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approved version of the following dissertation:**

**WHEN EAST MEETS WEST:  
CHANGE IN CULTURAL VALUES  
ABOUT EDUCATION AND LEARNING  
FROM CHINESE IMMIGRANT MOTHERS**

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**by**

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## **Dedication**

To My Parents

James Hsiu-Tao Liang and Joyce Yun-Hua Lin

and

To My Husband

Dr. Stephen Chiou-Hung Jang

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I thank God for His Guidance over the years during the course of my degree pursuit. With His Love and Mercy, I have been able to find strength and relief during the trials. I thank God for my committee members, Dr. Diane Schallert, Dr. Rico Ainslie, and Dr. Nancy Hazen-Swann, especially my co-supervisors, Dr. Edmund Emmer and Dr. Marie Suizzo, who generously lent their expertise and knowledge. I especially want to thank God for providing me the Chinese immigrant participants who so willingly gave their time and thoughts to help make this dissertation a reality. I finally would like to thank God for my family for their love and support over the years.

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The University of Texas at Austin, 2006

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Being an immigrant mother poses a unique challenge to the parenting experience because she is removed physically from her original cultural setting. In this novel situation the mother must balance her own parents' parenting values with the set of belief systems present in the new culture.

This study identifies the unique ways and critical features of bi-cultural parenting decisions that the Chinese immigrant parents have come to make. Fifteen Chinese immigrant mothers participated in this study. Each participant completed a background

information survey prior to the interview. Qualitative methodology was used to gather and to analyze the data. Descriptive quantitative statistics were used to organize the data.

A substantive theory of accommodation of bi-cultural childrearing practices was generated that revolved around the three psychological processes of deviation, accommodation, and balance of views about education and learning. Four bi-cultural parenting strategies were identified that immigrant parents used: comparison process, opportunity education, child-inspired education, and the education of love. Specifically in order for the balance in their bi-cultural childrearing decisions and parental satisfaction to occur, the immigrant mothers had to deviate from the perceived negative cultural values and accommodate to the perceived positive cultural belief of both home and host countries.

This research not only fulfills the need for empirical research on the role of acculturation in changing and modifying the central values of a cultural group, but also broadens the area of migration by examining in depth the change of cultural values in the context of migration. By using familial level of analysis (i.e., by using the memory of the parents as a factor contributing to the outcomes of parenting beliefs and practices), the continuity of vertical transmission of value congruence from parents to children in the context of dual cultures is achieved. Furthermore, this study explores value congruence between parents and offspring by taking not one, but two, cultures into account.

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## **CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION**

Immigration is one of the most significant social developments of our time. According to the 1990 Census, data have reflected a noticeable growth of Asian population of 178.3% since 1980 (U.S. Department of Commerce Economics & Statistics Administration Bureau of the Census, 1988) and a 300% growth from 1965 (U.S. Department of Commerce Economics & Statistics Administration Bureau of the Census, 1965). At the turn of a new millennium, approximately 12.5 million Asians resided in the United States (U.S. Department of Commerce Economics & Statistics Administration Bureau of the Census, 2002). Needless to say, immigrants are a vital part of the American fabric.

History documented two major waves of immigrants who came to the United States from Asia. The first was a pre-1920 wave in which Chinese, Japanese, and Filipinos came as contract laborers to work in gold mines and on railroads. According to Fong (1979), Chinese who came to the United States at this time were mainly from the coastal province of Kuangtung. During that period, this area of China was faced with serious flooding and famine; therefore, when the prospect of a better life was available in the United States, many flocked to America. With the passing of the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1882, a long period of restrictive entry ensued from 1924 to 1965 during which very few Asian immigrants could come to this country (Sung, 1987).

The Chinese Exclusion laws were repealed in 1943, and the immigration laws were amended in 1965, allowing a quota of 20,000 immigrants from each country per



year (Takiki, 1989). This gave way to a second wave of immigration from Asia beginning in 1965 for the next two decades (Sung, 1987). Chinese individuals coming in these waves were from many areas of Mainland China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Southeast Asia. That more Asians were allowed to come after the Korean and Vietnam Wars made the Asian population in this country very noticeable.

Today, the story of the United States of America is a saga of immigrants. Literature has documented countless accounts of immigrants' journeys to the New World. In the past, some immigrants came in search of social opportunities while others chose this route owing to economic concerns. Whatever the path might be, they came to America in search of a better future. Not only did they have to forsake everything they had built up in their home societies: careers, reputations, friendship, and families, but they had to rebuild everything from ground zero and adjust to an entirely different environment. Because migration tends to have a destabilizing effect on the family (Sluzki, 1979; Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2001), their childrearing experiences are equally challenging. For instance, many immigrant parents worked several jobs in order to provide for their children. However, that the long work hours left many children unattended often resulted in parental anxiety and depression (Ahearn & Athey, 1991). This physical absence compounding the psychological unavailability left immigrant children to their own devices long before they were developmentally ready. In the meantime, parents had to relinquish their authority to their children when they entered the realm of a foreign language because the children were the ones who could learn English more quickly than their parents (Cao, 1997). The structure of the family changed when

the children of the immigrants were placed in situations where the children had to advocate for their parents. Parental loss of status in a new society had profound effects on the morale of the parents and the children (Shuval, 1980). The footprints of these migrants marked their passage to the foreign land with sweat and tears. However, this was about to change for the next wave of immigrants.

From the early 1980s on, Chinese who have been able to migrate are the ones who have the luxury to do so. This new wave of immigrants differs tremendously from those who came before them because some of them come to the States first as visiting scholars and then decide to make America home; others have the wealth and vision to transfer the whole family to a more comfortable environment. They are either well-educated or resourceful. Thanks also to earlier pioneers, they understand what challenges will lie ahead and where they may look for possible support. Therefore, unlike their predecessors these new immigrants are not seeking refuge in a new country. It becomes a trend to explore a newer world. An opportunity to live or to study abroad is now more exciting than daunting. Because a foreign language is not so much an obstacle for them, these educated and affluent immigrants can take on jobs more easily in society and maintain their role as parents at home. Some mothers even have the luxury to stay at home to tend to their children. Because they are well educated, these newer immigrants now understand how and where to look for resources to cultivate their children. This new wave of immigrants indeed dances to a different rhythm. Yet, research, literature, or popular media thus far have not yet documented this new wave of immigration.

Discussions about immigration have typically concentrated on policy issues and, especially, economical ones. However, there is a growing concern nationwide about immigrating children and the children of immigrants because they are the most rapidly growing segment of the U.S. child population (Landale & Oropesa, 1995). The future character of American society and economy will be intimately related to the adaptation of the children of today's immigrants. In order to fully understand how the children of immigrants are faring in American society, it is imperative to trace back to the root predictor of a child's future well-being and contributions to society – how immigrant parents are rearing their children in America. As I began working with many immigrant families, it became important to me to explore the values that exist in this new development of migration trend. This exploration led me to concentrate on the Chinese culture in contrast with the North American culture – in particular, how immigrant mothers try to balance American and Chinese cultural values about education and learning in order to transmit them to their American-born children.

For parents, caring for their children is a priority. Under the pressure of the cultural clash, parents will hunt for ways to educate their children and help the children regulate their lives in a new country. In the foreign land they prevail as the courageous leaders who have paved the pathway for their children in search of the American dreams. Yet in the meantime, they cherish and ache for the good, old traditions back home that they believe are still valuable and irreplaceable. In this mix of cultures, the immigrant parents try to find light in a seemingly endless tunnel of compromises to maintain equilibrium in search of a better way to raise their children in a foreign land. The fact

that these mothers are first generation immigrants with their parents still in their homeland and are having their own children here in the U.S. creates an interesting dilemma. Throughout this immigration expedition, they may also learn many precious life experiences that could not be attained otherwise. They soon discover that this struggle of dual cultures gradually may develop into a *mélange* of two worlds that are distinctly different, yet both beautiful.

This dissertation is designed to examine how the process of acculturation to the mainstream U.S. culture has influenced and altered the structure and the dynamics in the way the first generation immigrant parents rear their children. The focus of this study is on the emphasis on education, and how the childrearing decision of immigrant parents differs from their own parents' due to their adjustment to the new culture in which they place themselves and their children.

In the next chapter, the background of Chinese immigrants in the U.S. is introduced. Statistical dominance of Chinese immigrants in the United States is a matter that cannot be ignored. As the number of families migrating to America increases, the cultural adaptation process becomes a prominent concern. A discourse on traditional migration research will then follow. Although the issue of migration has long been a heated topic of interest in the literature, the current available literature on the psychological adaptation to culture contact in the migration situation has been studied strictly under the heading of acculturation and within the analytical levels of the individual and society. Traditional migration research has yet to take into account the family-kinship relationship. The decision to migrate to a foreign country is rarely a

decision of the migrant alone, but a collective decision of other family members as well (Nauck & Settles, 2001). By considering the family as a system, interactions and characteristics of the members of the entire family are more thoroughly examined. This is particularly important in the case of a complex family unit with the immigrant parents raising their American-born children along with home and host culture values to contemplate. Therefore, this research will take on the familial level of analysis as a guideline. Following that is an exploration of the values with which the parents rear their children – detailing the process of how the values are changed and transmitted intergenerationally and culturally. Not only do immigrant parents have to choose between the values from western and eastern cultures, they also need to battle with the values that they learned from *their* own parents. This chapter will close with a section describing Chinese cultural models of childrearing, highlighting educational achievement as one of the important values in Asian parenting.

Chapter Three provides a description of the grounded theory methodology used to collect and analyze the data. I have chosen to use qualitative methods to explore this topic because there is limited research on the change in cultural values from the perspective of immigrants. Grounded theory provides an excellent method to accomplish that goal, because a grounded theory is inductively derived from the phenomenon it represents. According to Strauss and Corbin (1990), the use of qualitative methods is particularly effective when the goal of research is to uncover the nature of a person's experiences with a phenomenon or to understand what lies behind a phenomenon about which little is known. Qualitative methods can give the intricate details of phenomena

that are difficult to convey with quantitative methods. Furthermore, a number of qualitative investigators are convinced that theory building is the most powerful way to bring reality to light (Blummer, 1969; Diesing, 1971; Glaser, 1978, Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

Chapter Four will present the model that evolved from the analyses of the data. There will be an elaboration of the model, in which the participants' voices will be used to describe more fully the factors that contribute to their negotiating processes. To conclude this dissertation, an analysis and discussion of the findings, the implications of study for future research, and the limitations of the study will be provided.

