to do well on all exams, go to the best university and then take TOEFL to study abroad. Now we are in Canada, many roads are leading to a successful life. Uh, I should say that our expectations in Canada are higher than in China. Our life experiences in Western culture have broadened our minds, thus naturally our expectations are higher. Parents cannot set high demands if they are narrow-minded. When they open their eyes to see new things, they will know that their expectations for their children are too low. Definitely our concrete goals and therefore our concrete expectations are changing. (p.15)

While their emphasis on academic excellence was inspired by their life in China, their expectation on all-round development was shaped by their experiences in Canada. As the first generation immigrants, they had gone through a process that the majority of recent Chinese immigrants experienced, that is, going back to university to study computer science to obtain a well-paid job. The mother regarded this career path as a constraint of their abilities and development. She did not want Bo to follow their footsteps and become a computer programmer.

Feng's Family

The father believed that Confucian heritage played a vital role in the success of Chinese people. He accredited the Chinese striving for excellence to the five thousand years of Chinese civilization and Confucian heritage:

Our Chinese history, five thousand years of feudal society, has produced cultural beliefs such as xue er you ze shi and zhuang yuan zi (studying hard to get a good position). So in China, even a farmer wants his son to attain a privileged position. This is so-called wang zi cheng luong (expecting one's son to become a dragon, which implies to be a successful person). The meaning is that only if you excel in your studies first will you have a good future. (p.14)
With the support of Chinese cultural expectations, the father stated, "our children enjoy studying and know how to study. They also work very hard." He acknowledged a Confucian value, *xiao* or the desire to honour one's family and ancestry, in driving Chinese children to do their best:

They have a desire to honour their families and ancestors. They do. If they do not succeed, they feel that they lose face in front of their families.... Chinese children want to succeed, to feel good, and to bring honour to their families. Whereas Western children seldom have this kind of thought.... The ultimate goal of Chinese children is to strive for a good position in society. They want people who know them, such as their parents, teachers, and friends, to be proud of them.... Chinese children have a sense of shame. This is the strength in Chinese children. (p.15)

Feng's mother did not talk much during the interview. When I specifically asked about her expectations, she expressed them in relation to her own social and psychological suffering for not receiving a good education:

You know what happened in my generation. I was sent to the country to be re-educated during the Cultural Revolution. I did not learn too much knowledge. I felt that I was discriminated against in Chinese society because I was not well educated. So I expect my children to get a university education, to live a better life. I want them to get good grades in school. I was not educated and not very capable. I always tell them that they should not be like their mom. They should strive to achieve the best they can to make a good future. I repeat and repeat the same thing every day. (p.13-14)

The father's expectations were largely related to his teaching career. Having taught in university for many years, he learned that high grades did not guarantee success in society. Therefore, he tried to lead his son to focus on problem-solving skills instead of high grades:

I criticize him for doing things only to surpass others (*hao qiang*). I remind him that learning is to improve his abilities, not only for marks. I never exert any pressure by demanding high school grades. I taught for many years, and I know marks are not the most important. In school and university, you should develop skills and abilities (*ben shi*), such as how to solve problems. (p.10)
Xia's Family

With a deep appreciation of traditional Chinese culture, the parents stressed the importance of retaining Chinese cultural values and beliefs. The father expressed some gender expectations:

She should keep some Chinese values such as tolerance, diligence, and being conservative. Especially for girls, to be traditional is a good virtue. For instance, when she reaches the age of seventeen or eighteen, she should focus on her study, not on dating boyfriends. (p.14)

What the parents learned from their life experiences was to hold general rather than specific expectations. The father recalled that his own parents did not even expect him to get a university education, "everything I have done in my life is beyond the expectations of my parents." What he achieved had also exceeded his self-expectations. Therefore, he believed that, as parents, they should not hold concrete expectations to plan a future for their daughter but focus on helping her improve her current performance:

We cannot predict what she will do in the future. For my parents, they could not tell what I would be doing today. Myself, when I was a kid, I never knew what I would be doing now. The expectations I had before are quite different from the reality. I did not know what my parents expected for me. (laughs). No connections. (p.4)... Actually, my expectations ten years ago were totally different from what I am doing now.... I never thought that one day I would come to Canada. When I came to Canada, I never thought that I would work for Nortel. Therefore, I believe what will happen in the future is not the same thing as you wished. See, I even cannot foresee the future for myself, how can I expect something for the next generation?...Because I have this kind of experience, I hold a similar attitude toward my daughter's future. The most important thing is to help her build a solid ground. (p.3)

In summary, parental expectations of the Chinese immigrants are rooted in Confucian heritage and shaped by their life experiences in both China and Canada. A notable difference can be observed in Bo's family and Xia's family. Drawn from their own life experiences, the former believed in the power of parental expectations whereas the latter did not consider parental
expectations as imperative in children’s success. Now we move forward to the next category, how the parents convey their expectations to their children.

**Communication of Expectations**

The data have shown that parent-child dialogue and parental modeling are two basic avenues through which parental expectations are communicated.

**Lun's Family**

The parents felt that regular parent-child dialogue had significantly influenced Lun’s thinking and acting. According to the father, "we talk a lot with each other, especially on weekends and at dinner table. Our son understands us and we understand him." Once a month, the father would chat with his son from sunset to sunrise. Their topics were wide ranging (*tian nan hai bei*), from big issues to small things, "we never get tired of talking with each other. Usually at his age, kids would rather hang out with their friends than talk with their parents, but our son likes to talk with us."

The mother gave some examples to illustrate this dialogue:

We like his friends and classmates. We never choose a friend for him, such as "you can make friends with this one, not that one." If he considers a person as his friend, we’ll treat that person very well. Sometimes after school, he talks about his friends with us. We are very patient to listen to him. Small things such as a very brief conversation with his friends, who kicked him for fun today, who stepped on the back of his shoes etc. All kinds of things. (laughs). We listen to everything he shares with us. We also share everything with him. I would tell him what happened at work, what I bought when I was shopping with my friend, and so forth. I would ask his opinion on the clothes I bought. You can tell the family atmosphere here. Everybody concerns in and cares for the other family member’s everything. (p.15-16)

The mother pointed out that their open communication not only promoted mutual understanding but also strengthened parent-child bond and narrowed generation gap:

I think family communication is extremely important. Some children are good at school but their parents do not know what's on their minds. Later on, the children
may do something that totally surprises their parents. Through frequent family communication, we know what's on his mind every day. This narrows our generation gap. Once his Chinese teacher asked the students to write a paper on parent-child generation gap, our son said that there was no such a gap in his family. (laughs). (p.16)

The father stressed that all parents should serve as role models to their children:

As parents, we should set a model for the child, to convince him to follow us. For example, after coming home from work, most of the time we read. See, our son tends to imitate us and does not go out playing. Some parents, they force their children to read but they watch TV themselves. Do you think their children will follow their directives? Therefore, everything you expect your child to do, you should do it first, to set a good example. (p.10-11)

After recalling how they learned morals from their own parents, the father reflected that parental role model could effectively shape children's beliefs and behaviours. They regarded parental modelling as a process of er ru mu ruan (being imperceptibly influenced by what one constantly sees and hears). The mother reflected, "most of things I learned from my parents was through what I saw and heard...Our son also observes how we treat our friends. He learns from us through little things that occur in everyday life."

Yong's Family

Like Lun's family, Yong's parents also believed that they had developed a close parent-child relationship through open dialogue. The parents talked with Yong regularly at dinnertime. The mother joked that Yong tended to talk more with his father, "now he is growing into a man, maybe men have more things in common." I asked the father what was the primary topic of their conversation, and he answered, "he talks about his ideas or what he is going to do in the future."

The parents liked to share their own childhood experiences with their son. The father referred it to a Chinese motto: yi ku si tian (contrasting past suffering with present happiness), a parenting strategy that is widely used by Chinese parents. The mother felt that the comparison
between their past and his present, along with the current learning conditions in China, had helped her son share their expectations and strive his best:

We told him that when we were young, we did not have a good study environment and living condition as he does. So he should treasure what he has now and not waste his time. We always compare our past with his present. Now he has such good living and study conditions, we could not even imagine it when we were kids... When our son heard those stories, he felt that he was obligated to make effort to achieve his best. He has a desire to do better, that’s why our expectations have an influence on him. In this way he tends to share the same beliefs and expectations with us. I think some children don't take their parents' suggestions because they just don't care. (p.7)

He understood our stories even though he did not experience them. Compared to our own childhood and the students in China, children studying in Canada are very lucky.... Students in China work so hard, they do not have a happy childhood. His grandparents always write to him about student life in China. Through these comparisons, he understands us very well. That's why he strives for his best. (p.7-8)

The mother also observed that Yong tended to only report good things, "if he did not do well in his exam, he won't come to tell us." This echoes what Feng's father called the face-saving tactic in Chinese children.

When I asked the parents if they ever used role models in their communication of expectations. The mother discussed peer role models first:

Yes, of course we give him some live examples. Such as who was accepted at Harvard University with a scholarship, who was accepted at MIT etc. We usually encourage him with those good models so he can make further progress. (p.7)

The mother was very happy with Yong's peer group and community networks, "his best friends have good parents and good families. They usually study and play together. They have a mutual positive influence on each other."

In discussing parental modeling, the mother highlighted the importance of a positive family learning environment:
A harmonious family environment plays a significant role in his personal growth and in his attitude towards others. If the parents play cards every day, certainly it does not help their children's studies. According to a Chinese folk motto, *shan fang xia xiao*, your children tend to follow your example. Parents are the most imitated adults in the lives of their children. (p.8)

The father expressed the same ideas, "family environment, family interaction, and relationships could greatly influence a child. If he lives in a family full of quarrels and fighting, whatever he is taught, he can feel this kind of family environment." He stressed that parents should serve as a good example because children "learn to understand society through everyday observation and participation in family activities."

**Mei's Family**

Mei's parents, especially the mother, believed that children have different intelligences. They discussed the issue extensively with their daughter. While praising Mei's high achievement motivation, the mother kept reminding her of her talent limitations. She did not want her daughter to be frustrated by trying to achieve something beyond her potential, "we told her that she is a relatively smart child and a hard worker, but she is not the smartest or what we Chinese call as 'shen tong' (the gifted child). She understands it."

In terms of parental modeling, the parents briefly mentioned that their daughter's good study habits were developed in a nurturing family environment. When they lived in China, the parents usually read or worked on their research projects in the evenings. Gradually Mei became very interested in reading. The father gathered that Mei might view her mother as the role model since she wanted to become a physician as well.

**Ling's Family**

The mother felt that they had better parent-child dialogue when Ling was younger. The parents used to talk extensively with her about their life experiences in China and Canada.
Since Ling turned fourteen, the mother observed tremendous peer influence. She complained that their roles as parents had changed to "drivers, cooks, and servers" because Ling spent most of her spare time with her friends, "I feel that she only needs to communicate with me when she experiences difficulties. Otherwise she does not talk to me much... Sometimes I feel guilty because I did so little for her. She takes care of everything by herself."

Although she felt some resistance and a certain distance from her daughter, the mother made an effort to discuss things with her, especially about her future career:

Although she is not serious or is not willing to listen to me, I know that my words have some influences, consciously or unconsciously (qian yi mo hua). I am sure there is a difference between what I said and what I did not say... I am positive that she will consider our suggestions. I feel that children growing up in Canada are very different from children growing up in China, they do not depend on their parents. (p.11)

According to the mother, Ling wrote a paper around the age of fourteen, portraying her mother as her role model of strength and helpfulness. She appreciated greatly her mother for guiding her in the Christian faith, a life of peacefulness and meaningfulness. The mother felt that parental modeling played a critical role in Ling's growth.

Bo's Family

Recalling their own childhood, Bo's parents said that they would never dare to disagree or argue with their parents. They must obey and follow whatever their parents had decided, no matter right or wrong. Their parents also used corporal punishment to discipline them. When they became parents themselves, they were determined to create a more flexible family environment and to nurture an open parent-child dialogue. According to the father, "some of the parenting strategies my parents used with me, such as corporal punishment, have never been used with our son. I think he should have the right and chance to retort to us if he does not agree with us." The mother described their family dialogue in details:
Our family is very democratic. We let him express his own ideas. Usually, we say our ideas first, and then ask what’s on his mind. We respect him. My husband sometimes criticizes me “you give him too much freedom.” I gather it’s because his own parents were tough on him. As the mother, I tend to spoil my son. I let him say anything. His father is tough on him but I am not. In this way our parenting has a good balance.... He can disagree and argue with us. When we are chatting, he spontaneously participates in the discussion. Sometimes I initiate a topic, he talks about it most of the time. We have very good communication at the dinner table. Every day after returning home, he calls us at work. Usually we ask him if there is any news. If yes, he will talk about it briefly. Then we will ask for details when we are back home from work. During dinnertime, we will ask how it went in his class. He will tell a lot of things about his school. In this way, we know everything that happens at school, his teachers, classmates, and school projects etc. He is free to express himself in a warm family environment. It’s good for both parents and children. (p.24)

The mother was very proud of her husband and regarded him as a good role model for their son, which reflected her gender expectations:

I view my husband as my son's role model. I always tell him to learn from his father and grow up to be a man like his father. I remember that when he was younger, he was very talkative. In my opinion, being talkative is not a good thing. According to our Chinese proverb: yian duo bi shi (you are likely to show your weakness if you talk too much). I think that a talkative man is not serious, or in the words of those modern women, “not deep enough” (bu gou shen chen) (laughs). So I decided to set some limits from the beginning. I told him to be like his father, use his eyes more and his mouth less. He is not a girl. Talkative girls look lovely but talkative boys look silly. Gradually he started to change. I never use any significant figure as his role model, such as famous scientists etc. I use my husband as his model...The model is so close, and he can see him every day. It's practical and reliable. If the model is far away, he may not believe it. I often tell him, “your father is excellent on everything. He is respected by his colleagues at work; he is successful in his academic studies; he is also very responsible for his family, taking care of you and me.” His father is truly a good example. (p.11-12)

Feng's Family

The father admitted that he used to power over his son and was responsible for the lack of a mutual father-son dialogue:

Our family communication is one directional, from father to son. We do not have much mutual interaction. That was my fault. It's getting better because now I encourage him a lot. I used to give orders, criticize and scold him.... I think my
criticism had some negative effects on him. My son has such a strong personality that he has endured all of this. His strong personality has helped him overcome many negative effects of my criticism. Because of the poor father-son relationship, I was not able to help him. When he did not listen to me, I criticized him even more. (p.18)

The father explained that he criticized Feng a lot because he intended to pour some cold water on the 'flame' of his ego. However, "his conceitedness was so strong that the fire did not stop even with the cold water...I believed that if I repeat and repeat the same thing many times, he would take some suggestions from me. So I used to say things to him all day long."

Since Feng entered university, the dialogue between the father and the son had gradually improved. The father described this change in their communication:

I praised him for winning the highest scholarship at university. Interestingly enough, this Christmas he came back for holidays and told me in detail about all his defects. He told me that other Chinese students had prepared themselves before entering the program. Their parents taught them some university texts such as math, physics, and computer languages when they were in high school. It seems that he regretted he did not study those texts with me before. It's a big progress....When he only reported his merits, I said that he was not that good. This time he acknowledged his shortcomings, I praised him for the progress. (p.19-20)

Now I do not talk that much. He came to talk to me and even told me his drawbacks. He never told me about his weaknesses when he was young... He would not tell me that he was not one of the top ten students in his program. You can tell the big difference. (p.18)

The father learned a lesson from the poor father-son dialogue. He regretted his tough love approach, "I did not have a good parenting approach. Otherwise my son would be even better than what he is."

Feng's father did not discuss parental modeling.

Xia's Family

Since they did not hold specific expectations, Xia's parents did not purposefully discuss their expectations with her. One thing they made very clear to her was that she must obtain a
university education. As daily routine, they usually asked about her schoolwork during dinnertime.

The parents did not see themselves as role models. The mother explained, "everyone is different, why should I try to be like others?" However, they did refer to some peer role models, such as someone was admitted at Harvard University on a scholarship etc.

Up to this point, we have learned that the parents held expectations in five areas, namely school achievement, career aspirations, integration of two cultures, moral character, and leadership role. These expectations were largely grounded in Confucian philosophy and shaped by their own life experiences. The parents communicated their expectations through parent-child dialogue and parental modeling. Next we will hear views and stories of their children.

Section 2: Accounts of Children

This section of the findings examines the second research question, how the immigrant Chinese children perceive and feel about parental expectations. Three categories have emerged from the accounts of children: (a) perceptions of parental expectations; (b) anxiety; and (c) self-expectations.

In order to obtain an overview of the children's perceptions, a multiple choice scale (see Appendix E) was administered before the interview. The answers are summarized in Table 2.

Generally speaking, all children perceived that academic achievement and career security were the most important to their parents. Three male adolescents reported that their parents specially focused on outstanding school performances and skilful social abilities, which I gather has something to do with parental emphasis on leadership role. All three female adolescents perceived that their parents particularly expected them to pursue a good career and graduate studies. It indicated that the Chinese parents encouraged their daughters to be well educated and
financially independent. In reference to the fifth question, namely to find a good job, a female adolescent participant asked me if she could add another level, "extremely important." She explained that her parents stressed it more than the others because this issue was raised in family discussion almost every week.

Table 2: Children's perception of parental expectations

<table>
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<th>Questions</th>
<th>Answers</th>
<th>Not important</th>
<th>Important</th>
<th>Very important</th>
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<td>M* F*</td>
<td>M F M F</td>
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<tr>
<td>1. To be the best student</td>
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<td>1 2</td>
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<td>2. To get all A's</td>
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<td>3 2</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. To have a good social relationship</td>
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<td>3 1</td>
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<td>4. To go to the best university</td>
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<td>5. To find a good job</td>
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<td>6. To pursue a graduate degree</td>
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<td>1 1</td>
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* M = male; F = female

Let us listen to these children one by one.

Lun

Lun elaborated on all three categories.

Perception of parental expectations.

Lun perceived that his parents held high expectations even though they did not talk about them. He could tell through their different feedback to his grades:

My parents do not always say "you must perform well, be the number one student etc." However, there is a difference in their attitudes when I tell them my school marks. If I got high marks, they are very happy. If the marks are lower, they will, uh, they won't be angry, but they will ask me to tell them what kind of mistakes I have made in the exam. If they think that I should not have made that mistake, they won't be happy. Um, they are very demanding and have high expectations....I perceive it from the way they act. They did not set a standard for me, such as I
must be a good student or must get a specific mark. They only require me to make a lot of efforts, to do the best I can. (p.1)

Lun understood his parents’ expectations in the context of Chinese cultural expectations. After entering high school, he began to embrace his parents' admonition, "if you study hard now, you will have a great future."

All Chinese people think that academic achievement is very important, and all Chinese students are good students. Therefore, it’s a shame if you are not doing well at school. Only if you get good marks in school, can you go to a prestigious university and then find a good job. So it’s important for your future. (p.1-2)

Anxiety.

Overall, Lun was satisfied with his parents, "my parents are not tough on me, I have a democratic family." However, he was disturbed by their perfectionism. For example, they would not tolerate any minor negligent mistakes he made in exams. Lun told me that his parents "were very very angry" especially when they found that he had made a silly mistake in an easy task:

They said that negligence was not an appropriate excuse. A good student should not be so careless. My parents thought it was strange for me to make this kind of mistake. If I made a mistake because I really did not understand and could not do it, it’s acceptable for them. I should not make any mistake if I knew how to do it. I think they are right, but they should give me time to fix the problem. Everything needs a process. I will gradually become more careful and overcome the weakness. (p.3)

Lun told a 'ping-pong time story' to express his anxiety:

Recently we had a math contest. They wanted me to spend lots of time to prepare for it. You know, I am not a boy who spends lots of time playing after school. Once a week, my friends and I usually go to play ping-pong on the weekend. My parents told me that I should prepare for my math contest, so the time for ping-pong was cancelled for a few weeks. I think.... I (should) play ping-pong with my Chinese friends on weekends. You know I have been studying very hard for five days in an English language environment. I cannot wait to play ping-pong with my friends and to speak Mandarin together. I think they should not have cut the time. (p.3-4)
I asked if he expressed his disagreement to his parents, he answered, "yes, but they have their reasons too. My mom insisted that I should concentrate on my math contest. She told me I could get all my ping pong hours back after the contest." Lun felt frustrated, "but I still want to go." I pursued further, "you are telling me that you have to comply with their rules even if you do not agree with them and not happy with their decision?" Lun responded, "usually I obey...uh, I can get something I want if I spend lots of time arguing with them ... I prefer to use that time to solve some math problems. Maybe they see I am studying hard, they will let me go."

In comparing parental expectations with his own interests, Lun said, "during the summer, my parents had someone to help me with math... consequently I am far ahead of other students in math. But I do not like math that much, I like arts." However, he understood his parents and agreed with them that artwork should be only viewed as a hobby, "although I do not like math, I think it is very useful."

In terms of study strategies, Lun had a different preference from that of his parents. He felt that studying with friends was more fun and efficient because he could learn from the strength of others to offset his weakness (qu chang bu duan), "I think I can learn something beyond the text by spending time with my friends." However, his parents insisted that studying with peers was a waste of time, so they wanted him to study alone with high concentration and minimum distraction. Sometimes Lun had to conform to the decisions of his parents and gave up his own preferences.

Self-expectations.

Lun aligned his self-expectations with those of his parents and viewed being a good person as the most important quality. Needless to say, he conducted himself accordingly. When I asked him what he would wish for if a wizard could grant him a wish, he answered:
I would be satisfied if the wizard could make all my friends and relatives happy throughout their lives. Because if they are happy I will be happy; but if I am happy it does not mean they are happy. (p.11)

Regarding his studies, Lun wished that he would develop better time management skills:

If I can be more efficient, I can finish my homework in one hour and then have plenty of time to do other things I like. My parents will be very happy. I think if I am more efficient I will meet their expectations. Now I notice the problem but it has not been completely solved yet. (p.10)

Lun stumped himself with a strong Chinese identity and always aspired to return to serve his motherland after completing university education, "I always want to go back to China since I came to Canada.... Here is not my home."

**Yong**

Yong mainly discussed parental expectations and his self-expectations. He did not feel pressure from his parents.

