

THE ROLE OF ETHNICITY IN THE CAREER DEVELOPMENT OF
CHINESE CANADIAN YOUNG ADULTS

by

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A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements
For the degree of Master of Arts
Department of Adult Education and Counselling Psychology
Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the
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ABSTRACT

This study explored the career development of foreign-born Chinese Canadian young adults. Utilizing a qualitative design using the grounded theory approach, 13 participants who have completed post-secondary education in Canada and have been working full-time for less than five years were interviewed about their career experiences, with specific emphasis on the role of ethnicity throughout this process. Analyses revealed that Chinese Canadian young adults encountered a combination of influential experiences in their career development, including their education, previous work experience, advice from mentors, desperate circumstances, and coming to Canada. They make their career decision considering multiple factors, with their career interest as the most important one. The role of ethnicity is played out primarily in their work experience, in particular causing struggles in social interaction with co-workers. The implications for theories and practice in career counseling are discussed.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Background to the Study

Chinese Canadian represents one of the fastest growing populations in Canada. According to the 2001 Census of Population, Chinese Canadians constitute the largest visible minority group encompassing one million individuals, which accounts for 3.5% of the total population (Chui, Tran & Flanders, 2005). This population is projected to reach between 1.6 to 2.2 million by 2017 (Statistics Canada, 2005).

Interesting patterns regarding the labor force, education attainment, and occupational choice among Chinese Canadians are observed from analyzing the statistics. In 2001, Chinese Canadians accounted for 3.1% of the national and 25% of the visible minority labor force respectively (Chui, Tran, & Flanders, 2005). More Chinese Canadians attained university education than the rest of the Canadian population (31% vs. 18 %), and they were twice as likely than the remaining population to work in occupations related to natural and applied sciences (16% vs. 7%; Chui, Tran, & Flanders, 2005). Also, the projected rate of entry of visible minority to the labor force will greatly outnumber the remaining Canadian population by 2017. For every 100 visible minority persons leaving the labor force, 142 will enter, which is significantly higher than the potential 75 entries for every 100 exits for the remaining population (Statistics Canada, 2005).

Despite the growing Chinese Canadian population, their increasing participation in the labor force and their distinguished trends in education attainment and occupational choice, little is known about their career choice and development. To date, only three studies that

exclusively examined the career development of Chinese Canadians could be located (Toohey, Kishor, & Beynon, 1998; Young, Ball, Valach, Turkey, & Wong, 2003; Li, 2004).

The scarcity of research on the career development of Chinese Canadians is problematic for career counselors for several reasons. First, the applicability of existing career development theories to ethnic minorities' trajectory in career development have been widely criticized as they had been developed and tested primarily on White middle-class men (Flores, Spanierman, & Obasi, 2003; Leong & Brown, 1995; Leong & Gim-Chung, 1995). Second, since the majority of previous research on the career development of Chinese and Asians were conducted in the United States, whether such information can adequately describe Chinese Canadians' career development is uncertain as the acculturation experiences in these two countries may differ markedly. Third, as most cross-cultural career development studies considered Asian as a homogeneous group, what they suggested might not be most relevant to Chinese as all Asian cultures were assumed to be identical. Fourth, the majority of studies related to the career development of Asian Americans continue to be stuck at the descriptive level, which often compared two or more groups based on ethnic designation (Leong & Gupta, 2007). Thus, the nature of the relationships is less understood, which necessitate studies that identify, evaluate, and test the role and impact of variables that are believed to influence this phenomenon. To address these knowledge gaps, the present study sought to gain a deeper understanding of Chinese Canadians' career development.

Rationale of the Study

The purpose of the study was to explore the career experiences of first generation Chinese young adults, who have completed post-secondary education in Canada and who have been

working in their chosen field for less than five years. Through semi-structured, in-depth interviews, the study sought to elicit information through participants' experiences in the hope to contribute to the scant body of knowledge regarding Chinese Canadians in their career development.

The primary research question of the study was "How does being a Chinese in Canada influence on one's career development?" Subsumed under this question were the following secondary research questions:

1. What are the career experiences of the participant?
2. What are some key factors influencing the career decision-making of the participant?
3. In what ways, if any, does ethnicity influence the career choice and development of the participant?

Definition of Terms

For the purpose of the present study, the following terms are defined:

1. Chinese Canadian. When not intended to describe one's ethnic identity, Chinese Canadian an individual who is currently working in Canada for less than five years and whose ancestor originated from mainland China, Hong Kong, or Taiwan.
2. First generation. An individual who has left his or her country of origin and settled in a foreign country.
3. Young adult. An individual who has worked full-time for less than five years after completing post-secondary education.
4. Career development. The implementation of a series of integrated career decisions over the life span that provide a guiding direction to one's career path (Brown & Brooks,

1996, p. 428).

5. Career decision-making. A process that not only encompasses career choice but also involves making a commitment and carrying out the actions necessary to implement the choice (Brown & Brooks, 1996, p. 428).
6. Career choice. Selection(s) of occupation made by an individual.
7. Ethnicity. One's ethnic group membership, which includes the cultural characteristics, ethnic identity and the minority status associated with that group (Phinney, 1996).
8. Cultural Characteristics. Norms, values, attitudes and behaviours that are typical of an ethnic group and that stem from a common culture of origin transmitted across generations (Phinney, 1996).
9. Acculturation. A process involving multiple changes when two or more cultural groups come into continuous contact (Berry, 2006; Phinney, 1996), in which ethnic identity is one of the outcomes (Leong & Chou, 1994).
10. Ethnic identity. One's subjective sense of belonging to his or her ethnic group (Phinney, 1996) and an outcome of acculturation (Leong & Chou, 1994).

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Due to the scarcity of research pertaining to the career development of Chinese Canadians as well as Asian Canadians, this literature review focuses on the career development of Chinese Americans and Asian Americans to provide a more in-depth foundation to the topic of interest. It is deemed appropriate to include these literatures because of the presumably similar experiences faced by these ethnic groups in their career development, such as cultural and language barriers, occupational segregation and discrimination.

The literature review consists of three sections. The first section describes acculturation as a context of career development, and defines and elucidates ethnicity and its components. The second section reviews several theories that may pertain to the career development among Asian Americans. Finally, the last section discusses factors influencing the career development of Asian Americans in light of the role of ethnicity.

Acculturation: The Context

Acculturation is a complex process involving changes in many areas, such as attitudes, feelings, beliefs and behaviors, which take place as a result of contact between two or more cultural groups (Berry, 2006; Phinney, 2003). Its source of change is the continuous contact between cultural groups, which differentiates acculturation from cultural change through learning, discovery and innovation (Castro, 2003). Contemporarily originated from interests in the effects of European domination of indigenous peoples, acculturation becomes an increasingly important construct as immigration universalizes and multicultural societies

become more prevalent (Berry, 2006).

Rather than being described as a uni-dimensional process, which assumes contact with the dominant society leads to the eventual loss of one's heritage, acculturation is best exemplified as a two-dimensional process, which recognizes the simultaneous nature of the two conceptually independent aspects - the maintenance of one's heritage and the adaptation to the host society (Phinney, Horenczyk, Liebkind, & Vedder, 2001). Berry's (1980, 1990, 1997) model serves as the foundation of the two-dimensional conceptualization of acculturation and provides a framework of understanding ethnic identity (Leong & Chou, 1994; Phinney, 1990; Phinney et al., 2001), which will be discussed later. Essentially, Berry's (1980, 1990, 1997) model identifies strategies used by ethnic minorities in dealing with acculturation by asking two questions: Is it considered to be of value to maintain one's identity and characteristics and is it considered to be of value to maintain relationships with larger society (Leong & Chou, 1994; Phinney et al., 2001)? Acculturation, Leong and Serafica (1995) asserted, is a significant moderating variable to consider when examining the vocational behaviors of Asian Americans and render important implications for their vocational functioning (Kim, 2007).

In the present study, acculturation was considered as a process that took place while the Chinese participants pursued their career in Canada. The outcome of this process, namely ethnic identity (Leong & Chou, 1994) and changes in cultural values (Marin & Gamba, 2003), along with the minority status of the ethnic group, were assessed to elucidate the impact of acculturation in the participants' perspectives.

Ethnicity: Conceptualization and Components

The present study attempted to answer one key question: How does being a Chinese in

Canada influence one's career development? To examine this influence, it is imperative to explicate the meaning of Chinese Canadian as an ethnicity. Ethnicity is a significant and complex construct in understanding the well-being of individuals or groups of individuals, especially in a multicultural society. Merely knowing one's ethnic membership may not adequately explain its influence because of various reasons, such as the heterogeneity within an ethnic group, the varied extent of acculturation, and the different meanings of ethnic identifications (Phinney, 1996). To understand the influence of ethnicity, Phinney (1996) asserted that the associated variables that may account for its impact must be identified and assessed. Thus, she suggested three aspects, which include culture, ethnic identity and minority status and hence will be used in the present study to conceive the implications of Chinese living in Canada.

Ethnicity as Minority Status

One of the major struggles for visible minorities in a predominantly White society is to gain equality, recognition and acceptance. Thus, Phinney (1996) asserted that it is crucial to examine the status of the ethnic group within the larger society to understand the impact of ethnicity. To visible minorities, ethnicity often implies less power, lower status, prejudice and discrimination. Psychological consequence of the minority experience includes the tendency to emphasize collectivist values over individualistic values (Gaines & Reed, 1995), duality within personalities (DuBois, 1989), and the presence of negative stereotypes (Fiske, 1993; Steele, 1992; Steele & Aronson, 1995). Furthermore, the impact of ethnicity may further be complicated by contextual factors, such as the history and present status of an ethnic group in the larger society. To provide an overview of the history and the present status of Chinese Canadians, it may help to take a look at their demographics and sociopolitical background.

Chinese Immigration to Canada

Chinese immigration to Canada began around 1858, when the gold rush enticed them to migrate from the west coast of U.S. to British Columbia (Li, 1998). Later, between 1881 and 1885, Chinese were brought to Canada directly from China to build the Canadian Pacific Railway (Chui, Tran, & Flanders, 2005; Li, 1998).

Following the completion of the railway in 1885, Chinese immigration was restricted through policies such as the *1885 Act to Restrict and Regulate Chinese Immigration*, which excluded any Chinese person from entering the country and controlled those already in Canada. Imposing a head tax of \$50 on all persons of Chinese origin entering the country was a form of the policy (Li, 1998). The 1923 *Chinese Immigration Act* withheld Chinese's right to vote, to obtain citizenship and to work in certain occupations (Li, 1998). Although this act was repealed in 1947, the number of Chinese immigrants remained relatively small as Chinese immigration prior to 1962 was highly restricted in comparison to the free migration from Europe and the United States (Chui, Tran, & Flanders, 2005; Li & Bolaria, 1979).

Significant changes in the immigration policy took place in the late 1960s, when the universal points system was introduced and race or national origin was removed as a selection criterion (Chui, Tran, & Flanders, 2005). Since then, many Chinese immigrants arrived with educational and occupational backgrounds that were quite different from their predecessors (Li, 1998). The level of Chinese immigration took off during the mid-1980s, and immigrants came mainly from China, Taiwan and Hong Kong (Chui, Tran, & Flanders, 2005).

Current Demographics

The Chinese Canadian population grew substantially since the 1980s (Chui, Tran, & Flanders, 2005). In 1981, there were about 300,000 Chinese living in Canada. By 2001, this

population had more than tripled to one million, and accounted for 3.5% of the total population. This population is projected to reach between 1.6 to 2.2 million by 2017 (Statistics Canada, 2005).

Almost three-quarters of the Chinese Canadian population lived in either Toronto or Vancouver (Chui, Tran, & Flanders, 2005). Recent immigrants contributed to a 50% increase in size of Toronto's Chinese community, accounting for 9% of Toronto's total population in 2001. Recent Chinese immigrants also helped double the size of the Chinese community in Vancouver, which increased the Chinese population from accounting 9% of Vancouver's total population in 1991 to 17% in 2001. As a result, Chinese communities have expanded beyond the traditional Chinatowns into the suburbs.

Chinese Canadians nowadays are better educated than their predecessors. Nearly one-third (31%) of Chinese Canadian had attained university education, almost double the rate of 18% among the general population (Chui, Tran, & Flanders, 2005). About 20% of the Chinese working population was in sales and service occupations, another 20% in business, finance, and administrative jobs, 16% in natural and applied science fields, 13% in management occupations and 11% in processing, manufacturing and utilities occupations.

Present Minority Experience of Chinese in Canada

Few studies have examined Chinese Canadians and their workplace experience and reveal that Chinese-origin people faced more earning disparity at the top of the distribution of earnings (Pendakur & Pendakur, 2007), perceive more discrimination in job, pay, loans, and club membership (Dion & Kawakami, 1996). However, in a study investigating three Chinese Canadian women and their workplace racism experience, one participant contended that she did not feel much racism at her workplace, and probably because of their professional confidence

and experience, all three participants supported employment equity and reported no fear of backlash from colleagues due to the policy (Pon, 2005).

Because of their outstanding academic achievement in comparison with other minority groups, Chinese students have been conventionally perceived as "academic nerds", "high achievers", and "model minorities" (Lee, 1996; Townsend & Fu, 1998). In spite of this, Chinese youths, especially first generation ones, seem to experience more adversities than their non-immigrant or non-Chinese counterparts because of their minority status and adaptation experience. They perceived the classroom as more competitive and reported discrimination as a result of race and language differences (Dyson, 2005), experienced more prejudice, adaptation and communication problems (Chataway & Berry, 1996), and racism in the form of victimization, non-acceptance, and being laughed at, criticized or badmouthed (Tsang, Irving, Alaggia, Chau, & Benjamin, 2003). Consequently, these adolescents' life satisfaction may be jeopardized because of their discrimination experiences and the lack of positive experience in making friends with Canadians (Chow, 2007). Unlike the first generation, second generation Chinese youths, or youths who were born in Canada and whose parents were immigrants, may not have experienced harsh racial discrimination, they may not perceive themselves as part of a tightly knit ethnic culture and endorse less rigid ethnic identity (Hiller & Chow, 2005).

As a visible minority group, Chinese Canadians have experienced a certain degree of discrimination, prejudice and stereotype in various aspects of their lives. As the impact of ethnicity is associated with contextual factors, personal experiences, and one's resolution of issues related to ethnicity (Phinney, 1996), this overview is by no means a conclusive account of Chinese Canadians' experience as an ethnic group

Ethnicity as Culture

Ethnicity is most widely assumed as cultural characteristics of a particular group, which includes the norms, values, attitudes and behaviors that are typical of an ethnic group and that stem from a common culture of origin transmitted across generations (Phinney, 1996). To understand the psychological implications of Chinese living in Canada, it is essential to identify the specific characteristics associated with the Chinese culture.

Chinese Cultural Characteristics and Values

Confucianism is the most important philosophies underlying many traditional Chinese values (Lam, 2005; Lin, 2003). Confucianism emphasizes the value of education, and through rigorous learning to acquire the basic virtues such as humanity (仁) and propriety (禮). These concepts of Confucianism stress the importance of inner integrity, loyalty, altruism and benevolence, and have been the basis or the rules and structures of society in Chinese culture for many years (King & Bond, 1985; Lin, 2003). The next section will provide an overview of traditional Chinese values, which are classified into six categories as identified by Kim, Atkinson and Yang (1999) in the development and validation of the Asian Values Scale.

Collectivism. Collectivism is the core value that connects the other five values together (Lin, 2003). Collectivism is a social pattern where people value being connected to one or more collectives (Trandis, 1995), and emphasizes putting the group before the individual, prioritizing others' needs above one's own needs and viewing one's achievements as achievements of the group or family (Kim, Atkinson, & Yang, 1999). Values developed from this concept includes harmony, obligations to one's family, precedence of group interests over individual interest and reciprocating kindness, and collectivistic individuals are expected to withhold negative emotions, limit expression of feelings, suppress conflicts, and avoid direct

confrontation (Lin, 2003).

Although collectivistic values are in stark contrast to the Western values such as autonomy, independence and individualism (Chin, 1983 cited in Kim, 1995; Kim, 1995), considerable variability may exist within the Asian American community such that not everyone identifies with collectivism because of the influence of acculturation and environmental experiences. Trandis, McCusker, and Hui (1990) asserted that it is possible for someone who has been raised in a collectivistic orientation to become exhausted by the demands of their collective group and act in ways that are more reflective of an individualistic nature.

Filial Piety. Filial piety focuses on the central value of family in a society. It emphasizes family hierarchy, respect for elders, obedience to parents, family obligations and patriarchy (Kim, 1995; Kim, Atkinson, & Yang, 1999; Lin, 2003; Sue & Okazaki, 1990). Filial piety is considered as the most important value in Chinese culture (Yang, 1981), as suggested by the Chinese saying "百行以孝為先" (Among hundred of virtues, filial piety is the most important one). Children are expected to respect and obey parents, lessen parents' worries, and subordinate to the good of the family as a whole (Kim, 1995; Lin, 2003). Adult children are also expected to take care of their parents, which would bring glory to the family (Lam, 2005).

Conformity to norms. Conformity to norms refers to the need to fulfill social and familial norms rather than personal needs (Lin, 2003). It emphasizes the importance of gender and family role expectation, honoring family reputation, and reciprocating social kindness (Kim, Atkinson, & Yang, 1999). Children are taught family standards and traditions by their parents and teachers, and are expected to measure up to these standards and fulfill the associated obligations (Lin, 2003). Conformity to norms, as one might expect, diminishes individual differences and autonomy and increases group cohesiveness.

Emotional self-control. Emotional self-control emphasizes the ability to control one's emotion and the self-sufficiency to resolve emotional problems (Kim, Atkinson, & Yang, 1999). This value originated from the emphasis on family harmony and peace (Kim, 1995), and individuals expressing emotions overtly are viewed as being immature, disrupting harmony and bringing shame to the family (Lin, 2003). Parents tend not to acknowledge their children's negative emotions as they believe doing so would spoil the child, and children are taught to use intellectualization, rationalizing, and repression to control and process the aroused negative emotions (Lin, 2003). Chinese culture views females expressing their emotion as acceptable, while males are prohibited to express their feelings, especially negative ones. Such views are reflected by the Chinese proverb "男兒有流不輕彈" (Man though have tears but do not shed them easily). Therefore, Chinese, especially males, are socialized to suppress their emotions, which in turn avoid conflicts and direct confrontation.

Family Recognition through achievement. Family recognition through achievement refers to the need to achieve success to bring honor to the family (Kim, Atkinson, & Yang, 1999). On the other hand, the avoidance of shame is the primary consideration to control the behavior of family members in Chinese families (Kim, 1995). Asian families may also induce guilt on children about parental sacrifices and the need to payback by educational and career achievements (Sue & Okazaki, 1990). Individuals are expected to succeed academically, occupationally and financially to glorify their parents and family (Kim, 1995; Kim et al., 1999; Lin, 2003; Sue & Okazaki, 1990). The collectivistic nature of Chinese culture encourages the society to see the family as a whole, which leads family members to share fame and shame together (Lin, 2003). Thus, family recognition through achievement places individuals under great pressure and responsibility to protect family reputation and honor by showing meritable

accomplishments (Lam, 2005; Lin, 2003; Stevenson & Lee, 1996).

Humility. Humility, or being modest, is a desirable quality in Chinese culture (Kim et al., 1999). It emphasizes referring personal success as a result of group effort and downplaying one's accomplishment, thus supporting collectivism and interpersonal harmony (Lin, 2003). On the contrary, attributing personal credit is discouraged because it is believed that doing so would lead to overconfidence and arrogance (Lin, 2003). Parents often raise their children to be humble and diminish their achievements.

Using culture as a basis for understanding the psychological implications of ethnicity is not without problems, with the most obvious being the vast heterogeneity within groups, which makes it unclear whether the cultural characteristics adequately reflect features of members of the group. Also, cultural values have been shown to fail to differentiate among subgroups who vary in acculturation (see Felix-Ortiz, 1994; Sabogal, Marin, Otero-Sabogal, Marin, & Perez-Stable, 1990). Therefore, although cultural values are an important aspect of ethnicity, it is not sufficient to account for the role of ethnicity in certain psychological outcomes, which necessitates the need to use additional constructs.

Ethnicity as Ethnic Identity

Ethnic identity refers to "one's identity or sense of self as a member of an ethnic group" (Phinney, 2003; p. 63). Ethnic identity is often used interchangeably with acculturation (Leong & Chou, 1994; Nguyen, Messe, & Stollak, 1999; Phinney, 1990), but others suggested that these two terms should be distinguished (Cheryan & Tsai, 2007; Phinney, 1990). Acculturation is considered as a broader construct that encompasses changes in behaviors, attitudes, and values that result from contact between cultures (Phinney et al., 2001), whereas ethnic identity can be viewed as an aspect of acculturation that focuses on the subjective sense of belonging as part of

an ethnic group as a subgroup of the larger society (Cheryan & Tsai, 2007; Phinney, 1990, 2003). Acculturation can also be viewed as a process of developing one's racial, ethnic or cultural identity in which ethnic identity is the outcome of that process (Leong & Chou, 1994). As a result, acculturation provides a theoretical framework for studying ethnic identity (Leong & Chou, 1994; Phinney, 1990; Phinney et al., 2001).

Based on Sue and Sue's (1973) ethnic development model and Berry's (1980) acculturation model, Leong and Chou (1994) proposed a framework for integrating Asian American ethnic identity and acculturation models, which include four ethnic identities:

1. *Assimilationists* value maintaining interactions with the dominant culture, but not with their own ethnic culture.
2. *Integrationists* value maintaining their own culture as well as interactions with the dominant culture.
3. *Separationists* value maintaining their own ethnic culture, but not interactions with the dominant culture.
4. *Marginalists* do not value maintaining their own ethnic culture or interactions with the dominant culture.

Chinese Canadians' Ethnic Identity.

Several empirical studies pertinent exclusively to Chinese Canadians' ethnic identity were located, most of which studied adolescents. Kwong (1998) investigated the ethnic identity of first and second generation Chinese Canadians using the Chinese Canadian Self-Identity Acculturation Scale (CCSIA), which consisted of six factors including English language competency, cultural root, social network in Canada, parental identity, Chinese culture, and Canadian popular culture. Significant differences were found between the two generations for all factors except parental identity and Chinese culture. In comparison to the first generation Chinese Canadians, the second generation possessed a higher English language competency,

seemed to identify more with Western peers and were more likely to prefer English language movies and non-Chinese cuisines. The second-generation Chinese Canadians are also regarded as having cultural roots in Canada, rather than in Asia as endorsed by the first generation counterparts. Using Berry's (1987) model to understand the results of the study, second generation Chinese can be described as being more assimilated or more integrated into Western Canadian culture than first generation Chinese Canadians.

Chia (2002) conducted a study of 234 Chinese Canadian university students to examine the dimensions of Chinese and Canadian ethnic identity and acculturation. Three factors were yielded to account for the multidimensional nature of ethnic identity: Chinese-Internal Identity (affective and cognitive sense of belonging), Chinese-External Identity (cultural behavioral orientations and practises), and Ethnic Evaluation (private and public evaluation of ones' ethnic group and the evaluation of one's contribution to one's ethnic group). The emergence of Ethnic Evaluation reflected participants' evaluation of their cultural group as distinct from their identification with that group. Acculturation (Canadian Identity) was found to be a unidimensional construct. Results showed that being born outside of Canada was associated with higher Chinese-External Identity, and residing in Canada longer was associated with higher Canadian Identity. Older chronological age, but not cultural contact, was related to higher Chinese-Internal Identity and Ethnic Evaluation.

In a study of 166 subjects, Ooka (2002) describes the emerging patterns of incorporation in terms of language, culture and identity among second-generation Chinese youths growing up in Canada. Results indicated that 40% of youths identified themselves as ethnic Chinese (e.g. Hong Kong Chinese, Taiwanese), 57% as hyphenated Canadian (e.g. Chinese-Canadian, Taiwanese-Canadian), and 3% as ethnic Canadian. Those who identify as ethnic Chinese

explicitly show the strong attachment to the immigrant experience and their heritage country. The hyphenated Canadian showed that their attachment towards Canadian identity is developing, but they still remain significantly attached to their ethnic background as well. The relatively small proportion of youth who endorsed as ethnic Canadian suggested the limited degree of full identity assimilation among these Chinese youths. Results also suggested that these youths' ethnic self-identity is significantly influenced by their parental ethnic background.

Using a qualitative methodology, Tsang, Irving, Alaggia, Chau and Benjamin (2003) examined the concept of ethnic identity through the experience of "Satellite Children" - children of ethnically Chinese immigrants to North America who have returned to their country of origin after immigration. The analysis showed multiple ways of ethnic identity negotiation, ranging from an essentialist approach to differentiation and to confusion. People who hold an essentialist view sees their ethnic identity as stable, secure, self-evident and non-problematic, and features such as place of birth and physical appearance are conceived as incontrovertible evidence of their ethnic identity. Respondents who hold a differentiation view do not view ethnic identity as permanent and unchangeable. They are conscious of changes in their identity as part of their immigration process, thus identifying as Canadian in some ways with varying degrees of clarity and certainty (e.g. "half Canadian and half Chinese", "Chinese Canadian"). Other respondents stated that they were confused with their ethnic identity, especially the ones who plan to return to their country of origin in the future.

Career Development of Chinese Canadians

Theories Applied to the Career Development of Asian Americans

Four theories that are potentially useful to describe and explain the career development of

Asian Americans are reviewed in this section. They include Holland's Theory of Types, Social Cognitive Career Theory, Gottfredson's Theory of Circumscription and Compromise and Super's Life-Span Theory.

Holland's Theory of Types

Holland's (1985) theory of vocational psychology emphasized searching for a fit between aspects of the person and the environment. Its goals are to describe and explain career choice, and to predict career achievement, satisfaction, stability and change (Holland, 1985; Leong & Serafica, 1995). Holland contends:

The choice of an occupation is an expressive act which reflects the person's motivation, knowledge, personality and ability. Occupations represent a way of life, an environment rather than a set of isolated work functions or skills (1985, p. 336).