The present study is intended to contribute new information to the limited, existing literature on the decision-making processes of the immigrant mothers regarding their bi-cultural childrearing issues. This qualitative study uses the real voice of the immigrants' experience as a way to construct theory derived empirically from the data and to discover new patterns of immigration. Many immigrant parents are seeking ways to be more effective in their parenting and are interested in more holistic approaches to the management of bi-cultural issues in childrearing. Therefore, the goal is to illuminate the areas where further research should be conducted and to point to areas where education and knowledge are deficient or lacking both in the research community and in the general population.

## **CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW**

While the overall purpose of this study is to generate a theory from interviews of Chinese immigrant mothers, a secondary purpose is to explore some research questions that examine how the mothers of immigrant status debate their choices on how to raise their children in a foreign country. The emphasis of this study will be on education; how this childrearing decision might differ from their own parents' and might be influenced by both home and host cultural values. These questions have not yet been answered since there are no satisfactory theories thus far that can provide an explanation of the phenomenon that I am examining. As a result, I will utilize several theoretical frameworks which will guide the design of the study.

This chapter is designed to provide an overview of the major themes related to the role of acculturation on immigrants' intergenerational and cultural transmission of values. First, a historical background of the Chinese immigrants is surveyed. The necessity of studying the Chinese immigrant population is discussed. Next, traditional migration research will be examined briefly, with its distinction among the societal, individual and familial levels of analysis. Within the familial level of analysis, systems theory is presented to provide a foundation to explore in depth the linkages of the social integration and family dynamics of the migrants, both in home and host societies. Evidence is provided that the body of literature on immigrants is not only lacking in the familial level of analysis but also incomplete in the empirical studies of immigrants' belief systems. By considering the role of acculturation in changing or modifying the central values of a

group, the process of value transmission is examined. The concepts of “intergenerational transmission” and “cultural transmission” are discussed in conjunction with the literatures on parenting. Lastly, attention is turned to the Chinese cultural values of parenting. This review will provide an overview of the initial framework for the study. Literature relevant to the phenomenon and themes emerging from the data will be reviewed in the final chapter of discussion.

### Chinese Immigrants

Outside of China itself, Chinese people can be found in virtually every country in the world, constituting a majority in several and a significant minority in many others. The Chinese who have immigrated to other countries were estimated to number between 27 and 28 million people in 1980 – that is more than the entire population of Canada and twice that of Australia or the Netherlands (Poston & Yu, 1985). In America, the most commonly spoken Asian or Pacific island language is Mandarin Chinese (2.0 million speakers), with Tagalog (1.2 million), Vietnamese (1.0 million) and Korean (894,000) trailing behind (US Census, 2003). In the U.S. alone, Chinese Americans are the largest group in the Asian-American population comprising one-fourth of the nation’s total foreign-born population that is estimated to reach over 40 million by 2050 (U.S. Department of Commerce, 1995). Within this group, immigrants come from Mainland China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore, and other Asian countries.

From these statistics alone, as the number of families migrating to America increases, the cultural adaptation process becomes a prominent concern. These recent



Asian immigrants comprise distinct cultural groups by bringing with them their own beliefs, practices, and norms.

In addition, the difficulties arising from language, religion, and cultural values are experienced not only by the immigrant families but also by school systems and helping professionals who try to assist the family. These issues profoundly affect both the immigrant parents and their children. The models developed over the past few decades to explain the immigrant experience in American society have been based largely on the European experience (Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2001). Consequently, it is imperative to conduct ethnographic work in this field in order to lend a voice to this growing population.

### Traditional Migration Research

#### Societal Level of Analysis

Since the United States is a country of immigrants, the issue of migration has long been a heatedly debated topic in the social science literature. Traditional migration research has typically focused on two levels of analysis: the level of the individual and the level of society (Nauck & Settles, 2001). On the societal level, researchers look at the causes of migration based on structural conditions in the society of origin, that is, in the home culture and in the receiving society. Examples of structural conditions in the society of origin might include political issues, racial discrimination, religious prosecution, poverty, and unemployment. Alternatively, structural conditions in the receiving society might encompass relatively affluent and favorable living conditions,

prospects for social and political participation, and opportunities on the job and housing market. Within the context of the host society, researchers mostly focus on the exchange-process between the migrants and the already residing populations based on differences not only in numbers but also in cultural orientations, power, resources, and politics (Nauck & Settles, 2001).

Most of the research on immigrant Chinese within the societal level of analysis has examined the challenge of coping with two different cultures and identifying stressors and conflicts for immigrants (Chan & Leong, 1994; Li, 1998). For instance, Takaki (1989) detailed the history of various ethnic groups who migrated from Asia and who had but one goal – looking for economic stability and better living conditions. Although each immigrant group has been subjected to discrimination in this country, Sue (1983) documented how the Asian Americans were the first group subjected to legalized discrimination and rejection. With the passing of the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1882, a long period of restrictive entry ensued from 1924 to 1965 during which very few Chinese immigrants could come to this country (Sung, 1987). This challenged the lives of the Chinese to face the problem of stereotypes and issues of discrimination. While such blatant discrimination has long ceased to exist, a more subtle form of discrimination is still part of the lives of many Chinese (Chan & Leong, 1994). With limited or no knowledge of English, many Chinese remain mainly connected to a Chinese community (Chinese American Planning Council, United Way of Tri-State and Regional Plan Association, 1988). For example, when Takaki (1989) compared the differences in

employment patterns, income levels, and needs for services among the Asian American groups, he found that Asians worked longer hours than most other races.

### Individual Level of Analysis

In contrast with the societal level of analysis, at the individual level, migrants have been studied typically as discrete individuals, who have pursued their own goals according to their own personal motivations, competencies, and resources in the host culture. Within the respective social context, immigrants became members of a specific migrant minority. As a result, the environment of the host culture shaped the process of social placement of the immigrants and their social incorporation. This determined the individual result of migration, whether it be social assimilation or segregation, whether it be integration into both the home and host culture or alienation from both. The following section illustrates several prominent theorists' explanations of how the psychological state of an individual changes as a result of migration.

Gordon's assimilation model (1964, 1978) described seven types of assimilation that explained the psychological changes experienced by individuals of an immigrant group arriving in a host society: (1) *cultural or behavioral assimilation* (also known as acculturation), the adoption of cultural patterns characteristic of the 'core group' or host society; (2) *structural assimilation*, signifying entrance into the primary group relationships, such as clubs, cliques, and institutions, of the host society; (3) *identificational assimilation*, the taking of one's sense of 'peoplehood' or collective identity from the host society; (4) *marital assimilation*, (also known as 'amalgamation'), demonstrated by large-scale inter-marriage; (5) *attitude-receptional*

*assimilation*, characterized by an absence of prejudice; (6) *behavior-receptional assimilation*, shown by an absence of discrimination; and (7) *civic assimilation*, marked by an absence of value and power conflict between or among groups. Gordon's model of assimilation remains useful for conceptualizing different types of assimilation in a given society and for asking how these different types may relate to one another. However, it is a linear model assuming absorption of individual immigrant and ethnic groups into the core, dominant society to be the ideal or norm (Dion & Dion, 1996).

More recent theories of acculturation proposed by psychologists in the past ten or fifteen years have been from a 'multiple option' perspective, one that assumes that individuals and groups have several different orientations or choices regarding maintenance of their heritage culture and contact with other groups, such as the models proposed by Berry (1986), Ogbu and Matute-Bianchi (1986), and LaFromboise, Coleman, and Gerton (1993), yet they have continued to neglect the importance of familial relations in the context of migration.

In contrast to the linearity of Gordon's model, Berry's cross-cultural model of acculturation (1986) emphasized that acculturation is a two-dimensional process. There are at least four possible ways to deal with the minority individuals of the ethnic group membership can have in a diverse society, either strong or weak identifications with both their own and the mainstream cultures. Accordingly, four varieties of acculturation are generated: integration, assimilation, separation, and marginalization. The term *integration* used here is distinct from the term *assimilation*, although the two sometimes appear as synonyms in the literature. Cultural maintenance is sought for both home and

host cultures in the case of integration, whereas in the case of assimilation there is little or no interest in such continuity. When an individual in Culture B does not wish to maintain his or her identity and seeks daily interaction with Culture A, then the assimilation path is defined. On the other hand, separation is defined when one values to hold onto one's original culture and at the same time wishes to avoid interaction with the host culture. Finally, when there is little possibility or interest in cultural maintenance (often for reasons of enforced cultural loss) and little interest in relations with others (often for reasons of exclusion or discrimination), then marginalization is defined.

Another well-known theory in the area of bi-culturalism is the alternation model proposed by Ogbu and Matute-Bianchi (1986) that stresses the individual's ability "to participate in two different cultures or to use two different languages, perhaps for different purposes, by alternating one's behavior according to the situation" (p. 89). To characterize the process of exploring and making decisions about the role of one's own ethnicity, Phinney (1990) developed a model that proposes stages of ethnic self-identification. By extending Phinney's concept of ethnic identity, LaFromboise and colleagues (1993) outlined the individual psychological impact of bicultural competence.

While these theories remain as some of the most influential and perhaps the most prominent conceptualizations of acculturation in the social science literature today, hardly have any Chinese immigrant studies used them. For a collectivistic culture like the Chinese where its sociocultural roots of family interdependence is deep-rooted, research only based on the individual level of analysis may be somewhat limited. On the individual level, researchers overlook the significance of dealing with the migrants at the

familial level of analysis, which is essential in examining acculturation and migration issues. The next section discusses the necessity of studying immigration at the familial level of analysis in further detail.

### Familial Level of Analysis

The exploration of the psychological impact of pluralistic societies has been seriously constrained by the fact that traditional research in this area has yet to take into account the family-kinship relationship. Only recently, new approaches in migration research have begun to connect the societal level and the micro-level of individual decision-making. By introducing the perspectives of social networks and general systems theory, research now looks more comprehensively at the linkages of migrants in the course of migration and of social integration, both in home and host societies (Nauck & Settles, 2001).