**Perception of parental expectations.**

Yong viewed parental expectations as a universal phenomenon. A great future, in his mind, was associated with finding a good job and making a lot of money. He viewed education as a vital means that would lead to a good future:

All parents in the world expect their children to find a good job in the future. They do not want their children to live in the street. They want their children to make good money to support themselves. For this purpose, education is the key. Only if you get into a good high school and get good grades can you be accepted by a prestigious university. In this way, you have a better chance to find a good job and to be professionally employed. (p.1)

I noticed that he used the same metaphor as his father, "education is the key." Yong recalled that his parents were very demanding when he was in elementary school. He understood his parents even though they did not explicitly specify their standards:

My parents do not have any concrete expectations such as "you should go to study medical science or you should go to this university instead of that one." They only
say it's better to go to a good university....They never set a criteria for me, such as 'you must get an A' etc. I know I have to study hard so I can have a good future. They have some demands, such as do not spend too much time playing, and always do my homework first after school etc....They were much tougher when I was in grade one and grade two....Uh, they were really tough when I was in grade three and four. (p.1)

Yong compared his present learning conditions with that of China and felt fortunate to be in Canada. Furthermore, he felt obligated to treasure his current positive environment:

They want me to be successful, that's why they brought me to Canada. Now in China, it's not easy to be accepted by a university even though you excel in high school because of the huge population. It's too competitive in China.... You know in China, if you are not able to go to a good high school, your life is over. Basically you have no future anymore. You can never dream of going to a good university.... It's not easy to be admitted by a university, and even after completing university it's not easy to find a good job. They brought me here because the education system here is better, and the chance of getting a university education is better. (p.2)

Yong was satisfied with their parenting and was grateful for their support. He did not experience parental pressure:

I do not feel any pressure from my parents. I think their expectations are ok for me. Mostly they let me do things on my own. They also guide me to do things. If I study well, they are very happy. If I do not study well, they won't scold me. Instead, they will teach me how to do it better. They are good parents. They are not like some parents, when you get good grades they are very happy; when you get poor grades they won't let you eat anything. (laughs). (p.3-4)

Self-expectations.

Yong shared the same expectations with his parents, "first I should go to a good university, second I should find a good job so that they do not need to worry about me. I should be able to secure a good career to support myself and my own family later." He believed that a quality university education would open several doors for his future:

Uh, I think, if you graduate from a prestigious university, you can easily find a good job. You can also get a better education than students from other universities. You have a good chance to interact with high quality people as well. It's the same as in a gifted program. All your classmates are excellent students.
You work harder now, you can enjoy your future later. You can earn good money and have a good life. You should work hard first and then you will have a good life. (p.4)

He did not conceive ambitious plans and pictured his future life as follows:

I hope I can live a happy life. Not necessarily very successful but happy. When I am old, looking back on my life, I wish I would have no regrets. I am not like some people, very ambitious, wanting to make a lot of money or become a millionaire. It’s not always good to be a millionaire. It’s great if I can achieve at a high level. If not, that's fine too. Not everyone can be famous, right? (p.5)

Mei

Mei’s discussion touched all three categories.

Perception of parental expectations.

Mei explicated parental expectations in several areas, "they want me to put effort, to get good grades, to have a good relationship with teachers and students…uh, they expect me to participate in school activities and to integrate into Canadian culture." She perceived these expectations through family communication and their feedback on her schoolwork:

Sometimes they say it, sometimes I can tell from their actions. For example, if I did not do very well in an exam, they would say that I should make more effort, be more attentive in the class, and spend more time to review schoolwork so I can improve my grades. (p.1)

After entering high school, Mei felt that her parents communicated more often about their expectations with her because "high school is related to my future."

Anxiety.

Mei said that her parents never pressed her, "uh, mostly, the pressure comes from myself, not from my parents." She felt that peer competition at school and her self-expectations were two primary sources of the pressure:

After entering high school, I discovered that many students were very smart. All of a sudden I felt I was not that good. In this high school, almost everyone is excellent, at least on one aspect. Therefore, it’s impossible to completely surpass another student. Maybe you are better than him on this, but he may be better than
you on that. In other words, you cannot stand out as the best student. If you want to have your name as the best one, you have to work very hard. Since I won’t be happy if I do not do well in an exam, it actually serves as a pressure. (p.4)

Although her parents did not demand high academic standing, sometimes Mei felt anxious because they held rigid views towards her grades. For example, she was always good at math. Sometimes her marks went down because both the text and the exam were more difficult. Her parents assumed that she must get high marks on math without any excuse. In one class, she did not get the mark as expected because the teacher was extremely demanding. Her parents thought that she had fallen behind. Mei felt frustrated because she actually made progress in that class despite the lower mark.

Self-expectations.

Mei aspired to become a medical doctor. No matter how difficult it would be, she would make every effort to ensure that her childhood dream becomes a reality, "I think I will be a doctor around thirty."

Like Lun, Mei also planned to return to China after university. To serve her motherland was her ultimate goal. She told me that her family did not yet apply for Canadian citizenship; and she identified herself as a Chinese both by law and by heart.

Ling (the interview was conducted in English)

Ling was a very active participant. She shared her thoughts and feelings on all three categories, especially her anxiety under parental pressure.

Perception of parental expectations.

Ling perceived parental expectations though their regular discussion about her future university education and career:

Since grade seven, they often ask me what I want to be when I grow up.... They want me to go to university, probably one of the best in Canada, such as UBC or
University of Waterloo, which offers good computer programming classes. So they want me to pursue a career like technology and science.... They also talked to me about completing high school with good marks so that I can go to a good university. Uh, maybe get a scholarship. (p.1)

Ling told me that her parents were very demanding in her early childhood. As she grew up, Ling had gradually adjusted to the pressure and aligned her self-expectations with those of her parents:

I pressure myself a lot too. Because you learn from what your parents teach you. When you grow up, your parents pressure you, you'll probably pressure yourself. And if you have any children later, you'll probably pressure your children. It's just you get taught that way. I guess. (p.2)

After entering high school, Ling began to understand why her parents tried so hard to influence her, "I realize that why wouldn't you want your children to become the best they can. If in some ways, they could influence me to do the best I can, why not, right?"

Anxiety.

Ling experienced a lot of parental pressure, "I used to think that my parents, they were mean for doing that, because it's too much pressure. It's almost that they only cared if I was a good student, not anything else." She wished that her parents could have cared about other things, offering mental and emotional support:

The most important thing is that your children's health you need to take care of. And I do not think my parents begin to realize how important it is for them to ask how I feel rather than what grades I got. Love from parents should be unconditional. If parents judge you and love you because you have high grades, that's not unconditional love. And I found (that) most Chinese parents are like that (too). If their children get good marks, all of a sudden they are nicer, they give them money and gifts, they tell them how good they are. But if you do not have good grades, they always criticize you, whatever, they are not as nice, (and) as loving.... Maybe that's why I tried so hard to get more love if I did more. (p.3-4)

Reflecting on her identity, Ling felt that her perspectives "were very Asian" because of the influence of her parents. She commented that, with a future orientation, Chinese life was
more stressful, "while Caucasian perspectives will be to live in the present, to enjoy the moment. For Asians, we always worry or stress because we always strive for something, and we miss what's fun and what's there. I am more Asian because of that."

Ling felt that Chinese future orientation made her parents overly "concerned" about her future university education and career, she complained that her parents were trying to "give" her a future:

It automatically places pressure on me....They have one future for me, but that's not real. Because there are many ways I can walk in my life. I can go to certain directions. If they want you to go in one direction (they pointed this to you), it's not even a fact that, it's a pressure. It's a control! I do not want that control. I do not want them to say "ok, here is your future, take it." I want them to say "we have an idea for you, and we want to share with you. But if you do not like the idea, that's fine too." (p.4-5)

I guess right now, because my parents put so many expectations on my future, and I really don't like it. I really think it's annoying. It's hard for me to think and plan my future right now. It's just so annoying for them to tell me what to do. I do not think about it, I don't really think about it. But I have my goal in life. If I plan to somehow get into the field that deals with my artistic ability, and probably also has something to do with high-tech, somewhere between computer animation and arts, or graphic design. Uh, that's what I have for myself. When I say that, it's not a steppingstone of course. It's just a goal, I am not sure what I want to be yet. And they may think that if I am not sure, my whole world is going to fall apart. But it's not like that, right? (p.5)

Ling also felt that her parents constantly retold their own life hardships in China and North America in order to press her to work harder:

They also try to use that against me to make me pity them so that I have to achieve the best because they worked so hard. Now I have to work harder, and something like that and that pressure is always present. And you know that when we have dinner, they start to talk about "when we first came here, we did not have the privilege of...." and when I first heard my mom saying that, it's quite impressive that how she was able to put herself through. But when they repeat that hundred of times, it's just, you almost feel like they are trying to use that against you so you can push yourself harder. But I don't feel that I need to push myself any harder. And they know that I am a good student, and they should not pressure me anymore. (p.6)
She also felt that Chinese parents were generally very controlling and did not nurture independent thinking and creativity. She commented that Chinese parenting is almost "a reflection of the Chinese government":

I do not like that....I have to do stuff, not by my own choice but because I was demanded to....They provide me the stuff, so I have to obey them. It's how the Chinese parents think, they believed that obedience is such an important thing their children should have. I mean obedience. But for Asian kids, what they lack is the independence, the ability to think for themselves, be creative, and be assertive. Because we are always taught what we are supposed to do and never have a chance to discover it by ourselves. (p.7)

Ling felt that Chinese parents tend to have very narrow views. She called it a 'tunnel vision'. For example, in terms of dating, Chinese parents usually viewed it as troublesome, "they always assume the worst...if you have a boyfriend, you are going to get pregnant, you are going to do bad at school." She told me that, in order to avoid a parent-child conflict, some Chinese adolescents had to hide their dating experiences:

One of my friends is dating a Caucasian boy. She tried to talk to her parents about it. But her parents just said that you cannot date until eighteen. And all of a sudden they are so suspicious like "are you actually dating a boy, is it the boy that you were talking to on the phone? Uh, I am so worried for you...."stuff like that. So she is going through a tough time. That's what every Asian girl wants right now, for your parents to accept who you are. But Chinese parents don't realize how important it is. They are really ignorant, very ignorant. It's kind of sad. (p.14)

Right now I don't date also because they don't let me date. If they just give me permission to date, it would make a whole difference. I think I would be a very happy girl. Not the fact that the day after I am going to get a boyfriend, but the fact that they finally accept me as I am. Exactly who I am, that I have thoughts, and I want to make decisions for my own life, and stuff like that. (p.13)

Ling shared more of her feelings and thoughts about Chinese parenting to vent her Frustrations. She wished that her parents could love her unconditionally, and more important, to show their love to her:
A little girl wants her parents to accept what she is, but the parents only accept the
Asian part of her, the part that she gets good grades, the part where she wins a
prize, the part where the teacher says good things about her, she is a good
Christian girl something like that. But I really hope that if I am a parent, I will
love unconditionally, like I will love my daughter even if she got a failed mark in
the exam. Like I am sure that my parents will still love me, but they do not show
it. Well, I had a bad Christmas. When sometimes you get into an argument with
your parents, you try to run, to escape them. Just for a day or something, like go
to your friends' home. And my mom got really mad at me that I did not come
home. And I said I slept at my friend's house, she came to pick me up. And I
guess that having an argument with your parents somehow helps you understand
each other. I have found after that somehow we have more understanding. So I
guess me and my mom have to fight some more. (laughs). (p.14)

When I asked Ling whether she talked about her feelings more with her parents or with
her friends, she answered immediately, "I cannot talk with my parents, I cannot! It's so hard and
it's so frustrating." I probed further on whether she ever made any effort to talk with them, and
she responded that she could not have an honest dialogue with her parents:

Yes, I tried to make an attempt, but it was unsuccessful. Because even though I
say that I am Asian, I am probably half Asian or 75 % Asian. But that 25 %
Caucasian culture is still very strong in me. I cannot talk with them about guys or
I like a boy something like that. I cannot tell them that because it's unacceptable
for them. I am not supposed to date until eighteen or after I get a career, stuff like
that, and stuff like how I hate my teacher or how I hate school and stuff like that.
(p.11)

I am supposed to be a perfect little Chinese girl who has no hormones. It's very
hard to grow up as a teenager. Because you really want your parents to understand
you, to have compassion for you, and to sympathize with you. And you know it's
so hard for them because they do not know this culture as much as you do. And
you grow up in this culture, the thing that bothers me is that they expect me to be
a 100% Chinese girl but they brought you here into this North American culture,
how could they not expect you to be someone influenced by this culture?
(p.11-12)

Ling recalled another story to illustrate the cultural differences between her mother and
her. She used to keep a diary when she was thirteen and fourteen. One day her mom found the
key to her diary and read everything:
I remember that I was so hurt....I was crying my head off. I could not breathe because I was so mad. For like a few months I was so depressed because she found out the stuff....She walked into my space, and that space is created from my Caucasian culture that to have your own space, to have your own privacy. (p.12)

On the issue of her diary, Ling had a big argument with her mother about her own privacy, "I asked her to accept me as the half Caucasian culture influenced person, in turn, I will try to understand her. But really there was no solution after that."

Have suffered a lot from parental pressure, Ling was determined that she would not repeat the same mistakes when she becomes a parent herself:

Every time my mom or my dad does something I don't like, I say to myself, "when you are older, and you are a parent, you are not going to do this." That's what I tell myself. I know my parents are trying so hard, it's just they lack some of the love I needed (p.19).

Gradually, Ling turned to friends to share her thoughts and feelings. Whenever she experienced difficulties at home and school, she could count on her close friends, which included Chinese, Vietnamese, Indian, Korean, and Iranian. Ling did not choose them because of their ethnic backgrounds but because they experienced the same problems and understood each other, "it is almost like a safety zone. They understand how you are feeling when you say that your parents pressure you to do this." Ling also made some White friends but they were not as close because they did not share common perspectives, "they won't put themselves in your shoes because they never experience it."

In order to avoid conflict, Ling learned to keep a neutral or ambiguous attitude towards the demands of her parents. Whenever her mother initiated a discussion regarding her future, she would say, "I am not sure yet." Ling looked forward to the day she would be independent, "when I move out, they will pretty much have no say in what I can do."
Self-expectations.

Ling felt that her self-expectations had gradually changed since childhood. She used to hold high self-expectations and took her school marks very seriously, "I used to cry because I did not get an A." After entering high school, her parents became less insistent on supervising her studies. However, she pressured herself to work hard:

I just kept on expecting myself to get good marks. If I expect to get good marks, of course I have to try to get good marks. And I realized that it doesn't matter how much pressure your parents put on you, it's what you choose to do yourself that matters, right? (p.2)

Gradually, Ling realized that marks were not everything. She began to value other things:

Things like love, things like compassion and sympathy, things like a smile and a laugh. That's what I really value right now. And also a good mark, but that just like a controlling or influential force my parents gives to me. I really want to get rid of it. But I think that wanting a good mark is not a bad thing, but it's a bad thing when you pressure yourself to a point when you think you are going to like die for it, right? (p.17)

As a faithful Christian, Ling's only wish was "to get out of this corrupted world and live with God in heaven." She viewed God as a powerful influence in her life, "I don't think I would be where I am without God. Because when I became a Christian, everything just changed for me. My perspective on life was different. Uh, it just made the whole world different to be a Christian and not be a Christian." She desired to live a simple life, "I do not want wealth, like Bill Gates, he is not entirely happy. I do not want love because I have God's love." When I asked her how she would see herself around the age of thirty, she described:

I want to marry early, so if I have a child, I will not have as much of a generation gap. That's what I was thinking. Just because I experienced so much on how hard it is if your parents cannot understand you. And that's what I try, I strive for it, to let my child know that. I will definitely, for whatever reason, for whatever problems they have, I will still love what they are, and I want to help them and I want to understand them. Probably I want two kids because growing up as an only child is very lonely, and I want my kids to have someone to yell with, laughs with, and play with.... (p.18)
Uh, probably I really want a good career that pays well. I know I thought of being an artist, but even though it will fulfill my desire to draw, that's what I really want to do, but it's really unreal. I used to be really really romantic about it. I want to have enough money so that I can buy a house, I want to have a dog and a cat. I really want to marry early so I will be looking for a handsome husband who is also well off financially. But he has to be a Christian because I think being a Christian it just makes things a lot better in terms of how we understand each other. And I do not want a very complicated life and I love simplicity. I love space. I guess that's why my mom and me are very different. She seems to live a very complicated life, I think. (p.18)

Bo (the interview was conducted in English)

Bo mainly talked about parental and self-expectations. He did not experience parental pressure.

Perception of parental expectations.

Bo perceived high parental expectations because they voiced them, "they talk about other people, going somewhere and doing something, this or that...they want me to go to a great university."

It seems that Bo entirely endorsed parental expectations because he admired them as experienced and wise adults, "they know more things than me." He did everything to meet their expectations:

For example, my parents wanted me to go to the gifted class, I did it. Recently they wanted me to go to the student council, I tried and I made it....If I get good grades at school, I get respected; I am happy; and my parents are happy. I get to go to high school. if I got good grades, it's a credit, I get to go to a great university. (p.1; p2)

Bo commented that the expectations of his parents "might be too high for somebody else, not for me... They push me sometimes but I don't feel any pressure...I just need to work harder."
Self-expectations.

Bo's self-expectations were largely derived from those of his parents. He would pursue an MBA or Ph.D. degree as his parents wished. In terms of specialization, he expected to become an economist. Bo wished that he could go to Wall Street and to run his own business:

I want to become a businessman. I get my own company. It's not like those companies, they just import stuff from somewhere else. I want a real business, like Bill Gates. My business won't be that large though, but I want my own company, a real business. (p.5)

Feng (the interview was conducted in English)

Feng mainly reflected on parental expectations and his self-expectations. He avoided talking about father-son relationship.

Perception of parental expectations.

With respect to the expectations of his parents, Feng chose to study computer engineering at university. He summarized the expectations of his parents, "basically to do the best I can, to succeed, to become independent when I graduate from the university." When I probed him on how he came to know those expectations, he answered:

My parents constantly remind me that if I want a good life, I have to work hard to achieve it, that's basically what they repeat over and over....They basically tell me, they tell me that they have (a) certain vision of where they see me later on in my life, that I should have a relatively comfortable life. Their basic concern is that I have to have a stable, high-paid job. (p3)

Feng told me he was very playful when he first attended Canadian school. It was until Grade Five that he came to an understanding of parental expectations and started to work harder:

Well, when I first started out, I was not good at school. From grade two to four, I was pretty bad. I was not into studying at all, very much into playing constantly, and not really making an effort to improve myself academically...They were not happy when I was in grade two to grade four. Basically they told me that (if) I was not going to work hard, I might end up like those homeless people in the streets. You know, like people (who) drop out of school, and they just become bad afterwards. Basically one of the motivational factors for me is that I am
always looking for a good life later on. I know if I want that I have to work hard. That’s why I started to work hard from grade five. (p.2)

Feng avoided talking about his relationship with his father. When I asked him if he experienced any parental pressure, the young man answered that the pressure came from his self-expectations:

No, but I do feel pressure from myself. Again, my parents play little or no role in determining how well I do at school or what I do at school. It’s more just I tell myself that I have to do well. If I did not do well on certain tests, for example, then I tell myself that I did not try hard enough, then I modify my habit to get better marks next time. Basically that’s how I work. Just self-evaluation along the way. (p.3)

Since I interviewed his parents first, I knew there was a tension between him and his father. I improvised this question, "if you had a problem with your schoolwork, such as a difficult assignment, to whom you would go for help?" Feng responded immediately, "I would consult other students first. Then probably I would go and talk with the teacher." "Why didn't you go to your parents?" I pursued further. He answered:

I do not know. I really cannot explain that. I just want to use all the other sources first before I go to my parents. I think parents should be the last resource to get academic advice. You should use other sources available, such as your friends and teachers. (p.3)

Feng's tactful responses covered his conflict with his father.

Self-expectations.

Feng felt that he had been always motivated by his self-expectations rather than by that of his parents:

Actually, the expectations are more of me to expect myself, my self-expectations rather than parental expectations. I find that’s what motivates me to do well at school, to succeed. Basically, it's me telling myself that I have to do well if I want to be what I want to be. My parents only mention that I should study hard at university. It’s me to make decisions, to keep myself motivated. (p.2)
Since Feng aspired to become a manager or to operate his own company, he would not be satisfied only with a well-paid high-tech job:

I look at it more as a stepping-stone towards what I want to be. I want to become someone in a management position, corporation somewhere, probably in a high-tech corporation. I want to get a bachelor degree in computer engineering as a stepping-stone to achieve what I want to be, to be a CEO or someone in a management position (p1-2).

At university, Feng experienced peer pressure because he only obtained average marks.

Like Lun, Feng also made a wish for better time management because he was dissatisfied with his lack of learning efficiency:

I want better time management. Because I always find myself out of time. I don’t think I am good with time. I do not manage my time very well. Some people do. I want to do better in time management so I can get lots of things done more efficiently. As I find myself in the university, that’s what I struggle with - time management. (p.5)

**Xia**

Xia shared her thoughts on all three categories.

**Perception of parental expectations.**

Xia felt that the expectations of her parents were modest, "my parents wish me to go to university, not college. They want me to find a good job, to be an ordinary person, to be a good person." She told me that his parents usually compared her school performance with that of others. They were dissatisfied with her grades and thus monitored her studies closely:

They talk about it every day. They discuss how to work and then they ask me if I finished my homework or not. They always say that I should study hard. Sometimes they criticize me for not doing well. Last time I brought my report card home, they were dissatisfied because my grades did not meet their expectations. They also tend to compare my grades with other children’s grades. If theirs are higher than mine, they would tell me that I should try as best as I can to catch them up. They wonder why I cannot do as well as other Chinese students. Why have other children reached the goal but I haven’t. (p.1-2)
Like Yong and Bo, Xia felt that the childhood stories told by her parents did help her understand their expectations better:

They talked about their childhood. They told me that I am so lucky to study in Canada. The environment was so poor when they were young. They had tons of assignments and those assignments were usually very difficult. (p.7)

Xia also learned from her parents that her school performance would have a significant impact on her future life. She must study hard in order to obtain a professional career and become independent:

If you do not study, you do not have many choices in Canada.... You have to study to get a good job to support yourself. If you do not get a good education, you cannot find a good job to support yourself. So it's important to study for your future. (p.2)

Anxiety.

Xia felt that her parents' expectations are reachable with effort. She did not experience undue parental pressure because they were not as strict as other Chinese parents, "as long as I finish my homework, I am allowed to do anything." However, she complained that they were controlling on other things. Having been in Canada for five years, her life style was somehow influenced by peer culture, "I like to watch TV, listen to music, browse the Internet, chat with friends, and go window shopping." Her parents criticized her for enjoying herself too much, "sometimes they blamed me for not studying hard; sometimes they scolded me for doing poorly in my studies...I should concentrate more on my studies."