Holland (1985) hypothesizes six vocational personality types and work environments: Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising, and Conventional (RIASEC). These six personality-environment types would form the points on an equilateral hexagon, in the order of RIASEC, with the distance between points indicating the similarity and dissimilarity between types. Holland (1985) hypothesizes that there exists a natural match between these interest types and corresponding work environments with the identical labels. The degree of fit between an individual's personality and the type of work environment in which he or she currently resides or anticipates entering is called congruence (Spokane, Luchetta, & Richwine, 2002).

One important question regarding the cultural validity is whether this structure of career interests holds true for Asian populations. Research tested on Asian Americans has yielded mixed results: Two studies suggested that this structure is different for Asian Americans than for

European Americans (Haverkamp, Collins, & Hansen, 1994; Rounds & Tracey, 1996), while three studies showed better support of the fit of this model with Asian Americans (Day & Rounds, 1998; Day, Rounds, & Swaney, 1998; Fouad, Harmon & Borgen, 1997). The contradictory results may be attributed to the striking difference in the sample characteristics between these two groups of studies. While the Asian American sample of the latter three studies were drawn from national sources and ranged from 795 to 6523 subjects, the sample sizes of the former two studies were relatively small: Haverkamp et al.'s (1994) study had only 118 Asian American subjects and although Rounds and Tracey (1996) did not include the number of Asian American subjects, they acknowledged the small sample size from a single source as a serious limitation.

Research on populations in Mainland China and Hong Kong has shown partial support for the structural hypothesis. Using data from 811 subjects recruited in Hong Kong and Mainland China, Yang, Stokes and Hui (2005) found that the model showed a good fit for both samples, thus providing support for the application of Holland's model in the Chinese population. Tang's (2002) study of 166 Chinese college studies provided some evidence for the structural hypothesis: while the RIASEC ordering is not validated, the nature of the relationship between the six career interest types is supported. Finally, Law, Wong and Leong (2001) found that a revised version of the model based on Hong Kong's cultural environment fits the student's vocational orientation better than Holland's original model, providing some convincing evidence of its applicability while emphasizing the importance of cultural influence.

Holland's (1985) theory predicts that people in different occupations should evidence different patterns of interests, that career interests should predict career choice, and that congruence should positively predict job satisfaction and tenure. Research suggests some

support for the first prediction in Asian American, Mainland China and Hong Kong students (Days & Rounds, 1998; Farh, Leong, & Law, 1998; Leung & Hou, 2005; Yu & Alvi, 1996), but little evidence has been found for the remaining two hypotheses in Asian populations due to the lack of research in this specificity. Day and Rounds (1998) identified students from five ethnic groups, including Asian Americans, who were very certain of their occupational choices, and compared statistically their Holland profiles. They found that students who chose the same occupations landed in similar hexagon locations. Yu and Alvi (1996) found significant support for Holland's congruence, as exemplified in the finding that students in computer science, fine arts, teacher education, and management are predominantly Investigative, Artistic, Social, and Enterprising respectively. However, no statistical analysis was conducted to verify the data. Farh, Leong and Law (1998) also uncovered that students who preferred realistic jobs had significantly higher Realistic interest than those who preferred other jobs, and similar results were found in Investigative, Enterprising, and Conventional occupations. Leung and Hou (2005) also discovered echoing results in the Hong Kong sample: although the correspondence between interest and tentative choices were generally lower than previous studies, Science students had higher Realistic and Investigative scores whereas Arts students evidenced higher Artistic, Social, and Enterprising scores.

Considerable research has been conducted regarding the applicability of Holland's theory to Asian populations. However, one criticism to Holland's theory is its lack of consideration regarding the role of culture in creating and sustaining environments (Leong & Brown, 1995). To what extent is Holland's model universal, as suggested by Day and Rounds (1998), and to what degree does culture influence the model fit, as concluded by Farh et al. (1998) and Yang et al. (1998), are questions worth further investigation.

Social Cognitive Career Theory

Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) hypothesizes that the development of career preferences and skills and the selections of an occupation are influenced by learning experiences (Lent, Brown & Hackett, 1994). SCCT emphasized that vocational outcomes are determined by the dynamic interaction between persons and their environments (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 2002), in which situation and domain-specific behavior also co-determines the outcome (Lent et al., 1994). People thus become both “the products and the producers of the environment” (Wood & Bandura, 1989).

In formulating the *person* determinants of career development, SCCT posits a complex interplay among three constructs borrowed from Albert Bandura’s (1986) social cognitive theory: self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and goals (Lent et al., 2002). Self-efficacy refers to one’s belief in his or her ability to succeed in a particular domain (Bandura, 1986) and is hypothesized to mediate the relationship between variables such as interest and persistence in activities (Leong & Hardin, 2002). Outcome expectations are personal beliefs about the consequences of performing particular behaviors (Lent et al., 2002). Lastly, goals are defined as the determination to engage in a particular activity or to influence a particular future outcome (Lent et al., 2002).

The SCCT model consists of three components: vocational interests, choice, and performance (Lent et al., 2002). The Interests Model posits that self-efficacy and outcome expectations exert a significant effect on the formation of career interests. People form an enduring interest in an activity when they perceive themselves as competent at it and when they anticipate that their performance will produce valued outcomes (Lent et al., 2002). Emergent

interests, along with self-efficacy and outcome expectations, in turn promote particular goals for activity involvement. SCCT assumes that this process is constantly in motion throughout the lifespan and that characteristic patterns of career interests are developed through it. Other factors, such as abilities, value, gender, race-ethnicity, and socioeconomic conditions, are also proposed as influential factors in the development of vocational interests.

The Choice Model holds that interests are typically related to the career choices people make and to the actions they take to implement their choices (Lent et al., 2002). The model postulates that goals stimulate actions designed to implement one's goal, which then lead to particular performance experiences. The performance outcomes revise or crystallize self-efficacy and outcome expectations, thereby help solidify or redirect one's choice behavior. This model proposes that choices are also affected by contextual influences and person variables, which helps explain the fact that many persons in reality do not make their career choices under optimal conditions.

Finally, the Performance Model concerned with the level of people's accomplishment and the persistence of their behavior in career-related pursuits (Lent et al., 2002). Performance is contingent upon one's ability, self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and goals. Ability influences performance through its impact on self-efficacy and outcome expectations, which in turn affect the level of performance goals that people set for themselves. Self-efficacy is viewed as a co-determinant of performance, which determines how people employ their abilities.

Tang et al. (1999) tested the validity of this model with 187 Asian American college students to investigate the role of self-efficacy in explaining their career choices. Findings provide some support for the SCCT model: self-efficacy influences interest and career choice,

and is strongly influenced by acculturation, which is considered as a contextual variable.

However, in contrary to the prediction that career interests relate to career choice, Tang et al. (1999) found that this relationship does not necessarily hold for Asian Americans.

Acculturation, self-efficacy, and family involvement were found to predict Asian Americans' career choices.

In a study of the influence of self-efficacy, outcome expectations, interests and ethnic identity on Korean-American career choices across gender and different domains, Chang (2006) found some support of SCCT. All four variables were significant predictors of career choices in the science domain for both genders. However, self-efficacy was not found to have any effects on non-science career choices.

In a direct replication of Tang et al.'s (1999) study in South Asian Americans, Castelino (2004) uncovered that although career interest and choice were unrelated, self-efficacy, acculturation, family involvement and SES were strong predictors of career choice, with acculturation relating to both self-efficacy beliefs and interests. Findings provide partial support of SCCT, and highlight the significant influence of acculturation on the career choice making process of South Asian Americans.

Gottfredson's Theory of Circumscription and Compromise

Gottfredson's (1981, 2002) theory intended to answer a question: Why do individuals from the *same* circumstances tend to have such *different* aspirations and success in implementing the self they prefer? Her theory revolves around three major concepts: self-concept, images of occupations, and cognitive map of occupations. Self-concept refers to one's view of oneself, which has many elements including appearance, abilities, personality, gender, values, and social status (Gottfredson, 2002). Gottfredson (2002) proposed that people hold images of

occupations, composing of the personalities of people in those occupations, the work they do, the lives they lead, and the rewards and conditions of the work. These common images are then organized into a shared, meaningful cognitive map of occupations, which is distinguished by three dimensions: masculinity-femininity, occupational prestige level, and field of work. Individuals identify the occupations they most prefer by assessing the compatibility of different occupations with their images of themselves, which is also known as congruence and person-environment fit (Gottfredson, 2002). The theory postulates that (1) public presentations of masculinity-femininity will be most carefully guarded, (2) protecting social standing, or prestige, will be of considerable but lesser concern, and (3) ensuring fulfillment of activity preferences and personality needs via occupation will be of least concern (Gottfredson, 2002). As one's most preferred occupations are not necessarily realistic or available, one must also consider the accessibility of occupations when making occupational choice.

One's zone of acceptable alternatives can be illustrated by the area bounded by the degree of masculinity-femininity on one axis and the degree of prestige of occupation on the other axis. Gottfredson (2002) proposed two processes that would alter this zone: circumscription and compromise. The process of circumscription involves the inclusion and elimination of occupational alternatives through a developmental sequence. It is proposed that from age 6 to 8, youngsters eliminate occupations based on their sex type preference; from age 9 to 13, they eliminate occupations according to their prestige preference; and from 14 onward, they eliminate occupations based on the degree of compatibility between their interests and the prospective occupations. Compromise is the process by which one relinquishes one's most preferred alternatives for less compatible choices that one perceives as more accessible.

One study that tested the validity of Gottfredson's (1981) theory with Asian Americans was

located. In a retrospective study of 149 Asian Americans, Leung (1993) examined three hypothesis: (1) There should be no difference in the scores indicating the boundary, ranges, and area of the zone of acceptable alternatives across life periods for both; (2) Asian Americans should be more likely to prestige than sex type in career compromise situations; and (3) Compromise behavior should vary depending on the comparative positions of the occupational alternatives in the sex type and prestige continua and on the gender of the respondent. Results supported the third hypothesis only. In particular, the prestige levels of the subjects increased significantly from the second to the third life periods. Also, the Asian American participants were more likely to compromise sex type for prestige than vice versa. This study provided partial support for the validity of Gottfredson's theory to Asian Americans, and could be limited by the retrospective nature of the study.

Super's Life-Span Theory

Focusing on the process of career choice making, Super's (1990) theory is a segmental theory representing a loosely defined set of theories concerning specific aspects of career development, taken from developmental, differential, social, personality and phenomenological psychology. All these segments are held together by two building blocks – self-concept and learning theory (Figure 1).

Super (1990) viewed career choice as ideally representing the implementation of one's self-concept - a combination of inherited aptitudes, physical makeup, social roles, and evaluations of the reactions other individuals have to the person (Super, 1990; Sharf, 2002). As interests, abilities, and self-concepts are products of learning through interactions with people, objects, facts and ideas, Super's (1990) theory emphasizes the importance of exploring and discovering one's personal interests and abilities in the developmental process.

Super (1990) asserted that one's career pattern - the occupational level attained and the sequence, frequency and duration of trial and stable jobs - is determined by one's parental socioeconomic level, mental ability, education, skills, personality characteristics, career maturity, and opportunities he or she is exposed. He outlined several specific stages (Growth, Exploration, Establishment, Maintenance, and Decline) and corresponding developmental tasks, as depicted in Figure 2, and claimed that every individual progresses through the same stages in the normal but not invariable order and that successful mastery of the tasks in each stage is critical for successful career development. The extent to which one has mastered the corresponding developmental tasks is known as career maturity (Super, 1990).

The primary criticism of Super's (1957, 1990) theory when applied to Asian Americans is its emphasis on individual choice and career as a manifestation of self-concept. Leong & Brown (1995) argued that this theory does not adequately address the impact of discrimination and limited opportunity experienced by minorities, which are considered as important determinants of the career choices of many ethnic groups. Other authors have criticized that the emphasis on individual choice is incongruent with traditional Asian emphasis on collectivism and the role of family in making career choices (Hardin, Leong & Osipow, 2001; Leong & Gim-Chung, 1995; Leong & Serafica, 1995; Leong & Tata, 1990).

In an early study, Leong (1991) found that Asian American college students exhibited higher levels of dependent decision-making and lower levels of career maturity than their White counterparts. However, a recent study showed that the construct of career maturity maybe less valid for Asian Americans because it failed to distinguish between dependence, independence and interdependence (Hardin et al., 2001). The more interdependent Asian Americans were considered as less dependent (not interdependent) than their White counterparts, which led to a

mistaken conclusion of exhibiting lower career maturity. Thus, the applicability of career maturity to Asian American is questionable.

One study suggested that Asian American's career maturity is moderated by their ethnic identity. In investigating the role of ethnic identity as related to career maturity and life role salience, Carter and Constantine (2000) found a significant relationship between Asian American's racial attitudes and career maturity. Specifically, individuals who are more accepted of the White culture and more aware of the cultural and racial influence on vocation showed a higher level of career maturity.

Although Super's (1957, 1990) theory may not adequately explain all aspects of the career decision-making process of Asian Americans, little research has been done to examine this process (Leong & Hardin, 2002). To what extent do Asian Americans progress through the stages as hypothesized by Super (1957, 1990) is an important question to examine.

Empirical Perspectives on Career Development of Chinese Canadians and Asian Canadians

Research on the career development of Chinese Canadians is very limited; only three studies that examined this topic of interest could be located. One of which was done by Young, Ball, Valach, Turkey and Wong (2003), where the authors examined the characteristics of the family career development project in six Chinese Canadian families, which referred to families with the parents born in Hong Kong and the adolescent born in Canada. Data was collected by individual interviews and videotaped conversations between the parent-adolescent dyad. Results suggested that the extent to which the parents and the adolescents participated in the project was strikingly different. While the parents were active in steering the progress of the project, the adolescents responded passively by giving minimal responses. The authors also

found that the extent of parental influence was based on an image that the parents had about the appropriate education and occupation for their children, which was circumscribed by advanced education that is expected to lead to a prestigious occupation.

The other relevant study was conducted by Toohey, Kishor and Beynon (1998), which examined the factors that might influence the career decisions of Grade 10 students with Chinese or South Asian background. The survey sample included 1595 students; of which 583 were Europeans, 651 were Chinese and 109 were South Asians. Findings indicated that students from all three groups rated intrinsic factors, such as interest and personal satisfaction, as the most important factors affecting their career choice. Although no group rated family influence as the most influential factor, Chinese and South Asian students viewed it as more important in determining their career choice than did their European counterparts.

Although it did not exclusively examine Chinese Canadian's career development, Li's (2004) qualitative study of parental expectations of Chinese immigrant families in Canada revealed interesting viewpoints regarding these adolescents' career aspirations. Seven parent-adolescent dyads migrated from Mainland China were interviewed in the study. Data revealed that the parents relied on science and technological career aspirations and cultural integration to maximize their children's chance of success in coping with their disadvantaged minority immigrant status. The adolescents largely shared these expectations, but some of them felt pressured to conform and thus experienced intense struggles in negotiating the bi-cultural expectations.

Research on the career development of Asian Canadians is also very limited as only one relevant study could be found. Surveying 811 high school students, Maxwell, Maxwell and Krugly-Smolksa (1996) investigated how ideal occupation and career indecision are linked to

gender and ethnicity. Findings revealed some career choice and decision-making patterns that were unique to the Asian-Canadian participants, which consisted Chinese and South Asian students. Asian-Canadians (38.8%) had the highest rate of career indecision in comparison to the Anglo- (32.4%) and Euro-Canadians (29.4%). Moreover, medical and engineering careers were disproportionately chosen by Asian-Canadian males (53.4%), in contrast to 33.4% of Anglo- and 31.3% of Euro-Canadian males. Also, a remarkably high proportion of Asian-Canadian females selected medical careers as their ideal occupation (36.8%), whereas only 28.8% of Anglo- and 27.1% and Euro-Canadian females endorsed this choice. However, these results should be interpreted with caution as no statistical analysis was done to test whether each group's results was significantly different from one another.

Drawing from the foregoing review, significant factors related to the career development of Chinese Canadians include Chinese parents' influence and expectations on their children's career aspiration as a response to the probable disadvantaged status and experience in the workplace, which may lead to the disproportionately high selection of medical and engineering occupations as ideal career choice made by Asian Canadian students.

Factors Influencing the Career Development of Chinese Americans and Asian Americans

Previous research has shown that Asian Americans differ from European Americans in their career decision-making. Leong (1991) examined the differential career development attributes of 83 European American and 63 Asian American students (Chinese and Korean descents). He found that in comparison to European Americans, Asian Americans exhibited a higher level of dependent decision-making styles and a lower level of career maturity. In a later study, Hardin et al. (2001) investigated whether theories and measurement of career maturity are culturally relative in a sample of 182 Asian American and 235 European American students. They found

that while both groups were comparably independent, Asian American students were more interdependent than their European counterparts. Moreover, interdependence, instead of independence, was found to be negatively associated with career maturity. Thus, the lower level of career maturity exhibited by Asian Americans could be attributed to their higher level of interdependence in their career decision-making.

Empirical findings also suggest that differences exist between the career interests of Asian Americans and European Americans. Leung, Ivey and Suzuki (1994) discovered that Asian American students were more likely to have considered investigative occupations (e.g., computer programmer, physician) than their Caucasian counterparts. In a later study, Leong, Kao and Lee (2004) found that Chinese Americans were most interested in enterprising occupations (e.g., real estate, business management), while European Americans showed highest interest in social occupations (e.g. teacher, counselor). Such overt differences between Asian Americans and European Americans in their career decision-making and career interests suggest a need to examine factors that may interact with their career development.

Influence of Minority Status on Career Development

The minority status of an ethnic group may not only render the group more susceptible to adverse experiences in the dominant society, but also in the occupational domain. Phenomena such as occupational segregation, stereotype and discrimination are examples of such experience.

Occupational segregation refers to the distribution of members of an ethnic group across occupations, such that they are overrepresented in some and underrepresented in others (Leong & Chou, 1994). It has been identified as a major problem for Asian Americans (Leong, 1985). Asian Americans are underrepresented in occupations such as lawyers, judges, chief executive

officers, and general administrators, while they are overrepresented in science and engineering fields (Leong & Serafica, 1995). Sue (1973) found that Asian Americans are overrepresented in professions and occupations that require minimal verbal proficiency, such as math, engineering, chemistry, accounting, and business, but they are underrepresented in people-contact professions and occupations such as law, advertising and journalism. Although data regarding Chinese Canadian's occupational underrepresentation is lacking, the 2001 Census data showed that, similarly to Asian Americans, they are overrepresented in science and engineering fields (Statistics Canada, 2005).

Occupational stereotype is defined as a judgment or perception about a particular occupation, as well as people who are employed in that occupation (Shinar, 1975). Occupational stereotype of Asian Americans suggest that they are more qualified in the physical, biological, and medical sciences and less qualified or likely to be successful in verbal, persuasive, or social careers (Leong & Chou, 1994). Stereotypes can be perpetuated by others, such as counselors, supervisors or the person himself (Leong & Chou, 1994; Leong & Leung, 1994). Some Asian Americans may have the impression that their ethnic membership is related to their success or failure in an occupation (Leong & Serafica, 1995). These stereotypes may also limit the perception of career alternatives of Asian-Americans to occupational categories traditional to one's own ethnic group (Leong & Leung, 1994). Moreover, Asian Americans are often labeled as "model minority", which is a stereotype that this ethnic group has prevailed over racial discrimination, language barriers, and immigrant status to succeed academically, vocationally and financially over other ethnic and cultural minority groups, and even White Americans (Ho, 1976; Uhm, 2004). Asian Americans are conventionally believed to have high educational attainment, high median family income, low

crime rates, a lack of juvenile delinquency, and a lack of mental illness (Cheng, 1997), and are "too successful" to be considered a disadvantaged minority group (Herrnstien & Murray, 1994).

Occupational discrimination occurs within whichever field Asian Americans choose and can take the form of lower pay, poorer reviews, or fewer promotions than would be expected on the basis of credentials and performance (Leong & Chou, 1994). One prevailing form is glass ceiling, defined as "artificial barriers based on attitudinal or organizational bias that prevent qualified individuals from advancing upward in their organization" (U.S. Department of Labor, 1991, p. 1). Research provides evidence of this phenomenon: although Asian Americans account for 3% of the U.S. population, they represent only 0.3% of senior *Fortune 500* executives (Korn/Ferry International, 1990, as cited in Cheng, 1997). In science and engineering fields, while 28% of European Americans and 28% of African Americans are in management, only 22% of Asian Americans hold similar positions (National Science Foundation, 1990, as cited in Cheng, 1997).

Influence of Cultural Values on Career Development

Parental Influence. Respect for family, especially parents and elders, is an important value Asian Americans hold (Fong, 1973). Developed from collectivism, filial piety and family recognition through achievement (Lin, 2003), parental influence is consistently shown as a critical factor that affects the career choice of Asian Americans and Chinese Americans (Gordon, 2000; Leong & Chou, 1994; Leong & Gim-Chung, 1995; Leong & Serafica, 1993; Tang, 2002; Tang, Fouad, & Smith, 1999).

Among African Americans, Asian Americans, Chicano/Latinos and European Americans, Asian Americans is found to be the only group to list parental pressure as one of the top five factors among the most influential factors in career choice (Gim, 1992, as cited in Leong &

Gim-Chung, 1995). Asian American parents consider it their right to direct and influence children's important life decisions, such as career choices (Leong & Gim-Chung, 1995).

Leong and Serafica (1995) also commented that since Asian American parents know that discrimination in workplace is common, they often suggested their children to pursue a career in a respected and autonomous profession which many Asian Americans have already succeeded so that they would have an easier time. Leong and Chou (1994) further maintained that parental influence is the reason for continued occupational segregation. The significance of parental influence in Asian Americans' career choice is also echoed by findings from the following studies.

Tang, Fouad and Smith (1999) surveyed 187 Asian American college students to examine factors that might influence their career choice. The sample included 41.3% Chinese, 26.1% Japanese, 7.1% Vietnamese and 22.5% other Asian ethnic groups. Career choice was found to be moderately correlated with family involvement, with higher parental influence predicting more traditional career choices (e.g., science and technology related occupations). Another striking finding is that contrary to predictions of most career choice theories, Asian Americans' career interests were unrelated to their career choice. Such finding suggested that parental influence may play a significant role in determining Asian American students' career choices.

Tang (2002) examined the relationship between parental influence and career choices in a sample of 131 Asian American, 124 Caucasian American, and 120 Chinese college students. A questionnaire eliciting the participants' actual and ideal career choice, their parents' career choice and parental involvement in career planning was administered to the participants. Results indicated that while Caucasian American students' career choices were not related to their parents' preferred choices, a significant correlation existed between these two variables for

Asian American and Chinese participants. In addition, when divergence existed between the participant's choice and their parent's choice, Asian American and Chinese students were more likely to compromise with their parents than their Caucasian American counterparts.

Gordon (2000) interviewed Asian American teacher education students to examine the sources of resistance to selecting teaching as a career. She found that parental attitude toward the teaching profession was the highest ranked source of resistance, which signified the lack of encouragement and intense pressure to strive for prestigious careers. Conversely, parental influence was also reported by Asian Americans as a significant factor that persuades them to select medicine as their profession (Bright, Duefield, & Stone, 1998; as cited in Leong & Gupta, 2007). Parental influence also seems to explain why Asian Americans' are overly represented in math and science related fields (Leong & Gupta, 2007).

In a sample of 54 White Americans and 70 Asian Americans, Fukunaga (1999) tested whether previously identified ethnic differences in career maturity between Asian American and White American would replicate and could be accounted for by cultural variables such as collectivism, interdependent self-construal and parental involvement in career decision-making. Results showed that Asian American respondents exhibited a lower career maturity than their White counterparts, and that the differences are accounted for by the cultural variables, in which parental involvement was the strongest negative predictor.

In an exploratory study of 30 second-generation Chinese-American undergraduates regarding their educational and career expectations, Liu (1998) discussed the powerful role culture and parental pressured played in the development of inner drive for achievement, which in some cases exceeded parental pressure. Chinese American parents placed high expectations to achieve well in school, as well as high career aspirations to pursue occupations in medicine,

law, politics, engineering and business. Differing views of education between students and parents were uncovered. Whereas parents viewed education as synonymous with academic achievement and critical to success, the students embraced a broader, holistic view of education, which included co-curricular and community involvement.

In sum, empirical evidence suggests the salient role of parental influence in the career development of Asian Americans, particularly in the decision-making process and career choices they make.

Collectivism. Asian Americans hold a group-oriented worldview (Sue & Sue, 1999) and a collectivistic decision-making style (Leong & Gim, 1993; Leung, 2002). How collectivism may affect career decision-making is an interesting topic to examine, and two studies that investigated this relation were located. Fukunaga (1999) hypothesized that the effect of group membership in career maturity will be accounted for by the cultural variables, and specifically collectivism will be negatively related to career maturity. However, the hypothesis was not supported; because the correlation between collectivism and career maturity is less than that between collectivism and parental involvement, the regression results show that collectivism did not add significantly to the prediction of career maturity above and beyond the parental involvement variable.

Carrero (2002) tested the assumption that ethnic minorities are more collectivist than the White majority and that their collectivist orientation would influence their career decision-making and development in a diverse sample of students including 54 Whites, 51 Blacks, 85 Asian Americans and 38 Hispanics. Contrary to conventional beliefs, results indicate that ethnic minorities were not more collectivist than Whites. Results did support the general hypothesis that individualism-collectivism has an effect on career behavior, in particular

career maturity and career decision-making. Collectivists were less independent in terms of career maturity and more dependent on others to guide them in their career decision making. They also indicated that their families were more involved in their careers. Overall, whether collectivism has an effect on Asian American's career-decision making, and the extent of the influence is unclear and necessitate for further investigation in this research.