Beginning in the 1940s, an alternate view of human problems and their alleviation began to emerge (Goldenberg & Goldenberg, 1994). Scientists began to comprehend the complex ecological system in which different forms of life (people, animals, plants, air, soil) share a common environment, affecting one another so intimately that it would be naïve to consider them separately (Bronfenbrenner, 1992). Clinicians began to investigate if it might be useful to consider an individual as existing in a familiar kind of ecological system, namely, his or her family (Segal & Bavelas, 1982). Within such a framework, family members are studied in terms of their interactions and not merely their intrinsic personal characteristics (Andolfi, 1979). More than the sum of what each family member adds to the whole, it is the relationship between or among the members - their

mutual impact - that requires attention. From a systems perspective, every event within a family is determined by all of the forces operating within that system (Minuchin, 1974).

In most cases of migration, the decision to migrate to a foreign country is rarely a decision of the migrant alone, but a decision of other family members as well (Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2001). Nauck and Settles (2001) referred to this as the “family migration project,” one that influences the social chances of the migrants’ descendants and entails material, social, and human investments in an intergenerational perspective. Therefore, the family life cycle and major events in the life course of the first and second generation of immigrants are closely related to the timing of migration. This is especially relevant to the context of collectivist societies like the Chinese.

In addition, strong intergenerational ties and relationships within an existing kinship system are perhaps the most effective mechanism of social security in the relatively insecure and unstable situation of migration (Nauck & Settles, 2001). In most cases, social support and mutual help are not based on neighborhood or ethnic membership, but on family and kinship relationship. Rather than rely on the ethnic communities for social support, it is more likely that a migrant would rely on his/her family members. All in all, systems theory provides a fundamental framework to explore the migrating family dynamics, involving structures, roles, and communication patterns (Rothbaum, Rosen & Ujiie, 2002). With its focus on the intergenerational triad, systems theory will help explain patterns of the parent-child interaction from one generation to the next.

The systems outlook has profound implications for the ways in which experts view, think about, and ultimately intervene in human social phenomena (Koman & Stechler, 1985). Systems thinking is not so much directly translatable into specific counseling techniques or research methodologies, but rather provides the experts with a way of organizing their thinking about people and the origins of their behavioral patterns.

## Values

### Acculturation and Changes in Cultural Values

The current available literature on the psychological adaptation to culture contact in the migration situation has been studied mainly under the headings of “acculturation” or “assimilation” (Berry, 1986; Gordon, 1964, 1978; LaFromboise et al., 1993; Ogbu & Matute-Bianchi, 1986; Phinney, 1990). However, the role of acculturation in changing or modifying the central values of a group is a question that has received limited attention in the literature despite its relevance in comprehending the process of individual culture learning and the development of multicultural societies (Marin & Gamba, 2003). Under the assumption that acculturation does influence certain cultural values and beliefs of the members of a given ethnic group, previous research identified a number of reasons for the power of the acculturative process in changing basic, cultural values or beliefs. Cultural beliefs or values are often used to distinguish specific ethnic or cultural groups or differentiate among them (Hofstede, 1980; Kluckhohn & Strodtbeck, 1961). The ability of acculturation to elicit change in these values has important implications for their continued existence, for defining the characteristics of these groups, and for



characterizing the nature of multicultural societies (Marin & Gamba, 2003).

Furthermore, a change in values and beliefs caused by the acculturative process can dictate a change in the behaviors and actions that would be expected from the members of an ethnic or cultural group undergoing acculturation (Marin et al., 1989; Marin, Posner & Kinyon, 1993; Marks et al., 1987). In addition, these values are often considered important components in the design of culturally appropriate interventions to change people's daily behavior (Cuellar, Arnold & Gonzalez, 1995; Marin, 1993). Marin and Gamba (2003) also stress the implications these changes have for the stipulation of culturally appropriate services and in terms of understanding family functioning and intergenerational conflict.

#### Value Change vs. Value Transmission

The current scientific discourse on values focuses on two important topics: value change and value transmission, which have rarely been addressed together. Studies of *value change* concentrate on societal phenomena (Abramson & Inglehart, 1995; Huntington, 1996; Inglehart, 1990, 1997). *Value transmission*, on the other hand, usually pertains to the socialization of values in institutions, predominantly in the family (Rohan & Zanna, 1996). According to Inglehart (1990), *value change* in highly industrialized Western societies was basically assumed as an essentially automatic consequence of increased socioeconomic prosperity. Rather than assuming a unidirectional development toward Western value, Huntington (1996) perceived value preferences as changing constantly as a consequence of societal modernization. Often, this work remains within the bounds of one culture or of similar cultures, such as European countries (Klages,

Kippler & Herbert, 1992) and one cohort (Elder, 1974). More commonly, value change studies do not look at families as sampling units but rather individuals. As such, only inferences of transgenerational transmission processes can be made.

On the other hand, research on *value transmission*, particularly on the transmission of values in the family, typically has focused on value resemblance between parents and their children (Rohan & Zanna, 1996; Whitbeck & Gecas, 1988). Participants in most studies have been limited to college students and their middle-aged parents. The life phase of the college children has the least congruence with their parents because they are on their own for the first time in their lives without yet experiencing the obligations of parenthood and a profession. Values studied in transmission research are often concentrated entirely on value congruence between parents and offspring without taking society or culture into account (Goodnow, 1997; Grusec & Kuczynski, 1997; Homer, 1993). Transmission studies are usually confined within one culture which substantially limits the validity of findings, and little do they mention societal change (Homer, 1993; Kohn et al., 1990). Another limitation in transmission research is the treating of the gender variable. Some handle parents as if they were a unit, not differentiating between mother and father influence in transmission of values (Homer, 1993; Rohan & Zanna, 1996). When all things are considered, value change studies do not take intra-familial value transmission processes into consideration, whereas value transmission research, even when they take societal context into consideration, disregard societal change processes.

## Cultural Transmission

Intergenerational transmission is one process leading to cultural continuity. What exactly is culture? Culture is considered by some to reflect a complex of variables, a set of separable contextual factors (Campbell, 1961; Jahoda, 1980; Munroe & Munroe, 1980; Triandis, 1989), and by others to constitute a considerably more abstract entity of learned meanings and shared information transmitted from one generation to the next through interaction (Rohner, 1984; Schwartz, 1981; Segall, 1986). According to Boyd & Richerson (1985), culture is “the transmission from one generation to the next, via teaching and imitation, of knowledge, values, and other factors that influence behavior.” Some findings suggest that vertical (parent-offspring) as opposed to horizontal (peer) transmission serves the function of spreading more complex cultural units and that horizontally transmitted traits are advantageous in rapidly changing spatially heterogeneous environments (Schonpflug, 2001a). Vertical social transmission from the parent generation to its offspring seems to be less responsive to environmental variability than horizontal transmission (Laland, 1993). Nonetheless, the process of cultural transmission does not automatically become a constant replication of culture in successive generations. Rather it falls somewhere in the continuum between an exact transmission (without any difference between parents and children) and a complete failure of transmission (with hardly any similarity between the generations) (Schonpflug, 2001b). Practically, either extreme would be problematic for a society. Exact transmission would not permit novelty and transformation and consequently the ability to

respond to new circumstances; whereas, failure of transmission would not allow for coordinated action between generations (Boyd & Richerson, 1985).

### People and Contexts

Ecological theorists suggest that parenting and development always occur in a context larger than the family unit (Bronfenbrenner, 1992; Harkness & Super, 2002). This larger context may be a geographic space (i.e., a neighborhood or a region) or a social space (i.e., a network of friends or a national culture). In any event, the values that emerge in any generation and the ways in which this emergence takes place will reflect in the interweaving of *people* and *contexts*. For this study, the *people* studied are the Chinese immigrant parents whose parents are native Chinese and whose children are American born. The larger *context* studied in this research is the migration from the Chinese society to a western society.

### Transmission Process

According to Schonpflug (2001b), there are two aspects of the intergenerational cultural transmission process: the content of transmission – in this study, values – and transmission belts. Transmission belts are conditions or factors that may enhance transmission. One of the two transmission belts investigated in this study is relational: parental influence and cultural influence. The other kind of transmission belt includes socio-developmental conditions: mother's education level and work experience in the home and host societies, phase in migration (duration of stay in the U.S., age coming to the U.S.), and becoming a mother.

### Purpose of Transmission

As mentioned above, the transmission of value orientations appears to be a core issue of culture maintenance and culture change. Values furnish standards for actions and thoughts and therefore regulate daily behaviors as well as important and critical life decisions (Gaerling, 1999). Socialization and enculturation are assumed to be universal processes involved in the transmission of values (Schonpflug, 2001b). Socialization comprises the deliberate shaping of individuals to become adapted to the social environment. The common means of transmission by socialization are distinct child-rearing or child-training practices by parents and other mentors or educators. In the processes of enculturation, parenting consists of mechanisms for transmitting cultural information and childhood processing that information (Bornstein, 1991). Enculturation may involve explicit, deliberate learning, but it may also take place in the form of implicit, unintentional learning. Enculturation involves bi-directional processes in which an adult and a child play active roles in selecting, editing, and refashioning cultural information. Enculturation aims at developing persons into competent members of a culture, including identity, rituals, the language, and values. For that reason, studies of parenting will be missing a large piece of the puzzle if issues of culture are not in place, especially in the context of migration.

### Context of Transmission

In the case of family migration, the effectiveness of transmission from parents to children might be less effective due to dysfunctionality and non-adaptability in the transmission of culture of origin in the host country. Not only will the younger

generation be reluctant to accept transmission but the parents may also hesitate to transmit their own orientations that they see as possibly as non-adaptive behavior patterns in a new environment.

In Schwartz's (1992) international study of value dimensions, effective transmission between generations in migrant groups pointed to segregation from the majority culture in the host country when the host culture and culture of origin of a migrated group differ considerably. The migrant parents who insist on maintaining the culture of origin in the host country will emphasize the transmission of culture of origin, whereas parents oriented toward adaptation in the host society will hold back cultural transmission and let their children adopt behavior patterns that are functional in the new environment (Schonpflug, 2001b). As a result, immigrant parents living in the enclosed context of their culture of origin should transmit their value orientation more intensively than those living in a context where they allow the permeability to the host culture.