Like Ling, Xia communicated more with her friends than with her parents. She explained, "we are in the same age and we understand each other. My parents are much older, sometimes they do not understand me." She especially liked to be with her Asian friends, "maybe because our appearances are similar, black hair, yellow skin... uh, I found we think alike. With White friends, our thinking, likes, and dislikes are somehow different."
Self-expectations.

As with Lun and Mei, Xia also expressed a desire to return to China, "I do not like Canada...Canada is not my home. I think I should go back to my motherland. But I do not know if my Chinese language is good enough or not." Dreaming of becoming a singer in China, she wished a wizard could turn her into a star. However, her parents discouraged this ambition:

They said my Chinese language is not good, I am not as good as those teenagers in China. I cannot pass the National College Entrance Examination if I go back to China. So I have to stay in Canada, to find a job here. My parents do not think I can ever become a singer. My father once joked, "if one day you become a singer, I will walk with my hands". (laughs). (p.6).

Xia informed me that, even though her parents did not believe that she would eventually become a singer, they were going to register her in a private class to get training in singing.

So far, the first and second research questions have been examined. We have learned the content, the source, and the communication of parental expectations. We have also heard the children's perceptions of parental expectations, their positive and negative attitudes and feelings towards those expectations, and their self-expectations. The following section accounts for the third research question to reveal their visible minority experiences.

Section 3: Visible Minority Experiences

This section of findings will examine the third research question, how visible minority experiences affect educational aspirations of the Chinese immigrants. Three categories, (a) racial discrimination, (b) visible minority ideology, and (c) dreams of prosperity, have emerged as driving forces that underpin high parental expectations and children's striving for school achievement in these immigrant Chinese families.
Racial Discrimination

As a visible minority in Canada, Chinese immigrants have suffered and are still suffering from racial discrimination. A father pointed out that perceived racial discrimination had a significant influence on high parental expectations of Chinese immigrants, "in this society, although racial discrimination is against the law, it still happens every day. We have acknowledged some severe racial problems since we moved to Canada. Probably this is why we expect our child to do better than others."

Since recalling experiences of discrimination could provoke humiliating memories and negative feelings, both parents and children felt uncomfortable talking about it. They were very hesitant and chose their words prudently. Therefore, I pooled the data to keep the informants entirely anonymous.

A recent Chinese immigrant recalled overt racial discriminatory comments he encountered two years ago. One day he was walking in the street, and a White woman passed by him and screamed, "bloody Chinese, go back to China, you are not welcome to our country."

"Did you say anything back to her?" I asked. "No, I did not say anything even though I felt insulted, I was new to the country." He explained. "In the meantime, another white man caught up to me and comforted me. He said something like 'don't listen to her, many Canadians are very friendly to minority people' etc. I felt better but I was so embarrassed and I walked away as fast as I could."

A parent told me that despite having obtained Canadian citizenship for many years, some Canadians still viewed and treated them as foreigners because of their appearance and accent. Many Canadians assumed that only White people were real Canadians, "they do not consider Canada as multicultural or plural."
Although all parent participants affirmed that they had experienced racial discrimination in different ways and forms, they were unwilling to uncover their personal stories. They generally mentioned that new Chinese immigrants had a hard time to find a job that matches their educational qualifications and professional expertise. Usually Chinese immigrants seldom got a promotion at work. Even if they obtained a raise, they were always limited by a ‘job ceiling’. A father pointed out that racial discrimination existed in all sectors of the Canadian society, including academic institutions. His doctoral advisor, a highly qualified minority scholar, told him that he paid a double price for his position:

When discussing our minority status, my advisor said that as an immigrant, if you want to have a position here, you must do more and do better than others so as to be able to establish yourself in North America (zhan zhu jiao geng). For the same position, you need to achieve 150% with 200% effort while White Canadians only need to achieve 100% with 50% effort. Only by so doing can you get a position here. Otherwise.... It’s evident that whether in Canada or in the States, racial discrimination exists and will continue to exist. You cannot neglect or change it. You have to face the situation. It not only influences us but also affects our children’s lives. Maybe we need many years to eliminate racial discrimination. It’s impossible to get rid of it now.... We do not like the situation, but what can we do about it? We have to endure it.

Another parent also mentioned that his doctoral supervisor, a Chinese professor, was discriminated against by the Faculty. Similarly, the information gathered from the Chinese graduate students studying in a White-dominant faculty revealed tremendous difficulties and struggles in getting TA and RA positions. One extremely painful incident occurred when a Chinese doctoral student signed a contract with a professor but was later replaced by a White student.

A mother recalled that, her doctoral supervisor, a professor of minority background, said "nothing is equal" when commenting on racial relations in Canada:

You can never erase racial discrimination on a psychological level. It’s impossible. Canada is a tolerant society. But psychologically....some people are
very polite, but you know they look down on our minority group from the bottom of their hearts. You can do nothing to get rid of discrimination on a psychological level, impossible.

Perceiving that there exist less racial discrimination in the fields of science and high-tech where the workers have less human exchange, the majority of immigrant Chinese parents encouraged their children to pursue a career in these two fields. A mother explained that her career aspirations for her daughter were closely linked to anticipated racial discrimination:

I do not support my daughter in aspiring to be a lawyer as her future career. In Canada, although multiculturalism is written into the government policy, you can feel racial discrimination everywhere, in everyday life, in your working environment. It’s very common. So minority groups, especially visible minority groups are in a disadvantaged situation.... I suggest to my daughter not to choose law as a career because a lawyer represents justice, but how can you argue with the dominant society if they believe that ‘truth’ is on the side of the White majority, not on the side of visible minority? It will be very difficult if my daughter wants to pursue such a career. If she wants to become a medical doctor or a computer expert, it would be much easier.

Since racial discrimination is officially banned in Canada, racial comments and acts have became hidden and subtle. A new immigrant gave the following example, "when some Canadians hear that you speak English with an accent, they look at you like you are less intelligent." Another new immigrant shared her shopping experience, saying that the White sales girl ignored her questions and warmly greeted a White customer, "I felt insulted because her attitude was solely based on my race, but what could I do about that?" A parent felt sad when talking about her experiences at work:

For instance, when you have the same opportunities as other colleagues to get promoted, your boss may choose White people instead of you because you are a minority person. If he needs speakers for a meeting, he invites White Canadians and does not ask you. Maybe they are doing that unconsciously, but we are very sensitive about this because they did not treat me equally or view me as the same quality person as other people.
Racial stereotypes and prejudice are rooted in the dominant group's perceptions of Chinese immigration history in Canada. For example, the early Chinese in Canada had to earn their living by providing manual services because they were not allowed to work in other fields. Some Canadians assumed that the Chinese were only good 'laundry' and 'restaurant' people. A parent told me that once a White Canadian even asked her if Chinese men still kept their pigtails in China. This misperception might come from movies and other mass media but it seems to reflect a profound ignorance of other cultures and a feeling of White superiority. The fact that North America media negatively portrayed China in general often worsens this misperception.

Even though the parents believed their children would not encounter as much overt racial discrimination as the first generation immigrants, they feared that their children would be subject to covert racial discrimination because of deep embedded White superiority. A mother said:

Now my son does not feel too much racial pressure at school. We told him that he would face this problem later on in society. He will feel better because he does not have language barriers. But his Chinese features, such as his black hair, brown eyes, and yellow skin will never change. For sure he will experience racial discrimination in this society.

The children also shared some stories of racial problems in Canada. A girl compared her experiences in North America and felt that she experienced more racial discrimination in Canada than in the United States. Some Canadians tended to put down minority people, "they even do not like us to speak our own language." Once she heard a White student shouting to a Chinese student, "you are only a Chinese, go back to China!..."

A boy shared his encounters and feelings during his first few years in Canada:

At the very beginning, I was afraid of those White kids because there were very few Chinese in the city. They viewed us as foreigners, "you are Chinese, why don't you stay in China but come here?" I remember one day I was sitting on the school bus, a few White kids saw that our eyes were smaller than theirs. They imitated us by squeezing their eyes smaller. I felt insulted and fought with them.
Other children also told me that they heard more discriminatory comments from White students during their first few years in Canada. I probed further about the content of those remarks but they said they forgot the details.

A female adolescent criticized Western arrogance and pointed out that Western culture was self-centered and did not open to other cultures. Furthermore, American popular media negatively portray China in general. She believed that racial prejudice and discrimination were partly the result of their lack of interests, knowledge, and understanding of other cultures:

Even this country is so multicultural, we say we are so multicultural, we really (are) not. Most Americans try to bring down China, the image of China, you know in American shows. Canadians are more sensitive about being multicultural. But they really do not care to know more about China, because they are just not open to it. Because the society is so closed, it's very individual. Like who cares, that's what they would say, right? But China is so open, culturally it's a very warm country. People are very warm, they tend to want to know more. So you know, like Chinese people know so much about other people, other ethnic cultures. They are more open to American culture but American culture is not open itself to another culture. And also, because of a feeling of racial superiority, like we are better, why should we care about anything else. But if they really open their eyes, they could really find that another country is a really fascinating country, and it has a fascinating past and awesome stories about history and events. Not enough North American people care to learn about it. It does not just go for China, others like India, Brazil, anywhere else.

Under racial pressure, the parents and children enthusiastically discussed on how to prepare themselves to overcome the disadvantages associated with their visible minority status.

**Visible Minority Ideology**

The parents unanimously voiced their ideology or cultural beliefs on the basis of their visible minority status. They stressed that their children must be better and stronger in order to succeed in mainstream society. In other words, they wanted their children to be fully prepared for their life disadvantages.
Lun's mother constantly reminded her son of potential racial discrimination he would encounter in Canadian society and taught him how to cope with it:

I told him that he should prepare himself and know how to deal with discrimination. In a good high school, usually there is no discrimination there because teachers like good students. However, at work, he might encounter racial problems. In mainstream society, sometimes even though he is excellent, the good position may not be offered to him. He should remember that there always exists racial discrimination. If he wants to be respected, he should do a remarkable job so other people won’t put him down... The first important thing is that he should be strong and good enough to earn the respect of others. One of our expectations is that wherever he goes, (he should) always remember that he is a Chinese and is not inferior to anybody. He should be physically, psychologically, and intellectually strong enough so nobody can bully him and put him down. There exists racial discrimination here and there, now and then, he should prepare himself and know how to deal with it. (p.18-19)

Lun's father also expressed his discomfort and disappointment with their disadvantaged minority status:

I have lived in Canada for several years. I feel that for the first generation immigrants, we have a big tragedy. We are highly intelligent with excellent professional and technical skills as well as good manual abilities. However, because of our cultural background and language barriers, we are put in a very disadvantaged situation. We can only show our strength in high-tech field. It's very sad that most Chinese immigrants have to work in high-tech fields. Given our intelligence and ability, we can run or manage a company instead of working as technicians. (p.4)

The father confided that, the fear of racial discrimination was one of the primary factors that drove him to hold high expectations. He viewed excellence as a weapon against racism:

In my opinion, racial discrimination against minorities is unavoidable. Minority people should work harder and do better than others. For our generation, racism is evident. If we do an excellent job we can survive or even succeed. However, we lose many opportunities because of our cultural background and language barriers. The situation is much better for our child. However, he needs to be excellent in order to succeed in society. (p.17)

As expected, Lun developed a very pleasant personality and enjoyed the company of friends from diverse cultural backgrounds. However, when I asked him about his best friends, he
named two Chinese male students. He explained that he was willing to make friends from other cultures as long as "they are nice students", but he felt more comfortable and closer with his two Chinese friends because they could speak Chinese together.

Yong's parents also affirmed that their visible minority status in Canada had essentially influenced their educational expectations. According to the father, minority immigrants must do better than the White majority so as to create a chance to success:

> As a visible minority in Canada, only if we do our best can we compete with mainstream people at the same level. I mean we can never stand on the same level with those Western people. Only if we are better than them, can we be regarded in the same class and at the same level. So as a minority student, my son cannot behave like White students, playing and enjoying every day. They can do whatever they want in the future but he does not have the same privilege as they do. If he does things like the Whites, in the future, even though he achieves at the same level, he won't get the same benefit as they do because there are some other factors involved. That's why he needs to compensate for this disadvantage by other means. The easiest way is through education. If his educational level is higher than them, he will be able to compete with them for sure. It is this consciousness that drives Chinese parents to hold high educational expectations. (p.8)

Yong's mother liked to show her son's school accomplishment to her colleagues, not only to highlight her son's success, but also to help build a positive image of the Chinese community.

She voiced a strong Chinese identity:

> No matter where we go and how long we stay in Canada, we are Chinese....Our Chinese identity is very strong, the feeling is with us all the time. I do not know why, I especially want to tell other people that I am a Chinese. I do not want other people to look down on me. Whenever I did something better than other people, I am very proud of myself as a Chinese and I emphasize that I am a Chinese. The feeling is so strong inside of me that I want to show people I am a successful Chinese. (p.10)

Like his parents, Yong cherished traditional Chinese heritage and maintained a strong Chinese identity. He was also aware of learning about Canadian culture:

> If you want to live in Canada, you have to take some of their culture. My father does not like Western food, he is always joking that his belly loves China. It’s not
good because sometimes his Canadian friends invite him for dinner but he cannot eat their food....If you want to integrate into Canadian culture, you have to speak English. It is even better if you can speak French because you need it to communicate with French Canadians. You have to understand their cultural background, what they are doing in their spare time, and their popular culture. In this way, they won’t view you as a foreigner. They will consider you as one of their members. In the meantime, you need to keep Chinese tradition and characteristics. Whether you live in Canada or in the States, you are still a Chinese. (p.6)

Compared to his parents, Yong seemed to hold a rosy vision of race. He was optimistic about their visible minority status:

Canada is a pluralistic society, many visible minorities immigrated to Canada from different countries. Now more and more Chinese immigrants are coming here. These Canadians get used to our appearance and existence...Uh, if I look for a job in the future, I don't think they will reject me just because I am a Chinese. If we integrate into their culture, speak fluent English, and make good communication with them, I don't think the color of our skin matters that much. Now in high school, I don't feel I am different from them. As a matter of fact, only half of students are White Canadians, another half are Chinese, black students or other minorities. (p.2)

Mei's parents asserted that racial discrimination would persist throughout the lives of their children even though they would not have language barriers. They wanted their children to prepare themselves for this disadvantage; that is, becoming better and stronger. The father explained:

For example, our daughter wants to be a doctor, we tell her that she should have better medical skills than other Canadian doctors to get clients. The Whites are the majority here, certainly they want to see White doctors. If she is better than White doctors, the patients who are not cured by White doctors may come to see her instead....Under the same condition, if one is White, one is Chinese, for sure they would choose the White person. (p.9)

Mei's parents pointed out, as a visible minority, they should align their career aspirations to the demands of the Canadian labor market and avoid competing with mainstream society.

Many recent Chinese immigrants obtained employment in high-tech field shortly after arriving in
Canada because their technical skills compensated for their language barriers and cultural differences.

Ling’s mother was very sensitive about the issue of race. She chose the present high school for her daughter partly because “one of the school missions is equity… It means that all students with different cultural backgrounds should be treated equally. I have not heard of any racial problems in that school.” She illustrated her racial awareness with a ‘basketball story’. Ling used to play in her junior high school basketball team. One day she indicated that she wanted to quit the team. Suspecting that racial discrimination might be the reason behind it, Ling’s mother went to their team training session to observe their practices. All the players were White except her daughter, but she did not see any racial acts from the coach and her peers. Therefore, the mother encouraged Ling to stay in the team. Eventually, Ling left the basketball team because she felt uncomfortable as the only minority player. The mother was very sympathetic, "I did not object to her decision because I thought it was no good to force her to adapt to an uncomfortable environment."

Ling’s mother said her daughter had been academically, linguistically, and culturally prepared for her life in Canada, "I think she has less problems than I had." However, she insisted that her daughter should avoid competing with mainstream society and should not study arts and law.

Like other Chinese families, Bo’s parents were also keenly aware of their disadvantaged situation as the first generation minority immigrants. However, they were optimistic about their son’s future. The mother viewed their weak English proficiency as the primary constraint:

We are constrained by our English and cannot express ourselves completely. Although we do not have problems in everyday communication, our English is not good enough for us to be fully involved in Western culture. Thus we cannot make Western people understood our ideas and perspectives in depth. You know,
our potential ability needs to be expressed to become public. It's a pity that our
potential strength is limited and becomes invisible behind our cultural background
and language barriers. Especially my husband's potential abilities. For our son, he
has both internal and external advantages. He grew up here, therefore he does not
have the limitations we had. (p.6)

Bo's father explained why they wanted their son to excel academically at school:

We are immigrants, we do not have the advantages those native Canadians have.
He must get good grades so other students can respect him. And also he is the
smallest student in the class, and he has no chance to win in a fight. Only if he is
academically better than others will the teachers like him and the classmates
respect him. (p.11)

Bo's mother maintained that, in order to succeed in a white dominant society, it was
critical for a minority member to surpass others:

Because we are visible minorities, we look different from the majority. We expect
our son to do better than others so he can earn their respect. Otherwise nobody
will respect us and value us. My husband said we must do better than others. We
need to show our ability so other people will look up to us. From our appearance,
we do not have any advantage. When our son grows up, he can speak English as
well as those White people, but he looks different. His black hair, yellow skin will
never change. We have a strong Chinese identity. We do not like it when some
Chinese people say that they are Canadians. Even though they cannot speak
Chinese language, their physical features show that they are Chinese, no matter
where they were born or how long they have been in Canada. As a minority group
in a foreign land, we have fewer advantages than native-born Canadians. For
example, for the same position, maybe a White person can get it with 8, but we
need 10 to get it. Therefore, we need to devote ourselves to do better. We always
talk with him about this issue, seriously. I told him exactly the same as I told you.
He understands us and knows that he must try harder than others. (p.13)

Feng's father equated their visible minority status to women's situation in society. He
said that all immigrant Chinese parents and children were keenly aware of their disadvantaged
situation and thus worked harder:

The Chinese immigrants seldom get into a director's position, no matter how
excellent they are. They call it a 'job ceiling'. It is almost like the situation of
women. Women have much less chance to get promoted....As immigrants,
Chinese students know that they should hold higher standards for themselves and
do better than White Canadians. You ask immigrant Chinese students if they
behave like the Whites, can they get the same benefit as they do? Nobody will
answer yes. They know there is a race issue here. They know that they must be better than the Whites, no, should be much better than them in order to get priority to be selected. All Chinese students know this fact. (p.15)

Feng's father used a 'blue eye' priority to illustrate racial inequality in Canada. He believed that his daily directives had helped his children establish a strong awareness of their minority disadvantages:

They know the society is very competitive. As a minority group, we are in a disadvantaged situation. I often tell them that if all candidates are on the same level, for sure the employer will choose blue-eyes first. The opportunity won't be given to them. To deal with this, they should be better, no, much better than the Whites, then the employer may consider choosing them instead of blue eyes. My children knew this reality since they were very young (p.9)... My directives play an important role in my son's academic success. He knows that as immigrants, we need to be better than the Whites so as to be treated the same way. If he wants to be treated better he should do much better than them. (p.12)

Xia's parents were proud of being Chinese. The mother strongly objected to cultural assimilation:

I want to say that it's very important to keep a Chinese mentality.... We have our unique Chinese tradition. I should keep good aspects of our cultural tradition. This mentality is much better than the one who wants to become local Canadians and follow everything in Canadian culture. We always tell her that she is a Chinese with a unique cultural background. Thus she is different from the Whites. Don't even think that I am in Canada, and I am growing up in a Western country so I should follow Canadians on everything, even food, hair, and skin colour etc. Don't try to be the same as the Western people.... We should keep Chinese culture and be proud of being Chinese. To keep a Chinese mentality will benefit her life in the future. Otherwise psychologically she will lose the balance because she always feels that she is different from others. (p.15)

Like other parents, Xia's mother foresaw a better future for the second generation immigrant Chinese children:

We are minority here and we look different....it has a great influence in our generation. Certainly my daughter also feels that she is different from White students. She has the similar mentality. However, I don't think it will affect her life significantly in the future. (p.8)
Based on their experiences of racial discrimination and their visible minority ideology, the parents voiced their dreams of prosperity.

**Dreams of Prosperity**

In August 2000, CBC Radio One broadcasted an interview series on new immigrants of various cultural backgrounds, called "Are We There Yet." One common theme that emerged from the interviews was, they immigrated to Canada for their children's well being. On July 1, 1999, a CBC TV program called *Pier 21* interviewed a recent immigrant Chinese couple. Although they experienced difficulties in finding employment in the new country, they were determined to stay in Canada, "we come for our son's future."

In this study, I specifically asked the parents to picture their children around the age of thirty. Let us listen to their dreams.

Lun's mother foresaw an established family man with a happy family and a fruitful career. She expected him to be in a management position, "I do not expect him to do something significant, like Bill Gates, but by that time he should have his own products in his own company." Likewise, Lun's father wished that his son would assume a leadership role in the future, to "pursue his career in business management instead of being a doctor, lawyer, or engineer."

Yong's mother was optimistic about her son's future:

For the second generation immigrants, they received their high school education here and they are going to get a university education here as well. Their thinking and behaviour are largely influenced by Western culture, and their language is not a problem anymore. Our son also receives Chinese cultural influences at home because we have a close family relationship. We hope he can do better and have a better future than us. Although we have achieved somehow a middle class status in Canada, we still expect him to do better than us. He has a good chance, he will not be speaking English with an accent. (p.4)
At the age of thirty, he should have a good family, maybe have children. He will have graduated from university and have worked for eight years. Or he will be going back to school to do his MBA. Uh, he will not be in Canada, perhaps in the States or China. (p.16)

As the first generation immigrants, Mei's parents went through all kinds of difficulties and hardships. They wished that their daughter would establish herself earlier than themselves.

The mother pictured her daughter's future as follows:

I think at least she will have graduated from university. If everything goes well, she should be able to find a job. Maybe she will be in China, or in the States, I'm not sure. By that time, she may have a boyfriend, or may already have a family. I do not know if I can foresee it. One thing I am sure is that she will be settled down earlier than us. Up to now, we have not completely settled down yet. Economically, I think she will do better than us at the same age. If nothing unexpected happens, she should be fine. (p.22)

Based on what Ling had achieved as a teenager, the mother foresaw a happy and successful life for her daughter:

By the age of thirty, professionally, she will be a successful computer animator. Maybe she will be an active contributor in that field. Her products may be applied or used in Disney World or other big film companies. For her personal life, since she loves and cares for other people as a child; she observes her parents' responsibility; she respects teachers and gets along with friends; she conforms to public rules in society; I believe that if she gets married by that time, she should have a harmonious family life. Will she have children? I do not know. Young people now are very open and flexible about that. They care more about the quality of their own lives. If she is successful, she will have a good living environment, a house at least. Uh, that's all about it. She loves arts and sports, her life will be very rich and meaningful. Um.... She will go skating and skiing during the winter and go swimming during the summer. She will travel with her partner or husband. I think she will be a happy person. I hope she is a happy person. I want her to be happy first and to succeed second. (p.17)

Referring to a Chinese proverb "san shi er li" (everything should be established around the age of thirty), Bo's parents anticipated a successful life for their son. The father was mainly concerned about his professional career while the mother talked more about his future family.