Influence of Ethnic Identity and Acculturation on Vocational Behavior

Ethnic identity and acculturation plays an important role in the career development of Asian Americans (Leong & Chou, 1994; Leong & Gim-Chung, 1995). Leong and Chou (1994, p. 164) asserted that, "For Asian Americans, their ethnic identity and status in the acculturation process serve as moderators in many areas of their lives, including career development and experiencing of the American opportunity structure."

Ethnic identity also influenced Asian American's career choice and occupational mobility. Leong and Chou (1994) proposed that people with strong ethnic identity may want to help their own people, and would consider their own interests and desire to help or represent their people when choosing careers. Strongly ethnically identified people may be more aware of the careers that are underrepresented by their ethnic group and would be more motivated to enter these fields. Regarding occupational mobility, Assimilationists and Integrationist may find it easier to be upwardly mobile in changing occupations because less acculturated persons maybe less skillful in networking and in communicating their desire to move up or change jobs (Leong & Chou, 1994).

Carter and Constantine (2000) examined ethnic identity attitudes, career maturity and life role salience in Asian Americans and found that ethnic identity attitudes are associated with maturity. Asian Americans who are more accepted of White culture and who possessed a

positive internalized ethnic identity seem to be more proficient in attending to the practical aspects of career development.

Leong and Chou (1994) proposed that acculturation affects Asian Americans' work values, occupational choice and interests, and job satisfaction. More acculturated Asian Americans (i.e., Assimilationists and Integrationists) are likely to hold work values similar to those of European Americans, and therefore, would choose occupations based on their interests, thereby perceived as more like European Americans and more accepted and qualified (Leong & Chou, 1994). Less acculturated Asian Americans (i.e., Separationists) may view work as a means to an end (i.e., financial security), which is different from European's view of work and maybe regarded as having negative work attitudes. As a result, Separationists may experience more stress, less occupational prestige and less job satisfaction than their more acculturated counterparts (Leong & Chou, 1994). Integrationists would be able to see the strengths and weaknesses of both cultures and are therefore able to make more realistic decisions and have a closer match between their career aspirations and expectations, which render more career satisfaction (Leong & Chou, 1994).

In a later study testing Leong and Chou's (1994) hypotheses pertaining to the relations between acculturation and career adjustment, Leong (2001) surveyed 56 Asian Americans working in several companies and found that more acculturated Asian Americans tended to be more satisfied and find their job less stressful. Also, more acculturated Asian Americans tended to receive higher performance ratings from their supervisors in comparison to their less acculturated counterparts.

Several other studies have examined the relationship between acculturation and vocational experiences among Asian Americans, including career interests, career maturity, the likelihood

of parent-child conflicts related to career, and career adjustment.

Based on data obtained from questionnaires administered to 184 Asian American college students, Park and Harrison (1995) found that acculturation was positively correlated with interests in the enterprising type of occupations and was negatively correlated with interests in the investigative and conventional types of occupations. Tang et al. (1999) investigated the relationship between acculturation and occupational interests in 187 Asian American college students and found that less acculturated Asian Americans tended to choose more conventional occupations than their more acculturated counterparts. In a study examining the relation between acculturation and career maturity, Hardin et al. (2002) discovered that although, as a group, Asian Americans exhibited lower career maturity than European Americans, the more acculturated Asian Americans did not differ from European Americans in their levels of career maturity. Acculturation seems to positively associate with Asian American's level of career maturity. Chung (2001) examined the relationship between acculturation and parent-child intergeneration conflicts. Based on data from 342 Asian American college students, which consisted of Chinese, Korean, Japanese, Filipino and Southeast Asians, Chung found that the level of acculturation of Asian American young adults is negatively related to the likelihood of conflicts with their parents regarding their education and career. This could be explained by the fact that the parents of the more acculturated participants were also more likely to be more acculturated themselves.

Summary

Chapter II provides a literature review of the rationale of the study and various issues pertinent to the career development of Chinese Canadian young adults. This study placed acculturation as a context to study the topic of interest. It adopted Phinney's (1996) definition

of ethnicity as a framework to examine the role of ethnicity in the career experiences and career decision-making of Chinese Canadian young adults. Four career theories were reviewed to provide a theoretical background. An overview of the career development of Chinese Canadians, which adopted literature relevant to Chinese and Asian Americans, was provided.

Chapter III

METHODS

This study used a qualitative methodology, specifically the grounded theory approach, to explore the career development of Chinese Canadian young adults. This chapter consists of five sections. First, it addresses the assumptions and rationale for a qualitative design. Second, it describes the grounded theory approach. The procedure of recruiting participants and the participants' characteristics is delineated in the third section. Then, the researcher's personal biases and assumptions regarding this study are discussed. Finally, the last section described the procedures for data collection and analysis.

Assumptions and Rationale for a Qualitative Design

A qualitative approach was used in the present study. This approach is defined as an inquiry process of understanding a social or human problem, based on building a complex, holistic picture, formed with words, reporting detailed views of informants, and conducted in a naturalistic setting (Creswell, 1994). The goal of qualitative inquiry is less to test what is already known, but to discover, explore, and describe the new or unknown topic (Creswell, 1998; Flick, 2006).

The qualitative design was conceived within the constructivist paradigm. The ontological assumption of constructivists is that reality is subjective and multiple as seen by participants in a study and is influenced by the context of the situation (Creswell, 1994; Ponterotto, 2005). This paradigm assumes an idiographic approach, which focuses on understanding the individual as a unique and complex entity, and an emic perspective, which refers to constructs or behaviors that

are unique to an individual and sociocultural context that are not generalizable (Ponterotto, 2005). To uncover the participants' subjective reality, constructivists assume a subjectivist epistemology where the researcher interacts with the participant and together create understandings (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Ponterotto, 2005). The collaboration between the researcher and the participant also implies the value-laden and biased nature of this approach, which suggests that the researcher should acknowledge and report her¹ background, values and biases in understanding and interpreting the information. The methodological assumption that follows is that naturalistic inquiry methods, such as observation and interview, are most often used (Ponterotto, 2005) and that information emerges from participants rather than being identified a priori by the researcher (Creswell, 1994).

A qualitative design was deemed appropriate for the current study because the researcher (1) believes that career development is a subjective experience that is unique to each individual and necessitates an emic and idiographic inquiry, (2) is primarily interested in exploring the process rather than the outcome of career development, (3) wishes to study this phenomenon in the participants' individual and socio-cultural contexts, (4) believes that a quantitative design is not conducive due to the lack of hypotheses or theories to be tested, and (5) hopes to generate relevant concepts or theories to explain this phenomenon.

Grounded Theory

As a major qualitative research methodology, the Grounded Theory (GT) approach was used to collect and analyze data in this study. The purpose of this approach is to derive theories from data that were systematically gathered and analyzed through the research process

¹ The feminine pronoun is used throughout the paper to refer to the researcher as a third person. It is intended to be general and to reduce redundancy.

(Strauss & Corbin, 1998). This method originated from the works of two sociologists, Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss (1967). In contrast to a priori theoretical orientation in sociology, Glaser and Strauss (1967) contended that theories should be grounded in data from the field, especially in the actions, interactions, and social processes of people (Creswell, 1994). Researchers do not begin with a theory in mind; rather they let the theory emerge from the data. Data-generated theories are more likely to resemble reality, offer insight, and enhance understanding (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). This approach was well suited to the focus of the study because the researcher wishes to discover concepts or theories that are relevant to describing and explaining the career development of Chinese Canadian young adults.

Since the joint effort of Glaser and Strauss to create the Grounded Theory in 1967, these two scholars have diverged in their stance and approach to this methodology, with the most obvious deviation in their approach to data analysis, which is claimed as the core of Grounded Theory (Glaser 2001; Hallberg, 2006; Walker & Myrick, 2006). In the original form of Grounded Theory, Glaser and Strauss (1967) developed the method of constant comparison, which combined four processes: (1) Compare incidents applicable to each category, (2) Integrating categories and their properties, (3) Delimiting the theory and (4) Writing the theory (p. 105). While Glaser remained consistent with the classic grounded theory approach, Strauss has made some reformulations and published *Basics of Qualitative Research* with Corbin in 1990 aiming to help researchers to learn construct in-depth grounded theory in a consistent manner. However, Glaser (1992) critiqued Strauss and Corbin's approach as a "preconceived conceptual description" rather than a grounded theory (p. 4).

Glaser stressed on theory induction and the use of memo writing to facilitate imagination and creativity of the process (Heath & Cowley, 2004). He believes the proper use of constant

comparison would allow concepts to emerge, create categories and their properties, and forces the verification of accuracy (Heath & Cowley, 2004; Walker & Myrick, 2006). In contrast, Strauss and Corbin (1990) placed a higher emphasis on deduction and verification of data, with the use of asking questions about what might be happening in the data. As a result, the coding procedures of these two approaches differ considerably (Boychuk Duchscher & Morgan, 2004; Heath & Cowley, 2004; Kendall, 1999; Walker & Myrick, 2006).

While both approaches being with open coding and aim to identify categories and their categories, Strauss and Corbin (1990) also suggest dimensionalizing a category's properties, which Glaser (1992) views as part of theoretical coding, the second of the two coding methods he proposes. Axial coding is the second of Strauss and Corbin's (1990) coding method, which delineate relationships among categories by using a coding paradigm that focuses on the conditions in which the phenomenon occurs, the responding actions or interactions of people and their consequences. Glaser (1992) did not support axial coding and believes the paradigm imposes one coding family onto the data and forces the data into a full conceptual description. Rather, his next step is selective coding, which delimits the coding process around a core category, followed by theoretical coding to "conceptualize how the substantive codes may relate to each other as hypotheses integrated into theories" (Glaser, 1978, p. 72). Strauss and Corbin's (1990) approach concludes with selective coding, the process of integrating and refining at an abstract level by selecting a core category and relates all other categories to the core as well as to the others. They also advanced an analytic tool called conditional matrix, which could be applied in axial and/or selective coding that focuses solely on the conditions and consequences pertinent to the phenomenon under study.

In addition to the divergence lies in coding, the discrepancy in the level of emphasis given

to memo writing and theoretical sorting is also apparent (Boychuk Duchscher & Morgan, 2004; Walker & Myrick, 2006). The use of memo writing to capture the analyst's ideas throughout the coding process and the theoretical sorting of data and memos are procedures essential to theory construction in Glaser's (1978, 1992) approach. In contrast, while Strauss and Corbin (1990, 1998) fractured memo writing into three categories, they provided limited explanation on the procedure of theoretical sorting. Glaser and Strauss also differed in their views on the role of literature in grounded theory (Boychuk Duchscher & Morgan, 2004; Heath & Cowley, 2004). Glaser (1978) maintained that grounded theorists should ignore all existing literature to maintain sensitivity to data whereas Strauss (1987) suggested that relevant literature may be used to stimulate theoretical sensitivity and generate hypotheses. Lastly, Glaser and Strauss diverge in the use of theoretical sampling in the guiding of emerging theory (Boychuk Duchscher & Morgan, 2004). Glaser and Strauss (1967) defined theoretical sampling as "the process data collection for generating theory whereby the analyst jointly collects, codes, and analyzes his data and decides what data to collect next and where to find them, in order to develop his theory as it emerges" (p. 45), which is considered as a distinguishing aspect of grounded theory (Boychuk Duchscher & Morgan, 2004). While Strauss and Corbin (1998) maintained the purpose of theoretical sampling is to "maximize opportunities to compare events, incidents, or happenings to determine how a category varies in terms of its properties and dimensions" (p. 202), which seemingly concurred with the original definition of theoretical sampling, Glaser (1992) criticizes that Strauss and Corbin seek to collect data to verify or refute their preconceived hypotheses rather than to enter the field without any predetermined ideas of what is being studied until it emerged. To conclude, Glaser (1992) argued that the various modifications Strauss and Corbin made to grounded theory are attempts to force a theory

emerging process that will eventually occur automatically.

With the considerable disparity between Glaser's (1992) and Strauss and Corbin's (1990, 1998) approaches to grounded theory, it is important for the researcher to clarify which version was being used in this study after learning their differences. The ultimate concern was which approach could better aid the researcher to understand the nature of the phenomenon of interest, rather than searching for the 'better' or 'right' approach to find the data (Boychuk Duchscher & Morgan, 2004; Kendall, 1999; Walker & Myrick, 2004). The researcher decided to use Glaser's approach to develop grounded theory not only because of her intention to let the data speak for itself, but also because of the complex nature of Strauss and Corbin's (1990, 1998) approach. The researcher felt Strauss and Corbin's (1990, 1998) approach distracted her energy from immersing in the data to understand it to working with various analytic tools, which was also a concern echoed by Kendall (1999) in her study of ADHD children.

Participants

Sampling Strategy

Because there was no evolving theory that could act as a guide for theoretical sampling before the researcher began to collect and analyze data, she followed Cutcliffe's (2000) suggestion to first use purposeful sampling to select participants. Two sampling strategies were employed: homogenous sampling and maximum variation sampling. In homogenous sampling, participants are selected based on membership in a subgroup that has specific characteristics (Onwuegbuzie, 2007). In maximum variation sampling, the researcher purposefully select a wide range of individuals so that variability in certain criterion is optimized (Sandelowski, 1995). The benefit of using these two strategies together is to reduce

the minimum number of participants needed for meaningful results while still producing credible and analytically significant findings (Sandelowski, 1995). After the first interviews are completed, it would be appropriate to sample based on the emerging theory.

To maximize variation within the sample, several decisions were made. The researcher decided to sample participants from various places of origin (e.g. China, Hong Kong, Taiwan) so that their cultural background is varied. Also, the researcher included participants with a range of years of residence in Canada to diversify their extent of acculturation to the Canadian culture.

After interviewing the first six participants, a decision was made to include participants from non-technical fields as the researcher noticed most of the participants were working in fields related to science, mathematics and computers. Thus, a participant was recruited from each of the following disciplines: graphics design, psychology and education.

Selection Criteria

The targeted sample for this study were foreign-born Chinese Canadian young adults, which refers to people: (1) whose self-identified ethnicity is Chinese, (2) who were not born in Canada, (3) who have completed post-secondary education in Canada, and (4) who have been working full-time in their chosen field for less than five years. The first two criteria ensured that the participants were socialized in both Chinese and Canadian cultures. The third criterion warranted that the participants would have received some education in Canada, with the belief that throughout post-secondary education they would have seriously thought about their career path. This criterion also excluded people who moved to Canada to seek employment. The last criterion excluded people who were working part-time or casually. For the purpose of the study, it was assumed that people who were working full-time in their chosen field would have

gone through the career decision-making process. By limiting participants to ones who had worked for five years or less, it was believed that they were at a similar stage of career development.

Recruitment

Recruitment began with contacts from community and personal networks, which included church-affiliated groups and acquaintances from social and family circles. These individuals were asked to participate in the research and/or to help recruit participants. Three participants helped recruit their co-workers or friends to participate in the study. An email (Appendix A) was forwarded to these networks to recruit participants.

Once responses from individuals showing interest in participating in the study were received, they were contacted by phone or email to ensure eligibility and to set up an interview using the script provided in Appendix B. The researcher also responded to any questions that potential participants might have about the study at that point.

Characteristics of Participants

A total of 13 individuals agreed to participate in the study. Participants were recruited in Toronto, Ontario. Their age ranged from 24 to 31 years, with the average of 26.9 years. Seven participants were female. Regarding their country of origin, one was born in Vietnam, one was born in Malaysia, two in China and the remaining nine in Hong Kong. The number of years spent in Canada ranges from 6 to 18, with the average years of 12.7. Other than two participants holding visa status, all the other participants are Canadian citizens. Except for one participant who lost his mother language of Cantonese, all the participants spoke either Cantonese or a dialect of Chinese as their mother language.

In terms of the participants' educational and career background, all of them had completed

a Bachelor degree. Only one participant had obtained a Master's degree. Regarding the career backgrounds of the 13 participants, three worked in the actuarial science field, three worked in the field of computer science, three worked in the engineering field, and one worked in each of the following fields including information studies, graphics design, psychology and education. Table 1 provides a detailed summary of the personal and professional backgrounds of the participants.

The Role of the Researcher

In qualitative studies, the researcher is the instrument, or means through which the study is conducted (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Marshall & Rossman, 1999; Rossman & Rallis, 2003). The qualitative researcher is characterized as one who (a) views the social world holistically, (b) systematically reflects on who she is, (c) is sensitive to personal biography, and (d) uses complex reasoning (Rossman & Rallis, 2003). The human instrument is unique because of her immediate responsiveness and adaptability, and capability to clarify, summarize and explore. The researcher is also the only instrument that can build on experiential knowledge, which is essential to the comprehensive understanding of a phenomenon (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

The qualitative researcher's comprehension and interpretation of the subject being studied form the core knowledge of the research. The researcher brings to the study her background, experiences, attitudes, beliefs and biases, which may influence how she makes sense of the study and how people she studies makes sense of her (Rossman & Rallis, 2003). It is therefore necessary for the researcher to review her personal biography, feelings about the topic being studied, assumptions and biases and reflect on how they may influence the research process so that she can maintain her inquiry as a rigorous and systematic one.

Personal Biography and Feelings about the Issue

I, the researcher of this study, was brought up in the mix of Chinese and Canadian cultures. I was born in Hong Kong and immigrated to Canada at the age of 11. I lived in Calgary for six years and moved to Toronto in 2000, where I completed my university education. Noticing how values from the Canadian and Chinese cultures have shaped me, which eventually impacted my education and career choice, I have come to wonder how this may affect people who went through similar experiences. Thus, conducting this study gives me an opportunity to explore this issue in-depth. Throughout the study, I kept a log to document my reflections, thoughts and ideas about data collection and interpretation, as well as the decisions made during these processes.

Personal Assumptions and Biases

1. Being socialized and educated in Canada for the majority of my life, I have adopted the individualistic view that one should have the freedom to do what s/he wants and to choose his or her career independently. Anyone who is influenced by others in making this decision is considered to be less mature or noble, and is more likely to be less satisfied with his or her career. However, I realize that not everyone views career in the same way; some people do see working as a means of making money to support their family or earning honor and respect and may not perceive the need of doing something they enjoy. Thus, it is important to elicit how each participant views the meaning of career and understand his or her career development in light of that connotation.
2. Following the reasoning from the previous note, I tend to view parental influence as negative because from my personal experience Chinese parents were more likely to discourage their children from choosing their desired careers than to encourage them.

However, this view may be skewed because of the limited incidents I have encountered.

Therefore, I need to be careful not to lead participants to respond in ways that may resemble my assumption.

Procedures for Data Collection and Analysis

Interview

In-depth one-on-one interviews were used to collect information from participants. An interview is a conversation with purpose that takes the researcher into the participants' worlds, whereby the researcher asks participants general, open-ended questions and records their answers (Creswell, 2003; Rossman & Rallis, 2003). This method of data collection was deemed appropriate because although participants could not be observed directly, interviewing them allowed the researcher to ask open-ended questions, to probe or clarify, to generate rich data, to gain insights into participants' thinking, and to learn more about the context (Creswell, 2003; Rossman & Rallis, 2003). All these features were well suited to accomplish the objectives of the study.

Interviews took place at an undisturbed location that is mutually convenient to the participants, which lasted for approximately 90 minutes. Prior to the interview participants were given a letter that introduced the research area, the purpose and rationale of the study, the interview format and the general topics of discussion (Appendix C). It also addressed confidentiality, informed consent, audio recording of the interview, and the use of data. The researcher spent the first 10 to 15 minutes to ensure the participants understand their rights in the study as outlined in the document, and answered any questions that participants had before giving consent. The researcher also tried to engage in small talk to build rapport with the

participant.

After the participant consented to participate in the study, they were given a sheet to fill out their demographic information, which included their gender, date and country of birth, ethnicity, language spoken at home, years residing in Canada, education background, current occupation and length of working in that field (Appendix D).

The interview guide approach was used in the study, which intended to ensure that the same general areas of information are collected from each participant while facilitating a degree of freedom and adaptability in eliciting information from the participant (Patton, 2002). The researcher decided to use this approach because it was more formal than informal interviews that entail casual conversations, yet less structured than standardized interviews that might limit participant from freely expressing their opinions. This approach demonstrated an assumption of qualitative research, which was to let each participant's perspective emerge throughout the interview. Interview topics were divided into two main categories: career choice and development and the role of ethnicity in career development (Appendix E). The researcher posed open-ended questions, which "minimized the imposition of predetermined responses when gathering data" (Patton, 1990, p. 295), and probed for elaboration and the participant was expected to respond by long narratives. While using the interview guide as an aid, the researcher did not strictly follow its order so that participants were encouraged to contribute their ideas as they arose. The researcher also prompted the participants whether they had ideas to contribute that had not been covered in the interview to support open sharing.

Data Analysis

Data collection and analysis in a grounded theory study occurs in an ongoing and simultaneous fashion (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Heath & Cowley, 2004). Transcription of

interviews took place soon after the interview. Fill-in words such as “well”, “you know”, “right” and “um” and repeated phrases that added no new understanding to the content were omitted, which rendered clearer transcripts that captured the content and meaning of the participants. Because of the time constraint during the data collection, the researcher was not able to code the transcripts immediately after they were completed. However, they were reviewed to obtain a general idea of themes presented before the next interview took place to guide the interview process and sampling. Ideas, intuition and interpretation of data were written down throughout the interview and reviewing process.

After transcribing the first two interviews, the researcher made several decisions to modify the interview procedure and some of the format of the questions. The researcher decided to provide a simplified form of the interview guide (Appendix F) that included only the main research questions and the definition of the three aspects of ethnicity to the participants prior to the interview as the first participants seemed to confuse the meanings of cultural values, ethnic identity and minority status. When asking the question to elicit the most important aspects of the participant’s career, the researcher added a hypothetical situation of selecting a new job as some participants perceived this question to be similar to the previous one that probed for the most rewarding aspects of their career. Also, as the researcher noticed from the first interviews the significant role of ethnicity in the participants’ work experience, which was not included in the interview questions, the researcher decided to specifically probe participants for this aspect in subsequent interviews. The researcher also explained the definition of career development in the later interviews as she noticed some participants only considered the role of ethnicity in relation to their career choice, but not their decision-making process and their implementation of the decision. She also added questions to ask the participants to identify their sense of

importance to maintain their Chinese roots as well as to integrate to the Canadian culture to deepen her understanding of their ethnic identity. Finally, the question, “If you were not in Canada, or in your home country, what occupation would you choose?” was added to single out the impact of being a Chinese in Canada on career development

Open coding began after the completion of the transcription. Using line-by-line coding (Charmaz, 2001), the researcher coded the first two transcripts into as many categories as possible and compared them with each other to generate common categories. Open coding and constant comparison continued with the remaining transcripts until the researcher could identify the possibility of a theory that could explain all of the data. A core category was selected and coding around this category began, which signified selective coding. Other categories were compared with the core category to generate among them similarities and differences, thus forming the properties of the core category. All codes used were recorded on index cards to facilitate theoretical sorting, whereby relationships among categories are conceptualized to integrate them into a theory. Memos written throughout data collection and analysis were also examined and included in the conceptualization of the theory.

Confidentiality of Data

To ensure anonymity of participants, each participant was assigned a pseudonym that was used as reference to his or her information in the transcription of interviews, the write-up of the study, summary of results and any public presentations or publications. Only the researcher and her supervisor had access to a master list with the names of participants and corresponding pseudonym.

Electronic files of the audio recording of interviews were stored in the researcher’s home computer. The audio files were transcribed only by the researcher and were shared only with

her supervisor. These transcripts were coded using a pseudonym and were kept in a locked cabinet until the completion of the thesis. Any data collected during the study were saved only on the researcher's home computer, her private university e-mail account, or on portable disks that will also be kept in a secure location at her home or office. All audio files, transcripts and data collected for this study will be destroyed by October 2012.

Methods for Verification

As with any type of research, it is highly important to verify that the data collected is accurate and reliable. To achieve this, some verification procedures suggested by Creswell (1994) were considered.

One procedure that can verify the quality of the data is prolonged engagement, which entails building trust with participants and learning the culture (Creswell, 1994). As the researcher began sampling with acquaintances from personal network and community, it was believed that a degree of trust between her and the participants was already existent. Because the researcher was also a Chinese Canadian, her implicit knowledge about the culture helped her understand and interpret the data. To accomplish this, the researcher kept a journal to jot down ideas during interviews, and clarified with the participant when she was uncertain of her understanding. These two procedures helped verify the trustworthiness of the data.

Another step the researcher took to verify the reliability of the data was to clarify her bias from the outset of the study (Creswell, 1994; Morrow, 2005), which was stated earlier. This was an ongoing process that continued during data collection and analysis. The researcher also conducted a member check (Creswell, 1994), which involved soliciting participants' views of the credibility of the findings and interpretations, to ensure that the results were understandable to them. This was done by first soliciting participants' consent for this process at the beginning

of the interview, and if obtained sending them a summary of results via electronic mail. All participants consented to receive the summary (Appendix G) and no participant indicated any discrepancy that required alteration or omission from reporting the findings.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Chapter IV presents the findings of the study regarding the career development of Chinese Canadian young adults, with an elaboration on the role of ethnicity in this process. The report of findings is divided into two parts. The first part provides the summaries of each participant's experience in career development, which include educational background, work history, current occupation and personal career meaning.

The second part presents results from the grounded theory analysis at the cross-case level, which consists of descriptions of themes emerged within each of the three major areas of inquiry: (1) Major influential experiences in the participants' career development, (2) Factors that have influenced the participants' career decision-making, (3) The role of ethnicity in the participants' work experience.

Part 1: Summary of the Career Development of Participants

Thirteen Chinese Canadian young adults participated in the study. This section summarizes and reports each participant's career development, including his or her educational background, work history, current occupation and personal meaning of career, to provide a foundation to understand his or her work experience and career development. Table 1 provides a summary of each participant's background information.