### Intergenerational Transmission

From the understanding of both value change and value transmission, the process in which these values are conveyed is not only socio-cultural but also intergenerational. Humans have the unique capacity to transmit knowledge explicitly to other individuals by means of such strategies as deliberate teaching (Tomasello, 2001). Much of human behavior seems to rely simply on these explicit social learning processes. Indeed, many behavioral acquisitions would not be possible without them (Whiten, 2000).

According to Jacobvitz and colleagues (1991), parents are the primary and most immediate source of value transmission. The issue of parenting that has received the most theoretical attention and empirical support in recent years with regard to intergenerational transmission involves clinical explanations for problematic parent-child relationship or harsh-intensive parenting. Evidence has accumulated for the intergenerational origins of such exploitive parent-child relationships. Childhood abuse and anxious infant-caregiver attachment relationships have been implicated as precursors of a variety of childhood behavior and emotional problems (Belsky et al., 2005; Carlson et al., 1989; Egeland & Sroufe, 1981). Mothers' descriptions of physical abuse and rejection by their parents during childhood have been related to mothers' reenactment of the maltreatment with their own children (Biringen, 1990; Egeland, Jacobvitz, & Sroufe, 1988; Grossman et al., 1988; Hall et al., 1979; Ricks, 1985; Simons et al., 1991). Attachment theory posits that relational expectations are forged in childhood and that these internal working models come to influence subsequent relationship experiences, including parenting (Bowlby, 1969, 1982; Bretherton, 1985; Sroufe & Fleeson, 1986). It is also acknowledged by attachment theorists (Main & Goldwyn, 1984) and others working from compatible theoretical perspectives (Epstein & Erskine, 1983; Malatesta & Wilson, 1988) that developmental trajectories are subject to modification if experience provides a basis for altering expectations about self, others, and relationship. However, research has yet to apply intergenerational transmission as a factor contributing to value congruence.

According to cross-cultural developmental researchers, the most popular method of learning about parenting is direct observation of behavior (Bornstein, 1991). This pathway, typically thought of as “parenting,” is termed as the “intergenerational transmission,” which indicates a static and unidirectional relationship between two groups of people: one conveying an established and unchanging set of values, and the other involved only in understanding those values and accepting them as their own (Goodnow, 1997). Goodnow suggests that this two-step process flow from *transmission* to *internalization*, from one generation to the next. First, a particular source of internal direction or commitment from the last generation is presented to the individual. This is accomplished by teaching, childrearing and imitation. The receiver of the transmission then selects and absorbs or internalizes some of these external points of view as his or her own. For the purpose of this particular study, another segment of *transmission* will be added onto this flow to make the entire process of the phenomenon studied as *transmission-internalization-transmission*. The last transmission occurs when the children sequentially pass what is internalized down to the next generation. In this study, the first *transmission* will occur when the grandparents pass their values onto their children, who are the immigrant mothers, the participants of this study. When the mothers face childrearing decisions, they will then *transmit* the values that they have *internalized* from their own parents. Value transmission can succeed or fail at each step in this process when children perceive their parents’ values accurately or misperceive them (Schonpflug, 2001b). Value similarity should be high if children perceive their parents’ values accurately and accept rather than reject them. However, value



dissimilarity should be high if children perceive their parents' values as unsuitable for their own, or the children's continuing survival in a social context is different from their parents, i.e., a foreign country.

### Memory of Parents

Evidently, daily beliefs, attitudes, values, and patterns of life are strongly dictated not only by our environment (i.e., cultural contexts) but also by parental influences. Previous studies of intergenerational parenting have relied largely on mothers' retrospective accounts of their childhood history. The concept of the memory of parents or parental influence is especially prominent and essential in the Chinese culture because the Confucius tradition teaches that one should always think and reflect back to one's ancestry to seek the source of origin, purpose, and goals of life (C. M. Chao, 2000). Ancestors and elders (i.e., parents) stand to offer wisdom, connections, and relationships, which serve a crucial and central psychological reality of the Asian psyche. The voices of the parents, grandparents, great grandparents, and so on, echo from the underlying familial establishment that demands obedience in a Confucian hierarchy. This stems from the concept of filial piety, which can be defined as the "honor, reverence, obedience, loyalty, and love owed to those who are hierarchically above you" (C. M. Chao, 1992, p.159). As such, the extent to which parental influence is transmitted across multiple generations is tremendous.

## Chinese Cultural Models of Parenting

The transmission process also involves a selection of transmitted contents, in this study, values. Values are commonly identified as the hard core of culture, which are the most enduring in the face of culture contact or social change (Phalet & Schonpflug, 2001). In accordance with the issues of values raised, this study will focus on the Chinese cultural values of parenting. As compared with the scarcity of research done on identifying how migration experience modifies the cultural values and beliefs of a group, a vast amount of research has been dedicated to describing cultural models of parenting in Asian society. Taiwanese culture offers a particularly interesting case for comparison with European American culture because it is deeply rooted in one of the world's most durable ideological systems, the Confucian tradition. Contemporary historians maintain that Confucian values are still alive in Taiwan and other Chinese cultures despite the massive economic, political, and social changes that have occurred in this century (Dennerline, 1988; Spence, 1992). Moreover, a number of scholars have argued that we cannot fully understand Chinese childrearing without understanding Confucian values (R. K. Chao, 1994; Chu, 1972; Wu, 1981), and the reviews of the literature conclude that Confucian teachings concerning childrearing are still evident today in the patterns of childhood socialization (Ho, 1986; Wu, 1996a).

The following sections showcase the three general themes that emerge in the Asian parenting literatures: family as center, control and strictness, and educational achievement (R. Chao & Tseng, 2002).

### Family as Center

The most often cited characteristic of Asian parenting is the strong emphasis on interdependence among family members. Researchers typically contrast Asian and Asian American emphases on interdependence with European and European American emphases on independence. Interdependent construals of the self stress persons in relation to others within harmonious relationships, whereas independent construals stress individualism and persons as separate or unique from others (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Interdependence among family members for Chinese is demonstrated through the socialization goals of family loyalty and respect for one's elders (Chiu, 1987a).

An important socialization goal for East Asian families is the strong influences of filial piety around family interdependence. Scholars have often noted this emphasis on family interdependence with Asian cultures, but they have rarely examined the sociocultural roots of interdependence or how the cultural value of family interdependence is transmitted in a bi-cultural context. The concept of filial piety has been identified as a set of unifying principles underlying parenting and specifically, notions of family interdependence in Confucian-based societies in East Asia and parts of Southeast Asia (Ho, 1994; Sung, 1995; Zhou and Bankston, 1998). Filial piety refers to treating parents with great respect, being obedient, caring for parents materially and emotionally, providing for family continuity, performing ancestral worship duties, bringing honor and glory to the family, making sacrifices for the family, and seeking parental advice and guidance (Ho & Lee, 1974; Sung, 1995). Filial duties not only extend to one's parents, but also to one's overall family in terms of respecting and

honoring the family and the family name. Thus, filial piety emphasizes family interdependence in that children's actions do not simply have ramifications for themselves. Instead, their actions can potentially bring honor and pride or, conversely, shame and loss of face to the entire family (Cheung et al., 1994).

For centuries, filial piety has been taught through narrative exemplars of extraordinary filial deeds, written collections of which are still in use in Taiwan (Wu, 1981). Ancient texts, such as *The Thousand Character Classic*, *The Three Character Classic*, and *The Twenty-Four Filial Stories* have been used for hundreds of years to teach children to read and to impart moral lessons and knowledge of Chinese history. For instance, *The Three Character Classic* contains a series of stories illustrating the diligence of scholars, followed by an explicit exhortation to the young readers to emulate these examples. These and other classic texts demonstrate the high value placed on filial piety and importance of family within the Confucian tradition.

In qualitative interviews and focus groups, immigrant Chinese mothers reported that they prefer to guide their children rather than impose absolute control (Chao, 1995; Gorman, 1998). They often have particular expectations and desires for their children's behavior, but they also explain the reasoning behind their requests and expectations and allow their children to "make up their own minds" (Gorman, 1998, p. 78). Therefore, children are encouraged to make their own decisions, but to do so interdependently by taking the welfare and wishes of family members into account (Chao, 1995). These findings, however, do not look into the specific processes of cultural and intergenerational transmission process for immigrant Chinese parenting. Research has

also yet to tackle whether Chinese immigrants' socialization goals of interdependence might have shifted toward independence so that their children would be able to function effectively in dual cultural contexts.

### Control and Strictness

Another salient theme in Asian parenting that has generated some debate is *control and strictness*. Some early comparative research has examined the harshness and restrictiveness of Asian parental control (Ho, 1986, 1996; Ho & Kang, 1984; Kriger & Kroes, 1972; Law, 1973; Osterweil & Nagano-Nakamura, 1992; Seymour, 1999; Tobin, Wu, & Davidson, 1987; Wu, 1996b). Ho (1986, 1996) pointed out that regardless of the traditional leniency given to children before age 6, Chinese parents often begin disciplining children as early as 2 ½ years of age. Chinese concerns over discipline are based on their beliefs that misdemeanors among children would lead to parents being drawn into conflicts, thereby disrupting family relations and harmony (Wolf, 1970). Other research involving cross-societal or cross-ethnic comparisons with European Americans and Australians has found that Asians and also Asian Americans are more restrictive in their parenting. Chinese in Taiwan and the United States are higher on restrictive control and hostility, and lower on encouragement of autonomy than parents of European descent in the United States and Australia (Chiu, 1987; Feldman & Rosenthal, 1990, 1991; Fuligni, 1998; Kelley & Tseng, 1992; Lin & Fu, 1990; Rosenthal & Feldman, 1991, 1992; Stewart et al., 1999).

More recent research has attempted to offer explanations in the realm of the parental control that provides a more in-depth understanding of its cultural meaning for

Chinese Americans (Chiu, 1987; Feldman & Rosenthal, 1991; Jose et al., 2000; Kelley & Tseng, 1992; Lin & Fu, 1990; Rosenthal & Feldman, 1991, 1992). Chao (1994) argued that although Chinese parents may exert more control over their children, they do so with the goal of training their children to achieve academically and to behave according to social norms. Jose et al.'s (2000) study further demonstrated that although the Chinese parents exert more control over their children, their chief disciplinary approach is that of "order keeping" (Kagitcibasi, 1990, 1996a, 1996b; Lau et al., 1990) rather than a punitive style.