The father's outlook was as follows:
By that time he should have succeeded professionally. If he wants to pursue academic studies, he should have been a professor around the age of thirty; if he wants to pursue a business career, he should be in a management position. I don’t think he can be a politician. But at least he can be a professor or manager. If he is interested in high-tech, he should be able to develop his own products. I am concerned more about his career development. Other things, that’s his own business. I do not have too much to say. (laughs). (p.27)

Bo’s mother’s description completed the picture:

I expect him to be physically healthy and strong. Of course his father expects the same thing, but he is mainly concerned if he can establish his professional career or not. I hope that he will be physically healthy and have his own happy family by that time. Tall and handsome, has a balanced mentality. In terms of his marriage, he can decide by himself. As his mother, for sure I will have lots of suggestions. My husband said we should not interfere in this matter, it’s his own business. Maybe this is a major difference between my husband and I. Honestly, the Chinese tradition is stronger in me than in his father. (p.27)

Feng’s father said his basic expectations for his two children would remain the same, whether they lived in China or in Canada:

First of all, I expect them to have good living conditions. They should contribute to society so they can be rewarded afterwards. Secondly, I expect them to live a meaningful life, to make full use of their talent and potential. These expectations would be the same wherever we are, at home or abroad. (p.17)

When I asked him to picture his son at the age of thirty, he responded enthusiastically:

I can tell that he wants to be a boss, to found a company, and to have his own business. That’s very good ... I think he may become an original co-founder of a company. He will go to work for Nortel first but he won’t stay there very long. He may go to the States. Since he is able to make more money, he will have a much better life than us. Now in high-tech field, a new graduate with a bachelor’s degree can make $ 50,000. Therefore, he won’t like the stuff we use, including the house. You know I bought my house with $200,000. He often says it’s not good enough, and he does not like it. He will buy a better and much more expensive one. For his generation, he has no problem to reach this goal. They are very independent, they believe that if they contribute more to society, they will gain more. (p.25)

Xia’s parents did not want to predict her life. The father believed that one never knew what tomorrow would bring, "I even do not know what will happen to me in the future." The mother agreed with her husband, and she explained:
You never know what will happen in the future. And you cannot guarantee anything for the second generation. The first generation immigrants are hard workers. Are you sure that the next generation will be as diligent as their parents? People change if their situation and condition change. (p.20)

Based on Xia's current performance, the mother anticipated that their daughter would become a career woman with a good family around the age of thirty:

At the age of thirty, she will have graduated from a university and have a good job and a good family. These are the basic things. She should follow our Chinese tradition, she cannot, say, like some Canadians, stay single until 30. I think our child grow up with us, the first generation immigrants, they are mostly influenced by our values. (p.21)

The father added, "It's hard to say if she will have a family by that age. I only hope that she will have a stable job and will be financially independent."

Up to this point, the participants have accounted for their experiences as visible minority immigrants and expressed their worries, dreams, and determination. The last section explores the role of parental expectations.

Section 4: Role of Parental Expectations

The last section of the findings examines the fourth research question, namely the role of immigrant Chinese parental expectations on their children's achievement motivation. Four categories emerged from the accounts of the participants: (a) goal orientation; (b) mastery learning experience; (c) internal control beliefs; and (d) study habits.

Planning for the Future: Goal Orientation

In Lun's family, the general parental expectations served as Lun's life goals. Because the parents valued morals and character building, they reinforced nurturing peace of mind and did not encourage him to compete with others. Accordingly, Lun focused on making personal progress beyond his "past self." The father highly praised his progressive goals:
Our son knows what to do, the standard he sets for himself is, today he does better than yesterday, and tomorrow he will do better than today. As parents, we are satisfied with his progressive goals.... I understand him. If he knows that he should make progress every day, today is better than yesterday, tomorrow is better than today. That's enough. (p.3)

The expectations of Yong's parents set basic goals for his university education and future career. Yong's learning goal and career goal were not only derived from his personal interests but also inspired by his parents' suggestions.

Acknowledging that North American culture does not evaluate students based only on their academic accomplishments, Mei's parents did not press for academic achievement but helped her plan practical goals to adjust to the new cultural demands. Their emphasis on French was a good example.

Ling's mother felt that she had successfully oriented her daughter towards certain life goals. First of all, the mother introduced Ling to Christianity to help her develop good moral values and achieve peace of mind. Secondly, the mother introduced Ling to a 'marketable' career goal, computer animation, so that she could apply her art talent in computer technology. In terms of daily planning, the mother taught Ling to plan a time schedule and to keep a "things to do" list since she was eight. Influenced by her parents, Ling liked to set and pursue goals, "I believe in striving for goals. I always have goals for life because it just makes life interesting. Objectives in life just make life clear."

Bo's father expected him to attain two primary goals in his life, to "have a good position within the reach of his ability, and have a good reputation in his own community." The mother equaled a good reputation to "outstanding performances". They guided Bo to plan his goal in a step by step fashion. "We usually foresee the next step for him", the mother said. They had
successfully helped Bo get into the gifted class and the school council. Next they planned to help him get admitted into the gifted program in a prestigious public high school.

The mother explained why they pressed him to be in the gifted program:

Now he is in the gifted program... The meaning of the best student in a gifted program and the best student in a regular program is different. He was a top student in the regular class, but in the gifted class, he should try harder to be the best one. We told him that the journey was going to be more difficult because it’s not easy to excel among good students. Actually it is our expectations that guide him towards the next goal. He knows what to do. He knows that he should spend more time on his studies in the gifted program. (p.8-9)

Guided by high parental expectations, Bo always strived for excellence. He reflected that children's grades were directly influenced by parental expectations, "some of my Canadian classmates also get good grades, I can tell that their parents expect a lot of them. Those students who did not get their homework done, I guess their parents do not care too much about their studies."

Feng's father believed that Feng's life goals and strong sense of personal best were largely derived from the Chinese values transmitted through his daily directives:

He did not listen to me much. However, the basic values, whether he listens or not, were consciously or unconsciously passed to him from me.... I have a tremendous influence on how to set goals, how to be an effective learner, and how to live an ideal and successful life.... Since his childhood, I taught him that life for a person is short, so he should treasure it and do his best to live a meaningful life, to become better, higher, and stronger. Some people live a long life but they do nothing meaningful. Some people live a relatively shorter life but they contribute significantly to human civilization, and everybody remembers them.... He is striving for his life goal - to become a valuable and stronger man, to contribute more to better his life. (p.22; p.7; p.12)

The father's career aspirations had a strong goal orientation in Feng's choice of computer engineering. Currently, the father was guiding his son what to do next:

I tell him that, in engineering, he does not need to do his Ph.D., a master's degree is enough. If he wants to pursue graduate studies, it's better to do a MBA than a Ph.D. When he was very young I recommended Bill Gates’ biography to him. I
told him that Bill Gates dropped out of university when he was in his second year because a university education could not meet his needs. He is so successful in his business that lots of Ph.D.s are working for his company all around world. I said that achievement is not necessarily related to his degree, especially in engineering. (p.11)

When I asked Feng to list three factors in success, he answered, "first, you have to have a determination to strive for something. Second, you have to be persistent. Third, you have to have a long range goal towards which you can work." Although he lived more years in Canada than in China, Feng identified himself as more Chinese than Canadian because he liked to plan goals. He identified the differences of two cultures and shared his thoughts on the relationship between the career choice of the Chinese and the pressure of survival:

I mean, striving to do the best you can, that has something to do with Chinese culture. If you take a look at the White Canadian culture, or just Canadian culture in general, they say that you should always do what you want to do, and not to give a thought to whether that profession or whatever you are doing can earn you a living. I think that's their approach. The Chinese approach is always, you know, make sure you can bring food to the table first and then talk about if you actually like the profession. I think that's an example where you have a comparison between Chinese culture and Canadian culture. (p.4-5)

The general expectations of Xia's parents actually served as her life goals. Xia was clear that she was expected to obtain a university education, have a stable career, and become a productive adult.

The parental expectations not only helped their children plan their future and orient their goals in life but also enhance children's self-efficacy by promoting their mastery experiences.

Enhancing Self Efficacy: Mastery Learning Experiences

Lun's self-efficacy was fostered in a free and open family environment. In order to maximize Lun's optimal learning experiences, the mother helped him with chemistry and one of

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6 Mastery learning experiences, according to Bandura (1997), refer to a person's successful experiences with a learning task.
his friend's father helped him with physics. They also hired tutors to teach him advanced
knowledge in math. Lun praised his parents for being very supportive in his academic studies,
especially in science subjects, "during summer, my parents had someone to help me with my
math. As a result, I am far ahead of other students in math." With multiple sources of academic
support, Lun acquired various mastery experiences in different subjects and developed high self-
efficacy in dealing with difficult learning tasks.

In order to provide an optimal learning environment at home, Yong's parents devoted
themselves to gratifying his needs, financially, psychologically, and spiritually. Like Lun's
parents, they also support his academic studies by assisting him with his homework, and hiring
tutors in the summer. They helped him develop better time management strategies when he
experienced difficulty in adjusting to the new high school schedule. The father viewed children's
learning motivation as both innate and learned. He offered the following insights:

For children, sometimes their motivation is innate. For example, if a child wants
to reach something, he will try different means. He will be very happy if he gets
what he wants. You can also say that it is learned. Education, family environment,
and live examples have important influences on his achievement motivation. I
think both innate and external factors have an impact on his achievement
motivation. When a child desires to do things better and you set certain demands,
it helps him to strive for it. Thus an appropriate family environment and
parenting can nurture the development of achievement motivation. (p.12)

In order to enhance his self-efficacy and competence, Yong's parents closely supervised
his coursework and helped him learn from previous success as well as mistakes. According to the
mother:

Sometimes he gave a wrong answer on a math exam, for example. Then we would
ask why he did wrong. If he could not explain, we would help him find the
reason, and discuss how to do it correctly next time. Usually we listened to him
first and then we gave our suggestions that may be quite different from his own. If
he disagreed, he would argue with us, then we would explain again. Mostly he
accepted our suggestions wholeheartedly (xin fu kou fu)... when we found that he
did something wrong or dissatisfied, we did not criticize or scold him. Scolding is
not good. We went through different life stages. We think that our son is a teenager now, almost a real man. If he realized he was wrong, and we still criticize him, it's not good. We will be happy if he can correct it after recognizing the problem. We expect him to learn from his previous experiences of success and failure, and also to learn good things from other people. In so doing, he will become better and better. However, he does not always take our suggestions, sometimes he is so stubborn that he will continue to do things his own way until he runs into a 'blind alley' (si hu tong). (p.13)

In order to provide their daughter a competitive learning environment, Mei's parents chose the location of their apartment for her schooling. The father recalled:

When we were moving to Ottawa, I came one month earlier. I consulted with many friends, what was the best high school in the city, and where I should live so my child could enter that high school. Then I looked for an apartment in that area. That's what we did specifically for our daughter. (p.16)

Perceiving Mei's desire for high marks, the mother constantly reminded her not to compare her grades with others and assured her that they would be happy with her effortful performance. She criticized Chinese education for hindering students' self-respect, self-confidence, and self-efficacy by comparing their marks, "some students lose their confidence in school because of their poor performances. He or she may think that I am not good on this...I am not capable of doing that...It's impossible for me to do it well... It's very sad."

The parents focused on helping their daughter set realistic self-expectations to avoid unnecessary frustrations. The mother explained, "we recognized that there is a gap between her goal and her ability. We do not want her to feel sad for 'an unreachable fruit'."(a Chinese expression, which means the goal is too high, thus unattainable).

In order to help Mei obtain mastery experiences and thus develop a good sense of self-efficacy, the parents assisted her with her assignments and school projects. They also provided special training in her weaker fields, such as in French and painting.

Like Mei's parents, Ling's parents moved to another area so that their daughter could
study in the high school they chose for her. They believed that, as parents, they were responsible for providing a positive learning environment that challenges her intellectual growth. The mother reinforced the importance of positive feedback in enhancing a high sense of self-efficacy:

   My approach is to encourage her as much as I can. I seldom criticize her. When she was young, she told me, "in this exam, I gave the right answer first but I changed it into a wrong one later." I did not scold her for that. I said, "you'd better consult with your teacher. Next time you need to be more careful. You need to find out if the mistake was made because you were careless, because you were too nervous, or because you did not understand the question. You have to know why you made that mistake." I told her not to focus only on marks. I do not care about marks. I care if she understands what she has learned. She knew that I was not strict on her marks, so she did not feel any pressure and did even better in her next exam. Whenever she got good grades, I would praise her, give her gifts, or show what she had accomplished to my friends. See, she grows up in a positive and encouraging family environment. (p.13)

From the perspectives of Bo's parents, a supportive family environment was one of the most important facilitators for children's school achievement. The mother said:

   We try our best to provide a good family environment for him. In our family, we provide all kinds of support, emotionally, economically, and intellectually. We devote all of our time and energy to him. There is nothing we cannot give to him. (p.22)

To compensate the lower academic standards at school, Bo's father taught him at home. Taking advantage of optimal learning conditions provided by his parents, Bo always consulted his father whenever he encountered a challenging learning task. The continuing success and mastery experiences built in him a high sense of self-efficacy and confidence. The mother reflected:

   He is always confident about himself. I think it might be our influence. Both of us, wherever we go, we always feel good about ourselves and value our own abilities. I do not know if it's an innate trait due to inheritance, or something he has learned from us. (p.20)

In contrast to Bo, Feng tended to seek help from other people because of a tense father-son relationship. The father thus invited his friends to teach him and also carefully chose the high
school. The father said that the French immersion junior high school was vital in his son's academic success, "he got good teachers and a good learning environment in that junior high school...it seems that all of a sudden he became one of the top students." The father highlighted a French speech contest, "he won the first place, the certificate was signed by Jean Chrétien."

Positive school environment and continuing mastery experiences helped Feng develop a strong sense of self-efficacy. He excelled at school despite the tense father-son relationship.

Although Xia's parents believed that children's school achievement largely depended on their motivation and commitment to their studies, they were also aware that parents were responsible to provide guidance and a nurturing family environment. The mother explained:

She must want to study. Our expectations are only expectations. She should be internally motivated to do well at school. After she grows up, she will know how important education is. For us, we only can tell her why it's important to do well at school... When I say a good environment, I mean that we should make every effort to get her a good education. We support her to learn to play piano, to paint if she is interested. We also send her to study Chinese. In one word, we are trying our best. (p.3)

Xia reflected that mastery experiences had helped her enhance self-efficacy, "if I am successful with my studies, my learning motivation naturally becomes higher and higher."

The parental expectations also foster internal control beliefs as attributed to effort, according to the participants.

Constrasting Internal Control Beliefs: Effort Feedback

Lun's parents ascribed his academic excellence to effort rather than to intelligence, "our son is not very smart", the father commented, "but he tries very hard to achieve his goal step by step." Lun's internal control beliefs echoed his father's accounts, "I do not believe in luck. If I win a prize, I think it's the 'fruit' of my effort. Otherwise I could not have won the prize. I don't think I am a smart person."
The mother said that they were most satisfied whenever Lun made his uppermost effort:

If you have a certain talent, you should maximally use it, one hundred percent. If you do not make any effort, your ability is useless....We are satisfied with whatever he gets with his best effort. It's not acceptable for us if he does not try his best, or if he has the ability but does not try at all. We appreciate whatever he reaches with all his efforts. For example, when he tell us that he gave a wrong answer on an exam, we would say that we need to analyze the exam. If he knew how to do it but carelessly made the mistake, it's not forgivable. He needed to examine himself. If he did not know how to answer the question or he did not review it before, it's another thing. That's our principle. He must try his best. (p.2)

Yong's parents regarded diligence as one of the most important factors contributing to one's success. The father simply stated, "if you do not make effort, nothing will happen." The mother believed that school outcomes "depend on how much effort he places on his studies."

Yong also valued effort more than intelligence. He wished that he could work harder:

I do not think I am very smart, but I am not dumb. I do not think I am gifted. I do not think I have worked hard enough. I did not make enough effort on my studies. For example, I only finish my homework assigned but do not do extra work. I should have tried harder. (p.3)

When discussing control beliefs, Yong impressed me because he talked like a philosopher. I felt that his discussion captured his own learning experiences, mirrored the directives of his parents, and reflected his observation of other people's practices. He used a more general pronoun 'you' instead of 'I':

If you want to succeed, you should make an effort first. The reason is simple: you can control if you make an effort or not, but you cannot control if you have good luck or a good opportunity. If you tried your best and did what you want to do, you would feel good about yourself. You do what you should do and then you will see if you can succeed or not because you cannot control your chance and opportunity for success. It would be great if you tried your best and were also lucky, and you succeed. If you happen to have a good chance but you did not try hard enough, you would miss that chance and regret that you did not make enough effort. If you tried your best but you did not have a good chance to succeed, you have nothing to regret, because you have tried as hard as you could, right? (p.5)
Mei's parents not only believed in human intelligence but also believed that "the ability to make full use of her intelligence is the key to success." They claimed that they did not expect high grades but would be "very happy" if she obtained a high mark with an effort. According to the father, in elementary school, Mei was an honour student because she obtained 90% average in all subjects. She became very proud of herself and gradually made less and less effort in her studies. Perceiving this tendency, the parents taught her a Chinese motto "tian wai you tian, shan wai you shan" (there are always some people better) to press her to work harder. However, Mei did not take their words seriously because she did not see anyone was better than her in that school. To solve the problem, the parents moved and registered her in the best public high school in Ottawa. The new challenging learning environment pressed her to make more effort in her schoolwork. By so doing, the parents successfully helped their daughter maintain a high achievement motivation.

With respect to Mei's desire of becoming a medical doctor, the parents did not discourage this career goal as long as she made effort. The mother explained:

We do not regard it as the only goal for her. But we will be satisfied if she makes an effort. It's not bad to get some knowledge in that field. We cannot tell if she will reach her goal or if she will get into that career. Many factors are involved, sometimes it depends on her chance. We will be happy if she tries her best to achieve her goal. (p.4)

In explaining school success of the immigrant Chinese students, Mei believed that it was not because they were smarter but because they worked much harder than Canadian students, "you know, we spend more time to study, review, and do our homework. Of course we can do better on exams."

Since early childhood, Ling's parents always pressed her to make the best effort in all her pursuits. The mother especially valued persistence, "success does not depend on one's
intelligence but belongs to the people who persistently strive for their goals." She was satisfied that her daughter always devoted herself to all her endeavors.

Ling also attributed achievement to effort, "I don’t think anything in life is luck. I am a Christian and I really believe that everything happens for a reason. Effort is always important, I do not believe in luck."

Like other Chinese parents, Bo’s mother accredited his son's school accomplishment to effort, "he becomes a top student because he has worked harder and spent more time on his studies than other students." She said that they usually provide immediate feedback to his exam performance. If his marks were lower than expected, they would pursue if he had made enough effort:

If he does not work hard, he cannot get good marks and we will criticize him. He is aware of this and takes our words seriously. He will work harder and do better next time. If he does not do well on a quiz, he will tell us as soon as he is back home. If his mark is relatively lower, for example, if he got 15 or 16 out of a total score of 20, we are not satisfied. If his mark stands the third or the fourth in the class, we will tell him that he should be number one or number two. We remind him about our standards frequently. We expect him to do his best and to be the best student at school. (p.19)

When I asked Bo to list three factors that contributed to his school success, he answered, "first, study hard; second, listen to my parents' advice; third, never give up, always do my best."

Feng’s father evaluated his son as a hard worker and had a very strong sense of self-control. He would abstain from practicing all his hobbies before an exam, "for example, he likes to watch basketball, but he never watches before exams…He can control himself. I taped the show for him, but he said he did not have time to watch them." The father recalled that when Feng was in high school, he dedicated to his studies and worked harder and harder in spite of his criticism:
His strong personality has overcome the negative effects of my criticism. Because of our poor relationship, I was not able to help him with his studies. He rejected me. But he studied very hard by himself, especially in high school. We told him not to study until midnight, take a break from time to time. We had to remind him about this all the time. He did not listen to us and still worked very hard. (p.18)

When I asked Feng which was more important to success, effort or luck, he simply answered, "I think it's effort and persistence. Nothing to do with luck at all."

Xia's parents did not hold high academic expectations and would be satisfied with "whatever she reaches with her best effort". The mother insisted that "children need to be pushed", therefore, they assigned their daughter extra homework.

Xia rated effort as of the first importance:

Effort is more important. The first is effort and the second is luck. If you really have good luck, that's great. But not everyone has good luck. You have to make effort first. If you do not make any effort, you won't have any luck.... Nothing is related to luck in studies. If you do not study hard, surely you won't get good marks. (p.3)

Xia learned from her previous learning experiences that effort could help her get desirable results, "once the teacher asked us to write a paper about squeegee kids. I tried very hard. I also consulted with my parents. My father corrected my paper. I made my best effort and got a good mark."

Parental expectations not only helped their children with goal orientation, enhancing self-efficacy, and constructing internal control beliefs; but also nurturing good study habits.