Participant 1

Participant 1 (P1) is a 27-year-old male who emigrated from Hong Kong at the age of 14. He started Grade 9 when he first arrived in Canada, and continued his education until obtaining

a Bachelor in Computer Science. He has worked in a few jobs since his graduation, all of which related to his discipline. Currently, he has been working full-time as a Contract Web Developer for eight months. When asked why he chose this field, P1 claimed his interest in Computer Science arose since he was 9 years-old, which motivated him to pursue the education so that he could work in the technology field. In between his full-time jobs, he has worked as a server delivering frozen yogurt, in which he encountered his parents' opposition to treat it as a full-time job because "they would think a person delivering frozen yogurt is not a professional job". P1 acknowledged being mildly influenced by his parents about what job type he chose as his permanent career.

When asked what personal meaning he derived from his job, P1 mentioned that doing well in his job would prove his "personal good achievement" and that being able to help others solve problems is meaningful.

Participant 2

Participant 2 (P2) is a 28-year-old female who emigrated from China at the age of 14. After getting her Bachelor in Mathematics and Business Administration, she worked for a year in an accounting firm. Realizing that it was not what she wanted to do for her career, P2 pursued a Master's degree in Information Science. Now she has been working as an Information Research Specialist for eight months. One force that drove her to select a Caucasian-dominated field was the under-representation of Chinese in the discipline, which made her "want to represent Chinese in this profession". Although she maintained that "Chinese parents think about school and job as a way to identify how well a family is doing", P2 acknowledged her parent's openness and support of what she wanted to do in her career, even when she decided to switch field. To P2, her job signified her 'growing up', becoming

independent, and that she could “make a living with [her] skill and knowledge”.

Participant 3

Participant 3 (P3) is a 27-year-old female working as a Corporate Actuarial Analyst. P3 came to Canada from Hong Kong when she was 13, and obtained her Bachelor in Actuarial Science. She has been working full-time in this field for four years. When asked why she picked Actuarial Science as her discipline, P3 replied her strongest subject back in high school was mathematics and there was a high demand and promising outlook for actuaries. Although her parents did not overtly influence her career choice, P3 chose a career that would please them. She stated, “If I want to be a designer, they would not be very pleased because they would think that being a designer is not as promising as that of being an actuary.” In terms of what her career meant to her, P3 indicated that compared to when she just graduated, she had lost the passion to move up. She stated, “Maybe now it’s just more like a job, like I get it done and I get paid and then I can do something I like. It’s something I need to do to support my living and my other interest at this point.”

Participant 4

Participant 4 (P4) is a 26-year-old male emigrated from Hong Kong when he was 14. After graduating with a Bachelor in Mechanical Engineering, a field he was most interested in, P4 has been as a Project Engineer in a Japanese company for 1.5 years. When asked why he picked this job, P3 replied, “When I start my undergrad degree that basically determines where I’m going”. He added, “At the time when I was waiting for a job, this was the only offer at that time”. Besides deciding his career based on his interests, P4 did not indicate any other key event or people that had influenced his choice. When asked what personal meaning he derived from his job, P4 replied:

My job means income, which I can pay for my bills and I can accumulate wealth for future. It also means identity in front of my classmate and friends. Like when my classmates ask me what I do and when I tell them my position, I'd be proud of myself to have such a title.

Participant 5

Participant 5 (P5) is a 28-year-old female who is working as a System Engineer. P5 was born and raised by her Chinese parents in Vietnam, and came to Canada at the age of 14. P5 thought the most significant event that led her to her current position was her co-op work experience, from which she was hired for her current position. Because of her parents' preference for her to become a Pharmacist, she began her undergraduate studies in Biochemistry. However, realizing her interest for engineering was stronger, she switched into Electrical Engineering. Since her graduation, she has been working in her current position for two years. In terms of her personal meaning of career, P5 said, "The first one is doing what I like and the second one is having the financial support from it."

Participant 6

Participant 6 (P6) is a 24-year-old male who has left Hong Kong for South Africa when he was 10. He moved to Canada at the age of 17. Because of the limited exposure to the Chinese community in South Africa, most of his family values had become the Chinese values for him. P6 studied Mechanical Engineering as his undergraduate major. He has been working as an Energy Consultant for two years. He chose this field not only because it "aligned with his own values", but also because his working visa was soon to expire at the time and this was the only job offer. P6 thought that his job "must be something [he] enjoys working in" and that it "has to align with [his] core values" because he does not want to work against himself. It was also a way to sustain his living and a "stepping stone for [his] future career".

Participant 7

Participant 7 (P7) is a 27-year-old female currently working as an Actuarial Analyst. She emigrated from Hong Kong with her family at the age of 10. She had a Bachelor degree in Actuarial Science and Statistics. When asked why she pursued this field, she indicated it was because of her interest in finite mathematics back in high school. Her teacher suggested her to look into this field and she thought it was interesting. Through the co-op program in her undergraduate studies, she got to explore different aspects of Actuarial Science. She claimed, “The interest in math got me started in it, and having seen the program as what it is it reinforced my interest.” While her parents were open her career choice, having socialized in a Chinese environment where people tend to be more practical and conservative made P7 considered what level of income and job security Actuarial Science jobs would bring when she was deciding her major. When asked what her career meant to her, P6 hoped it was more than “making a living”. She wanted her job to be something she derived personal satisfaction from, which was “taking a reasonable amount of interest in the work I do and actually care about it”.

Participant 8

Participant 8 (P8) is a 27-year-old male who emigrated from Hong Kong to Canada when he was 9. Having completed a Bachelor degree in Computer Science, he has been working as an IT Analyst for one year. Before taking this job, he was working in the same company but a different line of business. He did not apply for the first job; the company offered him a Technical Support position as his resume in the repository matched with the job requirement. Since he had waited desperately for nine months for a job, he took the offer. When asked what the most important factor was in selecting his career, P8 said interest was his first priority. Although his parents had taught him that he should regard money as his foremost consideration

for a job, P8 indicated, “As a kid I’ve always been a rebellious child, maybe I put interest first, money second because my parents put money first interest second”. In terms of his personal meaning of career, P8 said, “It started off as a 9 to 5 kind of thing.” Now, not only did he feel appreciated for his work, but his job had also become something he wanted to stay and “grow into”.

Participant 9

Participant 9 (P9) is a 31-year-old male who has been working as a Graphics Designer in the mainstream industry for five years. He moved from Hong Kong to Canada when he was 17. Although P9 was really passionate about graphics arts since his childhood, he did not actualize his passion until his uncle, who was a successful Graphics Designer, encouraged him to further his education within the discipline after endorsing his interests, talent and capabilities. Despite his parents objected his decision because it’s hard for Graphics Designer to make money and secure a living, P9 went with it because of his immense passion. When asked what his career meant to him, P9 said, “Besides it is a means of making money for living, I think career is a representation of my identity as well.”

Participant 10

Participant 10 is a 26-year-old female who came to Canada from China at the age of 17. After graduating with a Bachelor degree in Actuarial Science, she has been working as an Actuarial Associate for two years. Although P10 initially enrolled in Business Administration when she entered university due to her mother’s preference, she thought the business field did not suit her interest and personality. She decided to switch to Actuarial Science, an area that she was fond of and good at. At this point, she valued the balance of life. Thus, she would rather make less money than having to work longer hours. When asked what her job meant to

her, P10 thought it represented her self-esteem and her “value in the world”.

Participant 11

Participant 11 is a 25-year-old female who came to Canada from Hong Kong when she was 17. Having obtained a Bachelor degree in Psychology and Mass Communication, she has worked as a Broadcaster in a Chinese radio station for one year. Although she thought after her graduation “it’s the obvious road for [her] to work with media”, her experience did not give her much opportunity to interact with people as she expected. Realizing her passion in working with children from her extracurricular activities, she decided to pursue a Bachelor in Education and has been working as a Supply Teacher for six months. P11 decided to work in the Chinese community in her first job because she “felt more comfortable”, but she found the Chinese community was too small and decided to “break [her] barrier and go back to the mainstream and go for [her] passion”. Although she maintained that she made her own career decision, she would feel pressured by her parents and relatives’ opinions on her decision. Regarding the personal meaning of career, P11 stated, “Instead of earning money for living, for myself I need something really meaningful for me to keep on moving for the rest of my life”.

Participant 12

Participant 12 is a 26-year-old male who was born in Malaysia. He came to Canada at the age of 10. When P12 first came to Canada, his parents wanted him to integrate to Canada quickly. They spoke English at home, which made P12 lose most of his Chinese culture and language. P12 studied Computer Science in university, an area that he was fascinated with since he was young. He indicated, “I pretty much knew that I wanted to do something in this field, even before high school.” He has been working in this field for three years. Currently, he is working as a Systems Design Analyst. Not only did he think his job was a way of making

money, he also perceived it as a “creative outlet”, from which he had “freedom in how [he] can shape a product”.

Participant 13

Participant 13 is a 28-year-old female who emigrated from Hong Kong to Canada at the age of 15. For almost three years, she has been working as an Instructor Therapist whose main task was to work with autistic children. Before getting her Bachelor in Psychology, she did a college degree in Early Childhood Education and worked in that field for a year. When asked why she chose to work with autistic children, P13 said, “I like to work with them. That’s basically my dream and my goal.” After graduating from high school, P13 decided to go to college to tryout different programs as she was uncertain of what she wanted to do in university. Although her parents preferred her to go to university, they respected her decision. This independent style of decision-making was apparent in P13’s family. She indicated, “In terms of decision making we’re quite independent. We have the ownership of making our own decision.” With respect to her job, P13 thought it meant “challenges, problem-solving, and income.”

Part 2: Chinese Canadian Young Adults’ Influential Career Experiences, Career

Decision-Making and the Role of Ethnicity in their Work Experience

This section presents results generated from the grounded theory analysis at the cross-case level. It consists of descriptions of themes emerged within each of the three major research questions:

1. What are the career experiences of the participant?
2. What are some key factors influencing the career decision-making of the participant?

3. In what ways, if any, does ethnicity influence the career choice and development of the participant?

Influential Experiences in Career Development

Educational Experience

When asked what experiences led them to the current position, all thirteen participants mentioned their educational background. Their educational experience played a significant role in determining the types of jobs they selected, as indicated by P4, “I guess when I started my undergrad degree that basically determined where I’m going.” When asked what has influenced his decision to work as a System Design Analyst, P12 replied, “I majored in Computer Science.” P10 echoed similarly, “When I was in University, I was doing Actuarial Science. So for sure, since I graduated I went into the Actuarial Science field.” Two participants, P1 and P8, emphasized their desire to work in fields related to their education. P1 indicated, “So after my graduation I have been switching to some other jobs, but they were all related to my field - computer science.” P8 resonated, “When I was looking for a job my priority was to stay relatively close to what I did in school.” Their educational experience greatly influenced the fields these participants decided to work in. In particular, all participants strived to work in positions that were closely related to their university major. Therefore, to understand why the participants selected their career, it was helpful to ask why they chose to major in their particular fields in university.

Advice from Mentors

Another influential experience emerged in these participants’ career development was seeking advice from mentors, which included parents, counsellors, friends and people working

in the field of interest. Six participants mentioned this event as a significant experience in their career development, and it could be categorized into an active or passive nature.

Four participants actively sought advice from their mentors to carry on their career interests. Two of them had already decided what they wanted to do and sought their mentor's advice in how they should proceed:

Even when I was in Grade 9 I told my counselor I wanted to study compute. So my counselor set me off the path to study Computer Science. (P1)

I talked to librarians there and find out how she became one and what she does. (P2)

Both P7 and P12 happened to be uncertain of what to choose for their undergraduate majors and sought their parents' advice:

At that time I was still a kid and have no idea what I wanted to do. So I was asking my mom what should I take. (P7)

I did consult my parents. At that point I didn't know what I wanted to do seriously. I was just searching and trying out different things. (P13)

Two participants were passively influenced by their mentors' suggestion. From their account, P7 and P9 decided to tryout their mentor's recommendation in their career path, which they perceived as something of interest:

I took a pretty big interest in finite mathematics. My teacher/mentor suggested that I look into this field. So I did and I thought it sounded interesting to me and sounded like something that I can be good at. That's how I got started so I went into Actuarial Science. (P7)

But I am really thankful for my uncle. He is also a very experienced graphic designer. He encourages me to take one step further when I was still in high school. At that moment I thought it was really hard to become a graphic designer. So I didn't think I would go for that. After he looked at my drawing and said, "Okay, go ahead. I think you can do it. Just practice more". So he encourages me. So then I went ahead and prepared my portfolio. I got an interview at the university and they accepted me. (P9)

In particular, P9 thought his uncle's encouragement was the most influential experience that triggered him to become a graphics designer, as he had almost abandoned his interests.

Seeking advice from mentors not only provided participants information about working in a field and helped them make their academic decisions, but also encouraged them to pursue certain careers.

Previous Work Experience

The participants' previous work experiences were also influential in their career development. Detailed analysis of their past work experience indicated that they served three functions: (1) Confirm or disconfirm career interests; (2) Offer career direction; and (3) Provide career opportunity.

Previous work experiences served as an opportunity to endorse or invalidate career interests. Three participants realized from their past experience that they did not want to remain in the same field and decided to switch. P2, after working in an accounting firm, realized that, "Accounting is not what I wanted to do. It was not suitable to what I want in my life", and further pursued Information Science. Similarly, after doing several work terms in the business field, P10 realized that they did not require her strong mathematical knowledge and decided to switch into Actuarial Science. P11 completed her bachelor degree in Psychology and Mass Communication, and thought a career as radio broadcaster was an appropriate choice. However, she realized:

After I finished the one-year contract reading news in the radio station, I would like to have more interaction with people. At first I thought doing media-related jobs, like journalism, would give me more experiences in working with people. But it was not really the case. And from the experience working with children in my church, I realized I have a stronger passion on children. That's why I wanted to go into Teacher's College.

Although these participants have begun or even completed the education in their initial career interests, they disconfirmed their interests in their work experience. They went for fields that better suited their interests and continued with the pertinent education.

Six participants affirmed their career interests in their past work experience. P3 had the

chance to tryout different companies in her co-op work experience, from which she concluded, “If I really disliked it I had the choice of turning back. But I found it okay.” Thus, she continued working in the Actuarial Science field. P10 confirmed her interests in Actuarial Science after switching from Business Administration. She described:

After I got an Actuarial Science job, I found it more interesting than business jobs. I had the opportunity to learn how to program using macro and how to use their actuarial system. When I was in the previous business job, I was just doing some photocopying or reconciling some accounting numbers. So I think it’s more challenging that I can apply my mathematical knowledge.

After deciding to switch out of their original fields, P2 and P11 searched for their interests from their past experience. While working part-time in her undergraduate university library, P2 realized that she wanted to become a knowledgeable librarian. Since working in the media industry fell short of her expectations, P11 recognized her passion for teaching children from her experience working in her church.

Past work experience also served to offer participants career direction. From the previous work experience, P4 decided he wanted to try something different, whereas P5 and P7 developed their specializations:

What I tried before were pharmaceutical company and automotive industry in my previous work terms. Now I want to try something different, which is working with steam boilers. (P4)

There is a variety of areas within the engineering field, but digital is always my main interest. My coop experience helped me a lot to learn about it and get started in this area. Now I can focus on this area. (P5)

And over the first few coop terms I had a chance to look at difference aspects of Actuarial Science, and finally decided on property and casualty because it just seems more interesting. (P7)

Finally, to four participants, previous work experience led to new work opportunities. P5 got her current job from her previous boss whom she worked for in her coop job. She recalled, “He took me in the coop position, which I think was the biggest event that took me to where I

am now.” Likewise, in her second last coop work term, P7 was referred by her boss to a company that offered her an opportunity for her last work term to work in her desired specialization. P7 continued, “So that’s how I started working there and I guess they like what they saw, so they offered me a full time job before I left the company. And then I took the offer.” P7’s last coop experience also led her to a full-time position after graduation. From the participants’ accounts, their past work experiences served to confirm or disconfirm career interests, offer career direction and provide career opportunity.

Desperate Circumstances

Desperate circumstance was another theme uncovered in the data analysis. Three participants discussed how they took their current job out of desperation. P4 stated, “At the time when I was waiting for a job, this was the only offer. So basically I took it. It was not like I have a couple of offers I had to choose from.” P6 and P8 described their considerable source of desperation:

Just a couple days before my visa expires I got this job. I was really desperate. So I would have taken any job at that point if I could find one that hires me. (P6)

It’s just so happens that when I was looking for a job I reached a point where I really needed the money. I didn’t really care what I do, so I would try to look for anything, like even sales position. (P8)

Due to their desperate situation, P6 and P8 would have taken any job offers at that time.

It is noteworthy that all three participants still ended up working in jobs related to their education.

Coming to Canada

The experience of coming to Canada played an important influence in the participants’ career development, as mentioned by nine participants. This experience had impacted their career development in four ways: (1) Strengthens or weakens participants’ qualification; (2)

Increases career opportunities; (3) Encourages freedom of career choice; and (4) Renders differences in treatment as an employee.

The experience of coming to Canada can either strengthen or weaken the participants' qualification, particularly in their language and specialized experience. Language ineptitude and the lack of proof of language proficiency had impacted P2 and P10's experience. When asked what she speculated might happen to her career path if she were not in Canada, P10 replied that she would have majored in accounting if not because of a mistake:

Because they made a mistake in my language proficiency test, I didn't get accepted into accounting. After I was admitted into business administration, the language proficiency test sent me a letter saying that they made a mistake. The mark actually satisfied the admission requirement for accounting. I called the University and they said it's too late.

Because of witnessing her parents' limited career choices in labour jobs due to their language incompetence, P2 stated, "I know I don't want to do those kinds of jobs. I want to do well so our lifestyle can improve." Although language ineptitude did not directly influence both participants' career development, it did, in P10's case, obstruct her original career path, and in P2's case, motivate her to pursue a career that would not be limited by English proficiency.

Specialized experience, or lack thereof, could limit or strengthen participants' qualification. P12 decided to limit her broadcasting career within the Chinese community due to her insufficient experience within the mainstream industry. She indicated, "First, I don't have much idea about the mainstream industry. And if they give me a topic to work on, I probably won't feel comfortable to do it all by myself." On the contrary, P7 indicated how her education experience in her home country primed to specialize in mathematics:

I am inclined to believe that just having 10 years of, or Primary 4 education in Hong Kong, give me a better foundation in Mathematics. The education system over there just gives more emphasis to the mathematics and technical skills. So I think the fact that I was good at it pushes me in another direction.

Specialized experience, or lack thereof, could restrict or focus one's career direction. In

sum, sufficiency in language competency and specialized experience, as a result of coming to Canada, could weaken or strengthen the participants' qualification.

To two participants, coming to Canada opened up more career opportunities. P3 stated:

Maybe if I had stayed in Hong Kong, because of the competition of the high school diploma, I would not have the chance to go to Actuarial Science. So being in Canada is an important factor of me to enter this career path.

P3 believed coming to Canada had reduced the competition for entering the Actuarial Science field. P12 also described an increase in career opportunities in Canada in comparison to Malaysia, his home country, but for a different reason:

Malays give preference to themselves over any other race. So in terms of offering job opportunities, Canada is much better. Especially for my experience in this field, no one discriminates by race or background or anything.

Coming to Canada also increased some participant's freedom to choose their career:

So if I stayed back in my home country, I don't think I have this freedom of choice or ability to stay independent. (P5)

When I have to make my choices, I know a lot of peers from Hong Kong, where I was brought up, have to choose their career path so differently just because of their parents' wishes. They may not have that many choices and they can't say much on their career. (P13)

P5 and P13, who emigrated respectively from China and Hong Kong, shared a similar perspective on the limited freedom in choosing a career because of the cultural norm and family influence. Comparatively, coming to Canada had encouraged them to exercise their freedom and choose their career independently.

Finally, two participants observed some discrepancies in their treatment as an employee in Canada in comparison to their home country, although they have not worked there. P1 said:

In my home country, they don't give too much respect to programmers. Actually, one of my co-workers, who worked in Shanghai for over 10 years, told me that programmers in Shanghai were cheap labor. So, the amount of respect is a big difference.

P4 elaborated the differences in working conditions, employer-employee relationship and

rights of employees between working in Hong Kong and Canada:

If I were working in Hong Kong, the hours would be very long and the pay would not be as good as what I am getting now. And in Hong Kong there would be no way to make a complaint. Basically, no one would listen to me. That's the fact and I just have to go along. But here it's a little different. I can jump from job to job, or talk to my managers or HR to work out something, such as money or vacation to what I want.

According to P1 and P4, they received more respect and rights, better working conditions and higher salary working in Canada in comparison to their home country. The experience of coming to Canada had significantly influenced the participants' career development regarding their qualifications, career opportunities, freedom of career choice and how they would be treated as employees.

Factors Influencing Participants' Career Decision-Making

This section reports factors that influence the participants' career decision-making, which include career interests, market demand, remuneration and Chinese values.

Career Interests

Data analysis revealed that career interest was considered by all participants as the most important factor deciding their education and career fields. Career interests drove them to pursue relevant education, so that they became qualified to work in their field of interest:

I am interested in computer when I am in Grade 9, when I first came to Canada. So that's why I am choosing Computer Science as my major of study in University. (P1)

For my first career as a news broadcaster, I got a passion in working with people. That's the reason why I chose Psychology and Mass Communication. (P11)

When asked about how they ended up in the fields of Actuarial Science and Computer Science respectively, P7 and P12 answered:

It went back to my High School days when my strongest courses were mathematics. I took a pretty big interest in finite mathematics. My teacher/mentor suggested that I look into this field. So I did, and that's how I got started so I went into Actuarial Science. (P7)

I majored in Computer Science in University. I've always been fascinated by computers since I was young. I pretty much knew that I wanted to do something in this field, even before High School. So that's why I chose this field. (P12)

Data analysis also revealed that some participants' career interests originated in their childhood. In addition to P12's account, three participants shared their experience:

My dad taught me how to use computer when I was in grade 4 in Hong Kong and that gives me lots of interest. (P1)

My education was Computer Science. As I grew up, I've always been contact with technology. (P8)

I think one of them is my passion about the graphic arts. When I was young I was really fond of animation, especially Japanese animation. Because I could read a chapter graphics animation and it would attract me. So I thought if I could do this one day it would be great. (P9)

Two participants indicated their career interests were closely associated with their strengths.

When asked about how she chose Actuarial Science as her field of interest, P3 replied:

Basically, back in high school I think my strongest subject is Mathematics. And then there are other areas that I am certain I don't want to go into. It's kind of by elimination that I want to do something with Math.

P7 indicated, "Well it kind of goes back to my High School days when I was in school my strongest courses were mathematics. I took a pretty big interest in finite mathematics." For some participants, their strength and career interests were strongly related.

The significance of career interests in the participants' career decision-making was also shown through their determination to switch fields and overcome hindrance in their career development. Three participants described how they changed their educational and career paths because of realizing their true career interests. As she found accounting wearisome, P2 determined to pursue Information Science as a second degree:

Even though I may be having fun with people at the workplace, the work is not rewarding to me. So I don't want to be working like that for a long time. I need to find something that I want to do that will make me happier everyday when I come back at home.

Due to her immense interests in Electrical Engineering, P5 decided to further her studies in that field, from which she found her new interest, “I wasn’t sure exactly what I would like to do in Electrical Engineering field until I went to the school and I found my interest when I started digital computer area.” Lastly, because of her lack of interests in business, P10 decided to switch into Actuarial Science:

Actually when I first studied University, I was in business administration. But after spending 1.5 year in that I found that I wasn’t quiet interested in business. I am more interested in financial analysis and mathematical calculations. So Actuarial Science in that time offered me both aspects.

Career interests also led participants to overcome barriers to their career development. P9, knowing that it might be difficult to secure a job in Graphics Design, decided to continue with his education:

I know it may not secure my future or living, but this is my passion. So when I was in college, I don’t really think of the future at that moment. After I almost graduate, I start to think about the future and find a job.

P 11 decided to breakthrough her barrier with the mainstream culture as a teacher:

But after a year working in the Chinese community media industry, I don’t really enjoy it. So that’s why I would prefer to break my barrier and go back to the mainstream and go for my passion instead of being bounded by the minority issues and difficulties.

The dominant nature of career interests in the participants’ career decision-making was also indicated by its precedence over other factors. Six participants discussed this viewpoint and three of them are listed below:

So it’s better to find a job that I like to do rather than a job that I don’t like but that gives me a lot of salary. (P1)

So I know that I’m doing my job, it’s not because of money. It’s just about my passion and interest. Of course that doesn’t mean I don’t need money to survive. They are not really my priority. (P13)

Career is a passion. So instead of earning money for living, I need something really meaningful for me to keep on moving for the rest of my life. (P11)

P9 stated he was willing to overwork without getting extra pay because of his passion:

Because as a graphic designer it is not just a 9 to 5 job or task. It's a career. It's a passion. I invest my time in this career. That's why I don't get extra pay when I work overtime. Because it's hard to define, right? I want to do it well. I want to make it the best at that moment. (P9)

Overall, all participants endorsed the chief importance of career interests in their career-decision making. For some of them, these interests originated from their childhood and their career was an enactment of them. For others, career interests tied closely with their strengths. The paramount importance of career interests in their career-decision making was suggested not only by the participants' decidedness to forego their previous path and their courage to breakthrough any hindrance, but also their dedication to pursue a career of interest rather than one of considerable income.