Within the Confucian tradition, shame is seen as a virtue, and a high value is placed on teaching, strict discipline, and acceptance of social obligations. According to Wu (1996a), a key principle of Confucian parenting is that children are taught and disciplined from an early age as soon as they can talk and walk. Chinese families typically view a child's transgression with an explicitly evaluative, overtly self-critical interpretive framework. By contrast, the European American families acknowledge yet downplay a child's wrongdoing using an implicitly evaluative, overtly self-affirmative framework (Miller et al., 1997). Although research studies provide support for cultural arguments that the meaning of strictness and control manifested within parent-child relationships may differ for Chinese and European American parents, little is known about the childrearing practices that caregivers use in the context of bi-cultural parenting. In other words, no studies have specifically examined how dual cultural values and practices of disciplinary methods are accommodated and applied in an immigrant context.

### Educational Achievement

Finally, the third theme focuses on the societal and parental importance placed on *educational achievement*, which is the particular Chinese cultural value in parenting I focused on for this study. Research on Asian Americans has focused on academic excellence. This concept stems from the general school success of Asians in comparison with all ethnic groups in the United States, including European Americans (Fuligni, 1997; Hao & Bonstead-Bruns, 1998; Kao, 1995; Mau, 1997; Okagaki & Frensch, 1998; Peng & Wright, 1994; Reglin & Adams, 1990; Sue & Abe, 1998). A number of studies on Asian Americans have reported higher Scholastic Aptitude Test scores, higher achievement test scores, higher grade point averages in both high school and college, more years of schooling completed, and higher scores on a number of standardized intelligence tests (Cheung, 1982; Kim & Chun, 1994; Sue & Abe, 1988; Suzuki, 1988). Cheung (1982) reported that although Asian students had parents with less education and family income than European American students, they had higher grade point averages in college and completed more years of schooling. This picture of school success has served to promote stereotypic views of Asian Americans as the “model minority” (Kao, 1995).

Since influences at home are greater than those at school in effecting achievement (Comer, 1984; Dolan, 1983), I have narrowed my scope of study to the attitude of immigrant parents toward education and learning. Research has shown that children’s schooling is regarded as the primary responsibility of the Chinese parents where *jihui jiaoyu* or “opportunity education” is employed to help a child learn. Opportunity education provides an opportunity to situate the lesson in concrete terms based on the

child's immediate experience (Fung, 1999). Rather than be taught a lesson deliberately, a child is reminded by the parents whenever an opportunity strikes. In other words, Chinese caregivers treat the child's here-and-now experiences as opportunities to teach or remind the child of a lesson, thereby reinforcing and personalizing lessons through concrete exemplars. This strategy of socialization requires that parents be alert to, and keep account of, their children's behaviors.

Children's schooling is regarded as the primary responsibility of Asian parents. In fact, for many Chinese parents, their efficacy in parenting is judged by how well their children do in school (R. K. Chao, 1995; R. Chao, 1996; Tu, Liang, & Li, 1989; Wu & Tseng, 1985). Tu and colleagues have emphasized that a successful Confucian father is defined by the scholarly achievements and cultural attainments of his family. The emphasis placed on educational achievement for Asian parents is reflected in broader cultural folk beliefs and attitudes about child development and learning, in their educational expectations and aspirations, and their involvement in their children's schooling.

This heavy emphasis on educational achievement stems from an educational tradition dating back to the Han Dynasty (206 B.C. to 220 A.D.). The traditional Chinese society had an unwritten caste system based on one's occupational category: government, agriculture, laborer, and business; government official jobs ranked the highest while a businessperson ranked the lowest. Having a job in the government affirmed an individual's intellectual capability and a lifetime guarantee of prosperity and distinction which brought honor to a family. Obtaining such a position in the regime in Chinese



ancient times before the emperor was overthrown and the republic was established meant that a person had to be a scholarly intellectual who had passed numerous, competitive area-wide and nation-wide government examinations.

To pass such examinations, anxious Chinese students went sleepless as they studied mathematics, geography, Chinese classical literature, history, and a foreign language. A Japanese authored a book called, *China's Examination Hell* (Miyazaki, 1976), which describes vividly the traditional Chinese educational system. Chinese students needed to memorize the Four Books of the Confucian canon in their entirety so that the students could finish a line from any of the classics if given the first three characters. Students also needed to be able to write creatively, constructing well-argued and thoughtful essays on any number of possible topics, from the metaphysical to the academic. They practiced calligraphy so that they could write in all of the invented styles known throughout antiquity. A scholar should be an artist, too, and if possible, be able to develop his own style of calligraphy.

Although it was indeed a difficult feat to achieve, many people would sacrifice much for a chance at the nearly impossible. After passing an exam, a man who persisted, studied, and excelled could obtain an official position in the bureaucracy. Within the span of one generation, he could change his family's social status, from being impoverished peasants to being accepted in a powerful bureaucrat's clan. Put into the effect during the Han dynasty in the second century B.C., the exam system provided upward mobility for centuries. Whereas in Europe at the same time, one had to inherit one's power; in China even a man from humble origins could become part of the

government so long as he was smart. Because such caste system was indeed flexible, not being classified into one specific class due to his birth, anyone who studied diligently had a chance to promote himself, even his entire kinfolds, up to a better class. Although the bureaucratic exam system was abolished in 1905, the idea that intellectuals should become Chinese leaders has been firmly entrenched in people's minds. Consequently, obtaining a higher education becomes an expectation and a goal for the entire family.

Accordingly, as a culture, the Chinese tend to place great emphasis on academics. Compared with other groups, including European Americans, Asian Americans tend to have higher parental expectations for educational attainment, the school grades they consider acceptable, and the amount of effort or work they believe their children can accomplish (R. Chao, 1996; Chen & Stevenson, 1995; Fuligni, 1997; Hao & Bonsted-Bruns, 1998; Kao, 1995; Lee, 1987; Okagaki & Frensch, 1998; Yao, 1985). Furthermore, studies across a range of Asian American ethnic subgroups have found that parental expectations form the basis for a large portion of children's high educational expectations, more than any other demographic factors (Goyette & Xie, 1999; Kim, Rendon, & Valdez, 1998; Lee, 1987). Examining in detail how the Chinese immigrant parents in the United States exercise their beliefs and values with regard to their children's development and learning by assisting in the learning process of their children, this study uniquely contributes to the current state of knowledge on educational achievements of the Chinese Americans.

### Integrative Summary

Change of cultural values in the context of migration is a complex and multifaceted process. The unique circumstances of being an immigrant parent propose a need for further exploration. Previous research in migration has served only to identify issues at societal and individual levels, with discontinuity of vertical transmission from parents to children. Thus far, there has been insufficient research conducted on the role of acculturation in changing or modifying the central values of a group culture. Comprehending the process of value change in the context of migration should provide needed information that will begin to address issues of adjustment in which immigrant parents have reared and taught their children in a brand new culture.

## **CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY**

### **Problem Statement/Statement of Purpose**

This qualitative study examines the psychological mechanisms of bi-cultural childrearing decisions on education and learning. It focuses on the first generation Chinese immigrant mothers' accommodation processes of value change and transmission between the parenting values of their own parents and the new set of cultural belief systems in the United States. Due to the adjustment to a brand new culture the interplay between cultural and generational transmission of the childrearing practices and beliefs is also discussed.

In this research, I considered several questions on bi-cultural childrearing beliefs and practices: 1) How are these mothers' parenting practices and beliefs similar to and different from those of their own Chinese parents? 2) How do these mothers make their childrearing decisions by reconciling the differences between their original culture and the new, host culture? 3) What parenting practices and beliefs do they utilize to teach their American-born children?

### **The Grounded Theory Approach**

I chose qualitative methods to explore this topic because there is limited research about the psychological processes in the alteration of cultural childrearing values or beliefs of the immigrant parents. Grounded theory provides an excellent method to accomplish that goal, since the theory is inductively derived from the phenomenon it

represents. The main function of grounded theory, a form of qualitative research, is the development of a theory that is derived from and interprets the social processes and issues related to human behaviors and attitudes. Often the fields of interest are those in which little information is known or more novel information is sought (Stern, 1980). Instead of arriving through statistical procedures or other methods of quantification, the findings in qualitative research are obtained through exhaustive exploration of phenomena that are difficult to convey with quantitative methods (Strauss and Corbin, 1990). During the development of grounded theory the processes of data collection, analyses, and theory development maintain a reciprocal relationship. Data can come from an assortment of resources, such as interviews and observations. The use of qualitative methods is particularly effective when the goal of research is to uncover the nature of participants' experiences with a phenomenon or to develop categories that reveal the multi-layered aspects of a phenomenon. In addition, a number of qualitative investigators believe that theory building is the most powerful way to bring reality to light (Diesing, 1971; Glaser, 1978; Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

### Data Collection

Data were collected in two phases. The first phase (the Pilot study) occurred from March to April of 2003. The second phase of data collection occurred approximately six months later, between September and November of 2003. In order to best represent the data collection and the analysis process, I will first describe the collection and analysis of the initial phase, the pilot study report, and then the second. In congruence with

grounded theory, research questions and analysis do not necessarily precede results, but rather intertwine with one another. The presentation of the report hereafter reflects such manner in which the data and conclusions are developed.

### Pilot Study Report

In the spring of 2003, pilot data were collected as part of requirements for both pre-doctoral project for the program of work and a qualitative research course. The pilot study shared the data set with a larger study in which the researcher was participating on “parents and teachers’ ideas and practices in the socialization and education of young children” (Suizzo, 2002). The larger study utilized survey questionnaires along with interviews as a second source of data. In that study, the interview protocol included both the questions for this particular study and the larger study. Besides the interview, other sources of data for the pilot study included a background information survey and field notes for each participant. The purpose of this particular study was: a) to pilot measures and methods, b) to provide the researcher with experience in conducting qualitative research, and c) to obtain information about the experience of immigrant parents’ rearing their children in a foreign country.