Fostering Study Habits: The Earlier the Better

Lun's mother felt his son's good study habits are a co-product of his innate interests in learning and parental discipline in his early years:

I think he got it when he was a baby. I mean we began to discipline him when he was a baby. His father was busy and most of time I took care of him. He seemed to be blessed with the gift of enjoying reading, so I bought lots of books to meet his needs. When he was in kindergarten, I told him to do his homework first after
school. You know in China, we lived in a very close-knit neighborhood. The kids liked to play with him. Since I always told him to finish his homework before going out for fun, gradually he got used to it. It became a good habit. We did not need to discipline him anymore in elementary school. We did not need to check if he finished his homework today or if there would be an exam tomorrow. See, it’s very important to nurture good study habits when the child is young. (p.10)

Yong’s parents also spoke highly of the importance of fostering good study habits in early childhood. The mother reflected that good study habits had not only helped Yong become a self-regulated learner, but also saved them time and energy in parenting:

Although we have high educational expectations, we have not spent too much energy in his studies.... we never push him. He is self-motivated and self-regulated. He strives his best and does not need us to push. We don’t need to press or watch him at all. We never say that he should do this or that, he knows how much time he should spend on his schoolwork each day. (p.3)

In order to foster good study habits, Mei’s parents always chose a challenging school environment for her. When they lived in China, they sent her to one of the best elementary school in the city. They were grateful to the primary education she received in China. The father accredited her study habits to these early school experiences:

Good study habits should be established at the very beginning of school....Her first few years of school training in China nurtured her good study habits. Once good study habits were established, we did not need to worry or push her to study anymore. It has eventually become her internal quality. (p.5)

The mother expressed the same opinion and viewed fostering good study habits as strength of Chinese education:

I appreciate Chinese education for encouraging children to study hard and to become self-regulated learners. It saves time on parenting. We do not need to push her....It saves us lots of trouble....As parents, we are grateful to her elementary school in China. The school taught her how to study, and to work hard. Gradually she developed good study habits. Studying is not painful for her at all, it’s her mission and obligation. She gets used to it and enjoys the learning process. I remember when we were in the States, I told the principal that we wanted to send her to a summer school to keep her busy. The principal was very surprised, "uh, why do you want to keep her busy?" (laughs). We thought it was a good thing that she always had something to do. It’s a good habit and also she had
that good habit. It was natural for her, she did not think we put any extra work on her. But her American teacher did not understand why I wanted to keep her busy (laughs). Children have lots of energy, I do not know what activities Canadian parents assign to their children to kill their energy...For me, I think if a child has good study habits, she knows how to make an effort in her things. If she does not think it's a pain to make an effort, it becomes a habit. I think this is the greatest advantage our Chinese education offers to our children. (p.6; p.19)

Mei recalled that, because the elementary school in China promoted high academic standards, she had to study very hard to meet these demands:

The teachers were demanding and the students were very competitive. If you did not try hard and did not get good marks, you looked different from others. You had to compete with other classmates. Once the habit is established, it's not easy to change. Since then I always try to be the best student in my class. (p.3)

Mei felt that good study habits she established in China had gradually become part of her. She became a self-disciplined and self-regulated learner. For example, in order to obtain high marks, she always did her homework first after school and spent time reviewing textbooks before exams.

Uh, it's like my instinct (benneng) to get high marks. Even though I am confident about the exam, I still spend lots of time to review it...I would feel very guilty and uncomfortable if I did not review the text before the exam...It's an instinct. I do not know why, I always get high marks and I always want high marks since I was a little girl...My parents tell me to do things but they do not check me every minute. I check myself constantly. My parents only tell me that I have to try my best. I supervise myself if I am up to the criteria. (p.2; p.4)

Like Mei's parents, Ling's mother also ascribed her daughter's study habits to the primary education she received in China, "you know Chinese school education is tough on children. It demands them to value education, to study hard, and to take their schoolwork seriously from early childhood." She recalled how they trained their daughter in her kindergarten years:

We pushed her since she was a baby girl. She could recognize many Chinese characters when she was three. She drew many pictures as well. I remember that she had to recite one or two short classical poems (tang shi) per week when she was only one and half. When she was two, she could recite one poem per day, very fluently and clearly. My little genius. (laughs). I also taught her English at
home. See, before entering elementary school, she already got three years of tough training at home. (p.11-12)

In examining her parenting practice, Ling's mother felt that she was too demanding and over-trained (ba miao zhu zhang) her daughter. However, the early training was fruitful. Beginning from grade five, Ling regulated her studies on her own and did not need to be pressed by external forces anymore.

Ling also accredited her study habits to the training she received from her parents and her early childhood school experience in China:

I guess since I was born, because I was always taught to be excellent at school. Since I was a child, I was taught to do my best, try to get A's, and try to get perfect. It just became my habits, it became part of me... Now even though they still have these expectations, I have these expectations for myself too. As I was growing up, these habits formed in me. Since I keep on getting good marks, I just expect myself to get good marks. (p.1-2).

Bo's mother believed that they had significantly influenced their son's childhood and early adolescence life:

We think that at the early stage of life, parents play an important role. When he becomes more and more independent, the role of parents thus changes as the child matures. Like what we said before, if we did not discipline him, he would not be able to achieve what he had achieved. I think that before he goes to university, we have a critical influence on him. We will become the second influence after he goes to the university. Overall, if he does not have a good foundation we set for him, he cannot reach what he wants or what we expect. (p.17)

Because Bo started elementary school in Canada, his parents worried that he would not get a good academic training. Therefore, they used guan to plan a strict daily time schedule to help him establish good study habits. According to the mother:

You know, both of us come home from work around 6 p.m. Our son is home from school around 4.00 p.m. We receive his phone call every day at 4.00 p.m. He will eat for half an hour. Then from 4.30 to 6.00 p.m., if he cannot finish his homework, for sure he did something else... We only allow him to watch TV on weekends, half an hour per day for two days. But he sometimes watches TV
behind our backs (laughs)….with or without extra homework, he should go to bed at 9.00 p.m. (p.12)

The parents insisted that Bo needed to be pressed because he was in a playful period of life. The father asserted, "at his age, external force is very important…If we let him go and did not exert any demands, for sure he would not have reached this level." The mother felt that her son became more and more independent and self-disciplined, "the way he deals with things is similar to what we taught him. Now he can manage many things by himself and does not need us to keep an eye on him all the time."

According to Feng's father, it was in Grade Five that his directives came into effect. Feng began to take his schoolwork seriously. In order to fulfill his parents' expectations as well as his self-expectations, Feng studied very hard to obtain good grades. Gradually he developed good study habits and excelled at school.

Xia's mother spoke highly of the importance of good study habits. As an example, the mother described how they helped her develop interests and habits in the Chinese language:

The most important thing is to help her develop good study habits. It is no doubt that good habits will benefit her entire life….To be more specific, for example, the Chinese language. When our daughter came to Canada, she was only seven years old. We lived in Montreal at that time. The language environment was French and English. Because she was in a new country and did not know anything, we did not push her to study Chinese. Two years later, we found that she almost lost her mother tongue. The test on her Chinese language was zero. She could not write a single Chinese character correctly. Therefore, we started to teach Chinese to her at home. Every day she had to do a dictation of a Chinese paragraph. Gradually she developed habits in reading Chinese books. Now her Chinese is fine, compared to other children who came to Canada at the age of seven or eight. At least, she can read some novels. We encourage her to read Chinese books. This summer, we made her read Jin Yong's novels. She keeps her Chinese by this means. (p.5)

Xia was grateful that her parents taught her learning strategies to help her develop good study habits and become an efficient learner, "they told me not to leave my school project until
the last minute. I should do it right away. If I have any questions, I should ask so I can understand."

In summary, in answering the fourth research questions, both parents and children acknowledged positive effects of parental expectations on children’s school achievement, which mainly include goal orientation, mastery experiences, internal control beliefs, and study habits.

Now I have finished presenting the findings of the study. Following the thread of the four research questions, the narratives of the seven interviewed families have illustrated an immigrant Chinese folk theory. Based on their cultural beliefs and life experiences, the parents mainly addressed their expectations in five areas, namely school achievement, career aspirations, integration of two cultures, moral character, and leadership role. They communicated their expectations with their children through parent-child dialogue and parental modeling. The children perceived these expectations and expressed their self-expectations. Some children uncovered their anxious thoughts and feelings under parental pressure. The parents and children also shared facts, thoughts, and feelings on racial discrimination and further voiced a visible minority ideology and dreams of prosperity. They affirmed that parental expectations foster goal orientation, mastery learning experiences, internal control beliefs, and study habits. In the discussion chapter I will interpret these findings in the Chinese and Canadian sociocultural context.
CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

Guided by the sociocultural approach, this chapter pursues a comprehensive interpretation of the immigrant Chinese folk theory by bridging the findings of the study and the research literature. In exploring how parental expectations are constructed in a given sociocultural context and how they actually function in the immigrant Chinese families, I will discuss both commonalities and uniqueness that emerged from the accounts of the participants. As a researcher from the same cultural roots, I acknowledge the presence of my personal identity in the interpretation.

I open my discussion by examining the context of parental expectations of the Chinese immigrants with regard to the social, cultural, historical, and personal circumstances in which these expectations are rooted and developed. Then, I will address the tension experienced by the Chinese immigrant parents and children as a result of a stark confrontation of the Eastern and Western culture. Finally, I will explore the affordances and constraints of parental expectations on children's school achievement in these immigrant Chinese families.

The discussion is primarily based on the utterances provided by the seven immigrant Chinese families, coupled with the information obtained from other sources and from my personal life experiences. The available information, and my discussion as well, cannot cover or represent the entire Chinese community in Ottawa nor in Canada. However, their experiences, as we have learned from the findings and we shall see as the discussion unfolds, may largely resemble what other Chinese immigrants have lived.

Context

Parental expectations of the Chinese immigrants are inseparable from the political, sociocultural, and economic circumstances of their homeland and their adopted country. Thus a
brief overview of the context of independent immigration from Mainland China is crucial in understanding their experiences and aspirations.

Since 1967, the Canadian government has adopted a point evaluation system to admit immigrants of all ethnic backgrounds. However, a large number of Mainland Chinese began to enter Canada only after 1980, when the People's Republic of China opened its door to the Western world following three decades of political turmoil and poverty (1949-1979). Global recognition of Western civilization and frequent intercultural exchanges have awoken the individual spirit of the educated Mainland Chinese. The quest for freedom, self-expression, and economic betterment has obviously struck a deep chord in the Chinese soul. It is this chord that motivates thousands of highly educated Mainland Chinese to uproot from their homeland and come to the new world, hoping to escape the old cultural web and to build a better future.

The new immigration wave is promoted by both push and pull forces. On the one hand, Chinese immigrants are pushed by pollution, limited political freedom, an uncertain future, and lower living standards in China. On the other hand, they are pulled by positive conditions in Canada, such as quality of life, environment, spirit of democracy, and multiculturalism. While the majority of Chinese immigrants with high-tech skills are able to enjoy economic benefits in Canada, some Chinese immigrants have to take low-paid jobs either because their career preparation is not in high demand in the Canadian job market or because their targeted career is predominantly occupied by White Canadians. Notwithstanding the recent trend to return to China, many Chinese immigrants have chosen to stay in Canada in spite of many disadvantages and difficulties. Probably some of them are afraid of losing face in front of other Chinese for not being able to make a living in a country that is rated as the best place to live in the world. In this
mixed sociocultural context and personal circumstance, they have to endure various life hardships and to adjust to their visible minority status.

Except for the recent high-tech immigration wave (1996-2000), many Chinese who came to Canada before 1996 were visa students financially supported by Canadian universities. The majority of them managed to change their residential status through independent immigration, an immigration category that screens applicants on the basis of their educational qualifications and career orientations. Six out of seven families I interviewed came to Canada through this path, except for one parent who came to Canada as a visiting scholar. The arrival of these highly educated professionals from Mainland China has resulted in a ‘creaming effect’, a product of the ‘brain drain’ of Canadian immigration policy. They have not only changed both the scope and structure of the Chinese community in Canada, but have also introduced unique cultural values influenced by the political, social, and economic conditions in modern China.

As the findings have revealed, the worldviews and expectations of the Chinese immigrants are significantly shaped by the dynamic and complex interplay of multiple forces such as indigenous cultural expectations, personal life experiences, and the very challenge of acculturation. Since the parent participants belong to a highly educated professional class, their educational background is also an important factor in formulating these expectations.

**Cultural Expectations**

Even though I have attempted to reduce repetitious accounts of my participants, similar values and beliefs, especially those drawn from Confucian philosophy, are notably told and retold in the interviews. I refer to this commonality, the values unanimously shared by members of the Chinese community and transmitted over generations, as cultural expectations. High respect for education, future orientation, and striving for excellence through diligence and
persistence are obviously a common ground that unites the diverse stories of these immigrant Chinese parents and children. In addition, two legitimately shared Confucian values, guan (parental discipline) and xiao (filial piety), are also influential and functional in the Chinese parent-child relationships.

Next I will discuss three primary cultural characteristics that are associated with Chinese cultural expectations: (a) high respect for education and academic inclination; (b) future orientation and belief in hard work; and (c) the constructs of guan and xiao.

High Respect for Education and Academic Inclination

When writing this phrase, a folk song I sang along during my childhood constantly came to my mind:

_Xiao ma xiao er lang ya, (I am a little kid)_
_Bei zhao la shu bao shang xiee tong. (Going to school every day)_
_Bu pa tai yang shai ya bu pa la feng yu kuang, (I am not afraid of sunburn or storm)_
_Zhi pa xian shen ma wo lan ya (I am afraid of being blamed as lazy by the teacher)_
_Mei you xue wen ya wu lian jian die liang. (It would be shameful to face my parents if I fail at school)_

This song illustrates perceived cultural expectations upon academic achievement through the eyes of a child: he/she fears nothing but a failure at school! Numerous Chinese folk songs, folk stories, and fairy tales convey the same message; that is, education is the most important thing in one's life. The findings of this study are consistent with research literature in that Chinese parents generally hold high academic standards and are usually dissatisfied with average grades (Chao, 1994; Chen & Uttal, 1988; Crystal & Chen et al, 1994; Stevenson & Lee, 1990; Stevenson & Stigler, 1992; Wong, 1995). The parents' dissatisfaction with the lower academic standards of Canadian schools and their unanimous assertion on the necessity of a university
education have demonstrated their high respect for education and their firm endorsement for academic excellence.

A brief examination of Chinese history and contemporary Chinese sociocultural context may help us better understand the Chinese academic inclination. Confucian tenets, traditional fairy tales, and 'ke ju kao shi', a policy of selecting civil officials in Chinese feudal society (Chen & Uttal, 1998), stipulate that a good education is a vital means for obtaining personal advancement and family pride. Since China adopted the National College Entrance Examination (NCEE or gao kao) in 1977, school achievement has served as a ticket to higher socio-economic status, or a stepping-stone that could completely change one's life course. China's only child policy makes NCEE even more competitive. Consequently, cultural and parental expectations for academic achievement become higher and higher. In this historical and sociocultural context, Chinese children are usually pushed almost relentlessly by multiple forces, such as government policy, mass media, especially school and home environment, to obtain high academic standing, as the parents have noted.

With the cultural priority placed on education, high academic achievers are valued and rewarded in Chinese society. As highly educated intellectuals themselves, the parents are well aware that the benefits of education are manifold because they have personal experiences that attest to the rewards of education. Their advanced educational attainment has not only granted them an access to a privileged position and a high socio-economic status in China but also has led them to a more interesting and meaningful life. Not surprisingly, these parents want their children to be well educated and to reap its benefits. They view school achievement as a ticket to a better life. The common rationale shared by the parents is that good early school performances
will help their children gain access to a good university, and a quality university education in a marketable field will ultimately lead to a professional career.

Chinese cultural expectations not only serve as primary sources of parental expectations but also as a ground for Chinese children to display culturally desirable performances. As the findings have revealed, the immigrant Chinese children's strong commitment to education and school accomplishment is largely fuelled by Chinese cultural expectations. The children generally accredit their school achievement to the simple fact that all immigrant Chinese children are doing very well in Canadian schools. Failure in school is viewed as a disgrace to their cultural reputation. Once the meaning of cultural values are internalized by the children and become part of their faith and beliefs, both cultural and parental expectations are likely to have a "Pygmalion Effect" and enhance their school performances.

In contrast to the patterns that emerged, Mei's parents express an altered perspective and obviously adopt a different parenting strategy that negates cultural expectations or discourages academic inclination. While all the Chinese parents tend to push their children to work hard so as to achieve academic excellence, Mei's parents, who embrace the Western developmental theory, do not demand an academic performance beyond their daughter's potential abilities. Rather, they reinforce the importance of natural development and the attainment of peace of mind. Learned from their North American experiences, they believe that high academic achievement does not guarantee success in society. Therefore, they encourage Mei to engage in various activities so as to develop multiple capabilities. This parenting philosophy is also reflected in their support for Mei's career aspirations of becoming a medical doctor. Although they have concerns and worries, they do not thwart her ambitions but actively search for other options in case her desired career goal cannot be realized. The uniqueness of this family as an outlier case shows that there
exist other types of parental strategies that do not conform to general cultural expectations. Interestingly enough, Mei's confusion about the discrepancy between the expectations of the local Chinese community and the expectations of her parents has confirmed the powerful impact of cultural expectations. Growing up in Chinese culture, Mei has adopted cultural-embedded values and thus expects high academic standards from her parents. She is somewhat disappointed about the fact that her parents are not as demanding as other Chinese parents.

Although academic inclination has a pervasive and long-standing influence in Chinese life, the immigrant Chinese parents are aligning their expectations to the demands of Western culture. We can observe a modest shift from academic inclination to all-round liberal education in their accounts.

Except for strong values placed on education and academics, future orientation and belief in hard work are also highlighted by the parents as general cultural expectations.

Future Orientation and Belief in Hard Work

Since the topic of 'expectations' is future-centred, the participants not only relate their expectations to their "being" but also to their "becoming". Compared to Western culture, the Chinese are more future oriented not only because it is a Chinese way of life but also because the Chinese immigrants came to Canada with a dream and a drive to build a better future.

Future orientation begins in the crib. Since my childhood, the cultural message “working hard for a better future” has been ever present. This cultural belief has also permeated the accounts of the parents and children interviewed. They stress that they must work hard to secure a good future. Since the future is uncertain and distant, the parental emphasis on the future inevitably brings pressure on children. Ling, for example, starts to question the thinking of her parents and the Chinese way of life after experiencing much pressure from her mother's intense
concern about her future. Her insurgent voice and resentful complaint about Chinese future orientation reflects an ongoing shift towards Western culture and a desire to enjoy the present. Ling came to the United States at the age of six and has lived longer years in North America than in China. We can observe significant Western influence from her accounts.

I have another example to illustrate the Chinese future orientation. One of my Chinese friends, Hui, met her White American husband in China in her early adulthood and moved to the United States afterwards. Her reflection of their intercultural relationship focuses on their different orientations. She wrote to me, "the longer we live together, the more I feel that we have different worldviews. I am willing to work hard in the present so that I can have a great future, but he cares about this minute more than next year." Even though she has direct and intimate contact with Western culture, Hui could not change her future orientation because it has been built into her faith and spirit. Likewise, neither could her White husband, who went to teach in China in his adulthood, shifts his focus of orientation from the present to the future. The contrast of these experiences, either between Hui and her husband, or between Hui and Ling, suggests that the period of childhood and adolescence is crucial in developing culturally ingrained values and beliefs.

The findings of the study show that parental educational expectations and career aspirations are largely based on the parents' careful consideration of future conditions that their children are likely to encounter in Canadian society. For example, having gone through various difficulties in searching for employment, Ling's mother becomes "over concerned" about her daughter's future. As minority immigrants with no roots in the adopted country, the parents have both ambitions and apprehensions. In order to ensure a positive future for their children, the parents focus on how to help them overcome sociocultural barriers. Obviously, future orientation
of the Chinese immigrants is based on their appraisal of what will likely happen in the context of the new culture, particularly what is beneficial and what can be harmful for their future, and what price they will have to pay for success and failure. It should be noted that, under the pressure of survival, the majority of the parents largely equate a sunny future with a well-paid career, and are less concerned if the targeted career is enjoyable and interesting. This tendency, in my opinion, is a by-product of Chinese cultural expectations and the situated Canadian sociocultural context.

The Chinese future orientation is rooted in a firm belief that hard work will pay off. This belief could largely explain why they work so hard in the present. The Chinese value placed on diligence is well documented in the research literature (Chia, Feldman, & Rosenthal, 1992). The accounts of the participants concur with the results of previous studies in that diligence and persistence lead to a promising future. All the parent participants demand their children to make their uppermost effort in their studies, not necessarily for good grades but for the best preparation of their life goals. Feng's father refers it to a well renowned Chinese motto, Mou shi zai ren, Chen shi zai tian, namely success is when and where the preparation meets the opportunity. Once an effort is rewarded by satisfying outcomes, the children are likely to develop internal control beliefs. In responding to my question about 'luck and hard work', not a single child ascribes success to luck. Yong's discussion about the importance of hard work is an outstanding reflection of his deep understanding of this Chinese belief. Consistent with Steinberg, Dornbusch, and Brown's work (1992), the children interviewed in this study are also aware of the consequences of poor performances; that is, school failure will ruin their future. The fear of failure drives them to work hard for a better life. Apparently, internal control beliefs in combination with future orientation are compelling psychological and sociocultural factors contributing to the immigrant Chinese children's school success.
Since academic inclination and future orientation have been deeply instilled in their belief system, many Chinese immigrants persist in this mind frame after having resided in Canada for many years. The tough love approach adopted by Feng's father, for instance, is not only a reflection of Chinese cultural expectations placed on academics and future, but also an application of the Confucian tenet, guan, in his parenting.

Confucian Constructs: Guan and Xiao

The fact that cultural and parental expectations display a "goodness of fit" in the immigrant Chinese families owes much to Chinese moral education, especially to two legitimately shared Confucian values: guan (parental discipline) and xiao (filial piety). The findings of this study add evidence to the relevant research literature (Chao, 1994; Cheung, 1982; Lin & Liu, 1999; Stewart et al., 1998). The narratives of the participants have shown that guan and xiao represent a tacit parent-child agreement and thus have special meaning in Chinese families. They are specifically related to the parent-child bond and are inapplicable to other social relationships.

While the Western developmental theory emphasizes children's natural growth in the process of becoming adults, Confucianism stresses the importance of parental guidance in children's becoming. Parents as more experienced adults ought to assume this responsibility. The purpose of guan is to help children take short cuts to success so as to avoid unnecessary failure and frustrations. This philosophy reminds us of Vygotsky's (1978) 'zone of proximal development' and the notion of 'apprenticeship' or 'guided participation' advocated by contemporary sociocultural theorists (Rogoff, 1995).

The parents who participated in the study regard guan or discipline in children's early years as necessary to the apprenticeship of socially and culturally desirable behaviours. A
Chinese value that significantly differs from Western culture is the parental emphasis on morality, which advocates the altruistic betterment of others rather than one's personal needs. Lun's father's 'orange story' is an outstanding illustration of how Chinese parents use the construct of guan to cultivate children's moral character. Respecting and honouring elders is one of the core Confucian moral values that is beyond the understanding of a young child, so Lun's father forces his son to follow his directives. In Chinese culture, this approach is called understanding by doing. It resembles 'guided participation' but in a more authoritarian manner. Growing up in this family environment, Lun gradually develops strong social obligation and sensitivity towards the needs of others. He always considers the well being of his friends and relatives before his own. Guan is regarded as the typical authoritarian parental style that does not function well in Western culture; however, it appears to produce positive outcomes in the Chinese families. To understand the essence of guan, we need to examine xiao because the two constructs are blended in the Chinese cultural and family context.