Remuneration

Although remuneration was not the primary factor the participants considered in their career decision-making, it was nevertheless an important one. Data analysis uncovered that the participants considered the reasonableness of salary as a critical factor. Reasons that justified their viewpoint included the early stage of their career and their emphasis on learning experience and advancement opportunities:

Actually right now, I just graduated for 1-2 years, I still treat these years as my learning years, to apply my knowledge I learned in university to a job market, a job nature. That's why I do not care too much about my salary. (P1)

The experience is the only thing that compensate why I choose this company. It pays not much. But I don't think about that so much. Mostly I think about how much I can learn from this experience. (P5)

I think experience, money can't buy that. If I value a job that brings me the experience that I'm looking forward to, money wouldn't be an obstacle for me. (P8)

Other participants concurred likewise, stating that as long as their pay was reasonable and could sustain their living they did not consider it as too crucial. As a Corporate Librarian, P2

maintained, “And I know the pay would be okay. It’s not a really underpaid job. I don’t know how high it is but I know that I’ll probably be fine working as a librarian.” When asked what factors they would consider in selecting a job, P3 ranked reasonable compensation as third important. The subordinate importance of income in the participants’ career decision-making was also signified by the following quotes:

I try to avoid just taking a job just to get money. Just to work so that I have work. (P6)

I guess put in other way, I am not going to change job because of money. I am not go into a different field just because it’s paying me like 30% higher whatever. I am not really going to consider just because of the money. So I guess put it that way it’s not that important. (P7)

Market Demand

The prospective market demand for human resource in a field was another significant factor the participants considered. Four participants used this as a reason of their choice:

I remembered when I first graduated from High School in 1999, it was the year the Information Technology sector has been very popular throughout the whole world. I realized Computer Science is so popular in Toronto and has a very high demand as they need a lot of people with that specific skill set. So that’s why I was choosing Computer Science as my major in University. (P1)

Back then Actuarial Science is still a relatively new area, showing a lot of demand for students. So I’d be earning good money and it offered job security, like I know I can find a job after I graduate. (P3)

The market back then. Some of my mom’s friends’ daughters or sons they graduated from business but most of them ended up in a bank, like the teller or manager in the bank but the salary is not as competitive as an actuary. (P10)

P3 and P10, both in Actuarial Science, indicated that the demand for human resource in a field positively associated with its salary and job security. These factors, secondary to career interests, were considered influential in their career decision-making process. P7 added to this notion, stating that it was one of the reasons she remained in her field:

I know I should look into other options but the fact that knowing Actuarial Science offers pretty stable opportunities, good income and job security, that swayed me to stay with in the field instead of seriously even starting to look for other options.

The demand of a job field not only attracted some participants to pursue, but also convinced some to remain in the field rather than considering something else.

Chinese Cultural Values and Parental Influence

This section discusses the role of Chinese cultural characteristics in the participants' career decision-making. First, how the Chinese values are communicated to the participants is reported and the relationship between Chinese values and parental influence is illustrated. Second, it presents the key Chinese values emerged from the data analysis. Third, the nature of parental influence is reported, followed by the participants' response to parental influence.

Transmission of Chinese Values

Data analysis revealed the two main ways Chinese values were passed onto participants were family teaching and exposure to Chinese culture. The following excerpts provide evidence for communication of Chinese values through family:

When I grew up in my family, I've always grown up with this Chinese way of behaving, like being modest, working hard, and even in the way of interacting with people. (P5)

So a lot of Chinese culture comes from South America, and the only Chinese community I can look into is pretty small. So my family value becomes the Chinese values. (P6)

These passages indicated how Chinese family, particularly the parents, was the foundation and means of communicating the Chinese culture and its values. This notion was also observed in the way some participants responded. When asked whether Chinese values played a role in his career development, P1 answered, "It does matter based on our culture, we do care a lot about our salary. Due to my cultural reasons my parents do not encourage me to work in certain companies." His reply indicated how he Chinese culture is closely connected with his parents' influence. When P8 talked about money as a traditional Chinese value, he said, "In Chinese culture, my parents would influence me and say, 'Oh yeah, get a job that would pay

well and you would live a comfortable life.” These accounts suggested parental influence was a means of communicating Chinese values.

Not only is family a means of conveying Chinese values, it is also a core Chinese value.

P1 said, “I agree that family is a very important key issue in my culture.” P11 stated:

Group responsibility is the main cultural values in Chinese. We often see people in a group, like family. We start at family, then our neighborhood, school, community and even country.

The role of family in the participant’s career development was thus compounded; not only was it a means of communicating Chinese values, the high regard for family was also a core value. How the participants associated Chinese values with their parent’s influence suggested that the Chinese values that were important to career decision-making were mainly conveyed by their parents. Therefore, considering the content of parental influence would be similar to examining the influential Chinese values, and hence only the latter is reported.

Exposure to Chinese society, including social groups, was another means of conveying Chinese values. P7, although indicated her family did not influence her career decisions, maintained the impact of associating with Chinese social groups:

I personally think as a culture Chinese are more practical and conservative in the sense that we’re not as willing to take risk. So I think just growing up in that environment and hang out with people with similar beliefs definitely has something to do with choosing Actuarial Science.

P3 also noted the influence of her exposure to the Chinese culture in Hong Kong:

I think being a Chinese, a lot of times whether a person is successful is measured by how much money the person makes. I think having lived in Hong Kong for 13 or 14 years, that idea is kind of written in my mind. I think it has affected my career choice, as to go for something that would give me good income.

Having socialized with the Chinese culture had instilled some of its values into these two participants’ belief system when considering their career decisions.

As Chinese cultural characteristics and values were communicated through family and

socialization, participants who lacked exposure via these two means did not recount the influence of Chinese culture in their career decision-making. P13 described her family culture:

I think my family culture, rather than the general Chinese culture influence me in making choices in my career development. In terms of my family culture, we're pretty open and we're quite independent. In terms of decision making we're quite independent. We have our own decision making.

Regarding the typical Chinese values of achieving financial success, P13 elaborated:

I know typical Chinese people focus on money. But my parents are not like that. They are not money-oriented. They are more life-oriented. So in terms of that, they are quite different from the culture. They want me to develop my own interest and go for my dream. To work at something I like. They didn't put too much pressure on me in terms of career decision.

As P13's parents emphasized an independent decision-making style and the pursuit of interests rather than financial success, P13 did not consider the typical Chinese values in making career decisions. The extent to which a family adheres to Chinese values influences how much their children are affected by those values.

When asked to identify Chinese values, P12 had a difficult time, "Most things are pretty generic across most culture. Basically just be the best person you can." His parents did not influence him to do anything in terms of his career. Exploring his cultural background, it was revealed that he lost a lot of culture and language when he came to Canada at the age of 10 as his family wanted him to quickly integrate to the Canadian culture. As the evidence of his family culture communicating him Chinese values was lacking and his exposure to the general Chinese culture was limited, P12 did not mention any Chinese values that influenced his career decision-making.

Key Chinese Characteristics and Values

When asked how Chinese characteristics and values had influenced their career decision-making, the participants indicated three characteristics: need for recognition, keeping

stability and striving for success.

Need for Recognition. The need for recognition was exemplified mainly in parental expectations. P4 was an exception; to him his career was a way to earn recognition:

Like when my classmates ask me what do I do and I tell them my position, I would be proud of myself to have such a title.

Three participants asserted that what they did for their jobs was a family issue. P2 stated, “Chinese parents think about school and job as a way to identify how well a family is doing.” Thus, parents may hold certain expectations for their children regarding their career choice, or even interfere with their decision-making:

I just think Chinese families do have some visions for their kids. And Chinese parents want their kids to be in a professional field, especially a technical professional field, because I believe it make them proud, or makes their family looks good to everyone else even though they keep it inside. (P6)

My parents will try to interfere with the job that I’m looking for, and they may also concern about the salary and position. So some parents are pretty name or position conscious, and job finding may become a family issue. (P1)

P6 and P1’s parents concerned with their job type and income to ensure what they do would make the family proud and recognized.

Keeping Stability. Stability was another influential Chinese value in the participants’ career decision-making, which associated with safety, comfort and being risk-averse:

Because we understand that stability feels safer. But at some point, I may not want to look for advancement. Being stable means staying back and relaxing, and prohibits me from seeking for something. (P6)

I personally think as a culture Chinese are more practical and conservative in the sense that we’re not as willing to take risk. Because when my teacher suggests Actuarial Science, I look at it and obviously a lot of factors came in to my head, like the money I make and how secure the job is. I think Chinese are more practical that way. (P7)

Some effects of upholding stability included the reservation to look for career changes or advancement and the tendency to seek for or remain in a secure and financially stable job. P6

indicated the association between stability and financial success, which was echoed by P8:

It's probably in the Chinese culture that makes me want to have something stable. Maybe that ties with financial success, so it limits my career choices. It ties with the financial sound or successful careers. It seems like only those careers will be stable enough that if I work my life through that career I will be okay. (P6)

In Chinese culture, my parents would influence me and say, "Oh yeah, get a job that would pay well and you would live a comfortable life." The main point is to make lots of money so I won't starve. (P8)

Striving for Success. Chinese culture emphasized success in a very specific way. P6 said:

I think one of the values of Chinese families is that they want me to be successful in a very specific way, like being professional. I have to demonstrate success through my career and through how well I do in school.

While P6 stated success meant having a professional career, P3 suggested success is measured "by how much money the person makes." Again, the job type and income were two aspects Chinese highly emphasized in making their career choice.

An emerging theme that characterized achieving success through career was the parental and/or personal expectation to obtain a professional job. Eight participants described what they considered a professional job. The three most mentioned professional jobs were doctors, lawyers and engineers. Six of them indicated their parents' expectation of pursuing one:

And Chinese parents want their kids to be in a professional field, especially a technical professional field. So they don't want their children to be musicians or artists. They want their children to be engineers, doctors and lawyers. (P6)

In terms of my parents, a professional job would be a teacher, dentist, doctor, nurse and engineer. It may also be programmers because they would think that a professional job is a job that only a specific kind of person trained in that can work at. (P1)

Professionals like engineers, doctors, lawyers. The ones that require a lot of studies. And not a professional job means that it doesn't need much education. It doesn't mean the job is not good. (P4)

These participants held a common yet clear idea of professional jobs, which belonged to a technical field and required specialized training with formal higher education and degrees.

When asked why these jobs were considered as professional, P3 and P5 replied:

I think it's the income and the demand, and the need. Like you don't need a designer, but you need a doctor. (P3)

My parents always think in a stereotypical way that a safer choice for career development would be in pharmacy, doctor, or business area because there is more growth. (P5)

Another feature of professional jobs was its stable demand, which was contingent on its technical nature as technical jobs usually had a steadier and more predictable demand than art-oriented ones, such as designers, artists and musicians. It is noteworthy that obtaining a professional job as a manifestation of success is highly dependent on the job type and income, aspects that typical Chinese families would be concerned of.

Parental Influence

This section illustrates the nature and intensity of parental influences, which could be categorized into three types: (1) Overt interference; (2) Covert interference; and (3) Support and Respect.

Overt Interference. As the job type and salary were closely related with attaining recognition, maintaining stability and achieving success, the participants' parents might actively interfere with their career choices when they were unsatisfied with these aspects:

The frozen yogurt job does not pay well, but if I work there I may get a higher salary. However, due to my cultural reasons, my parents do not encourage me to work in those companies. They warn me that I should treat those jobs as part-time jobs only. I don't know why, but they would think a person delivering frozen yogurt is not a professional job. So that's why they don't like the job type as a whole. They care too much about working in a professional job. (P1)

Because it's art-related, my parents always discourage me, "You can't earn money being a Graphic Designer. It's unstable. You're freelancing and you don't know when you're going to have job. It's not good." So I think in a Chinese mindset, anything relates to art will not be encouraged to pursue. (P9)

Looking back when I say I want to go into engineering, my family would object. They always think in a stereotypical way that a safer choice for career development would be in pharmacy, medicine, or business because there is more growth. If I stay in pharmacy, it's a

guarantee job and for sure it's a safe choice of job because the job is always there. (P5)

These examples indicated the parents would overtly object their children's career choice because of the job type, such as P1's non-professional job and P9's unstable and low-income choice. Although P5 chose engineering, which was typically considered as a professional discipline, her parents thought this field was disadvantageous for woman and preferred her to switch to a more stable field. P7's account of her friends' experiences summarized the reasons why Chinese parents would interfere with certain career choice:

I've seen several friends or their siblings were not encouraged to do what they want to do. Because the things they want to do are perceived as 'lower-value'. It doesn't make as much money. It doesn't seem like a decent job. It doesn't sound stable.

Covert Interference. Unless the participants' career choice directly opposed to their parents' expectations, their parents usually would not interfere directly, but rather give suggestions or communicate their general expectations. When asked how her mother influenced her to chose business initially, P10 replied, "Because in her opinion even though I'm a professional, I can't make as much money as owning my business. That's why she suggested me to go to the businesses world." P11 described how her parents and relatives gave comments on her career:

Parents, aunts, uncles, always have opinions on my career. They are pretty open for giving me freedom to choose. But they would have thorough considerations and explanations for the job that I am going to choose. They would analyze the job market and my personalities regarding to the career that I'd pick.

P11 stressed her freedom to choose her career, but throughout her decision-making her parents and relatives would indirectly interfere by making analysis and recommendations. P3 and P6 speculated their parents' response if they had chosen something else as their career, although they did not encounter any direct parental objection:

I think if I want to be an accountant, they would have no problem with it. Or a doctor or lawyer. Say if I want to be a designer, they would not be very pleased because they would think that being a designer is not as promising as being an actuary. So they have an idea of how certain career would give me better income. (P3)

Well my parents probably won't be as happy if I go into Mathematician because they don't see a real success in there in terms of when I have to come out for work. They don't see how that would translate into financial success. (P6)

Even without any personal experience, P3 and P6 seemed certain of their parents' expectations.

Again, parental expectations of choosing careers that belong to a professional nature and provide a stable income were apparent from these narratives.

Support and Respect. Five participants indicated how their parents were open with their career choice and supported their decisions. Some are listed below:

My family is always supportive of what I do. They know I don't like accounting, so they give me a lot of freedom to decide what I do. They encourage me to do what makes me happy. (P2)

In terms of my parents, they don't have a strong preference for me. I could have gone to Computer Science, which I have applied and got accepted. I like physics more and my parents were open to what I chose to study. (P4)

Another three participants, whose parents did have some expectations for them, discussed how their parents were open to their own decision. When asked how her parents communicated their preferences of her entering the business field, P10 responded, "They'd say they prefer that I go to that way, not like I have to, but preferably." Similarly, after talking about his parents' expectations, P6 asserted regarding their influence:

They didn't push me. They were more open than most of the other families. But they still have their wants in there. So they won't actually ask me to do this, but they would suggest me this pathway and encourage me to do that.

P5, after having decided against her parents' suggestion and were with her choice, described their supportiveness and "concerns [about her] ability to stay with the job."

Although Chinese parents hold certain expectations for their children's career, they are mostly open and supportive of their children's choice. Chinese parents would communicate their expectations to their children, but would leave the career decision in their children's hands.

Only when their children's decisions are in opposition to their expectations, such as jobs that are unstable and financially unsound, they would object their children's choice.

Response to Chinese Values

After examining the nature and impact of Chinese values on the participants' career decision-making, participants' response to Chinese values are presented. The three main types of response were: (1) Disregard; (2) Internalize; and (3) Make a balanced choice.

Disregard

Three participants did not show any evidence of being affected by Chinese values and/or parental influence in their career decision-making. When asked how she responded to her family's objection to pursuing engineering, P5 replied, "Because I am selfish in a way, I'd like to make my own choice. So what my parents think didn't really affect my decision." She elaborated her course of action, "After first year of University, I didn't agree with staying in biochemistry. So I want to be independent and I want to go to engineering." Although her mother preferred her to enter the business field, P10 decided to pursue Actuarial Science instead because it matched with her interests and personality. Regarding P9, he acknowledged the truthfulness of his parents' concerns:

My parents always worry about my future because I can't make money. They would tell me to take some business or computer course so that I will have a more stable rate of salary because as a Graphics Designer, it's hard to secure a living. Their concern is true.

When asked why he continued with his choice in spite of his parents' suggestion, he responded, "Because of my passion. I know it may not secure my future or living, but this is my passion." In sum, when faced with parents' objection against their career interests, these participants still went with their career interests.

Internalization

Four participants indicated some influence by Chinese values in their career

decision-making. Of which, P6 and P7 acknowledged a subtle influence. P7 recounted:

I think some of the influences are pretty subtle. For example, I personally think as a culture Chinese are more practical and conservative in the sense that we're not as willing to take risk. So I think just growing up in that environment and hang out with people with similar beliefs, I wouldn't say that that was a leading factor in my deciding on Actuarial Science, but definitely has something to do with it because when my teacher suggests Actuarial Science, I look at it and obviously a lot of factors came in to my head, like the money I make and how secure the job is. I think Chinese are more practical that way. (P7)

Although it was not a dominant factor, P7 acknowledged the slight impact of Chinese values in making her career choice. When asked how the Chinese value of striving for professional success influenced his career development, P6 replied:

And you can see what I chose in University - architecture, health science, engineering - they are very technical and professional fields. Or they will lead me to there. I think that's somehow influenced, maybe not directly, by cultural values, being a Chinese and having brought up in a Chinese family. Even though it's more subtle in my family, it does have that effect.

P6 further explained how the Chinese values that were passed on by his parents influenced him:

Because parental issues instill a value into me, and now it becomes my own value. They are right, it's probably not as easy when I have to come out to work, to translate into a good standard of living, or even a standard of living.

P6 internalized his parents' values and used them to make his career choices. He recognized the legitimacy of his parents' concerns and acknowledged the subtle influence they had on him choosing his major within the technical and professional range, while still basing on his interests.

The pattern of internalization is also observed in other participants:

If I were to teach my kid about choosing career, it would probably be the same as what my dad taught me: Find a career in a somewhat professional field, not just general labor; something that I can move on to management and that it could lead to a brighter future. (P4)

My parents keep telling me, "Oh, stay in school, work hard and eventually you'll get good education and good job, and you won't have to starve."...Due to circumstances, I am doing

my job right now. But if that wasn't like that, maybe I would aim higher to something that pays really well. (P8)

P4 and P8 also adopted their parents' values in making their own career choice. Their independence in making career choice was evident; they had the ownership and freedom of choice despite their parents might have imposed some suggestions. Thus, internalization can be defined as incorporating parents' values to make an independent career choice.

Balanced Choice

Four participants showed how they felt the need to make a balanced choice considering their parents' ideals and/or the family circumstances, with or without facing family pressure.

When asked how Chinese values had influenced her career decision-making, P3 replied:

Maybe the level of respect I pay my parents. Say if I want to be a designer, they would not be very pleased because... it's not as promising as that of being an actuary. So I think that has influenced my career choice. They have an idea of how certain career would give me better income.

Although P3 did not indicate any direct parental pressure, she had an implicit idea of what choices would please her parents more. Consequently, she chose something that interested her and gave her decent income and prospect. Similarly, though P2 did not mention any direct parental interference, she considered her family situation when deciding her career:

And I know I don't want to do those labour jobs within the Chinese community. I want our life to improve and I want my parents' lifestyle to improve. I want to do well so our lifestyle can improve in a way.

P2 sought for a professional job so that she could improve her and her family's lifestyle. In sum, P3 and P2 made a career choice balancing their career interests as well as their parents' implicit concerns and/or their family condition.

Two other participants, P1 and P11, indicated some pressure to make a balanced career choice, although they picked a career according to their own choice and interests:

My parents are talking about the job I'm working and they sort of warn me that I treat those jobs as part-time jobs only and I can't work there forever. Because of that I am being influenced by them about the job type I chose for my permanent career. But as I age, I do make my own decision and set my own standard of living. I build up my own standard of life, but I do have some pressure from them in times. (P1)

P1 indicated how he was influenced by his parents about what he should consider as a permanent job. Although he had the freedom to make his choice, he felt pressured. P11 stated similarly:

My parents, aunties and uncles would analyze the job market and my personalities regarding to the career that I'd pick. I felt the pressure from them to choose a career that would please them. Though I ended up choosing a career according to my choice, I did have a hard time to stand up for it.

P11 illustrated the pressure she felt to choose a career that would be satisfy her parents and relatives. Ultimately, she made her own choice, but struggled in standing up for it. In sum, the participants disregarded, internalized, or balanced the Chinese values in their career decision.

The Role of Ethnicity in the Work Experience of Chinese Canadian Young Adults

Except for the apparent impact of Chinese values in the participants' career decision-making, the role of ethnicity encompassing Chinese cultural characteristics, ethnic identity and minority status was significant chiefly in the participants' work experience.

Chinese Values

This section discusses the Chinese values that are influential in the participants' work experience, which include work hard and do well and being reserved.

Work hard and Do Well

An emerged theme regarding the work attitude of the participants was to work hard and do well. It was one of the Chinese values that most participants related to. To strive for

excellence by working hard was a core value Chinese parents taught their children:

I think Chinese people always want to do well and work hard. That's a value I developed since I was really little and carry it into my career development. I do want to do well in my job. (P1)

From the way I was brought up by my parents, studying hard and working hard were very important. (P3)

Working hard renders beneficial returns, according to the Chinese families' teaching:

Based on my family, the way my parents raised me, they always say being a Chinese I have to work hard. The reward would be from my own hard work. (P5)

In Chinese traditional culture, some would say, "The harder you work the more you get in return." (P8)

As a Chinese we are taught to work hard when we're young so we can learn faster. (P4)

Having been raised in an environment that esteemed diligence and excellence, these participants recognized their advantage over other non-Asian colleagues, including higher productivity, efficiency, endurance and achievements:

Maybe because I was like trained to study hard, therefore I did well in my professional exams. I guess I tried to do the same at a job. Maybe that would make some differences between me and my co-workers. (P3)

When the other co-workers encounter difficulty, they may either reject to do the job or choose to leave early and continue again tomorrow. But I would stay there late to make sure I have done the job before I go home. (P1)

I'd say Chinese work faster. Western people would just take their time. I guess Hardworking helps me pass my exams too. When my colleagues were in University, they just took one exam a year and enjoy their time. But for me I took all the exams in all seating. (P10)

Some participants observed diligence made Chinese willing to contribute their best, or even more than what was expected from them:

In Chinese traditional culture, some would say, "The harder you work the more you get in return." So the way I see it is that Chinese workers do more than they were supposed to. (P8)

I would say Chinese people are hardworking. Maybe not in my field, but when I see Chinese people they are willing to accept lower salary but longer working hours. (P10)

The mindset is different because they know that Chinese is hardworking. They don't mind overtime. (P9)

To work hard and do well are values taught in Chinese families and identified by most participants. Their identification to these values were reflected through their working style and attitude, which often made them superior to other workers because of their higher efficiency, productivity, endurance and accomplishments. Some indicated Chinese might be willing to contribute their best effort, even if it was more than what was required of them.

Reserved

Another key Chinese value revealed in data analysis was being reserved. Being reserved means being inexpressive, tolerating, unintrusive and not speaking out, which was a Chinese characteristic observed in various settings. P6 talked about how he became more reserved because of his childhood experience:

It almost becomes a personality that Chinese people are more shy comparatively. They are restricted to some speech. I learn, as a kid, that if I say something that's against my parents in a setting with other elders, they would beat me up. It becomes a repression that every time I want to voice out anything, I have that in the back of my head. That is terrible and would lead me into trouble, and I just stop doing it.

Not only was being inexpressive observed in some Chinese families, it was also evident in an education setting:

Like in University when I go to classes, a lot of Canadian students participated in the discussion. But not a lot of Chinese or Asian students participated. The professor asked were there any students from the East, meaning Asia, would like to give an opinion on this topic? And I saw there were none. (P2)

P8 and P13 described being reserved as a typical quality of Chinese people:

In our culture, I think we're pretty much reserved. Chinese are not quite open to their opinions. They don't stand up for themselves. (P13)

Chinese culture tends to keep things behind close doors. They are not very open with a lot of things. (P8)

From their descriptions, Chinese seem to keep things private and refrain from voicing out their opinions. These values are observed mainly in their knowledge of the older generations:

Like my parents are from Hong Kong and they have worked there before. They would speak up less about their situation. For example, they would work long hours without complaining and they would not voice out although the work environment is not as good as they wish. (P4)

The older generation of immigrants seems to undervalue themselves and they are afraid to ask, to speak up and fight for their right. But I guess sometimes culturally we just don't feel comfortable talking about things like that. So it's not even so much as running against the risk of being taken advantage of. It's just I think I've got my own rights and I have to lay it out, and know when I'm not getting what I deserve fully. I think that's persistent in our culture. (P7)

P4 and P7 highlighted how being reserved was a value observed in and regarded by the older generations of Chinese. The participants' response to being reserved was varied. While some had adopted this value, others found openness and expressiveness were more useful and adaptive. P6 talked about how he held back his opinion and gave in to the situation at work:

If I voice it out on a matter where we had different opinions, there's a risk of breaking the good relationship we had. So I rather give in and just soothe the matter out altogether. And obviously that's within the tolerance. (P6)

P6 indicated because it was a matter within his tolerance, he withheld his opinion as he worried speaking out might ruin the working relationship. The emphasis on a harmonized relationship as a reason of giving in was also evident in P9's experience:

I think sometimes in dealing with business, Chinese cares so much about the working relationship with their business partners. The business partners will always ask for free jobs and favors. In my position I don't want to take this job. But in order to keep this relationship, we would do it. We're afraid that if we say no we would lose that relationship.

P9 illustrated how Chinese tended to be tolerating and unassertive, even against their wishes, because of the fear of damaging a good working relationship.

While older generation Chinese would have a higher tolerance of their working conditions even if they were being treated unfairly, some participants asserted they would voice out and exercise their rights to strive for fairness:

For me I would lead more on the Canadian side, which I would look into the company policies, government regulations and labor acts so I do have my rights to voice out and get what I want. (P4)

I'd like to think I do speak up for myself. I know where my value is added. Like today, if you ask me, if I am grossly underpaid at my job, then I'd definitely look elsewhere and not settle. (P7)

Moreover, P13 found that withholding opinions was in fact maladaptive:

I find things don't work that way. I really have to speak up. Not speaking up is not going to help with the situation. That isn't helpful to other people. (P13)

Seemingly, although being reserved is a traditional Chinese value, not all participants identified with it, and some even found it unhelpful in their work experience.

Ethnic Identity

All participants in this study were first generation immigrants from Hong Kong, China, Vietnam and Malaysia. They were raised in their home countries and the age they came to Canada ranged from 9 to 17. Regarding their ethnic identity, except for P11 who identified herself as a global citizen, the rest included Chinese as part of their ethnic identity. Of which, four included only "Chinese" as their identification (ethnic Chinese), whereas eight used a combined form of Chinese and Canadian. For the latter eight participants, three indicated they were more Chinese than Canadian, and three identified as more Canadian than Chinese (Table 1).