The pilot study data collected from the interviews were included as part of the analyses, coding, and categorization of the present study. The pilot study sample consisted of 4 immigrant Chinese mothers, ages 35 to 41 years. The sample was limited to mothers with children under the age of 8 due to the restriction of the larger study. All mothers in the pilot study had migrated from Taiwan, Republic of China, to the United

States. The mothers came to America when they were 11, 23, 31, and 31 years old, respectively. The duration of stay in America for the four mothers ranged from 8 to 28 years. The educational level of two mothers was post-graduate; one had a college degree; the other had 13 to 15 years of education. Three mothers were homemakers; one was an accountant. All participants were Christians with their religiosity level ranging from “a little important” to “extremely important.”

Three out of the four interviews were conducted in the homes of the participants, one in her office. Each interview took about 2 hours. If children were present during the interview, its duration was prolonged due to interruptions. Three mothers were more comfortable speaking in Mandarin Chinese during the interview while one spoke in English. For those interviews conducted in Chinese, the transcriptions were translated directly into English. The interviews were transcribed and analyzed using grounded theory procedures described in the methodological section of this chapter. Issues of translation will be discussed later in the chapter.

From the analyses, three core categories were identified to illustrate the processes of bi-cultural parenting strategies: *deviation*, *negotiation*, and *balance* of views about education and learning. All the participants experienced *negotiation* as a result of being exposed to both North American values and Chinese values. Participants’ responses to *negotiation* involved searching for the values, beliefs, and practices that they deemed as important and valuable from their parents, home, and host cultures. What contributed to their response to the negotiation was the conscious decision of *deviation* from the values, belief systems, and practices that they did not want to transmit to their children from their

parents, home, and host cultures. Efforts of deviation and negotiation finally determined how the *balance* or the conciliation of the two cultural values was achieved. *Balance* was the central goal of the model; however, *deviation* and *negotiation* did not necessarily lead to *balance*. *Balance* was not the final and only resolution of *negotiation*. This preliminary result contributed to current views of childrearing practices by considering the management of bi-cultural issues in the contexts of parenting.

These results demonstrated what previous research has suggested that traditional Chinese culture tends to emphasize academic achievement (R. Chao, 1996; Chen & Stevenson, 1995; Fuligni, 1997; Goyette & Xie, 1999; Hao & Bonsted-Bruns, 1998; Kao, 1995; Kim, Rendon, & Valdez, 1998; Lee, 1987; Okagaki & Frensch, 1998; Yao, 1985). After coming to America, these immigrant mothers experienced acculturation, and this process induced changes in their childrearing values and beliefs (Marin & Gamba, 2003). Moreover, these changes in values and beliefs caused by the acculturative process were shaped into a set of newly developed childrearing practices.

Nevertheless, variations still exist in this negotiation process, depending on the degree a parent is exposed personally to the host culture. Some factors contributing to this negotiation process due to acculturation might be the age of coming to the host country, duration of her stay in the host country, educational level attained in the home and host countries, working experience vs. stay-at-home housekeeper in host country, motivation and reasons for moving to the host country, attitude toward home and host countries, and her general adaptation capability and personal experience with the host culture.



From the interviews, the theme of “struggle” or “conflict” was not detected among the mothers. Somehow, they found a suitable way to deal with their current situation of bi-culturalism that worked for them. One reason may have been that their children were still very young (before school age) and that they might not have foreseen the problems they would possibly encounter later. Nonetheless, one mother stressed that the struggle and conflict did not lie within the parents who taught and socialized the children. Rather, this hard task would fall on the shoulders of the children of immigrants who experienced real struggles and conflicts within themselves in order to seek their own identity, Chinese or American, or both.

#### Revisions of the Pilot Study

Having reflected upon the procedures and the findings of the Pilot Study, I concluded that several revisions were needed for the interview protocol. Questions that aimed at participant perceptions of the general public were discarded because I was more interested in their personal perception of the parenting experience rather than that of the general. For example, I eliminated “Why do you think people have children in general?” or “What are some of the ‘conscious’ reasons that you think people might have decided to have children?” Some questions in the protocol were repetitive, and the participants would usually comment that their answers were the same as what they had said before.

One question asked, “What kinds of values do you want to transmit or teach your children?” That question is essentially the same as the questions “Are there things about your upbringing that you try to imitate in raising your own child?” and “Are there any

western/American ways of parenting practices that you are adopting to incorporate in teaching your own children?” Instead, the question was changed into, “From the values that you mentioned above, why are those values and goals important to you and how do you try to teach them to your child?”

One question asked, “What kind of occupation would you want your child to hold? What attributes of this kind of profession do you think are suitable for your child?” When the mothers were asked the first question, typically the mothers would say, “Anything s/he want” or “It depends on him/her.” In order to understand more about the mothers’ parenting goal, the second part of the question was reworded to, “What kind of professions do you think are suitable for your child and why?”

Other questions were added to gain more insight into the phenomenon. For instance, “When did you come to the U.S.?” “What were your reasons for moving to the U.S.? Staying in the U.S.?” These questions were important so as to achieve the goal of describing the contexts of mothers’ immigrating.

#### Revised Interview Protocol

The protocol was divided into six sections: 1) opening, 2) learning and teaching, 3) mother’s upbringing, 4) migration/bi-cultural issues, 5) long term goals and values, and 6) general (see Table A). In Table A, questions that appear in italics indicate protocol questions derived from the larger study. Each section tailors questions corresponding to rationales derived from literature reviews. The opening section consists of questions that ease participants into the conversation. The mothers were asked about

their decisions on becoming parents and their perception of the target child. The next section focuses on what the children have learned and how the parents have assisted in their learning process. Questions explore how the Chinese parents apply their beliefs regarding their children's development and learning (Chen, 1996; Chen & Stevenson, 1995; Huang, 1997; Jose et al., 2000; Kojima, 1986) and the type of support or involvement that parents provide for their children's education and schooling (R. Chao, 1996; Epstein, 1987; Keith et al., 1993; Yao, 1985).

The following section asks the immigrant mothers to reflect back on their own childhood while growing up in the eastern culture. Consistent with previous studies of intergenerational parenting, the interview protocol relied on the mothers' retrospective accounts of their childhood history. The concept of memory of parents or parental influence was especially prominent and essential in the Chinese culture because the Confucian tradition teaches that one should always think and reflect back to the ancestry to seek the source of origin, purpose, and goals of life (C. M. Chao, 2000). According to theories of intergenerational transmission, parents are the primary and most immediate source of transmission, and humans rely on this explicit social learning process to pass values onto their offspring (Goodnow, 1997; Jacobvitz et al., 1991; Whiten, 2000). Therefore, the influence of the parents of the immigrant parents is expected through their childrearing practices and beliefs for the next generation.

The fourth section on migration and bi-culturalism employs the social network perspective that links migrants in the contexts of migration and of social integration, both in home and host societies at the familial level of analysis (Nauck & Settles, 2001).

Questions here ask the participants to discuss at length the influence of home and host cultures on their childrearing decisions. Due to the qualitative nature of the study, perceptions of the participants guided the identification of Taiwanese-Chinese and U.S. European American cultural values. Pros and cons of both cultural values were compared and contrasted in the context of childrearing decisions. Parents were also asked if there were any perceived difficulties in finding a balance between the American way and the Chinese way of parenting. Issues on the importance of ethnicity in raising children were also discussed -- how the parent might see, label, treat, and teach her child, as an American, a Chinese, or a Chinese-American. A hypothetical question was also posed to the parents – might they have felt differently about raising children if they had stayed in their own home country? In addition, participants were asked to detail their reasons for migration, the age of migration and the duration of stay in America.

Questions of the next section deal with values that parents wish to instill upon their children and long-term goals they expect from their children. Childrearing beliefs and practices that are transmitted through means of generations and cultures were anticipated to manifest in the responses of this section (Goodnow, 1997; Marin & Gamba, 2003). Explicit examples were asked from the mothers on how they had tried to teach the values that they deemed as important to their children. Responses here were compared and corresponded with the previous two sections: mother's upbringing and migration/bi-culture issues. Also, the mothers were asked to envision their children's adult future - what the parents expected the children to become and what would happen if they did not turn out as they hoped.

Table 3.1  
Interview Protocol

Opening

- 1) First of all, I'd like to ask you to tell me a little about yourself in regard to children.

When did you first make the decision that you would have children?

Why did you make that decision of having children?

How old were you when you got married? Had your first child?

Can you describe a discussion with your partner/spouse/friends/parents about your wanting to have children?

What sort of issues did the discussion come up? (e.g., planned/unplanned, sex preferences, birth order, birth spacing, number of children, etc.)

What do you think the "value of children" to you?

- 2) *Now, I'd like to ask you to talk a little bit about your child -- how would you describe him/her? How would you describe his/her personality?*

*What kind of temperament does he/she have?*

*What kind of child is he/she?*

Learning and Teaching

- 3) *Do you believe that your child is learning new things? What does s/he enjoy doing? Are there things that your child really enjoys learning -- what are those things? What kinds of things do you think he/she has learned in the past year?*
- 4) *(Pick one of the things that mother suggested and ask for details on how the child*

*learned that thing.) Did you do anything to help or teach or encourage him/her to learn that? What did you do to help him/her learn? Did you find it easy or difficult to teach or help him/her learn that -- why? What do you do when your child is having difficulty learning something that you are trying to teach or show him/her? How do you encourage him/her to deal with the difficulty?*

*How did you help him?*

*What did you do to teach him/her?*

*Do you push him/her to keep trying?*

*Do you offer him/her a reward or do you encourage him/her with words or with affection?*

- 5) *What do you think are the most important things that young children need to learn before going to school (kindergarten)? Why do you think those things are so important, and why do you think they need to learn those things before going to school?*
- 6) *Have you or another family member done anything to help your child learn those things?*
- 7) *Does your child attend a day care center or preschool? (If no, skip to the next question).*

*What kinds of things do you think your child has learned in this preschool?*

*Do you think these things are important?*

*What do you think your child gets out of being in this preschool that he/she*

*doesn't get at home?*

*What is it about the preschool teacher's way of teaching that is different from how you teach your child(ren)?*

**Mother's Own Upbringing**

- 8) *Now I'm going to ask you a few questions about your own childhood and your family when you were growing up: Where did you grow up? How many people were there in your family? Where were you raised? (Ask questions to get a general sense of the respondent's home environment and family climate.)*
- 9) *What kind of relationship did you have with your mother and father? What kind of upbringing do you consider your parents have given you? What did they teach you or give you that you consider important?*
- Did you feel close to your mother? Did you feel close to your father?*
- Were your parents (or mother or father) strict, affectionate, easy to talk to, or demanding?*
- What are the important lessons that you have learned from your parents?*
- 10) *Are there things about your own upbringing that you try to imitate/reproduce in raising your own child, and others that you try to avoid reproducing?*
- What are the things that you liked so much about how you were raised that you try to do with your own child(ren)?*
- What are the things that you didn't like and you try not to do with your child(ren)?*

Migration/Bi-Cultural Issues

11) When did you come to the U.S.?