Xiao, or filial piety, goes hand in hand with guan in Chinese culture. Xiao requires children unconditionally bring rewards and honour to their parents. Not surprisingly, when perceiving a great deal of parental love and support, the Chinese children feel more obligated to perform their best in order to please their parents. As the findings have revealed, the Chinese children study with a sense of duty or with a desire for parental approval. Xiao may grow stronger especially when the children perceive unwavering investment and tremendous sacrifice from their parents, because they understand that guan is another expression of parental love and support. For example, Feng did not talk about his relationship with his father in the interview. I gather it is partly because he does not want to air his dirty laundry in public, and partly because he knows that his father loves him. Because Feng was not open to me about his relationship with
his father during the interview, I do not know if he resents or hates his father for his excessive criticism and coercion. However, I do know that he has been working persistently to fulfill his father's expectations. Feng's striving for academic excellence definitely has something to do with his value of xiao. We can observe evidence of guan and xiao in all the seven families interviewed, especially in Bo and Feng's case. With the special parent-child bond, the former admires his parents as experienced mentors and thus performs exactly according to what his parents expect; the latter chooses to study computer engineering as his father wished. Obviously, parents' guan and children's xiao prevail in Chinese family life. This legitimately shared Confucian value system may help interpret the "Pygmalion Effect" in the immigrant Chinese families. Furthermore, it lends explanations to the paradoxical results reported in Crystal and Chen et al.'s study (1994) and help us understand why the Chinese students experienced higher parental expectations yet felt less pressure than their American counterparts.

So far, I have examined three primary cultural expectations that profoundly impact parenting of the Chinese immigrants and their children's school achievement. Since cultural expectations are historically rooted and institutionally reinforced in Chinese society, they have coloured every aspect of Chinese life. In addition to cultural expectations, the parents also recall their personal encounters and further reflect on how these life experiences have shaped their expectations.

**Life Experiences**

In the process of relocation and acculturation, the Chinese immigrants have experienced a new sociocultural context that is vastly different from their homeland. The parents tend to refresh their memories by looking back to their lost origin, and furthermore, to make sense of their lives by searching into the reservoir of their motherland experiences and comparing them with their
new undertaking. Life experiences are an important source of parental expectations of the Chinese immigrants. Their life reflections are mostly centred on the significant events they have lived, such as the impact of the Cultural Revolution and the challenge of uprooting.

Frequently, the parents link their current expectations to their own childhood experiences, especially the expectations they perceived from their own parents. Some parents, such as Lun and Bo’s parents, acknowledge that they have benefited from high parental expectations and parental discipline (guan) in their own childhood, therefore, they tend to apply the same parenting approach towards their children. Xia’s parents, in contrast, did not experience high parental expectations themselves, so they do not hold specific expectations towards their daughter.

Lun and Bo's parents firmly believe in the positive effect of parental expectations because they accredit what they have achieved to the influence of their own parents. Learned from their own childhood experiences, Lun’s parents believe that realistic expectations, modelling, and appropriate parenting practice are conducive to children's growth, and they implement their parenting accordingly. In Bo's case, since he is the only male child in the extended family, high expectations flow from two generations, those of his parents and those of his grandparents. Drawn from Bo's father's experiences in the Cultural Revolution, the parents believe that parental demands and expectations are both necessary and essential in promoting accomplishment. We can also observe evident gender role expectations in this family. Bo's mother indicates that she intends to shape her son into her husband's model. In such a family climate, Bo has entirely endorsed the beliefs of his parents and conducts himself accordingly.

Xia’s parents, however, voiced a different opinion based on the father’s life experiences. Xia's father did not experience high parental expectations in his childhood. As a matter of fact,
his success in China and in Canada went beyond parental expectations and his self-expectations. The father’s life experiences suggest that expectations are not necessarily the sole determinant to achievement. Unlike other Chinese families interviewed, who view expectations as vital in producing desirable outcomes, Xia’s parents believe that the future is unpredictable, so it is unnecessary to hold specific expectations. Having said this, in practice, they do hold certain basic standards. For instance, they expect their daughter to obtain a university education not a college diploma. In my understanding, Xia’s parents do hold some general expectations but they do not rely on those expectations to bring anticipated outcomes.

As the findings have revealed, parental expectations of the Chinese immigrants not only derive from cultural expectations and personal life experiences, but also are shaped by the challenge of acculturation.

**Challenge of Acculturation**

Relocating themselves in a new country, the Chinese immigrants embark on a journey of acculturation. As clearly inferred from the findings, their new journey is marred with sociocultural and psychological transitions. In what follows I briefly address three transitions that impact parental expectations of the Chinese immigrants.

**Confucian Ethics and Western Openness**

In forming their expectations, the parents refer to many Confucian mottos as their underlying parenting philosophy. Their emphasis on moral cultivation and character building largely reflects their endorsement of Confucian ethics. Lun’s father’s ‘orange story’ has illustrated how he uses guan to discipline his son to respect elders regardless of the fact that Lun was too young to understand the meaning of such a practice. Since Confucian ethics are largely prescriptive in terms of good and bad, it leaves little room for ambiguity and flexibility. Too
often the Chinese children follow a rule not because they understand it but because they are told to do so.

After residing in Canada for a period of time, the immigrant Chinese parents have gradually acknowledged the strength and weakness of Confucian ethics and Western openness. For example, Lun’s father highlights that Chinese culture stresses achieving excellence by practice and hard work (shu neng shen qiao, qing xue ku lian) while Western culture emphasizes inventing new products to compensate for human shortcomings (bu duan fa ming, yi qiao bu zhuo) (see page 74 of this thesis for reference). This comparison of two cultures is an excellent reflection that captures the essence of Chinese Confucian ethics and Western openness, or the different cultural priorities and preferences. I have observed that, with their increasing appreciation of Western civilization, the parents generally promote cultural integration to their children, despite their own preferences in maintaining a Chinese way of life.

The parents have expressed their deep appreciation of Western culture in nurturing their children’s originality and creativity, and further enhancing their self-esteem and confidence. Lun's father’s ‘science fair’ story and Mei’s mother’s ‘art exhibition’ story exemplified their gratitude and embracement of the Western spirit. As the parents become more aware of the strengths of Western culture, they are more likely to adjust their traditional Chinese parenting to the Canadian context, and become less controlling and more flexible in their parenting.

Academic Achievement and All-round Development

After coming to Canada, the Chinese parents become aware that academics is not as strongly reinforced in Western culture as it is in Chinese culture. While still maintaining high academic standards, they open up to other dimensions of development. Conditioned by their visible minority status, the parents have realized that their children's survival and success in
Canadian mainstream society largely rely on their educational achievement. Therefore, the purpose of encouraging their children to develop many interests in other areas is to enrich their leisure time and not to make a living out of these interests. For instance, the parents stress the importance of sports and other extracurricular events; however, they do not want their children to develop a career orientation from those activities. Xia's parents, for example, support her passion in music but firmly object to the possibility of pursuing a career in this field. Evidently, the parents regard academics, especially the sciences, as an important means in securing their children's future and view all-round development as necessary ingredients to enrich their leisure lives. Ling's mother's picture of her daughter's adult life conveys this ideal: she will have a well-paid high-tech career and enjoy her free time with a variety of hobbies.

**Career Choice and Economic Success**

Facing various demands of acculturation, the parents focus on helping their children make a career choice that directly leads to economic success and a good life. In the Chinese community, I often overheard Chinese parents say that they would encourage their children to study computer science and engineering. Once I went to a piano recital performed by a Chinese high school graduate. The performance was at a professional level, so I assumed that he would study in a music institution. To my surprise, the host announced at the end of the show that he had chosen to study computer engineering at university, although he was certified as a piano instructor in Ontario. According to his mother, a career in music was not economically sound.

This story, along with career aspirations of the participants, has shown that financial benefits are of central concern to the immigrant Chinese parents. Because of the high cost of living in Canada and uncertainties that the process of acculturation entails, both parents and children tend to rate economic success as their top priority and regard a good career as a vital
means to obtain material security.

As Lun's father points out in the interview, in order to make a living in the new country, the Chinese immigrants have to work in high-tech fields because it is the primary access route to their dreams of prosperity. In China, students are not necessarily majored in science and technological field, and they are free to choose other specialities that could meet their interests and fulfil their talent potentials. Therefore, career aspirations of the Chinese immigrants are an adaptive response to the Canadian sociocultural context and their visible minority status. The findings of the study reinforce Chun's (1999) argument that Asian preferences in science and the technology are not necessarily a reflection of their personal interests but a situated and forced adaptation to social reality. Frightened by the potential high risk of not being treated as cultural equals in the job market, the parents are guiding their children to avoid unfair competition in mainstream society. Both Ling’s mother and Feng’s father have effectively influenced career choices of their children. Ling plans to study both arts and computer science as her mother advised, in spite of her own fervent love of drawing and painting. Feng eventually forecloses on his original career ambition of becoming a medical doctor and changes to computer engineering as his father wished. The accounts of my participants are consistent with the ‘relative functionalism’ principle proposed by Sue and Okazuki (1990): the tendency of Chinese immigrants to specialize in science and technology stems from their awareness of racial inequality in the Canadian labour market.

Having gone through the struggle of uprooting and relocating, the narratives of the participants are full of contradictions and ambivalences. The following discussion will focus on the tension derived from the complex interplay of Chinese culture and Western culture they have experienced in the process of acculturation.
Tension

In narrating their life experiences and expectations, tension permeates the accounts of the participants. The tension manifests itself in the parents, in the children, and between the parents and their children. The findings have demonstrated that, as visible minority immigrants who are crossing sociocultural, linguistic, and economic boundaries, they inevitably experience pressure and stress because of the following intertwined factors: perceived racial discrimination, cultural ambivalence, identity struggle, and generation gap.

Perceived Racial Discrimination

Attracted by its image of freedom, justice, and multiculturalism, Chinese immigrants come to Canada with a romantic view of the new world and a hope of achieving prosperity in a merit-reward system. However, upon arriving in the new land, they find that reality is a far cry from their rosy dreams. In a racially stratified society, reward is not necessarily based on one's performance but largely depends on one's race and cultural background. Many disadvantages accompany new Chinese immigrants: their foreign accent, their physical features, and their life style stamp them as a visible minority, another name for a disadvantaged group who has limited opportunities and poor prospects for future advancement. The findings have provided evidence that high parental expectations of the Chinese immigrants are inseparable from their visible minority experiences.

Unlike the early Chinese who came to Canada as uneducated labourers, the majority of the recent independent Chinese immigrants come from middle and upper class backgrounds. They generally were psychologically prepared before they came to Canada because they knew that they would have to trudge their journey with courage and determination. However, how to deal with racial discrimination is not part of their preparation because China is largely a homogeneous
society and they came from Chinese mainstream culture. A common complaint among recent independent Chinese immigrants is that their knowledge of Western culture learned from books and mass media is very different from everyday reality of racial discrimination. The contrast between their privileged status in China and their marginalized situation in Canada unavoidably results in considerable tension, stress, and pain. Feng’s father, for example, equals their disadvantaged minority status to women’s situation in society. The new reality has forced them to make a difficult social and psychological transition from an elite group in their homeland to a disadvantaged community in Canadian mainstream society.

As Li (1998) has contended, Canada has a long history of denigration and discrimination against the Chinese. Although the first Chinese arrived in this land as early as 1858, they are still viewed as foreigners, no matter how long they have resided in Canada. The Chinese immigrants feel that they are never regarded as cultural equals or true Canadians because their physical appearance has labelled them as perpetual foreigners. In contrast to the overt racial discrimination the early Chinese suffered during the period of exclusion, such as being called names, stoned in the street, and segregated into different employment and schools, the new Chinese immigrants experience hypocritical and subtle racial discrimination. I agree with Li (1998) that racial discrimination has nothing to do with cultural misunderstanding but an unexamined assumption about inherent racial superiority and inferiority. Being treated as foreigners, the immigrant Chinese children especially do not feel safe and secure, “Canada is not my home”, as Lun claimed in the interview.

Still today, racial jokes are told. Popular culture and media continue to perpetuate stereotypes and prejudice by showing negative aspects of ancient and modern China instead of presenting its historical heritage and cultural richness. Having suffered from the systematic
devaluation of their culture and the denial of access to opportunities, the immigrant Chinese parents and children have learned to seek their comfort zone within their own community. Not only do the parents mainly socialize with other Chinese immigrants, the children also choose close friendships within Chinese community or other ethnic minorities.

Very few of the parents and children overtly address their personal encounters with racial discrimination. However, their general discussion on this issue sends a clear message that their ethnicity is a factor they must consider when making career choices and life decisions. I still remember what I heard from a radio interview in Beijing around eight years ago. When the host asked an interviewee why she chose to return to China from the United States, she answered, “it’s an insult to my dignity to be there.”

In response to racial discrimination, putting education first and carefully choosing a profession have become the basic coping strategy of the Chinese immigrants. They consider science and technology as race-neutral fields because the job recruitment is supposedly based on one's educational and technical qualifications. Furthermore, these fields demand less language proficiency and communication skills. As Kim and Chun (1994) argued, institutional racial discrimination is responsible for the narrow career choice of Chinese immigrants.

Under mainstream pressure, the parents focus on helping their children transform life disadvantages to positive challenges. They maintain that their children should be fully prepared to effectively compete in the new society despite unequal treatment. Feng's father's 'blue eye' theory exemplifies well what a minority candidate may confront in the job market and what they should do in order to win a worthwhile job. With this mentality, becoming better and stronger is voiced by both parents and children. They believe that, only by so doing, can their dreams of prosperity be fulfilled in the adopted country.
Cultural Ambivalence

Concurrently transiting two cultures that are distinctively different from each other in multiple ways, ambivalent feelings constantly inhabit the Chinese immigrants. The cultural ambivalence is reflected in their enthusiastic discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of Chinese and Canadian culture.

Pride and Shame of Chinese Culture

The parents take pride in their home culture for its rich historical heritage and sophisticated civilization. The underlying philosophy of Chinese parental expectations and practice is Confucian tenets. The parents express their deep appreciation of Chinese culture, especially its contribution to scholastic achievement and moral character building. Their pride in Chinese legacy is a reflection of their deep love of their motherland and affinity towards their cultural heritage on the one hand, and a reaction and resistance to the negative stereotyping from mainstream society, on the other hand. Disturbed by many negative images of China portrayed by North American mass media, both parents and children tend to defend their homeland. Yong's mother, for example, likes to show the evidence of her son's school achievement to her Canadian colleagues. Her intention is not only to present it as a family honour, but also as a cultural pride. Three children of the study, Lun, Mei, and Xia, have expressed a desire to return to China after completing university.

Parental cultural pride can also be observed in their attitude towards language maintenance and language shift. Having suffered economic, social, and political consequences of their limited English proficiency, the parents encourage their children to master the two official languages because it will bring more opportunities for their future. The parents also want their children to retain their mother tongue because it is the main voice of their culture that encodes
Chinese values, norms, and customs as well as conveys their cultural identity. The majority of the parents registered their children in the Saturday Mandarin School. Xia’s parents, for example, even provide intensive training in Chinese at home so that their daughter could have more opportunities and advantages in society, both in Canada and in China. Since children’s appreciation of their home culture largely depends on their Chinese proficiency, the more fluent they speak Chinese, the more they understand and value the worth of Chinese culture. It is very clear to the parents that encouraging their children to integrate into Canadian context does not mean abandoning their tradition and becoming entirely Canadianized. The parents also encourage their children to participate in Chinese cultural activities so as to develop pride in their sense of Chineseness.

Five thousand years of Chinese history have bred a sophisticated civilization that Chinese immigrants are proud of; however, the burden of the long history and political and economic disadvantages are a primary source of the cultural shame that usually leads Chinese immigrants to live a dual life. Unlike their children who aspire to return to China to serve their motherland, the parents are not willing to do the same. Overpopulation and fierce competition have resulted in complex Chinese social relationships that are incomprehensible to outsiders. I was taken aback when a Chinese gentleman from Hong Kong used the word "manipulative" to describe modern Chinese society. Frightened by cultural pressure, complex social relationships, as well as political, economic, and environmental disadvantages in China, the Chinese immigrants choose to endure Western mainstream pressure and to live in a foreign country that they cannot call it "home".

The parents have told how frequent political campaigns from the 50s to 70s in Mainland China, especially the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), were destructive of basic human qualities
such as honesty, solidarity, and compassion. Lun's mother points out that some side effects of
fierce competition, such as dishonesty and jealousy, have seriously damaged the mental health of
Chinese life. In such a sociocultural context, high achievers are valued and respected for their
excellency whereas poor performers are discriminated or condemned for their incapacity. Feng's
mother, for example, wants her children to achieve academically because she has been
discriminated against in Chinese society for not obtaining a good education. Under the cultural
pressure, the Chinese, regardless of age, gender, educational background, and socioeconomic
status, are pushed by an invisible hand to pursue achievement so that others will not look down
upon them. The face-saving tactic, a Confucian ethic to avoid embarrassment or discomfort in
public, exerts extra pressure on both parents and children. The Chinese parents are willing to
sacrifice everything for their children’s accomplishments, partly for the well being of their
children, and partly for saving face. Likewise, face-saving is also an important factor in the
Chinese children’s striving for academic excellence. As Lun and Yong have revealed in the
interview, they would feel shameful if they failed at school because such a conduct is a betrayal
to their cultural reputation as well as a disgrace to their family honour.

Appreciation and Disapproval of Western Culture

Unanimously, all the parents interviewed have expressed their deep appreciation for the
freedom and openness of Western civilization, especially for its all-round liberal education. The
‘science fair’ story described by Lun's father and the ‘art exhibition’ story told by Mei's mother
both praise North American education for nurturing children's initiatives, creativity, and
autonomy. The recognition of the strength of Western culture increases with their length of
residency in Canada. As Lun's father stated, their first impression was that Canadian education
was failing their children. He felt that his son learned nothing in school until he observed some
positive consequences of the new school system. Mei’s mother was grateful when she saw her
daughter’s drawing exposed with other children’s work, an experience that never occurred to her
daughter in China. She deeply appreciates North American education for its nurturance of self-
esteeum and peace of mind.

The primary parental criticism of Canadian education focuses on its weak challenge to
children’s intellectual growth. The Chinese parents believe that childhood and adolescence is the
‘golden age’ for acquiring knowledge and developing abilities, as Yong’s mother affirms.
Therefore, they expect Canadian schools to provide strict and efficient academic training for
their children. Somewhat disappointed, the parents are actively searching for other strategies,
such as hiring tutors, assigning extra homework, and helping their children get into the gifted
program to accelerate their children’s learning.

The parents have generally expressed disapproval and worries towards Canadian youth
culture. Perceiving certain harmful effects of peer culture, such as smoking, drugs, dating at an
early age, and teenage sex, they insist that parental guidance or guan is necessary to lead their
children towards the right direction. Some gender expectations discussed by the parents are
related to Chinese tradition and contemporary conditions in China. For example, Ling and Xia’s
parents do not allow them to date or experience sex in the period of adolescence. Since the
parents came from big cities in China, where career women are commonplace, the parents of the
three female adolescents expected their daughters to be well educated and financially
independent. The parents disagree with the Western cultural practice of letting children shoulder
many responsibilities and make their own decisions. From a Chinese perspective, parents as
more experienced masters and mentors ought to provide guidance. They believe that their
children are unlikely to follow Canadian peer culture if they keep Chinese tradition and engage in schoolwork.

Based on their critical examination and dialectical analysis of both merits and shortcomings of Chinese and Canadian culture, the parents generally regard integration as a solution to cultural ambivalence. They want their children to adopt positive aspects of both cultures so as to live a rich life. The intentions of immigrant Chinese parents are consistent with the following two propositions: in the process of acculturation, voluntary immigrants prefer what Ogbu (1974) and Berry (1990) calls ‘integration’ or what Gibson (1987) calls ‘accommodation without assimilation’.

**Identity Struggle**

Cultural ambivalence inevitably leads to identity struggle. Although ethnicity largely defines one's sense of belonging and cultural identity, the interaction between one's home culture and host mainstream culture can reshape one's identity formation. Anxiety, stress, even depression may occur because the loss of previous privileges in their home country and the challenge of new sociocultural reality are jointly adding uncertainty to their future. We can sense identity struggle of the immigrant Chinese participants from their visible minority ideology. Their struggle is not about their identity as Chinese but about their identity as a visible minority group in Canada. Clearly, being a Chinese in China and being a Chinese in Canada have a different meaning for them. Therefore, how recent independent Chinese immigrants, who are originally from mainstream society in their home country, renegotiate their cultural identity as a marginalized group in Canada is a topic worthy for exploration.

The immigrant Chinese parents and children are obviously experiencing different identity struggles when coping with the challenge of acculturation. Both psychological development and
sociocultural milieu account for this difference. First, the parents and children are in different developmental phases, their identity construction is thus evolving differently in light of their biological and psychological development. Second, the parents and children have different exposures to two cultures, thus they are likely to be influenced by the sociocultural milieu in which they are predominantly involved.

All parent participants immigrated to Canada in their midlives, and a Chinese identity had already been firmly established before they moved to the new country. Their acute consciousness of being Chinese is deeply embedded in their special bond with China, the land that has nurtured their childhood and part of their adulthood. From their narratives, we can see that their strong Chinese identity has shaped how they view the past, cope with the present, and plan for the future. The more years they lived in China, the more likely are they to hold firm to their cultural heritage and maintain their Chinese way of life. The tension lived by the parents is not caused by their cultural identity but on the ways to develop appropriate parenting strategies in order to balance cultural differences and reduce parent-child conflict.

In contrast, the tension that children confront is their identity struggle during the dual process of enculturation of Chinese culture and acculturation of Western culture. All the seven children came to Canada in their childhood years, thus they are more amenable to be influenced by the new culture. With initial contact, children's adjustment to mainstream culture may only be a small and simple shift. As contact continues, especially as children have more exposure to Canadian mass media and become more involved in peer culture, they may develop more ambivalent attitudes towards two different cultures. This ambivalence is likely to create identity struggle and acculturation stress because they have no alternative but to accommodate the expectations of their parents as well as the demands of Canadian mainstream culture.
In the process of acculturation, whether immigrant children remain more Chinese or become more Canadian, or develop bicultural or multiple cultural identities largely depends on their place of birth, the length of residency in two countries, and more importantly, on their attitudes towards two cultures. All seven immigrant Chinese children were born in China and they firmly identify themselves as Chinese. Obviously, their physical features, their childhood experiences in China, and everyday practice of Chinese culture at home have a significant impact on the maintenance of their Chinese cultural identity. However, as they enter into adolescence, their identity formation becomes predominantly influenced by Canadian mass media and peer culture. We can clearly observe two emerging identity patterns. Lun, Mei, and Yong seem to appreciate more Chinese culture whereas Bo, Ling, Feng, and Xia appear to feel more comfortable with the Canadian way of life. An examination of their backgrounds may help us understand this difference: Bo, Ling, Feng, and Xia came to Canada in their early childhood and have spent more years in Canada than the other three children.