Component of Ethnic Identity

Data analysis revealed that participants used a range of factors to determine their ethnic identity, which included citizenship, language, traditions, physical appearance, social group,

education, lifestyle, place of birth and growth, current residing place, mindset and values, and length of time spent in a country. The ones that were endorsed by five or more participants are discussed below.

Language. Six participants used the language they frequently used in their daily life to justify their ethnic identity. P10, who identified as an ethnic Chinese, noted, “I think deep inside I’d think that I am a Chinese, because my daily life is pretty much very Chinese except going to work. After I go home I talk to my parents in Cantonese.” P12, in explaining why he quickly integrated into the Canadian culture and lost his Chinese culture, stated:

My parents spoke English at home so that we would integrate to the Canadian society quickly. But then we lost a lot of the culture and language because being the only Chinese in the school, I lost the language quickly when no one speaks to me.

Language played a key role in determining who the participants socialized with. P7, who identified as more Canadian than Chinese, asserted, “It’s a bit strange because ultimately I am most comfortable to hang around people like me. Like kind of have to be Chinese and can speak the language.” P6 echoed likewise, “Or even if I am with a group of Chinese Canadians, I don’t think I can identify with them as well as if I with groups of people who speak Cantonese and have been in Hong Kong for the youth.” Lastly, P13 indicated how her non-fluent English might affect how others view her ethnically:

Not having fluent English, or the slang, plays a big part. Just because I am not speaking fluent English, that influenced how people view me and how I may perceive myself as a Chinese Canadian. If I can speak fluent English, I may as well say I am a pure Canadian.

Social Group. Who the participants usually socialized with determined the degree they identified themselves as Chinese or Canadian, which was endorsed by five participants.

Identifying themselves as ethnic Chinese, P6 and P10 indicated the following:

As I’ve only been in Canada for a few years, my social group has never really been Caucasian Canadian or the majority Canadian. So, I still have trouble in the social context

with them. (P6)

I mentioned before most of my friends are Chinese although some of them were born in Canada. So I think deep inside I am a traditional, typical Chinese. (P10)

P4, P7 and P12, although identified as Chinese Canadians, noted how they tended to make friends with only Chinese. P4 asserted, "Maybe I am referring to the social group. First of all social group I mean I would tend to make friends with Chinese than with other culture people."

P7 and P12 echoed similarly:

Like personally I don't think I'd ever be really close friends with somebody who's not Chinese. (P7)

In terms of Chinese, I know I lost a lot because I don't speak the language. But I still get a lot of it from friends. Most of the friends I have are actually Chinese. (P12)

Lifestyle. Lifestyle signifies the extent to which participants subscribe to the Canadian popular culture in their daily routine, such as hobbies, food and entertainment. Six participants used lifestyle as to justify their ethnic identification. Identifying themselves as ethnic Chinese, these participants indicated the following:

I think I am Chinese....I watch Chinese TV, I eat Chinese food. (P3)

After I go home I talk to my parents in Cantonese, and then I watch those Hong Kong drama series. And I prefer Chinese food more than western food. So I think deep inside I am a traditional, typical Chinese. (P10)

As a Chinese I don't quite enjoy watching hockey and baseball, but for a person with a western-style mind they'd really switch their TV channel to Raptors and Maple Leafs and to discuss about it at work. (P1)

Because when they start talking about things they do for recreation, or they play hockey, they would ask me whether I know the sports game. They would ask me things like that and I cannot identify with them. (P6)

While P3 and P10 mentioned subscribing to Chinese entertainment, food and hobbies during their leisure time, P1 and P6 used their unfamiliarity with the Canadian culture, such as sports and reaction, to justify their difference from typical Canadians.

Place of birth and growth. Place of birth and growth, identified by seven participants, was the most endorsed factor in determining ethnic identity. Three participants used this as an explanation of the irrefutable fact of being Chinese, or more Chinese:

I am brought up for at least 10 years in Hong Kong, and that makes me a Chinese person. And no matter how many changes I went through life, I still identify myself totally as a Chinese person. (P6)

I am more with the Chinese way based on the fact that I wasn't born here. (P8)

I think I would consider myself more Chinese than Canadian, since more than half of my life I was brought up in a Chinese culture, in Hong Kong. (P4)

Two participants talked about how they would not identify themselves as ethnic Chinese or Canadian, but a combination of both, because of where they were brought up:

Half of my life was spent in china, so half of my memory was in China. And half of my life was living in Canada. (P2)

I wouldn't say that I am a pure, 100% Chinese person, and the reason being my personal experience. I was born in Hong Kong, but I only spent a handful of years there. I came to Canada at a very young age. So I wouldn't identify myself as a pure Chinese, but I would identify myself as a Chinese Canadian. (P8)

P10 and P11 further discussed how their lack of experience growing up in Canada caused difficulty in identifying with other people's experience:

I don't know maybe the background and cultural differences. I wasn't born here or grew up here. When they talked about cartoons, I had no topic for conversation. (P10)

When my students shared how they spent their summer and holidays, such as how they would have turkey for thanksgiving and how they value thanksgiving. But I don't really have the same experience with them in their age. I cannot share the same feelings because I already passed the stages and my childhood did not happen in the same environment. (P11)

Mindset and values. Six participants identified their mindset and values as a factor explaining their ethnic identity. Identifying as ethnic Chinese, P1 and P3 stated:

And I do not have the western-style mindset. Like I do not understand what they are thinking about. So I can only describe myself as Chinese. (P1)

I think my way of thinking is more Chinese. I just don't think I think Canadian-ly. (P3)

Although living in Canada, P2 and P4 included Chinese as part of their ethnic identification because of subscribing to Chinese values:

But I was a Chinese and I am still a Chinese. I still have the Chinese values. (P2)

I have all the values of a Chinese person, but at the same time I live in Canada. (P4)

Lastly, P8 and P13 talked about how they included Canadian as part of their ethnic identity because they incorporated certain Canadian mentality and values:

So I wouldn't identify myself as a pure Chinese, but I would identify myself as a Chinese Canadian because being Canadians have their own set of values. (P8)

And the way I think, the way I communicate, the style that I wish I have, I will identify myself as a Canadian identity. (P13)

Nature of Ethnic Identity

Three themes emerged from data analysis pertinent to ethnic identity, which included: (1) Unfamiliarity with the Canadian culture; (2) Dissociation between work and other life aspects; (3) In-the-middle breed; and (4) Lack of incentive to adapt.

Unfamiliarity with the Canadian Culture. When asked how much they identified with the Canadian culture, five participants mentioned the fact that they were uncertain of what constituted the Canadian culture:

I don't know the Canadian culture very well. Maybe in the context of career, because I've never worked in Hong Kong, I have a better understanding of the Canadian work system. But I still have trouble in the social context with Caucasian Canadian. I would say I don't know the culture at all. I watch some TV here, but that's pretty much it. (P6)

Other participants mentioned their uncertainty rooted from the multiculturalism of Canada, thus making it difficult to identify a core, dominant Canadian culture:

Actually I am not sure, if you ask me what the Canadian values are. Maybe they are more about the nature. Canadian is really a mix of different cultures, so it's hard to say that there is a Canadian culture. (P3)

What makes Canada *Canada* is all these different ethnicities, everybody living together in harmony. But how would I identify myself as Canadian then? I guess it's the way I act. I guess it's a very vague question to begin with. Because being a Canadian is a very vague ideology. (P8)

It's kind of mix. It's hard to say. Because I would say the whole world focuses more on global community and global identity. So I don't really find a typical Canadian culture in it. (P11)

P2 mentioned unfamiliarity as a reason she was not completely associated with the Canadian culture, "A lot of it has to do with I don't really know the Canadian culture as well as people who were born here and grew up here."

Dissociation between Work and Other Life Aspects. Four participants indicated how they distinguished their work from other arenas of life, such as personal and social. Thus, although they identified themselves as more Chinese in their personal and social life, the Canadian identification dominated in their work life:

Just put aside, just focus on working, just professional development. Nothing outside the work aspect, I think I say that as the Canadian culture. But if I'm talking about the social aspect, I think the Chinese identity or behavior is still very strong within myself. (P5)

I think deep inside I'd think that I am a Chinese, because my daily life is pretty much very Chinese except going to work. (P10)

P6 and P9 not only discussed the dissociation of the work context from other aspects, but also how they did not seek to develop social relationship with their co-workers:

I don't understand my Canadian co-workers in any other contexts or fields. So I don't know what they do behind doors when they are home. But in terms of treating clients and business practices, I know how it functions and I can fit myself in with that even knowing that I am still different. So in strictly business sense I can identify with them. But outside of that box I am so Chinese. (P6)

When asked whether he strived to adapt to the Canadian culture in his career, P9 replied:

Yes, and I also have the mentality that this is only a workplace. I only work here. I don't expect to develop a social life from them. I cannot get these two things mixed together. This is my work environment. This is a place that I make money. It's very distinct from my

personal life. (P9)

These participants illustrated the context-specific nature of ethnic identity. Although most of them identified as more Chinese, they described how their career was the only ‘Canadian’ aspect of life, or the only context in which they identified with, or felt the need to adapt to, the mainstream Canadian culture.

In-the-Middle Breed. Another theme emerged from the data analysis of the participants’ ethnic identity was their struggles in connecting with either the ethnic Chinese group, such as new Chinese immigrants, or the ethnic Canadian group. Regardless of their ethnic identity, these participants were comfortable bonding with people of similar background – Chinese who were born elsewhere and came to Canada in their youth. Because of the struggle to bond with people who did not share their background, this unique “in-the-middle breed” was born. The following participants described this happening in their experience:

I think myself as Chinese Canadian. I find that with the new Chinese who come to Canada, we don’t fit well with those. We also don’t fit well with those who are just Canadians. We only fit well with those who are Chinese Canadians, and who are here for a long time. (P5)

Personally I am stuck in the middle. I don’t fully identify with the Chinese ethnic group. Nor do I fully identify myself with the dominant group, the Canadian culture. So it’s a bit strange because ultimately I am most comfortable to hang around people like me. They have to be Chinese and can speak the language. (P7)

I have problems identifying with the two groups. I don’t feel completely belonged to the Chinese group and I don’t feel completely belonged to the Canadian group. I feel like I’m in the middle of nowhere. (P2)

Another evidence of this phenomenon was the fact that Chinese immigrants who had been in Canada for a long time still tended to bond only with Chinese:

I guess having lived here for a long time, I’ve picked up a lot of the Canadian culture. But I still get a lot of Chinese culture from friends. Most of the friends I have are actually Chinese. (P12)

And even though one of my co-workers came here when he was six, he told me that pretty

much all his friends are Chinese. (P10)

Lack of Incentive to Adapt. Another phenomenon was the lack of incentive to adapt or fit in with the Canadian culture. One reason was the large number of Chinese residing in Canada, making this ethnic group unlike a minority. When asked whether he thought it was important to adapt to the Canadian culture other than at work, P6 replied:

In terms of other aspects, it would take much longer, and I don't know whether that would happen. And one of the reasons might be there are so many Chinese in Canada. I don't see that would happen very soon or all that important. There's no incentive to do so.

P7 resonated a similar observation in her field of Actuarial Science:

I think it's a safe guess to say that Asians tend to choose a more technical field. So maybe that could be one of the reasons why it's not as important to try to fit in because there's lot of people like me. Like I am surrounded by people whose experiences and background and similar to me in my field.

As there are many Chinese people with similar background in Canada, the participants felt a lack of incentive to fit in with the mainstream culture. P9 pointed out another reason, which was the lack of encouragement:

In my intellectual intent, I know I am a Chinese Canadian. But in reality, I just live out as a Chinese. Not very much into the Canadian culture yet. Although I understand this is a multicultural country and I should be very excited about it because I can learn and know more different cultures, I don't make use of every opportunity to know them more because I really enjoy my Chinese identity in a multicultural Canadian context. I think if somebody can give more encouragement, or invitation to participate I will learn more, or willing to embrace more.

For P10, her struggle lied with the difficulty in meeting people outside of work and getting to know people at work better:

I guess it's hard for me right now because I am not going to school. I can only know people from work. And I usually go home after work. It's hard to know that people in dept because at work I wouldn't talk about myself that much and after work people just rush home.

To conclude, the lack of incentive to fit in with the Canadian culture can be explained in three ways: the large number of Chinese in Canada, the lack of encouragement and the difficulty

in meeting people and getting to know them better.

Impact of Ethnic Identity

This section discusses the impact of ethnic identity in the work experience of the participants. The differences between the participants and their co-workers regarding their lifestyle, social life and language use were not only factors that distinguished the participants' ethnic identity, but also caused difficulties at work, such as to (1) socialize and build relationship, (2) obtain advancement, (3) feel included and (4) communicate. One result from these struggles was the tendency to bond with one's own ethnic group at work.

Struggle to socialize and build relationship with co-workers. The struggle to socialize and build relationship with people was evident in many participants' accounts. One nature of this struggle was the tendency to remain within the technical or work aspect of conversation:

The people aspect is also important in career development as well because how I interact could affect other people. I cannot always just talk about technical aspect. It's just an ability to have a social conversation, maybe it could make others view myself differently. (P5)

I think my ethnic identity affect my career, not in the technical sense, but more in general conversations with my co-workers. Say when they talk about hockey, I don't know anything about it. Maybe that influences us. When we talk about the work, then we know the work equally. If we deviated from work, then sometimes maybe I could not participate in the conversation because it's not something that I do outside of work. (P3)

Both participants highlighted the importance of generating social conversations at work and the difficulty to induce conversations outside of work-related topics because of the social differences. Their accounts also emphasized how they were considered equal in terms of work abilities, but might fall short in their social ability. This worry might lead them to show diligence and productivity to outweigh their disadvantage, as indicated by P1 and P4:

When they're telling some jokes, all people start to laugh loudly. But because I don't find it that funny, I may just say, "Ha ha ha." Sometimes I find it frustrating. So these are some difficulties in my work experience. Sometimes because of that I have to explicitly work

more rather than talk more in order to show that I am able to work, so that I can stay in the company for a longer time. (P1)

I think I am disadvantaged than someone who is born in Canada. He may be able to talk about Canadian sports and the cultural things that I don't know. Then he may be better in socializing than I do. But I do see that as a Chinese I am more outstanding in terms of my hardworking-ness and my attitude. (P4)

In light of this, participants showed their willingness to get more involved with their non-Chinese co-workers, despite facing some difficulties because of the diverse background:

I realize that they'd laugh at some jokes that are not funny. So I just want to understand their mind and to laugh with them. So I'd like to keep myself as a Chinese but I also want to understand their western-mind. (P1)

Like I try to be more like them, but it's hard because I didn't grow up like them. Like they all know the Simpson's, but I don't. Even though I'd like to be like them, it's not possible because I don't have the same background. (P3)

When situated in social conversations, a common response observed from the participant was withdrawal, where they remained silent and reserved:

I smile, but I stay quiet. I can see that the Canadians, even though they don't know each other well, they can joke around the first time they met. But I am not brought up that way. Most of the time I don't want to say anything. (P3)

I guess I could only listen and be silent because I don't know what to say. Maybe just learn and hear them, and share a little bit of what I learn. (P4)

Because of the differences in cultural background and experience, it was difficult for participants to share social conversations with their co-workers. As a result, they withdrew from conversations and became silent and unengaged. Unsurprisingly, the difficulty in socializing with co-workers led to a barrier in building friendships:

Because I cannot disagree that I am Chinese, it's hard for me to be involved or to understand their lifestyle and to make friends with their parents or relatives. (P1)

I guess it's not very significant, and in some sense I would miss some of the common topics they talk about. In terms of developing friendship, I may not be as good as Canadians. (P4)

It's hard to be close friends. Maybe the background and cultural differences. Since I wasn't born here or didn't grow up here, when they talked about cartoons, I would have no topic for conversation. (P10)

Because of the difficulty to socialize and build friendships, it may reinforce the participants' dissociation of work from their personal and social life.

Barriers to advancement. A subjective sense of barrier to advancement, due to differences in lifestyle and social life, were brought up by two participants. Although neither had encountered such experience, it seemed to be their common speculation regarding their advancement opportunities when compared to the Canadian counterparts:

If a big boss has a job that can be done by two persons, me and a western-style person who was born here, they may give the job to the western-style people. I'd suspect that based on the lifestyle they may have a lot of similar hobbies, like the things they talk, laugh and do together. Also the boss may be closer to that employee than me. (P1)

In terms of advancement I think it has some effect. Because I can see that in general most of the people in my office are the more Canadian type, so it's easier for them to bring in another person of their type and fit easily. If the job done doesn't make a difference and then outside of job it makes a difference, I think the person who is selecting would pick the one that has a better overall balance. But so far this has not affected me. (P3)

Both participants indicated the significance of considering social abilities in deciding the suitability of promoting an individual, which in their case would be disadvantaged because of their divergent personal background and social styles.

Sense of exclusion. Although they did not face any outright discrimination, two participants indicated feeling excluded in their workplace:

Although literally they may say that, "Len, let's ask Len for lunch...", at some point I can see from their face...I can feel from the way they talk, the way they ask and the way they act...I can see that I am the special one, like an outsider, of this crowd of people. (P1)

There are times I feel I am being discriminated. It might be something internal, or something that I feel that they don't like my work because they do not mingle with me. Clients may not want to deal with me as much whether it might be because I'm a Chinese or for other reasons. There are certain people who are less friendly to me, or it might also because of the social context. (P6)

Although P1 did not speculate the cause of his sense of exclusion, P6 guessed it could be because of his ethnicity or social style.

Communication difficulty. As English was not their first language, the participants' relative ineptness in English might have caused struggles at work and even affected whether they would be hired, especially in positions where communication was crucial. P4 and P9 indicated:

After all, English is my second language. I guess in the environment where I have to think out loud is not quite my style. Canadian kids are taught to do more on that side. So if I were to grow here then maybe I'd have the same qualities as they have. (P4)

I think many things like language fluency, culture and communication skill will affect a lot whether the company will hire me or not. Because a Graphics Design company requires me to have a very rapid speed to adapt, change and communicate. It is a very demanding environment. (P9)

Although they did not specify the relationship with their work experience, P2 and P10 described how their communication was impeded because of their relative English incompetence. P12's confidence and openness to communicate were hampered, whereas P10 realized her lack of vocabulary made it difficult to talk about specific topics:

If I think I can speak without an accent, I'd be more open and confident. So it affects a little bit of my communication. I can probably communicate more openly with people if I don't have an accent. (P2)

I mean just basic language I have no problem to communicate with those people. But if goes into more details, let say music, they have some special terms...those words are so complicated. (P10)

Tendency to bond with own ethnic group. Because of the differences in social life, daily lifestyle and language use, several participants indicated their tendency to bond with their own ethnic group at work. P11 explained why she chose to work in a Chinese community in her first job, "I find myself more comfortable to work with Chinese because of the language and the culture." P1 and P10 also mentioned their preference to bond with Chinese co-workers:

For example, in a western style company I'd feel happy if I saw any of my co-workers who'd speak Chinese. I'd like to talk to them and gossip with them. (P1)

Because I wasn't born here, I find I am closer to Chinese people. So, I am closer to my Chinese co-workers than others. (P10)

P7 made an observation regarding the growing Chinese population in her field:

As bad as it sound, I don't think it's too healthy for the population of Chinese to get too high in a department. I think that's when disparity could happen and make the other people feel segregated...Where the Asians just like to hang out with each other, there's no connection among everybody.

Because of the growing number of Chinese entering Actuarial Science and their tendency to exclusively bond with each other, P7 observed the occurrence of segregation in her field, which she thought was unfavorable to her department and company.

Data analysis revealed that the struggles the participants encountered at work due to their social style, daily lifestyle and language differences fall within four aspects, which included difficulties in socializing and developing relationships, barriers to advancement, sense of exclusion and difficulties in communication. A result of these struggles was the tendency for the participants to bond with their own ethnic group at work, which might lead to segregation in some highly Chinese-populated fields. It is noteworthy that these struggles were only mentioned by participants who were less *Canadian* or had spent fewer years in Canada. These difficulties were not mentioned by any of the three participants (P7, P8, P12) who had spent 16 or more years in Canada, nor by P13 who identified as more Canadian than Chinese.

Minority Status

When asked how the visible minority status had impacted their career development and decision-making, at least seven participants indicated its influence was trivial. However, further examination revealed that the impact of minority status was field-specific; the nature of the field and the prevalence of Chinese in it mediated the effect of minority status.

No Influence

Working in the Actuarial Science field, P3 and P7 asserted that their minority status did not influence their career development because “the whole definition of minority”, indicated by P7, was questionable. P3 maintained, “I think in Actuarial Science for some reason the Chinese do better than the Canadian people. So it didn’t give me trouble in my career.” The preponderance of Chinese in the field, coupled with their superior capability, minimized the effects of the minority status in this field. P12, who worked in a computer-related field, also asserted that his minority status did not influence his career development, and attributed this absence of influence to the knowledge-based nature of the field:

They don’t care where I come from or who I am. It’s pretty much what I know. If I’m talented, I can pretty much find a job and able to advance. They don’t look down on me basically because I’m of certain race or culture.

P9, a Graphics Designer working in a mainstream company, experienced something entirely opposite. Although he did not encounter any overt discrimination, the marketing agencies tended to take advantage of Chinese people:

They may hold a conception that Chinese people is a cheap labour. Even though we can produce the same quality as a Caucasian, but the price could be cut down a lot. But they also know that we don’t mind because we want the job. We in a Canadian Caucasian context don’t feel secure. We always want to please the clients. So the agency knows the secret and it will cut the price.

Because of this stereotype towards Chinese in the field, P9 was not only offered a lower salary in comparison to Caucasian designers despite their comparable capabilities, but also had to offer many free jobs to his clients to keep the business relationship. The unstable nature of marketing agencies offering work to companies, coupled with the minority status of Chinese within the field, hindered Chinese graphic designers to obtain equal compensation. These narratives suggested that the nature of the field and the prevalence of Chinese were key

determinants of the influence of the minority status.

Another emerging reason that most participants did not encounter any disadvantaged experience based on their minority status was that most people were accepting and open to minority:

In all my workplaces, I don't find I am being discriminated. I find people are very acceptable. I don't see any challenges or difficulties of being not accepted. (P2)

Compare to a lot places, Toronto or Canada do a much better job in assisting that. They at least identify with the minorities' existence. They know we're here and they're looking for ways to not discriminate any of the minorities. (P6)

Positive Impact

Two participants indicated some benefits of their minority status in their career development. P11 and P13 believed their minority status might have increased their chances to get interviews due to the Employment Equity Act in Canada:

They have issues or some kind of by-laws that they have to meet certain ratios of minorities in the company. So sometimes in my resume, cover letter or application, I would emphasize that I am a Chinese. Perhaps I'd get some benefits from that, such as having more chances for interviews. (P11)

I think my minority status helped me get a job. I would say that because there's an Equity Act. We're quite protected by the government so that we're included in the society. Sometimes when I go for an interview, I have a belief that I have a better chance of getting a job because I'm a Chinese. And because they have to hire someone with a diverse culture, they might hire me. (P13)

In fact, some companies made an effort to promote cultural diversity so that employees would feel more belonged. P8 described such experience:

It's a good thing that my company always try to put together things that would eliminate that problem. For example, like two weeks ago we have something called the Cultural Potluck Day, where everybody is supposed to bring a dish from their own culture. And it's really cool where everyone tries to wear their traditional clothing.

Identification with one's own culture was strongly encouraged in P8's company, thus making him feel benefited as a minority. P8 also stated that in his company culture diversity

induced a lot of conversation topics among his co-workers.

Negative Impact

Some participants mentioned the downside of their minority status. It is noteworthy that most of these narratives were not personal experience; they were observations or speculations of what might have happened because of their minority status.

One negative impact was their concern of people's doubts on their ability based on their visible minority status. P5, P8 and P11 shared this concern:

Sometimes I feel like being a minority within a bigger company could affect the chance to have equal advancement. For example, when I interview for a job and there are two candidates. Say I can equally match the other candidate and the other candidate is not a minority or a female. I think personally there is a chance that the position would go to the other candidate because that person is neither a female nor a minority. (P5)

Getting that first interview was especially stressful. They might think, "Oh you're a Chinese person, so would your communication skills verbal skills be a problem?" (P8)

But then another side of it is that the employers would have some doubts on my ability or competencies to fulfill that job description. (P11)

All of them concerned whether employers would question their abilities based on their Chinese ethnicity. P5 suspected that people in the majority would have a better chance to advance when everything else, including abilities, were considered equal.

Another phenomenon indicated by participants in the Actuarial Science field was occupational segregation, which referred to the over- or under-representation of members of an ethnic group across occupations. P12, working in a technology-related field, indicated that, "It so happens that most of my co-workers are also Chinese". P7 and P10 also mentioned that there were a higher proportion of Chinese in the field because of their better performance:

I think in Actuarial Science for some reason the Chinese do better than the Canadian people. (P3)

I have the impression that Chinese are better in math or the science field. That's why I am

seeing more and more Chinese going into Actuarial Science. (P10)

P7 pointed out that being good at math was a commonality for Asian. She called her friend's sibling "non-typical Asian" as she was not good at math. P7 reasoned the different education system in her home country primed them for better performance in math and science:

I guess the education system in Hong Kong just gives more emphasis to the mathematics and technical skills...I think it's just they pass so much more in early years that a lot of people coming from China or Hong Kong find the level of material presented to kids here in high school or primary school really easy because they have seen it before.

Occupational segregation was apparent from these participants' account, with a possible explanation that Chinese tended to excel in these areas. It was also indicated by the proportion of sample that was made up of participants from the math, science or technological fields, where deliberate effort was necessary to diversify the sample, as mentioned in the Chapter III.