What were your reasons for moving to the U.S.? Staying in the U.S.?

12) Do you think your ethnicity has influenced you in rearing your child?

Do you think you bring in any of your ethnicity background in teaching your child?

Are there any upbringing practices which you valued so much from your own culture that you are teaching your child?

Are there any upbringing practices that you want to discard from your own culture and would avoid teaching your child?

Are there any western/American ways of parenting practices that you are adopting to be incorporated in teaching your own children?

Do you perceive any difficulties or struggles in finding a compromise between the American way and the Chinese way of parenting?

If so, what? If not, how do you compromise?

13) Do you think it is important to teach your child about ethnicity?

What would you label your child, an American, a Chinese, an American-Chinese, or a Chinese-American? Why?

Do you treat and teach your child as an American or a Chinese or both?

What does your child think s/he is (an American or a Chinese – if the child is old enough)?



Do you think you might feel differently about how to raise your children if you stayed in your own country?

Long-term Goals and Values

14) *Do you believe that you have some influence over the future life of your child? If so, what goals do you have for your child's future?*

How do you envision your child's future?

Where do you see your children in their adulthood?

*What kind of adults do you hope he/she will become?*

15) *What is the worst thing that you can imagine that could happen to your child in his/her adulthood -- what could happen that would make you feel as if you'd failed in raising of your child?*

16) *Is it important to you that your child(ren) receive a good education? What would you consider to be a good or satisfactory education? How much education do you hope that your child will receive? What do you think are the benefits of receiving that level of education? What do you think might be the consequences of not receiving that level of education?*

17) *Do you think there are things that you can do as a parent to help your child succeed in school and obtain that level of education? Are there things that might make it difficult for you to do those things or to help your child with school?*

18) *What kind of occupation would you want your child to hold? What kind of profession do you think are suitable for your child?*

### General

- 19) What aspect of your relationship with your children is the most important and valuable to you? How would you see your function as a parent to your child? (e.g., a disciplinarian, a provider, a leader, a teacher, a nurturer, an entertainer, a bystander, a child's keeper, etc.) What is your role in your children's lives versus your spouse's (husband)? What do you hope your children to remember you as, other than just a parent?
- 20) What do you expect from your children? What do you hope they will be able to provide you in return? Do you believe your children have a purpose in life for you as a parent? What can your children offer to make you satisfied in life?

The interview concluded with a section that asked about the participants' parent-child relationship more broadly. Mothers were asked to discuss their role as parents in comparison with their spouses'. Mothers were also asked to rank their enjoyment and satisfaction of being a parent from a scale of 1 to 9, 9 being the highest.

### Main Study

#### Approval by the Human Subjects Committee

This study complied with the ethical standards of research as required by both the American Psychological Association and the University of Texas at Austin. Before the original study began, the research materials were submitted to and approved by the Institutional Review Board of the University of Texas at Austin.

### Recruitment

Initial contacts were made through local churches, Chinese schools, daycares and personal social networks. Fifteen participants were interviewed, eight were recruited from the Chinese school, two were personal friends, one was from the local church, and four were recruited during the pilot study. Permissions were sought by center directors or supervisors to distribute recruitment letters (see Appendix A) and background information survey (see Appendix B) to target mothers or primary caregivers. After voluntary participants returned their recruitment forms and background information surveys, phone calls were made to establish contact and schedule appointments for the interview. Locations of the interview were selected based on the convenience of the participants -- their homes, offices, or any public places.

### Participants

The final sample of fifteen mothers who were Asian-origin Taiwanese-Chinese mothers lived in a Texas metropolitan area at the time of this study. Two other mothers were excluded from the study because one was born in China and the other in Malaysia. One mother was included in the study even though she was born in California, U.S.A. because she moved back to Taiwan when she was only three months old. The remaining fourteen mothers in the study were all first generation Chinese immigrants born in Taiwan, Republic of China, and had spent the majority of their childhood in Taiwan prior to migrating to the United States. The spouses of thirteen participants were also from Taiwan, R.O.C.; one husband was a Taiwanese Malaysian, and the other was a Cantonese Brazilian. All mothers in the study were classified the first generation Chinese

immigrants because both their parents and all of their grandparents were born in mainland China or in Taiwan. Most research on immigrants confounds generational status, combining newly arrived immigrants, first-generation, second-generation, and even third-generation immigrants in a single category (Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2001). This poses a major methodological flaw. The experiences of recently arrived immigrants are in some ways unique and must be analytically isolated from issues facing the subsequent U.S.-born generations. Therefore, this particular study had strict criteria for participation.

The average age when the mothers came to America was 24.8 years old ( $SD = 6.77$ ) and the range was from 11 to 35 years. The average period of time the mothers had stayed in the United States was 12.5 years ( $SD = 6.38$ ) and the range was from 5 years to 28 years. The mothers were all residents of the United States, married and living with spouses, had given birth to at least one child in the United States between the ages of one and eight years old.

The average age of the mothers was 37.3 years ( $SD = 3.94$ ) and the range was from 32 to 44 years. Two mothers had one child, eleven mothers had two children, and two mothers had three children. All target children were under the age of eight. The mean age of the target child of each mother was about five years and eight months old ( $SD = 1.87$ ). Six mothers had a child between seven and eight years old, six mothers had a child between five and six years old, two mothers had one child between three and four years old, and one mothers' child was under two years old. Among the target children, there were twelve girls and three boys in this sample. Seven target children were the first

or only born, and eight children were the last born. Thirteen out of fifteen target children had one or two siblings. Birth order and gender variables will be discussed in further detail in the Discussion Chapter.

Table 3.2: Gender & Birth Order of All Children

	1 <sup>st</sup> Born	2 <sup>nd</sup> Born	3 <sup>rd</sup> Born
Balanced 2	Girl, 13 yrs	<b>Girl, 7 yrs</b>	
Chinese 1	<b>Girl, 5.5 yrs</b>	Boy, 2 yrs	
Struggle 4	<b>Girl, 5 yrs</b>	Girl, 4 yrs	
American 1	Girl, 9 yrs	<b>Boy, 5 yrs</b>	
Struggle 7	Boy, 9 yrs	<b>Girl, 5 yrs</b>	
Struggle 6	Boy, 9 yrs	<b>Girl, 3 yrs</b>	
Struggle 2	<b>Boy, 7 yrs</b>	Girl, 1.5 yrs	
Struggle 3	Boy, 12 yrs	<b>Girl, 8 yrs</b>	
Struggle1	<b>Girl, 6 yrs</b>	Girl, 2.5 yrs	
Balanced 3	Boy, 10 yrs	<b>Girl, 6 yrs</b>	
Balanced 1	Girl, 11.5 yrs	Boy, 10 yrs	<b>Girl, 15 mos</b>
Chinese 2	Boy, 16 yrs	Girl, 14 yrs	<b>Girl, 8 yrs</b>
Chinese 3	<b>Girl, 7 yrs</b>		
Balanced 4	<b>Girl, 4 yrs</b>	Boy, 22 mos	
Struggle 5	<b>Boy, 7 yrs</b>		

All mothers were considered middle class, as measured by their educational levels. One mother had completed 13 to 15 years of school, seven mothers had Bachelor's degrees, six mothers had earned the equivalent of a Master's degree, and one mother had a Ph.D. at the time of interview. Despite the fact that these mothers were well-educated, twelve mothers were homemakers (three had worked in Taiwan.) while two were software engineers, one accountant, one research scientist, one home-based

businesswoman, and one part-time student. Seven participants were Protestants, one was a Catholic; two were Buddhists, two were Not Sure, and three had No Religion.

#### Background Information Survey

(See Appendix B) Each participant filled out a background information sheet, which indicated the socio-demographic information, such as current age, age at bearing her first child, age when first coming to the United States, birthplace of self, parents and grandparents, age and gender of child(ren), ethnicity of spouse, current family constellation, education level, current occupation, religiosity, etc.

#### Participant Interview

The main portion of the interview (see Table 3.1) consisted of parental narratives from the mother. Each mother was asked to talk in detail about (1) her perception of the target child, (2) memory of her parents and own upbringing when she was growing up, (3) discussions of childrearing decision, (4) role of parenting, (5) influence of home culture and western culture in parenting, (6) conflict between cultures, (7) cultural identity for children, (8) long term goals and values for children, and (9) expectation from children. At the end of the interview, participants were asked to give a retrospective rating of their satisfaction and enjoyment as parents on the scale from 1 to 9, and 9 was the highest satisfaction. Each interview took approximately one and a half to two hours depending on the verbosity of the participants. All interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed.

Locations of the interview were selected based on the convenience of the participants: eleven chose to be interviewed at their homes, one at her office, one at a public library, one at a Chinese school/church, and the last at a laboratory.

### Transcription

All interview recordings were transcribed into text form verbatim. For those mothers who were more comfortable speaking in Mandarin Chinese, their interviews were conducted in Chinese, and the interviews were translated directly into English by the researcher. I am fluent in speaking, reading, and writing the Chinese language. When I was employed previously, I used both English and Chinese to deal with the needs of the clientele. Occasionally, I serve as a translator at my church during sermon delivery.