Since the immigrant children are exposed simultaneously to different perspectives, attitudes, preferences, and standards between home and school, some of them experience anxiety and confusion. Ling, for example, has been struggling with ambivalent feelings and trying to resolve her identity problem by defining herself half Chinese and half White, or 75% Chinese and 25% White. How to develop a healthy bicultural identity that retains Chinese heritage and incorporates Western cultural codes is a challenging task that immigrant Chinese children have to deal with.

The experiences of the immigrant Chinese identity formation suggest that cultural identity is an ever-changing construction of one's being and becoming. Aware of it or not, their cultural identity significantly influences their thinking, feeling, attitudes, and performances in
both obvious and subtle ways. The identity of Chinese immigrants in Canada is emergent, situational, and dynamically constructed in response to the very challenge of acculturation. Cultural ambivalence and identity struggle can provoke parent-child conflict and generation gap, as I shall examine in details next.

**Generation Gap**

But now she wants to be a Chinese, it is so fashionable. And I know it is too late.... I wanted my children to have the best combination: American circumstances and Chinese character. How could I know these two things do not mix?

-------- Amy Tan, *The Joy Luck Club*

One of the challenges that Chinese immigrant parents confront is how to help their children become self-sufficient adults who can function with ease in a bicultural environment. In the movie *The Joy Luck Club* (1993), Amy Tan voiced a typical immigrant Chinese parenting philosophy: they want their children to draw strength from both cultures and to benefit from the ‘best combination’ of Chinese tradition and Western context. Perceiving the increasing influence of Canadian mainstream culture on their children, the parents frequently caution their children about the danger of completely assimilating the dominant culture and discarding their original cultural identity and historical heritage, as Feng and Xia’s parents assert. What they desire for their children is to learn the best aspects of Western culture and to retain essential aspects of their Chinese way of life. In other words, the parents want their children to adopt 'Western science' but adhere to 'Confucian ethics'. However, this ideal is not an easy task. It could become a primary source of parent-child tension and widen the generation gap because two cultures could not be easily reconciled.

In the immigrant Chinese families, parent-child tension or generation gap is a reflection of different acculturation levels between parents and children. Since the parents are previously imbued with indigenous Chinese cultural values, they tend to predominantly maintain their
established home cultural identities with only a minor shift towards the mainstream. The children, however, have more exposure to the new culture and acquire the English language more rapidly than their parents through schooling and extra-curricular activities, so they are likely to develop a more sophisticated understanding of the Western context. The parents have a strong desire to transmit Chinese cultural values and beliefs to the next generation while the Canadian schools have a mission to inculcate Western cultural norms to the new students. In such a sociocultural context, the immigrant Chinese children have to negotiate the vast differences between Chinese tradition they have been receiving at home and the Canadian way of life they have been learning at school. Frequently, they find themselves stuck between the two cultures and experience tremendous contradictory feelings. As we have observed from Ling's family, children's ambivalent feelings may become more and more acute with the widening parent-child acculturation gap.

The tension between the parents and children also arises from the disagreement between 'guan' (parental discipline), and children's growing consciousness of independence. Lun's 'ping-pong time' story illustrates the strain caused by their different preferences with regard to academics and extracurricular activities as well as learning strategies. Although the parents are making an effort to integrate Canadian customs into their parenting, such as granting their children more freedom and encouraging alternative interests, their expectations and mind-sets are largely shaped by their Chinese cultural values and beliefs. On the contrary, the children, especially early adolescents or adolescents, are easily influenced by their surrounding peer environment. As the children become more and more independent, they are gradually changing from simple followers to critical thinkers, and begin to assume responsibilities for the consequence of their decisions and choices. Since children's exposure to Canadian culture is
adding new components to their ongoing identity construction, their thinking and behavior are likely to clash with what their parents deem to be appropriate. This reality does influence family harmony and parent-child relationships. The generation gap in Feng's case leads him to avoid interacting with his father, whereas in Ling's case it results in constant arguing and fighting with her mother. Growing up in a bicultural context, Ling feels that she has been pushed in opposite directions by Chinese and Canadian culture. Her internal struggles illustrate the challenge of this cultural negotiation.

In Feng's family, the tense father-son relationship results from a 'tough love approach'. Disappointed by the poor school performances his son displayed in his first few years in Canada, Feng's father was anxious to boost immediate school achievement and overnight behaviour change. Even though his directives and criticism were well intended, the outcome positive, Feng did excel at school, but the father suffered a bitter and painful feeling of his son's rejection. The case of Feng's family serves as a cautionary example for other Chinese parents. The implementation of guan should be modulated in order not to create intense parent-child strain.

In Lun, Yong, Mei, Bo, and Xia's family, the accounts of the children largely echo that of their parents. It appears that the majority of children interviewed endorse the beliefs of their parents. Two possible reasons may account for the consistency of their shared expectations. Firstly, all parent participants are highly educated professionals. They have earned their children's admiration and respect with their outstanding educational and professional qualities. Secondly, Confucian values of guan and xiao are obviously alive in these immigrant Chinese families. As other researchers have confirmed (Chao, 1994; Ho, 1994; Lin & Liu, 1990; Stewart et al., 1998), guan and xiao lead these children towards their parents' expected paths.
The children's personality traits and innate dispositions seem to play a significant role in parent-child interaction. Bo, Yong, Lun, Mei, and Xia are somewhat compliant in nature, thus they tend to share and endorse the beliefs and expectations of their parents. Accordingly, they have experienced less anxiety and reported a lower level of stress. Ling and Feng, in contrast, have displayed strong personality traits. Facing a painful generation gap, both of them have demonstrated resilience. Ling shows herself an independent thinker by critically examining the beliefs and practices of her parents and further challenging both Eastern and Western culture. Feng's strong character enables him to develop a coping strategy to withstand his father's criticism, all the while excelling in high school.

Given these sociocultural and personal circumstances, how can the parents and children share common beliefs and expectations beyond the generation gap and different levels of acculturation? Open communication is recommended as the best means to achieve mutual understanding. Ling felt that she "needs to fight more" with her mother. Lun's mother claimed that her son had nothing to write for a paper titled 'generation gap' because of frequent parent-child dialogue. I have observed that, in resolving the parent-child tension and reducing the generation gap, efforts have been made by both parties to achieve mutual understanding. The parents are modifying their expectations while the children are trying to understand their parents' perspectives. Hopefully, their efforts will increase the affordances and reduce the constraints of expectations, which in turn, will better their lives.

So far, I have examined the cultural context of immigrant Chinese parental expectations and the tension both the parents and children have lived in the process of acculturation. Next I will discuss the affordances and constraints of parental expectations upon children's school achievement in these immigrant Chinese families.
Affordances

The research literature has generally accredited the outstanding school performance of immigrant Chinese students to family and cultural support. This study has provided evidence to this effect. The affordances and advantages of parental expectations outweigh disadvantages. In these immigrant Chinese families, high parental expectations are not necessarily linked to the stereotyping of overburdened, anxious, and unhappy children but to a large extent promote goal orientation, achievement motivation, and study habits.

Goal Orientation

Parental expectations of the Chinese immigrants influence their children’s life goals as well as their short-term plans. As Ling explains in the interview, future orientation motivates the Chinese to set life goals and pursue them with persistence. Ling defines herself as more Chinese because she feels that cultural and parental expectations have been pressing her to always strive for something. Likewise, in spite of adopting the Western life style, Feng identifies himself as Chinese because of his strong desire for goal attainment. According to his father, although Feng rejects him, the Chinese values he inculcated have been built into his son's belief system through his daily directives. Growing up in the context of their family, community, and culture, these children have learned what it means to be a Chinese and have gradually adopted a typical Chinese way of life: setting goals and then striving for them.

It is evident that the immigrant Chinese parents hold two types of expectations for their children: general expectations and specific expectations. Their general expectations aim to help their children set life goals to become productive and reliable adults. In attaining these life goals, the parents regard obtaining a university education as a prerequisite. Their specific expectations focus on their children’s schooling. For example, all the parents have certain standards for their
children’s grades. It seems that the parents who participated in this study encourage performance goal orientation more than learning goal orientation. In educational psychology, the distinction between a performance goal and a learning goal is important to a good understanding of learning motivation. As Ablard and Parker (1997) illustrated in their study, the former is viewed as product oriented, namely obtaining high grades or test scores; the latter is defined as process oriented, namely immersing oneself in learning tasks.

As we have observed from the findings, performance goals are obviously more emphasized by the immigrant Chinese parents. Six out of seven families in this study value high school marks, only Mei’s parents focus more on learning goals. The parents encourage their children to work hard, to perform their best, and to ultimately do well in tests and exams. Relatively speaking, they are less concerned whether their children enjoy the learning process. For example, Lun’s parents want him to study alone so he can be more concentrated on learning tasks, whereas Lun prefers to study with his friends because it makes the learning process more enjoyable and interesting.

The performance goal orientation of the Chinese immigrants is motivated by two beliefs: first, they regard academic excellence as vital in earning their cultural reputation; second, with a belief that high grades will bring a good university education and secure a professional career, they view school achievement as an important means for their children to succeed in mainstream society.

While contemporary educational theory tends to give more credence to learning goals than to performance goals, I would argue that performance goals and learning goals are equally important for minority children’s schooling not only because the two goals often overlap in practice, but also because performance goals produce positive outcomes, and good grades can
enhance minority children's self-worth and confidence, and further help them develop
competence in coping with mainstream pressure. Both Lun and Bo's family, for example, stress
that their children's academic excellence have earned respect and friendships from Canadian
peers. The parents are keenly aware that, as visible minority immigrants, they do not have any
thing to take for granted. To a large extent, their career opportunities are based on their
university education, and a good university education can only be obtained through school
achievement. In this sense, parental encouragement upon performance goals in the immigrant
Chinese families is more an affordance than a constraint. However, the parents need to entertain
both performance goals and learning goals so that their children can enjoy the learning process
and feel less pressure and anxiety.

It should be noted that the immigrant Chinese parents largely reinforce the role of effort
and persistence in goal attainment. They believe that children's talent potential can be maximally
developed only through hard work. Since parental expectations are high and achievable, the
children tend to strive for long-term and short-term goals and thus retain a strong commitment to
accomplishment. High parental expectations of the Chinese immigrants have provided lofty goal
orientations that are conducive to their children's school achievement.

**Achievement Motivation**

Achievement motivation is a driving force in the pursuit of high standards and
excellence. Motivation entails all aspects of activation and intention, such as energy, direction,
and persistence (Ryan & Deci, 2000). As the findings have demonstrated, the immigrant Chinese
children in this study are highly motivated. This achievement motivation is not just individually
and psychologically driven but a collective function of their family and community involvement.
In other words, achievement motivation of the immigrant Chinese children is a subjective
experience that has a culturally constructed meaning. The accounts of the participants have illustrated what motivate the children to achieve and how the parents provide positive conditions to mobilize their children to perform well.

In educational psychology, motivation is often categorized as intrinsic and extrinsic (Ryan & Deci, 2000). The former is related to learners’ innate psychological needs and is accompanied by affective experiences such as enjoyment and pleasure. The latter is usually regulated by external rewards or pressure. In line with my position with regards to learning goals and performance goals, I maintain that children need both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation to become competent and confident learners. Since school education is not a leisure activity and the curriculum is based largely on what society believes children need to learn, not what children want to learn, children have to meet certain externally imposed social demands. As the minority immigrant children, extrinsic motivation is especially important because they have to adjust to the new cultural norms and to the new school system as well as to accommodate their parents’ standards and expectations. The parents who participated in this study believe that a certain amount of pressure is necessary in attaining desirable goals. Their expectations for a better life, their emphasis on effort, and their standards on school grades are a primary source of children's extrinsic motivation. Since parental expectations convey specific cultural values and beliefs, it actually serves as an external force. In the process of enculturation, the children may gradually internalize or share these cultural values and progressively transform them into their self-expectations and self-motivations. As the findings of this study have revealed, the children generally respond to high expectations of their parents with enhanced motivation, effort, and persistence. Once cultural and parental expectations become part of their personal beliefs, the children become more engaged in learning tasks and are thus likely to experience competence
and efficacy. In other words, extrinsic motivation can be gradually transformed into intrinsic motivation.

In order to motivate their children to pursue academic excellence, the parents usually employ two strategies, or more precisely, two kinds of comparisons. First, they tend to compare current pleasant life conditions with bitterness of the past, or what Bo and Yong's parents refer as *yi ku si tian*. By recalling past harsh life experiences, the parents send a message to their children that they should treasure the present life and learning environment in Canada because it has been earned by tremendous parental suffering and sacrifice. Second, the parents tend to compare the open learning environment in Canada with the competitive academic conditions in China. By telling stories of student life in China, the parents intend to motivate their children to pursue their personal best in a free environment because they do not need to bury themselves in exams like their counterparts in China.

These Chinese parenting strategies are generally successful in boosting their children's achievement motivation because it helps them develop a sense of duty and guilt. In order to live up to parental expectations, the children feel obligated to make full use of their time and resources. *Yi ku si tian* is particularly successful in Yong's family. By recalling their experiences in China, the parents effectively communicate their expectations to their son and motive him to strive for the best. Ling's mother also likes to share her experiences in China and North America with her daughter, encouraging her to work harder for a better life. However, because the mother constantly repeats the same stories, Ling gradually becomes resistant to this type of communication and wonders why she has to be responsible for her mother's unfulfilled goals. The problem here is not what the parents should communicate but how the parents communicate with their children.
The findings demonstrate that the immigrant Chinese children in this study largely share the expectations of their parents. When the children engage in a learning task not only because they are told to do it but also because they want to do it, external coercion is fused with intrinsic motivation and ultimately enhances their school achievement.

**Study Habits**

Both parents and children speak highly of the importance of parental expectations in nurturing good study habits. The parents generally feel that their high expectations help their children maintain commitment to learning since early childhood. An advantage unanimously recognized by the parents is that study habits can save them time and energy in parenting. Lun, Yong, Bo, Ling, and Xia’s parents have reflected that, to help children establish good study habits, the earlier the better. Once their children develop good study habits, the parents do not need to closely supervise their schoolwork anymore. The accounts of the children echo the perspectives of their parents. All the seven children interviewed acknowledge the contribution of parental expectations to the development of good study habits and their strong commitment to school achievement. They affirm that their upbringing in China and the demanding parenting they received in their early years explain a lot about their educational accomplishment in Canada.

At school entry, children may be intrinsically motivated for some learning tasks but feel less interested in others. However, with increasing social responsibility and pressure, extrinsic motivators such as obtaining good grades, pleasing their parents, and avoiding public embarrassment in the case of failure become primary sources of their learning motivation. In the process of pursuing external rewards, extrinsic motivation can be associated with intrinsic motivation as children become more interested in and are able to master learning activities. The
findings of the study have suggested that, as the children develop more mastery learning experiences, parental expectations and values are likely to be integrated into their self-expectations. Consequently, learning itself becomes a pleasure. Once good study habits are established, the children become self-regulated learners. They set goals and pursue them with effort and persistence. Whenever they are not performing well, the children experience feelings of guilty because they feel that they have disappointed their parents as well as betrayed their second nature and self-worth. In this way, good study habits help the immigrant Chinese children actively engage in learning activities, which ultimately lead to positive school outcomes.

Constraints

The findings have revealed that the immigrant Chinese children largely share expectations and beliefs of their parents. However, beneath the surface there seethes anxiety and stress, especially in Ling and Feng's family. In what follows I will discuss two prominent constraints or limitations of parental expectations that I have observed: parental pressure and tunnel vision.

Parental Pressure

Of the seven children, Ling is the one who voiced parental pressure and her internal struggles in dealing with cultural conflict and generation gap. She was raised in Chinese culture and was used to Chinese thinking and life style. However, as she enters into adolescence and becomes more independent, and especially becomes more involved in Canadian peer culture, Ling begins to challenge the traditional Chinese way of life and Confucian classical precepts, such as future orientation, guan and xiao, striving for personal best, and face-saving tactics. Although Ling has gradually adopted Western mainstream values, her Chinese identity always motivates her to strive for excellence. She views school achievement as a means to please her
parents so as to gain more love, and to reward her parents for their investment and sacrifice. The clash of values held by her parents and those celebrated by Canadian mainstream society results in a tense conflict between Ling and her mother. In order to escape parental pressure and control, Ling is spending more and more time with her close friends. She regards her circle of friends as a safety zone where she feels free to vent her frustrations, gain comfort, and find possible solutions. Suffering from inner turmoil, Ling longs for the day when she can become financially independent in order to decide by herself what she wants to do in her life.

Feng's family is a unique case. Although Feng does not complain about his parents, his rejection of his father is obviously a coping strategy to escape parental pressure. Feng's father went through various life hardships and had his first child only in his late forties. Therefore, he views his son as the one who would succeed and honour the family. Consequently he holds excessively high expectations. No matter what Feng accomplishes at school, the father is not completely satisfied. His 'tough love' approach has ensured a positive academic outcome at the expense of a close father-son relationship. Conscious of the love and sacrifices of his parents, Feng demonstrates his xiao by living up to their expectations. However, his distance towards his father is a silent protest to the excessive parental pressure. Promisingly, Feng's father has learned a lesson from his son and does not intend to apply the same parenting to his daughter. Furthermore, the father-son relationship is improving since the father begins to change his parenting strategies, encouraging his son more and criticizing him less.

Theoretically, high expectations bring stress and anxiety. However, a study conducted by Crystal et al. (1994) has uncovered a paradoxical phenomenon: the students in China perceive higher parental expectations but report lower stress level than their American counterparts. This study lends support to their results. The parents interviewed generally hold high expectations.
Whatever their children achieve, they push them for a yet better performance. However, except for Ling, the majority of children interviewed do not report extreme parental pressure. I gather it is largely because the children hold similar beliefs and expectations as their parents. Since the parents are highly achievers, they have earned their children’s admiration. Under these circumstances, the children view their parents as role models and tend to follow their instructions and relatively give less thoughts to alternatives.

High parental expectations can be a source of stress if children do not share these expectations or prefer a Western life style to traditional Chinese thinking. School achievement of the immigrant Chinese children thus is likely to be a product of external forces, for instance, a result of desire to please their parents.

**Tunnel Vision**

Ling calls the constraints of Chinese thinking and associated parenting as a ‘tunnel vision’, referring to their narrow-mindness. Her critical remarks reflect her subjective view of Chinese parenting, based on her interaction with her mother and her observation of the Chinese community. In order to understand a Chinese mind-set, we need to examine the context of Chinese perspectives.

The political and socio-economic system adopted by the Chinese government has shaped the prevalent cultural values of its citizens and thus has framed social homogeneity. Parental expectations of the Chinese immigrants are largely anchored on a socialist ideology and Confucian classical tenets. I had an interesting conversation with a Chinese Canadian friend who felt that the Mainland Chinese think alike and even their handwriting in English looks similar. For a long period of time in Mainland China, the government sets a uniform standard for everyone to pursue. *Gao Kao* (the National College Entrance Examination) is a good example, as
the parents frequently mentioned in the interviews. In this way, the Chinese are largely conditioned to think and behave in a similar manner. Once their belief system is established, they tend to seek information that fits that system. In so doing, they are likely to be blind or not ready to consider alternatives. Ling sees the control she has experienced from her parents as a reflection of the Chinese government. The findings of this study have demonstrated how cultural background and prior life experiences of the Chinese immigrants have coloured their visions and shaped their expectations, even though they are making effort to adjust to the Western cultural context. Except for Mei's family, all six other families consider primary education in China as more academically advanced than that of Canada, and they prefer to raise their children in a Chinese way. Even though Mei's parents appreciate Western education, they still possess a Chinese mind-set. For example, Mei's mother was grateful that the American school exhibited her daughter's drawing because she thought her daughter's work was "not good". She did not give a second thought that it was not because her daughter's artwork was poor but because the evaluation in China did not aim to encourage children's creativity.

All the parents interviewed are in their midlives. They have suffered long-term poverty and have gone through various political campaigns in China. They came to Canada with a dream of prosperity, and they are prepared to work harder for a better life. As independent immigrants, the Chinese parents are usually preoccupied with earning a decent living to support their family. And accordingly, their primary concern for their children's future falls on economic success. In this sense, parental expectations of the Chinese immigrants are largely related to their original North American dream and their situated conditions as visible minority members in Canada. They want to help their children to survive in mainstream society and achieve future prosperity to compensate an unfulfilled Chinese dream of many generations. Career aspirations of the
immigrant Chinese parents are money oriented, which are closely related to the pressure of survival. Having gone through overall poverty in China and suffered financial strain as new immigrants, the immediate and central concern of the first generation Chinese immigrants is to be able to "place food on the table", as Feng stated. The reality has forced them to rate financial success as their top priority and to view education as the necessary ladder in this pursuit.

With many disadvantages of their visible minority status, such as the fear of racial discrimination, the absence of financial security, the loss of family and social support networks, and the struggle with a new language and sociocultural system, the immigrant Chinese parents have to cope with financial insecurity first. However, it is not because they only see one objective and ignore others. As a matter of fact, the parents are not able to pursue other objectives except for financial benefit because they are overwhelmed by the high living cost in the new country. Therefore, only if they achieve a certain living standard can they broaden their vision or change their focus. They have gone through a bitter process of relocation and have learned from those experiences how important is it to be able to make a decent living. Not surprisingly, economic success becomes the core aspiration of these immigrant Chinese parents.

Perceiving their parents' struggles and sacrifice in securing a good life in Canada, the children are performing their best to please their parents by following their suggestions and fulfilling their expectations. This could explain why parental expectations are likely to be shared by children and function as a powerful source of children's school success in these immigrant Chinese families. However, the danger exists that the children are not doing something in which they are interested but something that is culturally desirable and theoretically important. With the increasing cultural interplay, the Chinese parents need to adjust their original static vision and mind-set to the dynamics and diversity of the Canadian multicultural society. And more
importantly, Canadian schools should develop appropriate curriculum and teaching strategies to adapt to, accommodate, and celebrate this cultural diversity.