Another observation pointed out by several participants was glass ceiling. They indicated how their company's senior positions were usually occupied by Caucasians:

When I look at my chain of commands, I realize that the executives and VPs aren't minorities at all. (P8)

If I talk about the upper management, I've noticed that there aren't a whole lot of visible minority at that level. I mean we're talking like senior management, CIO, CEO, President, VP that type of level. (P12)

Even in a field with considerable number of Asians, P7 and P10 noticed the following:

I haven't worked with a senior management who are of an Asian descent. (P7)

I don't understand why only one out of 10 senior people is Chinese. (P10)

Glass ceiling was evident across different disciplines, regardless of whether the field was dominated by Asians.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

This study explored the career development of 13 Chinese Canadian young adults living in Toronto, Ontario. The researcher was interested in the following: (1) the career experiences of Chinese Canadian young adults, (2) the factors influencing their career decision-making, and (3) the role of ethnicity, which encompasses Chinese values, ethnic identity and minority status, in their career choice and development. The major findings of the study, presented in greater details in Chapter IV, are listed as follow:

1. Chinese Canadian young adults encounter a combination of influential experiences in their career development, which include their education, previous work experience, advice from mentors, desperate circumstances, and coming to Canada.
2. Chinese Canadian young adults make their career decision considering an array of factors including their career interests, remuneration, market demand and Chinese values. Chinese values are communicated through parental influence and/or exposure to the Chinese culture. Out of these factors, career interests play a dominant role in determining these young adults' career choice.
3. Except the influence of Chinese values in career decision-making process, the role of ethnicity is primarily played out in the work experience of Chinese Canadian young adults. They identify with working hard and doing well, and, depending on circumstances, being reserved. The impact of ethnic identity is largely seen in the social interaction at the workplace, where Chinese Canadian young adults acknowledge their struggle to socialize and communicate, the barriers to advancement, the sense of

exclusion and the tendency to bond with their own ethnic group. The minority status of these young adults did not exert a significant impact in their work experience.

Some minor influences include glass ceiling, stereotypical doubt on their abilities, and the increased chance for obtaining job interviews due to the Employment Equity Act.

A detailed discussion of the findings and their implications are presented in three parts. The first section presents the implications of the findings from these Chinese Canadian young adults' career development experiences in light of the existing literature. The second part examines the current findings and their relation to major career theories. The third segment describes the implication of the career-decision making process of the Chinese Canadian young adults. The fourth section examines the implication of the role of ethnicity in their work experience. Lastly, implications for theory and application, limitations and contributions of the study, as well as suggestions for further research are discussed.

Influential Experiences in the Career Development of Chinese Canadian Young Adults

Interest as a Core of Career Experience

The findings of the study indicated that all participants reported their interests as the foremost factor in deciding their career. Hence, the key experiences in their career development revolved around their career interests. These interests could be developed in their childhood, and in light of them the participants selected relevant education in hope of pursuing careers in a related field. Based on their interests, some participants sought advice from mentors who could provide helpful suggestions to further their education and/or career. Then, through practical work experience, the participants confirmed or disconfirmed their interests and advanced their career path accordingly. These work experience might also offer career

direction, such as specialization, and provide further opportunities. Participants whose work experience fell short of their expectation considered other career interests; they valued working enjoyably as utmost important and would not remain in a field that has disconfirmed their interest. However, not all of the participants had the optimal opportunity to select their career; participants who faced desperate circumstances encountered barriers to choosing a job related to their field of interest. In summary, the participants' career development experiences could be perceived as a journey to actualize their career interests, and adjustments were made to optimize the match between their career interest and choice.

Utilitarian View of Education

When asked why they worked in their current field, most participants replied their education background as one of the reasons. Thus, they considered their career path since selecting their university major, and viewed their education as a means to their career. This utilitarian view of education is partially consistent with current literature. Chinese Canadians and Asian Americans parents viewed education as a means to upward mobility and that university education, especially in the sciences, would lead to a prestigious occupational choice that warrant financial and social achievement (Leong & Serafica, 1995; Li, 2004; Liu, 1998; Sue & Okazaki, 1990; Young et al., 2003). Current findings regarding Chinese Canadian young adults support the conventional Asian perception of education as a means rather than an end, but the extent to which they considered their education as a means to prestige and financial achievement, as suggested by the literature, was uncertain.

Impact of Coming to Canada

Unlike the typical consequence of migrating to a foreign country as a limitation to career opportunities (Leong & Brown, 1995), current findings suggest that coming to Canada could

render positive impacts on the participants' career development. To some participants, coming to Canada has weakened their qualifications, but to others this experience has strengthened their qualifications, increased career opportunities, encouraged their freedom of career choice and enhanced the respect they received and the working condition they were subject to. Coming to Canada did not merely induce negative consequence on the participants' career experience, but positive impacts as well.

Factors Influencing the Career Decision-Making of Chinese Canadian Young Adults

Career Interests and its Relation to Other Factors

The findings of the study showed that the participants considered an array of factors in making their career choice, with the chief one being their career interests. Other factors included remuneration, market demand and Chinese values. The importance of career interest is indicated by its prevalence over the other factors and its role in driving the decision of career-related pursuits. Not only did the participants select their education specialization based on their interests, but they also confirm or disconfirm their interests through their work experiences. More, all participants indicated their preference to pursue a career related to their education, which was based on their interests, and whether the job nature was interesting was also considered as the primary factor to select a job.

In relation to other factors, career interest plays an imperative role. When participants encountered hindrance or objection to their career choice, their career interests prevailed and motivated participants to further their pursuit. For example, when faced with parental objection, P5 and P8 persisted with their choice of interest. Interests were also rated as more important than other factors such as income. Several participants, such as P1, P5, P11 and P13,

indicated that not that money was unimportant, but they preferred to do something of interest rather than making a lot of money. Many participants indicated that as long as their compensation was reasonable they did not put much emphasis on it in selecting a career. Having an interest in mind, other factors, such as market demand and remuneration, played a secondary role to facilitate their career choice. For example, P1 and P7 indicated that the growing market of their field of interest reinforced their decision to enter the field. P1, P5 and P8 mentioned that they value whether they liked their job and the experience they could gain more than the money they could make from it.

Career Decision-making Style

Current findings indicated that the Chinese Canadian participants held a career decision-making style ranging from interdependent to independent. Whereas an independent style characterizes an autonomous choice free from others' influence, an interdependent style is considered as taking into account others' advice while possessing the ownership to make a final choice. This significance of interdependence in career decision-making resonated with Hardin et al.'s (2002) finding. Some participants, such as P2, P7, P12 and P13, maintained that they made their career decision independently and their parents did not interfere with the process. Although claiming that they made a personal career choice, it was evident that the remaining participants were influenced to an extent by their parents in their career decision-making. The ownership of making a career choice was prevalent in all participants' accounts; the distinguishing aspect between an independent and interdependent decision-making style lies in whether the participants considered, or sought for, other people's advice.

Chinese Values

Findings indicated that Chinese values, another influential factor in the participants' career

decision-making, were conveyed through parental influence and/or exposure to the Chinese culture. Participants whose parents did not endorse typical Chinese values or lacked contact with Chinese culture exhibited no consideration of Chinese values in their career decision-making. The significance of family in Chinese values is compounded; while it is the means of conveying Chinese values, the high regard for family and respect for parents, as elements of filial piety, are also core Chinese values. One finding was that when participants talked about Chinese values that influenced their career development, all of them, except for P7, referred to what their parents had taught them. In other words, the Chinese values that were essential to career decision-making were largely communicated by Chinese families.

In addition to respect for family and parental influence, other Chinese values identified in the findings included need for recognition, maintaining stability and striving for success. With the exception of maintaining stability, all other values correspond to findings from earlier studies (Fong, 1973; Lin 2003; Gordon, 2000; Kim, Atkinson, & Yang, 1999; Leong & Chou, 1994; Leong & Gim-Chung, 1995; Leong & Serafica, 1993; Tang, 2002; Tang, Fouad & Smith, 1999).

Parental influence, consistent with many previous studies (Gordon, 2000; Leong & Chou, 1994; Leong & Gim-Chung, 1995; Leong & Serafica, 1993; Tang, 2002; Tang et al., 1999), is an influential factor in the participants' career decision-making. Findings from the current study provided a more in-depth description of the content and the nature of parental influence, as well as the participants' response. As the content of parental influence coincides with Chinese values, they are discussed jointly.

The need for recognition as a key Chinese value is consistent with findings from previous studies (Kim, Atkinson, & Yang, 1999; Lam 2005; Lin, 2003; Stevenson & Lee, 1996).

Present findings indicated that Chinese families tended to perceive career and academic achievement as representations of family achievement and recognition and that parents might interfere with their children's career choice, especially the salary and job type, to protect their family recognition. Family recognition is attained through academic and career achievement, which introduces another key Chinese value identified in the present findings – striving for success. Although the need for recognition and striving for success were viewed as one value in the literature review - family recognition through achievement, data analysis uncovered that success in Chinese culture signified a specific characterization. Hence, the researcher separated these two values to clarify their descriptions.

Success as a key Chinese value, indicated by current findings, resonates with results from previous studies, which delineate the expectation of Chinese to achieve success academically, occupationally and financially to bring honor to their parents and family (Gordon, 2000; Kim, 1995; Kim et al., 1999; Lin, 2003). Participants in this study, such as P6 and P3, indicated a similar definition of success, which was to attain a professional job and considerable income. The emphasis on financial success also concurred with existing literature (Young et al., 2003; Li, 2004). Again, the job type and its income level are aspects that parents may interfere with so that they would meet their expectations.

Chinese parents hold a specific career expectation for their children's career, which is to obtain a professional job, a finding that resonated with the literature (Gordon, 2000; Leong & Serafica, 1995; Li, 2004; Tang et al., 1999; Young et al., 2003). Participants in this study also specified the features of professional jobs, which are of high, stable demand and a technical nature, require specialized training and offer substantial income. It is noteworthy that participants unanimously held a clear notion of what professional jobs entail, which implies the

strong emphasis the Chinese culture puts on it.

Maintaining stability, although unmentioned in the literature review as a Chinese value, resonated with others studies illuminating Chinese parents' expectation for their children in choosing their career (Gordon, 2000; Li, 2004; Young et al., 2003). One justification is that keeping stability can be understood as a career-specific Chinese value, while the values reviewed in Chapter II focused on human relationships. Chinese tend to seek for stability in their career, meaning safety, comfort and predictability, which translated to valuing job security and steady income, thus driving them to prefer professional jobs. Keeping stability could also be perceived as a way of how Chinese manage their jobs. Chinese may prefer remaining in the same position than looking for risk-taking, variable opportunities.

Gordon's (2000) study provided another illustration of the interrelation between recognition, success and stability. Her study aimed at understanding the reasons why so few Asian Americans were entering the teaching field. The primary reason she found was "parental attitudes toward the teaching profession" (pg. 184). Asian parents viewed high status as interchangeable with high income, and hence considered teaching as a lower status profession because of the lower income in comparison to medicine, law and business. The majority of participants in her study mentioned the parental pressure to enter job fields that are of high status and income to enhance the recognition of the family, and only such jobs would be regarded as stable. Gordon's (2000) findings elucidated the intertwined connection between prestige, professional jobs and stability, which was consistent with the current findings.

Response to Chinese Values

Like the present study, previous studies have examined how Chinese or Asian children responded to their parents' pressure or influence in their career decision-making. For instance,

several studies elucidated how the children felt pressured to correspond to their parents' career expectation (Gordon, 2000; Li, 2004; Liu, 1998; Young et al., 2003), and how some have adopted their parents' values and carried them out in their education and career pursuit (Li, 2004; Liu, 1998). One difference between these results and the current findings is that although participants in this study did feel pressured from their parents in making their career choice, none of them indicated that they complied with their parents' preference in selecting their career. Rather, they claimed that they made their career choice primarily based on their interest, and some considered or adopted their parents' values. Even for the participants (P5 and P9) who have faced the most intense parental pressure, they still made their own choice.

Young et al. (2003) discussed how the notion of internalization of parental demands is inadequate in representing the career decision-making process of the parent-children dyads in his study. Findings from the present finding supported his argument. Internalization was one of the three ways the participants responded to the impact of Chinese values, or parental influence. Participants who internalized their parents' ideals in making their career choice were free from any overt parental influence; they would evaluate their choice of interests based on some Chinese values, such as whether it would be stable, professional and practical. However, they acknowledged such impact was subtle. For the ones who faced overt objection from their parents, they opposed their parents' comments and went with their interests. Lastly, several participants felt the need to balance their choice with their parents' ideals or family situation, with or without being pressured by their family. As a result, they limited their career to certain categories, such as ones with professional status, to make a balanced decision.

Although these participants who made a balanced choice did internalize to some degree the Chinese values, they differed from participants who *internalized* in how they made their choice.

Whereas participants who *internalized* the Chinese values found those values reasonable and helpful, such as pursuing a technical field would render job security, participants who made a balanced choice not only consider them for their own good, but also for satisfying their family's expectation. The consideration of Chinese values to meet with the family's concern or situation distinguishes making a balanced choice from internalization, although making a balanced choice would also require some internalization. Thus, this finding, coupled with participants who entirely disregarded their parent's opinions, supported Young et al.'s (2003) comment that internalization may not fully portray the career decision-making process in Chinese families.

Existing literature agreeably indicate that parental influence played a dominant role in Asian children's career choice: Asian American parents consider it their right to direct children's career decisions (Leong & Gim-Chung, 1995) and that higher parental influence often predict more science- and technology-related occupations (Tang et al., 1999), which may explain the overrepresentation of Asian American in these fields (Leong & Gupta, 2007) and the lack of relation between their career interests and choice (Tang et al., 1999). The salience of parental influence is inevitably strong from these findings, but they lack an in-depth description of its nature and intensity. Current findings may enhance such understanding. Unlike the illustration offered by existing literature, the current study revealed that the nature of parental influence is not always strong and overt; several participants indicated their family's openness and respect for their career decisions. Moreover, participants pointed out how their parents offered their opinions or concerns, but ultimately left them with the final decision. Only when the participants were considering fields that opposed the aforementioned Chinese values would their parents directly interfere, and their reasoning, which some participants regarded as true,

was often based on concerns about their children's living and well-being. Thus, the current study showed that parental influence is not as definite, restrictive and stringent as how the existing literature may have portrayed. Whether because of family recognition, the need for success or their children's well-being, Chinese Canadian parents, at their core, desire their children to pursue a career path that would minimize their worries for sustaining a living.

The Role of Ethnicity in the Work Experience of Chinese Canadian Young Adults

The current study attempted to answer one question: what is the role of ethnicity in the career development of Chinese Canadian young adults? Findings uncovered that with the exception of Chinese values, the major impact of ethnicity was found in the participants' work experience. This section discusses the roles of Chinese values, ethnic identity and minority status in the work experience of Chinese Canadian young adults

Chinese Cultural Values

Diligence and excellence are values that Chinese Canadian young adults emphasize. Although current literature share this notion with specific regard to Chinese and Asian parents' expectations for their children (Young et al., 2003; Liu, 1998; Li, 2004; Sue & Okazaki, 1990), Liu (1998) described Chinese children adopting these expectations and forming their own internal drive. Consistent with Liu's (1998) finding, the participants internalized diligence and excellence and expected themselves to work hard and do well in their jobs, and some recognized this as their advantage to their non-Asian counterparts.

While diligence and excellence are Chinese values most participants related to, being reserved is one that not all participants identified with. The participants indicated that Chinese tend to be less expressive, more tolerating and less open with their opinions. While some

learned this value since their childhood, others regarded it as a disadvantage in their workplace and instead valued openness, a distinguish aspect of the Canadian culture. Examining this Chinese value illustrated how participants considered its usefulness in light of the mainstream culture and adjusted their identification accordingly.

Ethnic Identity

Of the 13 participants, 12 included Chinese as part of their ethnic identity. While four identified as ethnic *Chinese*, eight included *Canadian* as part of their identification. The participants used a range of factors to justify their ethnic identification, which provided partial support of the multi-faceted nature of ethnic identity discovered by Chia (2002). The dimensions of ethnic identity in Chia's (2002) study included affective (e.g., sense of affirmation and belonging to the Chinese group), cognitive (e.g., Chinese cultural values), behavioral aspects (e.g., Chinese behavioral orientations and practices), and ethnic evaluation (e.g., the evaluation of one's ethnic group, distinct from one's identification with it). With the exception of ethnic evaluation, current findings provided evidence of using the affective, cognitive, and behavioral constructs as part of ethnic identification: *social group* could be viewed similarly as the affective construct; *mindset* and *values* as the cognitive component, and *traditions* and *lifestyle* as the behavior construct.

Tsang et al. (2003) examined the concept of ethnic identity in Satellite Children and discovered multiple ways of ethnic identity negotiation, ranging from an essentialist approach to differentiation and confusion, which is consistent with current findings. Participants using their place of birth and physical appearance could be perceived as using an essentialist approach to negotiate their ethnic identity, whereas ones who viewed their identity as a changeable concept contingent on their immigration status used their citizenship as part of their ethnic

identification. Some participants also identified their confusion with their identity, which was represented by the *in-the-middle breed*, a phenomenon that was also shared in Tsang et al.'s (2003) study. Participants in this category acknowledged their struggles to identify with either the ethnic Chinese or Canadian group. Overall, current findings of the Chinese Canadian young adult's ethnic identity were consistent with existing literature.

Effort was made to classify the participants' ethnic identity according to Leong and Chou's (1994) model of ethnic identity, but it was met with difficulty (Table 1). Possible reasons were the participants' unfamiliarity with the Canadian culture and their dissociation between work and other life aspects in negotiating their ethnic identity. When asked whether they thought it was important to adapt to the Canadian culture, several participants admitted their uncertainty of what the Canadian culture entailed, partly because of the multiculturalism. The mix within the Canadian society made it difficult to differentiate what the *Canadian culture* was, thus causing participants struggle to evaluate how acculturated they were. Moreover, some participants acknowledged their segregation of work from other aspects of life, in which they identified with *Canadian* while they were at work and *Chinese* in all other aspects. This caused difficulty in classifying their ethnic identity according to Leong and Chou's (1994) model as the participants' ethnic identity was context-specific. These findings suggested the inaptness of using Leong and Chou's (1994) model to describe the ethnic identity of Chinese Canadian young adults.

Another difficulty in applying Leong and Chou's (1994) model was its focus on process. Although the authors claimed their model as one that describes the outcome of the acculturation process, asking the two questions (Is it considered to be of value to maintain one's identity and characteristics? Is it considered to be of value to maintain relationships with larger society?) would elicit the participants' current wish to maintain their ethnic culture and/or interaction with

the dominant culture rather than their subjective identification with each culture. For example, while P7 identified herself as a Chinese Canadian emphasizing *Canadian*, she saw minimal importance in asserting her Chinese identity or adapting to the Canadian culture because she found it comfortable to stay *in the middle*. Thus, based on the two questions, she would be considered as a Marginalist (one who does not value maintaining their own culture or interactions with the dominant culture), which would fail to recognize her evident sense of belonging to the Canadian culture. P11 illustrated another example. Using Leong and Chou's (1994) model would classify her as an Integrationist, as she valued acculturating to the dominant culture, but in fact she found it uncomfortable to work in the mainstream society or socialize with her Canadian colleagues, which would signify a Separationist approach. Thus, although Leong and Chou's (1994) model provided a classification based on the participants' current wish to maintain their own culture and to adapt to the dominant culture, it did not accurately categorize their present level of acculturation or subjective identification with each culture, which was what ethnic identity intended to denote in the present study. Hence, to identify how acculturated the participants were, their subjective ethnic identity (e.g., Chinese, Chinese Canadian) were considered.

Another reason to explain the inappropriate use of Leong and Chou's (1994) model was the lack of incentive to acculturate to Canada in comparison to the United States. Whereas Canada has an explicit constitutional commitment to multiculturalism delineating it should assist and encourage the integration, but not assimilation, of all immigrants, the United States lacks such policy and is often referred to as a "melting pot" where assimilation is promoted. In a country where diversity is encouraged and at times endeared, as P8 suggested minority identification as a way to gain significance and open dialogue, the incentive to integrate, let alone assimilate, to

the dominant culture is lacking in Canada. Thus, Leong and Chou's (1994) propositions regarding ethnic identity and vocational behavior may be unsuitable to describe Chinese Canadians' career development.

Leong and Chou's (1994) hypotheses of ethnic identity and vocational behavior largely focused on occupational choice. They proposed how ethnic identity, the outcome of acculturation, might influence one's career choice, as manifested in susceptibility to occupational segregation and differences in work attitudes, career maturity and occupational aspirations. However, current findings suggested that the most significant role of ethnic identity was observed in the participants' work experience, but not in their career decision-making. For example, Leong and Chou (1994) proposed that more acculturated persons would view their job as more of a virtue, thus choosing occupations based on what they enjoy, whereas less acculturated persons would view their career more as a means to an end, such as whether it could provide financial security. Current findings revealed that all participants considered their interests of paramount importance in selecting their career, which implied that there was no apparent difference in their work attitude based on their ethnic identity. Another noteworthy observation was that most participants indicated the practical value of their career, a view similar to the one held by less acculturated persons suggested by Leong and Chou (1994). Thus, regardless of their ethnic identity, Chinese Canadian young adults tend to view their career as a combination of their interests and practical value, with more emphasis on what they enjoy doing.

One finding in the current study, though unmentioned in the existing literature, was the important role of ethnic identity in the participants' work experience. Although the participants possessed comparable capability as their White counterparts, they might feel less

adequate in their social skills and ability to develop relationship. Some participants mentioned the potential barriers to advancement, feeling a sense of exclusion and the difficulty in communication. These struggles resulted from the differences in their daily lifestyle, social life and language in comparison to their non-Asian co-workers, which were essential factors that determined their ethnic identity. Although some accounts were based on personal feeling rather than actual experience, the participants' intuition appeared similar to the in-group bias suggested by Leong (2001). Leong (2001) found that lower acculturated Asian Americans tended to receive lower performance ratings than higher acculturated Asian Americans and suggested in-group bias as an explanation. Because of the tendency for people to like and be attracted to people who are similar to them in attitudes, beliefs and values, Leong (2001) surmised that European American supervisors are more likely to like and be attracted to higher acculturated Asian Americans, which may be manifested through their attracting, selecting and retaining certain individuals in the organization. This explanation is similar to the participants' speculation of how their lower acculturation may jeopardize their advancement opportunity as compared to their more acculturated counterparts, when all else are considered equal.

Current findings suggested the significant impact of ethnic identity in the work experience of these participants, rather than the influence on their career decision-making as suggested by the existing literature. It also suggested the inaptness to apply the Leong and Chou's (1994) model to describe the ethnic identity of Chinese Canadian young adults, as their model elicit one's current wish to maintain one's own culture and/or to adapt to the dominant culture rather than one's subjective sense of belonging, which was the intended definition of ethnic identity in the current study.

Minority Status

Occupational segregation was apparent in the present study as indicated by the participants' experience as well as the sample collected by the researcher. The researcher had to purposely recruit people from a non-technical field to participate in the study to diversify the sample, which suggested many Chinese Canadians selected to work in technical fields where people-contact was less required. The explanation for occupational segregation is multi-faceted; while the literature reasoned lower acculturation (Leong & Chou, 1994) and minimal verbal proficiency in these fields (Sue, 1973) as possible causes, current findings suggested Chinese's superior performance in these fields, in accordance to the typical perception of 'high achievers' and 'model minorities' (Lee, 1996; Townsend & Fu, 1998), drove them to select these disciplines. Although occupational segregation is evident in the current study, its cause is compound and controversial.

Like Pon's (2005) findings, most participants in the study did not recognize any racial discrimination at their workplace. Two of them even specified their better chances of getting job interviews because of the Employment Equity Act. Participants reasoned that most people they have worked with were open to and respectful of minorities. Findings also pointed out the field-specific nature of racism at the workplace. Discrimination is virtually non-existent in knowledge-based fields, such as math-, science- and technology-related disciplines, as people are valued based on their abilities and knowledge. However, in fields where interaction and business negotiation are essential, such as P9's graphics design industry, discrimination may occur based on the distinguished qualities of Chinese as they are perceived to be more tolerant of inequitable business offers. Consistent with existing literature (Cheng, 1997; Pendakur & Pendakur, 2007; Leong & Chou, 1994), current findings provided evidence for glass ceiling

effect in the Canadian workplace. Several participants indicated that even in fields with a high prevalence of Chinese or Asians, there are proportionately less individuals of Chinese origin holding senior or management positions. In sum, current findings suggested a minimal effect of minority status in the Canadian workplace, which is dependent on the nature of the field. However, glass ceiling is evident in fields even with a high proportion of Chinese people.

Implications for Theory and Practice in Career Counselling

Theoretical Implications

The career development process of the participants are considered in light of the theoretical perspectives provided in Chapter II, which include Holland's Theory of Types, Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT), Gottfredson's Theory of Circumscription and Compromise and Career Choice, and Super's Life-Span Theory.

Several theories postulated the selection of career based on interests. In particular, Holland's (1985) theory predicts that people in different occupations should evidence different patterns of interests and that career interests should predict career choice. SCCT resonated similarly, highlighting the importance of career interests in driving career choices and implementations of them. Although validation studies in Asian American and South Asian American students refute such postulation (Tang et al., 1999; Castelino, 2004), in contrary the present study provided support that Chinese Canadian young adults decided their careers based on their interests. Examining the findings retrospectively, these participants' career choice largely reflected their interests, despite encountering some contextual influences that might have diverted their choice. Consequently, whereas the use of these career theories in explaining the career development of Asian American is questionable, the current study provided some support

of the validity of Holland's (1985) theory and SCCT.