In essence, the discussion chapter has attempted to make sense of the finding of the study from the sociocultural approach. I have addressed the context of parental expectations, the tension of acculturation, and the affordances and constraints of parental expectations. In the concluding chapter, I will provide the summary of the study and share the insights obtained in this research journey.
CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I will briefly summarize the immigrant Chinese folk theory developed in this study and reflect on what I have learned in this research journey. I will also address educational and research implications of the study, including contributions, limitations, and recommendations.

Summary of the Study

Generally speaking, all parents want to give what they believe is their best for the best future of their children. However, what they give and how they give varies from culture to culture, and family to family. Guided by the sociocultural approach and investigated with a qualitative inquiry, this study has examined the relationship between parental expectations and children's school achievement mainly based on the subjective experiences of the seven recent immigrant families from Mainland China. The narratives of the immigrant Chinese parents and children have formulated a Chinese folk theory that interprets this relationship through their cultural beliefs and vivid life stories.

The folk theory voiced by the immigrant Chinese parents and children touches many aspects of their lives in China and Canada. It reflects their desires for a better life, their expectations to achieve excellence, their struggles to adjust to a visible minority status, their determination to survive and prosper in a dominant society, and their yearning for their motherland. Due to various tensions they have lived in the process of acculturation, coexistence of contradictory accounts is frequently observed in the findings, such as expectations and apprehensions, dreams and worries, and determination and hesitation.

Based on their cultural beliefs and life experiences, the parents mainly address their expectations in five areas: (a) school achievement; (b) career aspirations; (c) integration of two
cultures; (d) moral character; and (d) leadership role. The parents communicate their expectations with their children through parent-child dialogue and parental modeling. All the children have perceived and made an effort to understand expectations of their parents. While some child participants entirely accept and endorse the values and beliefs of their parents, follow their parents' expected paths, and report no parental pressure or a lower level of anxiety, other child participants voice their anxious thoughts and feelings towards various tensions they have been experiencing in their daily lives. Both parents and children share their experiences of racial discrimination, their visible minority ideology, and their dreams of prosperity. The participants affirm that parental expectations enhance children's school performances by fostering goal orientation, mastery learning experiences, internal control beliefs, and study habits.

In general, the Chinese parents expect their children to secure a professional career in the future, and view education as a ticket to a worthwhile employment and a good life. Their educational expectations and career aspirations reflect their strong desire of retaining Chinese tradition as well as their careful consideration of their disadvantaged visible minority status. Chinese cultural expectations and tension of acculturation are two entwined forces underlying high parental expectations and children's striving for school achievement in immigrant Chinese families. Parental expectations of the Chinese immigrants are rooted in Confucian heritage and are situationally or locally motivated and historically transformed in different ways in response to the demands of the Canadian sociocultural context.

We have observed that, high educational expectations of the immigrant Chinese parents are grounded on the basis of their cultural beliefs and life experiences. Historically, academic excellence is valued and rewarded in Chinese society while a lower education level is often accompanied by poorer life opportunities. All parent participants are highly educated and have
intimate experiences about the multiple benefits of education. They not only hold high educational expectations but also provide passionate support to their children's school achievement. They attempt to develop effective parenting strategies to guide their children on expected paths. The perceived rewards of education have formed and shaped Chinese cultural expectations as well as individual parental expectations. Future orientation, high respect for education, and internal locus of control are three intertwined Chinese cultural values underlying high parental expectations and children's school achievement. Both Chinese parents and children in this study believe that a good education leads to a good future. They also believe that internal locus of control, namely one's happiness and success is more dependent on one's efforts than on external factors, can help them achieve their life goals. Two Confucian values, guan and xiao, have pervaded family life of the Chinese immigrants. Guan and xiao make parent-child shared expectations possible and can partially interpret why parental expectations are likely to be influential and fruitful in these Chinese families.

We have also observed that, when confronting both opportunities and difficulties of acculturation, the immigrant Chinese parents generally hold positive attitudes towards their home culture and host culture. They want their children to take the best of Eastern and Western culture so as to live a successful and meaningful life. Their strong Chinese identity and their appreciation of Western culture combine to foster realistic parental expectations and effective parenting strategies.

Acculturation requires a series of adjustments to the new socio-economic status, the new language, the new values, and new identities. The Chinese immigrants have to undergo social and psychological transitions to accommodate a new life. In coping with the tensions of acculturation, such as cultural ambivalence, perceived racial discrimination, identity struggle,
and generation gap, both the immigrant Chinese parents and children have demonstrated strong resilience. Although uprooting has changed the direction of their life course, they consider the difficulty of relocation as more a challenge than as a danger or a risk. Their optimism towards the future and commitment to success are undiminished by the problems that surround them. On the one hand, their determination to succeed in the new country is strengthened by problems surmounted in spite of the many disadvantages they have to face. On the other hand, they are gradually adjusting to Western mainstream norms in order to reconcile cultural differences and to reduce cultural conflicts. The accounts and stories of the participants demonstrate that they hold strong beliefs, and their spirit and determination can be injured but not broken. The findings have shown that the Chinese children fully or partially understand the significance of the 'push' exerted by their culture and parents; and they share the same beliefs about the importance of educational achievement, career choice, and internal locus of control. Their educational accomplishment is fuelled by cultural and family influences powerful enough to override the impact of cultural change, language barriers, and their marginalized minority status.

In coping with their life disadvantages in a White dominant society, these immigrant Chinese parents want their children to become better and stronger. Their high expectations and passionate support for their children's school achievement are based on a firm belief: excellence is the key determinant to a good life and the best deterrent to racial discrimination. So be excellent. It is positive for them to have this determination; but in reality, this belief does not guarantee an escape of racism, as the parents in this study discussed.

Ultimately, we have to answer the following question, do expectations work in immigrant Chinese families? Or in other words, is there a "Pygmalion Effect" in the Chinese family context? The answer provided by this study is "it depends." Although the majority of the
participants have voiced a strong positive relationship between parental expectations and children's school achievement, alternative parenting perspectives and practices do exist in the immigrant Chinese families. For example, Mei and Xia's parents do not conform to high Chinese cultural expectations and intend to mediate cultural pressure by holding realistic expectations and demanding reasonable effort. My reflection is that high parental expectations may produce positive outcomes but cannot guarantee achievement. Children's school success may be accredited to high parental expectations but may in some cases have little to do with parental expectations. This study has provided a convincing account that the relationship between parental expectations and children's school achievement is influenced by deeply interrelated multiple factors, such as (a) sociocultural context, namely if the culture supports educational accomplishment; (b) the nature of expectations, namely, if the expectations are realistic and meet children's developmental needs; (c) the nature of parenting, namely if parents effectively communicate their expectations with their children and if parents can transfer their expectations into appropriate parenting practice; and (d) the nature of children, namely children's personal circumstances or psychological dispositions such as personality and character.

Insights

This doctoral study lasted for four years. In retrospect, I should say that the long research journey has helped me understand qualitative inquiry and the role of researcher through first-hand experience.

First, I have learned the importance of choosing a general approach and a research paradigm that permits a qualitative investigation. The sociocultural approach and interpretivist paradigm I adopted have guided every decision I made in this study, including designing the research, formulating the research questions, collecting data, and interpreting findings. The study
is based on a belief that ‘reality’ is always situated within a certain sociocultural context and ‘meaning’ itself can only be best understood with respect to its subjectivity, dynamics, and multiplicity. The findings depict how the participants make sense of their educational experiences. My discussion reflects how I understand their accounts as a researcher from the same cultural roots. In this sense, this immigrant Chinese folk theory, and my interpretations as well, are a value-laden construction of the relationship of parental expectations and children’s school achievement. Given this stance, the folk theory is open-ended and the data could be interpreted alternatively within different paradigms and theoretical frameworks.

Second, I have learned the importance of carrying out a pilot study for helping ensure a successful qualitative inquiry. The group project in the course of EDU 7190 proved the feasibility of the study and brought my research interest into focus. The pre-interview I conducted with one of my Chinese friends' family tested the interview guidelines, from which I learned that the age of child participants was vital in obtaining rich information from children. Before devoting my time and energy to fieldwork, I obtained valuable first-hand experience from the two practical research exercises. The pilot study helped me establish a solid ground for refining and adjusting further research decisions.

Third, I have learned the importance of establishing trust and building rapport with participants. As we can easily observe from the findings, there are notable inconsistencies between the accounts of Feng and his father. Feng's father discussed extensively about his parenting problem and his 'tough love approach'. Feng, however, talked about his school experiences without mentioning the father-son tension. I view this difference as a reflection of trust. Feng's father has known me since I came to Canada in 1997 and trusted me as a friend. As a scholar himself, he understood the nature of the research and regarded the interview process as
an opportunity to share experiences and gain understanding. Feng, however, obviously viewed me as an outsider or ‘other’ who would judge his words and deeds, so he acted as a ‘good participant’ and chose not to wash his dirty linen in public. I feel that establishing a friendship and a low-profile entry are crucial to earn trust from the participants. In shortening the distance between the researcher and participants, it is important to tell them "how interested you are in knowing what they know." (Gladwin, 1989, p.24)

Lastly, I have learned from this study that the relationship between parental expectations and children's school achievement cannot be explained by a simple, linear model. As we can easily infer from the findings, common themes and altered views coexist. As qualitative researchers, we need to be mindful of this complexity and diversity.

**Educational Implications**

I address the educational implications of the study in the following three areas:
(a) contributions; (b) limitations; and (c) recommendations.

**Contributions**

By examining the role of parental expectations on children’s school achievement, this study makes educational experiences of the Chinese immigrants intelligible to the general public as well as policy makers. It gives voice to recent independent Chinese immigrants, whose perspectives are rarely heard in Canadian mainstream society. The findings of the study lend insights to the importance and necessity of anti-racism education. It compels us to rethink how to empower minority immigrants and to effectively reduce their tension and pressure so as to ensure Canadian multiculturalism a reality rather than a propaganda. Too often I have heard from Chinese immigrants, "I am a minority person, so I have to work harder." I wish one day they would say, "I am equally rewarded because I work as hard as mainstream Canadians."
According to the sociocultural approach, knowledge is situational, personal, and modifiable since people from the same cultural roots may hold similar, different, or contradictory lay beliefs. Although this folk theory cannot cover every facet of parental expectations and should not be generalized to other immigrant Chinese families, it exemplifies how parental expectations function in this specific cultural group. By providing information from the perspectives of both parents and children, the study helps immigrant Chinese parents and their children establish mutual understanding so as to lead a harmonious family life in the process of acculturation and in the pursuit of betterment.

This study has significant educational implications. As educators, we must optimize opportunities to help students of all backgrounds successfully go through sociocultural and psychological transitions so as to fulfill their talent potential. This study helps teachers and school counselors have a deeper understanding of cultural and family factors involved in schooling for immigrant Chinese children. This understanding will enhance school-home collaboration and facilitate teacher-parent partnership. This understanding will ultimately benefit immigrant Chinese students as well as students of other ethnic backgrounds. If the study compels Canadian schools to foster racially inclusive classrooms and to develop culturally responsive teaching strategies on the basis of cultural awareness, if it challenges Canadian schools to provide more efficient academic and social mentoring for non-mainstream children, then the expectations of this study are fulfilled.

Limitations

It is impossible to design and conduct a study without hindsight because we always learn from our research process and research participants. The openness and flexibility of qualitative studies allow us to examine its limitations so as to make constructive recommendations for future research.
First, due to time and financial constraints, the sample of the study is small in numbers, thus the findings are not representative of the immigrant Chinese community in Ottawa, nor other immigrant Chinese families across Canada. In other words, the findings cannot be generalized beyond the scope of the study. A positivist researcher may question its general reliability and transferability, however, the purpose of the study is not to prove something or to generalize the findings to other families but to deepen our understanding of how parental expectations actually work in this under-researched cultural community. The study does not claim that its findings are exhaustive or definitive; rather, it opens a window through which we come to understand educational experiences of the Chinese immigrants that are shaped by the interplay of culture, history, power, and identity.

Second, the study does not examine gender expectations in details. In my pilot study, I had one interview question probing gender expectations. My participants responded that they only had one child and never imagined that they would hold different expectations towards a child of different gender. Therefore, I did not include that question in my interviews with the seven families. However, the pattern on the gender expectations still emerged from the accounts of the parents. For example, Bo's mother considered that "a talkative girl looks lovely but a talkative boy looks silly" and thus did not want his son to develop a chatty habit. Feng's father indicated that he was not as tough on his daughter as he was with his son. I suspect that he might hold lower academic expectations toward girls. In addition, it appears that parental expectations of the female adolescents are not as high as those of the male adolescents, but it is also possible that the pattern emerged is because the three girls are not in the gifted program. Nevertheless, since I did not intend to investigate gender expectations, I did not extensively discuss this issue.
Gender expectations remain a worthwhile research topic for further investigation. Furthermore, a feminism lens would be helpful for exploring gender expectations.

Another limitation of the study is that all parent participants have professional backgrounds, and all child participants are above-average students and four of them are from gifted classes. The perspectives of highly educated parents and their highly achieving children put forward an ‘elitist’ interpretation of the relationship between parental expectations and children’s school achievement. Future research needs to explore how family social class and economic status are related to parental expectations and children’s schooling, and what can be uncovered with immigrant Chinese parents from diverse occupational backgrounds, especially those underachieved immigrant Chinese children who have major difficulties to fulfill their parents’ expectations.

Fourth, since open-ended interviewing is the primary method of data collection, the ‘good participant effect’, namely the desire to please the interviewer by the participants may exist in the study. I observed that this tendency is likely to occur when interviewing children because they tend to view the researcher as a figure of authority. Nevertheless, since the interviews are open-ended, the participants can talk freely about their experiences. This strategy helps mediate the potential performance of ‘a good participant’.

Lastly, the fact that I am a lone researcher during the entire period of this doctoral study may bring potential research biases. My subjective views have likely played a major part in this study. Furthermore, the sociocultural approach demands interdisciplinary knowledge, which is a challenge to my personal training since my academic background is mainly in educational psychology. To overcome this weakness, I have openly discussed my identity, values, and experiences in the interpretation of the findings. The suggestions and critique of my advisor,
committee members, colleagues, and friends are vital in reducing researcher bias. Nevertheless, I view data interpretation as personal, partial, and open-ended that can be changed and re-changed with further readings and thinking.

**Recommendations**

Canada is a new country built by immigrants. In the age of diversity, it has become in everyone's best interest to understand multicultural populations from the lens of those populations themselves. Only if we examine a phenomenon in context, can we find out what makes them tick, why people behave in certain ways, how they perceive reality, and what they view as valuable, important, and proper. As we have learned from this study, it is impossible to fully understand parental expectations of the Chinese immigrants without examining their historical origins and socio-cultural contexts. Therefore, more qualitative studies need to be conducted from the perspectives of visible minority immigrants to uncover their cultural beliefs and acculturation struggles, and to avoid an assumed White-mainstream interpretation. In addition to open-ended interviews, case study and ethnographic study such as participatory observation will be helpful in developing a more complete picture.

When time, research, and financial resources permit, future research on educational experiences of Chinese immigrants needs to examine the role of family social class in children’s schooling, to sample participants from diverse educational and occupational family backgrounds so as to celebrate multiple realities.

Immigrant Chinese adolescents deserve more research attention. When children enter adolescence, they have a desire to define their own paths and make their own decisions rather than to conform to conventional criteria or traditional Chinese customs. In addition to the tension of transiting from childhood to adolescence, and from adolescence to adulthood, the immigrant Chinese adolescents are experiencing inner struggles and ambivalent feelings towards the two radically different cultures they strive to reconcile in their daily lives. Qualitative research is best
suited to uncover their world so as to develop culturally responsive coping strategies to help them successfully cross intercultural and intergenerational boundaries and become happy, healthy, and productive members of our multicultural society.

Many people agree that life is like travelling on a ship. In closing my writing, I wish to share the following phrase as my personal reflection of this Chinese folk theory:

_We cannot control the strength or the direction of the wind, but we can adjust our sails to meet the challenges in our lives._

--- Author unknown
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### Appendix A

#### Immigration by Source Area and Top Ten Source Countries

**Immigration by Source Area**

![Graph showing immigration by source area](image)

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<th>1999</th>
<th>2000</th>
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<td>96,429</td>
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<td><strong>189,911</strong></td>
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**Principal Applicants and Dependents**

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<tr>
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**Immigration by Top Ten Source Countries**

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*Citizenship and Immigration Canada: Facts and Figures 2000: Immigration Overview*
## SKILLED WORKERS BY TOP TEN SOURCE COUNTRIES

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CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION CANADA - FACTS AND FIGURES 2000: IMMIGRATION OVERVIEW
Demographic Questionnaire

For Parents

Name: Father________________________ Mother________________________
Age: Father________________________ Mother________________________
Address: _______________________________________________________
Telephone #: ______________________________________________________
Email address: _____________________________________________________
Education: Father________________________ Mother________________________
Occupation: Father________________________ Mother________________________
How long have been in Canada or North America: 
Father________________________ Mother________________________
How many children: _________________
Children’s age: ________________________________________________

For the child

Name: ________________________________
Age: __________________ Male____ Female______
In what grade: ________________________________
How long have been in Canada or North America: ______________________
Interview Guide

Interview with parents

(Pre-instructions: I have some questions about your expectations for your children’s education. I won’t judge your answer, please feel free to talk about anything. You can tell stories, give examples. You don’t need to agree with one another)

1. - What are your expectations for your child’s education?
   - How do your expectations relate to your personal beliefs and life experiences in China?
   - How do your expectations relate to your personal beliefs and life experiences in Canada?

2. - Do you talk with your child about your expectations?
   - Do you think he or she understands your expectations? Give me an example please.
   - Do you use any role model in your communication of expectations to your child? Give me an example please.

2. - How do you define achievement or success for your child? Are you satisfied with your child’s school performance?
   - As a visible minority in Canada, how important is it for your child to do well in school?
   - Have your expectations changed since you came to Canada?

4. - What do you do to help your child meet your expectations?
   - Do you think your expectations promote your child’s achievement motivation? (such as goal orientation, control beliefs, self-efficacy)
   - Give me three factors you think are important in helping your child to succeed in school.

5. - What are the advantages and disadvantages of Chinese cultural heritage on your child’s school achievement?
   - What are the advantages and disadvantages of Canadian culture on your child’s school achievement?

6. - Picture your child when he or she reaches the age of 30, what will he or she have become?
Interview with children

(Pre-instructions: I have some questions about your parents’ expectations\(^1\) and your school achievement. Please feel free to talk about anything. I won’t judge the answer and I will be the only one to hear what you say).

1. - Do you know what your parents want for your school education? If so, please make a check on this sheet (see Appendix C).

3. - How do you come to know your parents’ expectations?
   - Do you think your parents’ expectations are too high, too low or just Ok? Do you feel any pressure from your parents?

4. - Are your self-expectations similar to or different from those of your parents?
   - If you accept your parents’ expectations, how do you meet them?
   - If you do not agree with your parents’ expectations, explain the reasons why you do not agree.

5. - Effort and luck, which one is more important in your study?
   - Please list three important factors that you think can help you to succeed.

6. - How do you identify yourself in Canada? More Chinese or more Canadian?
   - How do you feel as a minority student in Canada, How important is it for you to do well at school?
   - What are your likes and dislikes about Chinese culture?
   - What are your likes and dislikes about Canadian culture?

7. - How much free time do you have each week? What do you do for fun?

8. - Who are the significant people in your life?
   - Do you talk more with your parents or with your friends?

9. - Please name your three good friends at school.

10. - If you have a wizard who could grant you a wish, what would you wish for?

11. - How do you see yourself around the age of 30?

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\(^1\) For Chinese pre-adolescents, the Chinese word ‘expectation’ is well understood.
Appendix E

Children’ scale: Perceptions of their parental expectations

To be the best student in school
(1). Not important to my parents. (2). Important to them. (3). Very important to them.

To get all A's in exams
(1). Not important to my parents. (2). Important to them. (3). Very important to them.

To have a good relationship with teachers and students
(1). Not important to my parents. (2). Important to them. (3). Very important to them.

Going to a good university after high school
(1). Not important to my parents. (2). Important to them. (3). Very important to them.

Choosing a good specialty to find a good job
(1). Not important to my parents. (2). Important to them. (3). Very important to them.

Pursuing a graduate degree
(1). Not important to my parents. (2). Important to them. (3). Very important to them.
Appendix F

Consent Form For Parents

Principal Investigator: ____________________  Telephone No.: ____________________

Affiliation: ____________________

The present study, "Immigrant Chinese Parental Expectations: A Folk Theory About Children's School Achievement", carried out by Jun Li and supervised by Dr. Raymond LeBlanc, is a research study for a Ph.D. dissertation. The purpose of the study is to get a better understanding of the relationship between immigrant Chinese parental expectations and children's school achievement.

If I agree to participate, my participation will consist essentially of attending interview sessions that have been scheduled for approximately 60-90 minutes. One of my children, will also attend a 30 minute interview session. I understand that the contents will be used only for the purpose of satisfying the requirements of the research project for the Ph.D dissertation, and that my confidentiality will be respected.

I understand that since this activity deals with very personal information, it may induce emotional reactions that may, at times, be negative. I have received assurance from the researcher that every effort will be made to minimize this occurrence, and that the information I will share will remain strictly confidential and my name will remain anonymous.

I am free to withdraw from the project at any time, before or during an interview. Or I can refuse to participate and refuse to answer questions without penalty.

Any information requests or complaints about ethical conduct of the project may be addressed to the secretariat of the Ethics Committee (562-5800, ext.4057). There are two copies of the consent form, one of which I may keep.

Participant's signature: ____________________  Date: ____________________

Researcher's signature ____________________  Date ____________________

Dissertation director ____________________  Date ____________________

Optional: I wish to receive a summary of the findings of this study in the future at the following address:

__________________________________________
Consent Form For Children

Principal Investigator: _______________ Telephone No.: _______________

Affiliation: ________________________

The present study, "Immigrant Chinese Parental Expectations: A Folk Theory About Children’s School Achievement", carried out by Jun Li and guided by Dr. Raymond LeBlanc, is a research study for a Ph.D. thesis. The purpose of the study is to understand the relationship between my parents’ expectations and my school education.

If I agree to participate, I will attend a 30 minute interview session.

I understand that I am free to talk about anything in the interview. I have the right to quit from the interview and refuse to answer questions. Jun Li will not tell my answers to my parents and she will not use my real name in her thesis.

If I have any complaints, I can call the secretariat of the Ethics Committee (562-5800, ext.4057). There are two copies of the consent form, one of which I may keep.

Participant’s signature: ______________________ Date: ________________

Researcher’s signature _______________________ Date __________________

Dissertation director ________________________ Date __________________