In his theory, Holland (1985) emphasized the search for a person-environment fit in making vocational choices. However, it is criticized for failing to explain the role of culture in creating and sustaining environments (Leong & Serafica, 1995). Present findings echoed this criticism. Participants in the current study chose their career primarily based on their interests, at the same time considering Chinese values that are channeled through family influence and exposure to general culture. It is evident from current findings, as well as many others (Bright, Duefield & Stone, 1998; Li, 2004; Leong & Gupta, 2007; Leung et al., 1994; Tang et al., 1999), that Chinese families tend to encourage their children to pursue professional, technical and science-related disciplines and discourage them from engaging in social and arts-related fields. Thus, Chinese culture may provide more support towards sustaining Investigative, Conventional and Enterprising environments but less towards Artistic and Social ones. Furthering this critique, Holland's (1985) theory does not address the influence of contextual factors in making a career choice. Although all participants did end up working in a field relevant to their interest and educational pursuit, some participants (P6, P8) were under desperate circumstances that they would accept any job offers at the time. Therefore, career choice under these circumstances may not reflect congruence in the person-environment match, despite the person's desire and motivation to secure a fit. Holland's (1985) theory provides some value in predicting career choice by interests in these Chinese Canadian young adults, but lacks explanation in the role of culture and contextual factors in creating and sustaining the work environments.

SCCT seems to provide a thorough explanation of the findings of the study. It emphasizes vocational outcomes as products of the dynamic interaction between persons and their

environments (Lent et al., 2002), and that the development of career preferences and skills and the selections of an occupation are influenced by social cognitive functioning (Lent et al, 1994). Together, vocational interests, choice and performance make up of the SCCT model (Lent et al., 2002). The Interest Model postulates career interests are formed by individuals' self-efficacy and their perception of producing valued outcomes through their performance. Essentially, this model describes the connection between strength and interests that was exemplified in several participants' experience (P3, P7, P9 and P10). For example, P7's strength and superior performance in Mathematics led her to pursue Actuarial Science. P10's ability in drawing graphic arts and his outstanding accomplishment endorsed by others motivated him to go for Graphics Design. These participants' accounts were coherent with the Interest Model of the SCCT model.

The Choice Model postulates that interests are related to career choice people make and the actions they take to implement their choices (Lent et al., 2002). This proposition was evident in the participants' educational pursuit to facilitate their career endeavor. Most participants indicated their related educational background as one of the reasons they chose their current career. Their interests drove them to take action, which was their education, to implement their career choice. Another action the participants took to implement their choice was to find occupation related to their education and career interests. The Choice Model proposes that the performance outcomes from these actions would revise or crystallize self-efficacy and outcome expectations, and help solidify or redirect one's choice behavior (Lent et al., 2002). For instance, whereas the coop experiences in Actuarial Science confirmed P7's career interests, the experience working in business field disconfirmed P10's interests and abilities, and redirected her career path to Actuarial Science. P2's accounting work experience also made her realized

that it did not meet her expectations, thus motivating her to change career. In addition, the Choice Model holds that choices are also affected by contextual influences and person variables, which also explained some participants' (P4, P6 and P8) career choice under desperate circumstances. In conclusion, present findings were consistent with the explanation of SCCT in career interests and choice.

Career as an expression or implementation of self-concept is a notion endorsed by several career theorists, such as Gottfredson and Super. This notion can be summarized as follow: Career choice is expression of one's view of oneself, which encompasses his or her physical makeup, abilities, personality, gender, values, social status, motivation, knowledge and evaluation of other people's reactions to him or her (Gottfredson, 2002; Sharf, 2002; Super, 1990). This notion harmonizes with some aspects of the participants' career values, such as P1's perception of personal achievement, P2's application of knowledge, P4's sense of recognition and status, P6's alignment with core values, P9's identity and P10's self-esteem. However, this definition of career is an inadequate description of the participants' personal career meaning as it fails to include a practical value of career - a means to provide living - that was mentioned by nine participants. Though the income-earning aspect of career was not of paramount significance, the findings suggested that Chinese Canadian young adults not only considered their career as an implementation of their self-concept, but also as a practical means to sustain their living.

The current study described the career decision-making process of Chinese Canadians, the factors they considered and the relationship amongst them. The emphasis on career interests was highlighted, and its relation to other factors such as remuneration and parental influence were delineated. Present findings supported the significant role of parental influence, which

was subordinate to interests in Chinese Canadians' career decision-making, and provided an in-depth understanding of its nature and extent.

Practical Implications

As career interest is a major factor determining Chinese Canadians' career choice, counselors are encouraged to help clients of this population to assess and identify their interests. As Chinese Canadians also value the practical value of career, counselors should also help them identify careers that can best satisfy their interests as well as their expectations of financial rewards. Counsellors should also assess the ethnic identity of the clients of this population, with specific attention on whether their ethnic identity is consistent across various aspects. Such knowledge would help counselors determine the impact of acculturation and provide support and guidance accordingly, such as in socializing and developing relationship with co-workers of dominant culture for less acculturated persons facing struggles in these aspects, developing English conversation skills and understanding of the dominant culture. Counsellors should also be aware of the role of family in their clients' career decision-making, and assess its importance against their career interests. Counsellors should not assume that the role of family is dominant and common to all clients of Chinese background, and they should gain an in-depth knowledge of the family culture of the client as the family culture may dominate the effect of Chinese culture in a client's career decision-making.

Strengths and Limitations

This study provides significant contribution to the literature of the career development of Chinese Canadians. Despite this population is the largest visible minority in Canada and it continues to grow, research on their career development is limited. This study can lay the

groundwork for further research on Chinese Canadians.

This study is one of its firsts on the career development of Chinese Canadians. Using a qualitative approach, it produces rich data on how some young adults pursue their careers, negotiate between family expectations and their interests, and develop their career as a visible minority conciliating the differences in ethnic identity, cultural values and minority status. One significant discovery is the prominence of career interests as a deciding factor in their career decision-making process. This is inconsistent with existing literature, which has portrayed them as conforming to parental authority, family expectations and cultural norm. Another valuable finding is the nature of parental influence, which varies in its mode and intensity depending on the decisions these young adults made. This provides a comprehensive understanding of parental influence, which contradicts the conventional description as authoritative, delimiting and discouraging.

Another important discovery is the phenomena unique to Chinese Canadians regarding their ethnic identity, which include the lack of incentive to acculturate, the dissociation between work and other aspects of life regarding ethnic identity and the unique “in-the-middle breed” that suggests the considerable number of population sharing the same background. Possibly due to the differences in its atmosphere in encouraging cultural diversity, the salience of the level of acculturation in one’s career development in Canada could be very different than in the United States. Such finding not only validate the importance of conducting this research in Canada the, but also necessitate further research in this area to delineate a clear picture of ethnic identity and its impact on career development.

As most research will do, the limitations of the current study should be noted. One weakness of this research is the use of qualitative research methods. In this study, the

researcher is the only person who interviews, transcribes, codes, analyzes and reports the data, which rely heavily on her understanding and interpretation. Thus, these processes could be influenced by her personal assumption and biases. One way the researcher attempted to compensate this limitation was to ensure she understood the participant correctly during the interview, and clarified immediately when uncertainties arose. Also, she used quotes extensively in the report of results to show the transparency of her interpretations. The researcher also acknowledged her personal assumptions and biases in Chapter III, a process that was ongoing throughout the study. She also documented clearly changes she made in the interviews and justified accordingly. These efforts hopefully minimized the weaknesses of using a qualitative approach.

Another limitation of the current study is the use of English to conduct interview, which may limit participants' articulation and expression. Also, English proficiency can be an indicator of the acculturation level of participants, and conducting interviews in English may produce a biased sample towards participants with a higher level of acculturation. In spite of this, the researcher decided to use English as the interview language because of her concern of the loss of true meaning in the process of translation. Also, she included a sample diversified in years of residence in Canada in hope of diminishing this limitation.

The third weakness of this study is its sampling. Voluntary participation may bias the sample towards a group that is more open and willing to share their experience. Also, because of the small sample size with the focus on first generation Chinese Canadian young adults who have received education in Canada and resided in a large metropolitan city of Canada, the generalizability of the study is limited. The researcher compensated this weakness by recruiting participants with diversified demographics, such as country of origin, years of

residence in Canada and career fields. In spite of this, this study provided valuable insights to the career development of a cohort of Chinese Canadians.

Suggestions for Future Research

It is the researcher's hope that this study will provide a foundation to future studies regarding Chinese Canadians' career development. It will be worthwhile to replicate this study with other groups of Chinese Canadian, such as second-generation adults, recent immigrants and individuals who have not obtained any post-secondary education. The career opportunity, the role of ethnicity and the saliency of family would probably be different. Replicating this study with different Chinese Canadian groups can test the theoretical ideas generated in this study, which will help expand the understanding of Chinese Canadians' career development and decision-making.

Another suggestion is to further research in the SCCT and its validity and reliability to explain the career development of Chinese Canadians. As the current study provided support in its applicability to this population, using this theory as a foundation may offer a concrete theoretical framework for this phenomenon of interest. Also, as Canada has a multicultural atmosphere different to that of the United States, further research regarding the ethnic identity of ethnic minorities in relation to their career development will be helpful in understanding its impact and advance the development of theoretical model pertinent to this culture.

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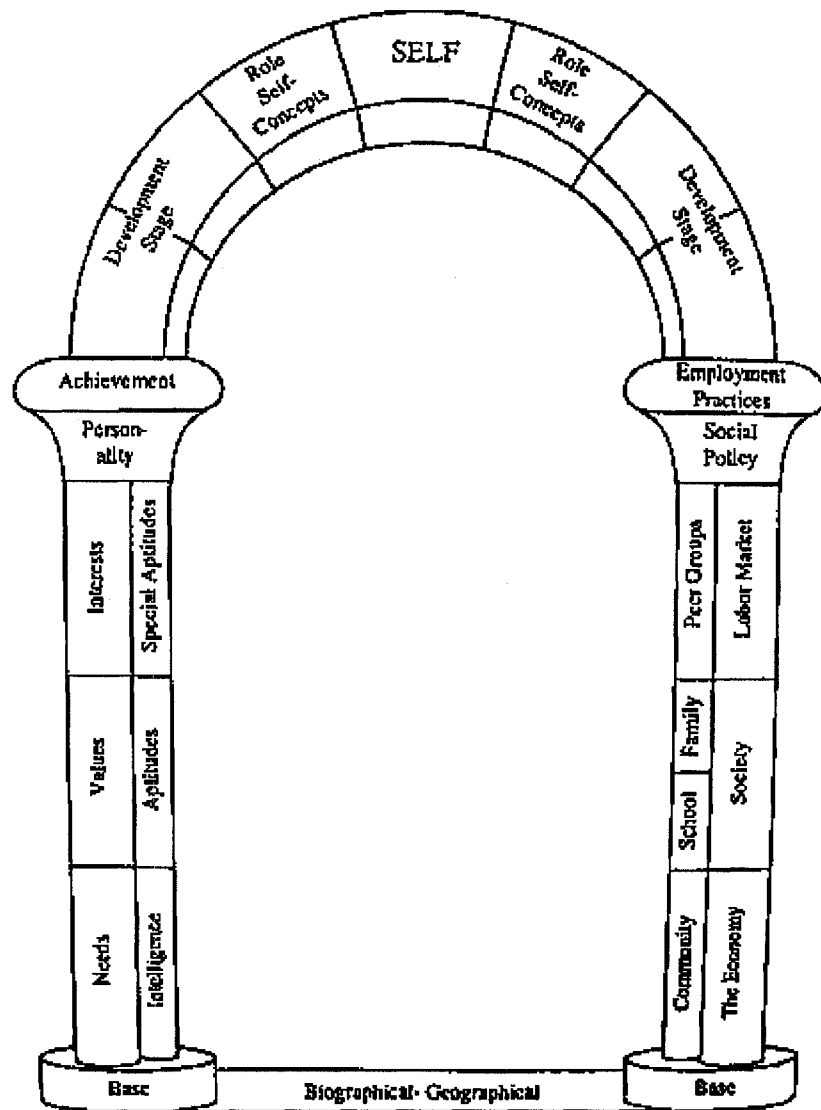
Table 1– Summary of Participants' Background

Background	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8	P9	P10	P11	P12	P13
Career Field	Computer	Information Science	Actuarial Science	Engineering	Engineering	Engineering	Actuarial Science	Computer	Design	Actuarial Science	Education	Computer	Psychology
Job Title	Web Developer	Information Research Specialist	Actuarial Analyst	Project Engineer	System Engineer	Energy Consultant	Actuarial Analyst	IT Analyst	Graphics Designer	Actuarial Associate	Supply Teacher	Systems Design Analyst	Applied Behaviorist
Educational Background	B.S in Computer Science	M.S. in Information Science	B.Math in Actuarial Science	B.S. in Mechanical Engineering	B.S. in Electrical Engineering	B.S. in Mechanical Engineering	B.Math in Actuarial Science	B.S. in Computer Science	B.A. in Graphics Design	B.Math in Actuarial Science	B.Ed. in Teaching	B.Math in Computer Science	B.A. in Psychology
Years of Experience	6 months	8 months	1	1.5	2	1	3	1	5	2	6 months	3	3
Age	27	28	27	26	28	24	27	27	31	26	26	26	28
Gender	M	F	F	M	F	M	F	M	M	F	F	M	F
Country of Origin	Hong Kong	China	Hong Kong	Hong Kong	Vietnam	Hong Kong	Hong Kong	Hong Kong	Hong Kong	China	Hong Kong	Malaysia	Hong Kong
Legal Status	Citizen	Citizen	Citizen	Citizen	Citizen	Work Visa	Citizen	Citizen	Citizen	Citizen	Work Visa	Citizen	Citizen
Years of Residence	13	14	13	12	14	7	17	18	14	9	6	16	12
Ethnic Identity ²	Chinese	Canadian Chinese	Chinese	Chinese Canadian	Chinese Canadian	Chinese	Chinese Canadian	Chinese Canadian	Chinese Canadian	Chinese	Global	Chinese Canadian	Chinese Canadian
Ethnic Identity (Work) ³	Integration	Integration	Integration	Integration	Integration	Assimilation	Integration	Integration	Assimilation	Separation	Integration	Integration	Integration
Ethnic Identity (Other) ³	Separation	Integration	Marginal	Integration	Integration	Marginal	Marginal	Integration	Separation	Separation	Integration	Integration	Assimilation

² The bold word denotes the stronger emphasis of ethnic identity.

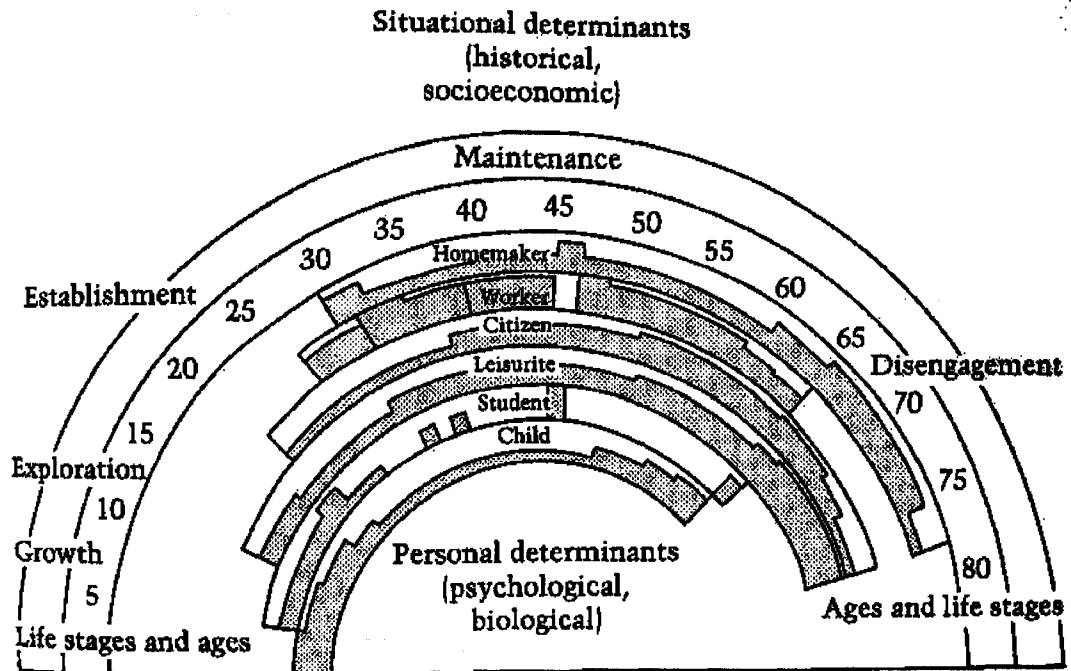
³ Using Leong & Chou's (1994) Model of Ethnic Identity.

Figure 1. A Segmented Model of Career Development



Source: "A life-span, life-space approach to career development," by D. E. Super. In D. Brown, L. Brooks, & Associates (Eds.), *Career choice and development* (2nd ed., pp. 200).

Figure 2. The Life-Career Rainbow: Six Life Roles in Schematic life Space.



Source: "A life-span, life-space approach to career development," by D. E. Super. In D. Brown, L. Brooks, & Associates (Eds.), *Career choice and development* (2nd ed., pp. 212).

Appendix A: Recruitment Email Script

My name is Wendy Lee, and I am a Master's candidate at OISE/UT. I am currently doing a research about Chinese Canadians and their career development. I have chosen this topic because as a Chinese Canadian and a prospective counsellor myself, I believe it is important to understand how our Chinese background might have influenced how we decide our career in a Canadian culture. I hope this research can contribute to developing effective means to assist Chinese Canadians in acquiring careers that are purposeful to them. If you find this topic interesting, and answer 'Yes' to all of the following questions, I sincerely invite you to participate in my study.

Are you...

- A Chinese born outside of Canada?
- Working full-time for at least 1 year but less than 5 years?
- A graduate of a Canadian post-secondary institution (e.g. college, university)?

The interview will take one to two hours of your time, and it will be kept confidential. You will be asked to sign an informed consent agreement prior to the interview, and you will also have the option to decline any questions if you prefer not to respond. You may also withdraw from the study at any time. Upon completion of the interview, you will receive \$10 as compensation.

If you are interested to participate, or have any further questions, please contact me at wendylee@oise.utoronto.ca or 416 275 4866. If you do decide to participate, I will send you the informed consent document to sign, and we will set an interview date, time, and location that is convenient to you.

Thank you for considering this request, and I look forward to hearing from you. Please also forward to anyone whom you think might be interested in participating.

Sincerely,
Wendy Lee

Appendix B: Interview Set Up Phone/Email Script

Thank you for your interest to participate in the study. To make sure you are eligible, please answer the following questions:

1. Were you born outside of Canada?
2. Did you graduate from a Canadian post-secondary institution (e.g. college, university)?
3. Have you been working full-time for at least 1 year but no more than 5 years?
4. Are you comfortable to be interviewed in English?

If you answer 'Yes' to all of the above questions, I would like to set up a time for interview with you at a location that is convenient to you. The interview will take one to two hours of your time, and it will be kept confidential. You will be asked to sign an informed consent agreement prior to the interview. You may choose to decline any questions if you prefer not to respond. You may also withdraw from the study at any time. Upon completion of the interview, you will receive \$10 as compensation.

I will send you the informed consent document to review. If you have any further questions, please contact me at wendylee@oise.utoronto.ca or 416 275 4866. Once again, thank you for your interest in participating in this study!

Sincerely,
Wendy Lee

Appendix C: Informed Consent Form

You have been invited to participate in a research project entitled “*The Role of Ethnicity in the Career Development of Chinese Canadians*”, conducted by Wendy Lee as part her M.A. thesis research in the Adult Education and Counselling Psychology department of the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto. The purpose of this study is to explore the career development of Chinese Canadians and how their ethnicity may have influenced this process. Based on her preliminary knowledge of your ethnic, educational and career background, the researcher believes that your experience would greatly contribute to the understanding of this topic. The researcher anticipates six to twenty participants in this study.

As a participant of the study, you will be asked to:

- (a) Fill out a brief personal information questionnaire, which will take about 15 minutes to complete
- (b) Participate in an audio tape-recorded interview for approximately 1 to 2 hours in length.

The interview will be conducted by Wendy Lee at a mutually agreed upon location. The interview will be audiotaped and transcribed. In the interview, you will be asked questions related to your career experiences, how you come to a decision working in your current field, and how your ethnicity might have influenced your experiences.

All information collected from you will be kept confidential and locked in a secure location, which can only be accessed by the researcher and her supervisor. Confidentiality will be maintained by the use of pseudonyms for your name on any document on which this information is recorded. Only the researcher and her supervisor will have access to a master list with the names of participants and corresponding pseudonym. All documents and audiotapes will be destroyed by October 2012. Materials collected from this interview will form part of a thesis and may be used for future publications or public presentations.

After the completion of the interviews and data analyses, a summary of findings will be sent to you via mail or email so that you will have a chance to review the findings from this study. You will be invited to provide feedback by phone or email. Should you decide to provide comments regarding these findings, your comments will be carefully reviewed. If discrepancy between your comments and the researcher’s findings occur, the researcher will contact you via phone or email to confirm how the researcher can best present in the research findings what you have stated during the interviews.

You may benefit from participation in this research through the opportunity to explore and reflect your career development and experiences. Upon completion of the interview, you will receive \$10 as your compensation. Upon request, you may receive a summary of the results of this research in the mail at the conclusion of the study.

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You may choose not to participate or may withdraw from this study at any time without penalty. You may decline to answer any questions in the questionnaire or during the interview. If you have any questions or concerns about this study, you may contact either Wendy Lee (wendylee@oise.utoronto.ca, 416-275-4866) or her supervisor Dr. Charles Chen (cpchen@oise.utoronto.ca, 416-978-0719). You may also contact the Ethics Review Office (ethics.review@utoronto.ca, 416-946-3273) if you have any questions about your rights as a participant.

Your signature below indicates that you have read and/or explained to you the purpose and requirements of the study and that you agree to participate. A copy of this consent form will be given to you for your own reference.

Participant’s signature: _____ Date: _____

Appendix D: Personal Information

Name: _____

Phone number: _____

Email: _____

Mailing address: _____

Gender: _____

Age: _____

Country of birth: _____

Age of moving to Canada: _____

Years of residence in Canada: _____

Status in Canada (Permanent resident, citizen, working visa): _____

Marital status: _____

Spouse's ethnicity: _____

Spouse's occupation: _____

Mother's country of birth: _____

Father's country of birth: _____

Mother's occupation: _____

Father's occupation: _____

Number of siblings: _____

Sibling(s)' occupation: _____

Highest level of education: _____

Major: _____

Current occupation: _____

Years of working in this occupation: _____

Appendix E: Guiding Interview Questions

I. Career Development and Decision-Making

Can you please briefly describe your current job and the experiences you that brought you to your current position.

Probing Questions

- Please briefly introduce your current job (e.g. job nature, years of experience)
- Why did you choose this career?
- What did you do in your career decision process?
- Have you considered any other careers? If so, what are they? Why did you consider them and why did you decide against them?
- What are some key factors that affect your career path?
- What aspects of your career do you find most rewarding?
- What aspects of your career is the most important to you?
- What does your career mean to you?

II. Ethnicity and its Role in Career Development

In what ways, if any, does being a Chinese in Canada influence your career choice and development?

A. Cultural Values and its Role in Career Development

In what ways, if any, did the Chinese cultural values influence your career choice and development?

Probing Questions

- In your opinion, what are the most important values in the Chinese culture?
- How much do you identify with these values?
- In what ways, if any, did your Chinese cultural background (e.g. values, family influence) affect your career development or decision-making?
- What role does your family play in your career decision?

B. Ethnic Identity and its Role in Career Development

In what ways, if any, did your ethnic identity influence your career choice and development?

Probing Questions

- How would you describe your ethnic identity (e.g. Chinese, Chinese Canadian or Canadian)?
- How would you identify with the Chinese culture? The Canadian culture?
- In what ways, if any, did your ethnic identity influence your career development or decision-making?

C. Minority Status and its Role in Career Development

In what ways, if any, did the minority status of Chinese Canadian influence your career choice and development?

Probing Questions

- In what ways, if any, did your background as an immigrant to Canada, or your minority status in Canada, affect your career development or decision-making?
- Have you encountered any cultural challenges or conflicts in relation to your career development? If so, how did you deal with them?

Appendix F: Interview Guide

I. Career Choice and Development

Can you please briefly describe your current job and the experiences you that brought you to your current position.

II. Ethnicity and its Role in Career Development

In what ways, if any, does being a Chinese in Canada influence your career choice and development?

A. Cultural Values and its Role in Career Development

In what ways, if any, did the Chinese cultural values influence your career choice and development?

Chinese cultural characteristics: norms, values, attitudes and behavior that are typical of an ethnic group and that stem from a common culture origin transmitted across generations

B. Ethnic Identity and its Role in Career Development

In what ways, if any, did your ethnic identity influence your career choice and development?

Ethnic identity: the extent to which you identify with, or feel belonged to, the Chinese culture and the Canadian culture

C. Minority Status and its Role in Career Development

In what ways, if any, did the minority status of Chinese Canadian influence your work experience, career choice and development?

Minority status: member of a visible minority

Appendix G: Summary of Results

1. Chinese Canadian young adults encounter a combination of influential experiences in their career development, which include their education, previous work experience, advice from mentors, desperate circumstances, and coming to Canada.
2. Chinese Canadian young adults make their career decision considering an array of factors including their career interests, remuneration, market demand and Chinese values. Chinese values are communicated through parental influence and/or exposure to the Chinese culture. Out of these factors, career interests play a dominant role in determining these young adults' career choice.
3. Except the influence of Chinese values in the career decision-making process, the role of ethnicity is primarily played out in the work experience of Chinese Canadian young adults. They identify with working hard and doing well, and, depending on circumstances, being reserved. The impact of ethnic identity is largely seen in the social interaction at the workplace, where Chinese Canadian young adults acknowledge their struggle to socialize and communicate, the barriers to advancement, the sense of exclusion and the tendency to bond with own ethnic group. The minority status of these young adults did not exert a significant impact in their work experience. Some minor influences include glass ceiling, stereotypical doubt on their abilities, and the increased chance for obtaining interviews due to the Employment Equity Act.