Due to the nature of the study, the interview responses about cultural values were quite difficult to translate. In the transcriptions of a difficult phrase or concept, I first typed it with its phonetic transcription. Then, attempts were made to explain the meaning and the context of a phrase or a concept. Oftentimes, the mothers used Chinese idioms and axioms to illustrate their beliefs and attitudes. Some examples of these maxims include Confucian terminologies found in the Analects and the Trimetrical Classic. Many cultural concepts and maxims specific to Chinese do not have direct translations in the English language. Thus, I relied upon English-Chinese dictionary, Chinese-English dictionary, Mandarin lexicon, Chinese etymological dictionary, Chinese-English encyclopedic handbook, and other bi-lingual scholars for a clear interpretation of the phrases or sayings.

Although the analysis was based upon the English translation of the data, in order to avoid losing the integrity of the original interview, difficult or cultural-specific passages were documented in Chinese with memos during the translation/translation and coding process.

### Field Notes

In addition to the actual interview, I recorded field notes after the interview to be used in data analysis. Field notes included what was said in the first phone contact. They then described the process of the interview, such as first impressions of the participants, the surroundings of the interview (e.g., their living premises, etc.), the flow of the interview, communication style of the participants, reactions of the participants toward the questions, and the observation of the mother-child interaction if children were present. The notes also included any events after the interview (after the tape was turned off), such as what the mothers thought about their parenting experience, questions about the research or the researcher, or the interview itself. In the event of transcription, remarks were added on when the dialogue sparked any reactions on the researcher's part.

In case of questions concerning the interview itself, to validate the data, field notes helped keep a record of contact of the participants and the settings in which the data were collected. Also, any observation notes of the setting and between the mothers and children added useful information that supplements the interview. An example is noted below.

During the interview, her younger daughter (not the target child) would come near her and go at times. The little girl behaved quite well for a 3-year-old. Whenever



the mother spoke with the daughter, she would speak to her daughter in English.

The linguistic ability of the daughter was not quite developed. She only mumbled words which I could not make out.

This situation quite fascinated me because I was personally surprised that she would speak English entirely to her 3-year-old child. It turned out that she was quite troubled about the linguistic ability of her firstborn son when he entered pre-school.

Even though the mother spoke Mandarin during the interview, she spoke to her child entirely in English. She indicated that she leaned more toward the Chinese way of childrearing. The degree of observation of the parent-child interaction affected the analysis of the interview as in this case the language spoken during the interview and language spoken at home (with children) were taken into consideration for bi-cultural childrearing beliefs and practices.

### Data Analysis

According to Erlandson et al. (1993), there is an inseparable relationship between data collection and data analysis in qualitative research, both occurring simultaneously throughout the study. Lincoln and Guba (1985) also noted that, “data analysis involves taking constructions gathered from the context and reconstructing them into meaningful wholes.” This study approached qualitative data analysis in a three-step process involving (a) organizing the data, (b) generating categories, themes and patterns and, finally, (c) considering alternative interpretations. This process involved intense coding

procedure of *open coding*, *axial coding*, and *selective coding* that began after the first interview, and new categories were added with subsequent interviews. “Coding represents the operations by which data are broken down, conceptualized, and put back together in new ways” (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p.57).

As mentioned previously, all mothers’ interviews were audio-recorded, translated, and transcribed. In analyzing the data, coding procedures described in Strauss and Corbin (1990) and constant comparative analysis (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) were used. In constant comparative analysis, data are constantly compared and analyzed, thereby assisting the investigator in identifying conceptual categories and in the development of a theoretical explanation of the phenomena that are being studied. In addition, constant comparative analysis may be used to verify theory, either theory that has emerged from the data or existing theory. In this study, constant comparative analysis was used to identify categories and to verify the theory that was developed over the course of the investigation.

Although the steps in the data analysis will be described sequentially, the iterative nature of the analysis must be emphasized. Some steps occurred simultaneously and at times the direction reversed. As part of the attempt to generate a theoretical model from the data, data collection, coding, and analysis were intermingled.

Open coding of the transcripts of the mothers’ interviews began the analysis procedure. In organizing the data, examination of responses was made for each question across the interviews. Strauss and Corbin (1990) terms this step as *open coding*, which “opens up” the data by breaking the interviews down into categories as small as recurring

words or phrases. The larger interview is broken down into discrete parts, or categories, to be closely examined and compared for similarities and differences in order to clarify questions about the phenomena as reflected in the data. Thus, data collected were broken down into discrete parts, closely examined, and compared for similarities and differences according to one of the main themes, education and learning, emerged from Asian parenting literatures (R. Chao & Tseng, 2002). Events, actions, ideas, and beliefs that were found to be conceptually similar in nature or related in meaning were color-coded, labeled, and grouped under this concept. As each phenomenon or incident is coded, the “comparative” aspect of this method comes into play. Glaser and Strauss (1967) described this as the “basic, defining rule for the constant comparative method” (p.106). Each incident or concept is compared to previously coded incidents for similarity and differences. Some codes are repeated frequently and others are found only once or twice in all of the data.

Grouping concepts or incidents revealed the categories of data evident in the transcripts. For instance, under the category *Heuristic Style of Learning*, five properties emerged in which immigrant parents exposed their children to various resources of learning experiences: *community*, *social*, *religion*, *activity*, and *routine* (see figure 1).

Within the *activity* subcategory, three subjects surfaced: *extracurricular lessons*, *leisure*, and *electronic media*. Four concepts stemmed from *leisure*: *toys*, *play*, *reading*, and *arts and craft*. For *reading*, five different properties emerged: *genre* (e.g., fiction, non-fiction), *print* (e.g., book, magazine, newspaper), *time* (when the parents spend time reading with their children), *place* (location in which the parents read with their children),

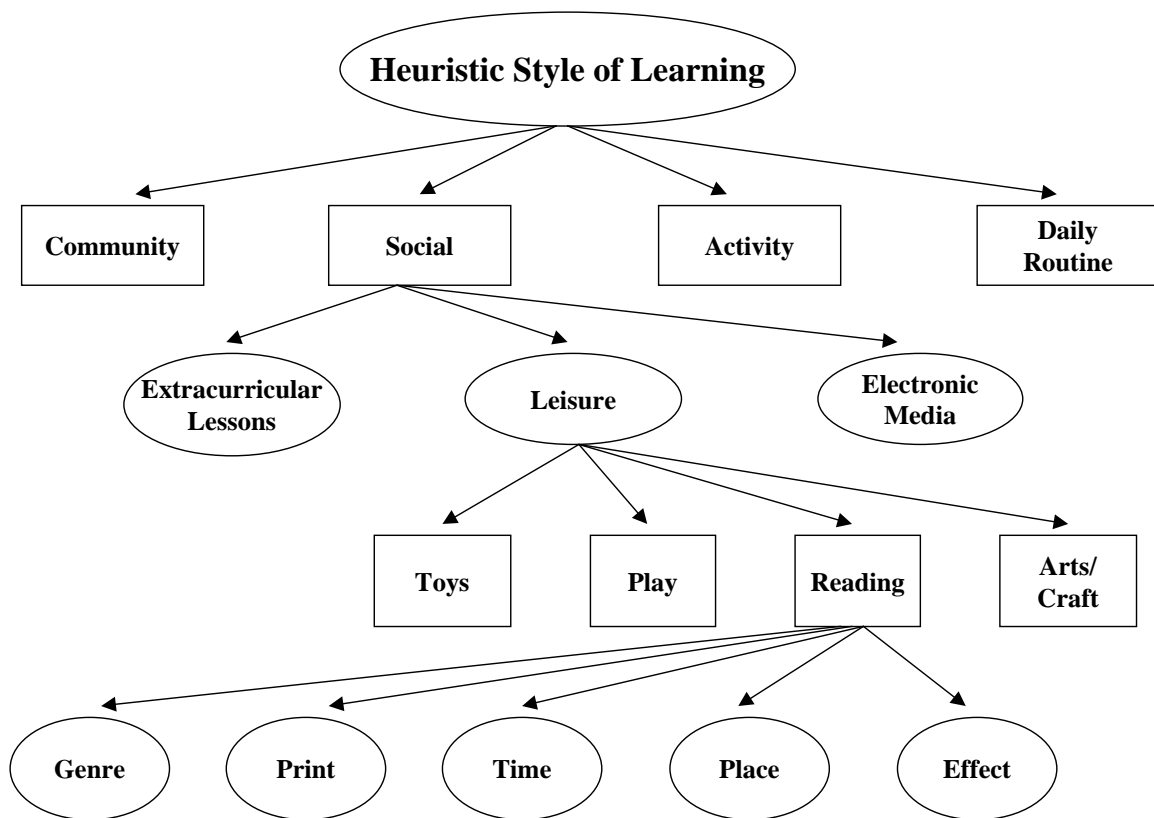


Figure 1: Example of Open Coding

and *effect* (the interaction or result parents hoped to achieve when reading with their children).

During the process of categorization, the investigator asks questions of the data, building the dimensions of each category identified (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). The documentation of steps, such as asking questions of the data occurred in the form of code notes and memos. Early notes were made directly on each transcript. As these accumulated, additional code notes and theoretical memos were entered into a word processing program. The “second rule of the constant comparative method” (Glaser &

Strauss, 1967, p.107) is to stop coding at certain points during data analysis and record ideas on memos.

Transcripts of the interviews with the immigrant mothers and field notes were analyzed. Conceptual labels were formed from the transcripts and tallied. Concepts were then grouped together to form tentative categories. The emerging categories were hierarchical, abstracted units that contained subcategories resulting from the open coding. These categories later became conceptual units of the emerging theory. This open coding was supplemented by the use of code notes, theoretical notes, and operational notes (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

The next coding strategy that was used to analyze the data was *axial coding*. Strauss and Corbin (1990) discussed axial coding as a process of reconstructing the various categories and concepts identified in open coding to make connections and relationships between categories or between a category and its sub-categories. Following the paradigm model suggested by Strauss and Corbin (1990), categories established in open coding were organized as to contexts, intervening variables, causes/conditions, action/interaction strategies, the phenomena itself or consequences of the phenomena. The phenomenon refers to the central idea of *balance in bi-cultural childrearing*, the event around which the categories that have emerged from open coding are organized. The context represents both the specific set of properties, or characteristics of the phenomenon, and the particular set of conditions within which the action/interaction strategies are taken. These action/interaction strategies, which comprise immigrant mothers' *disciplinary method*, "*Chance Education*," *Child-Inspired education*, and

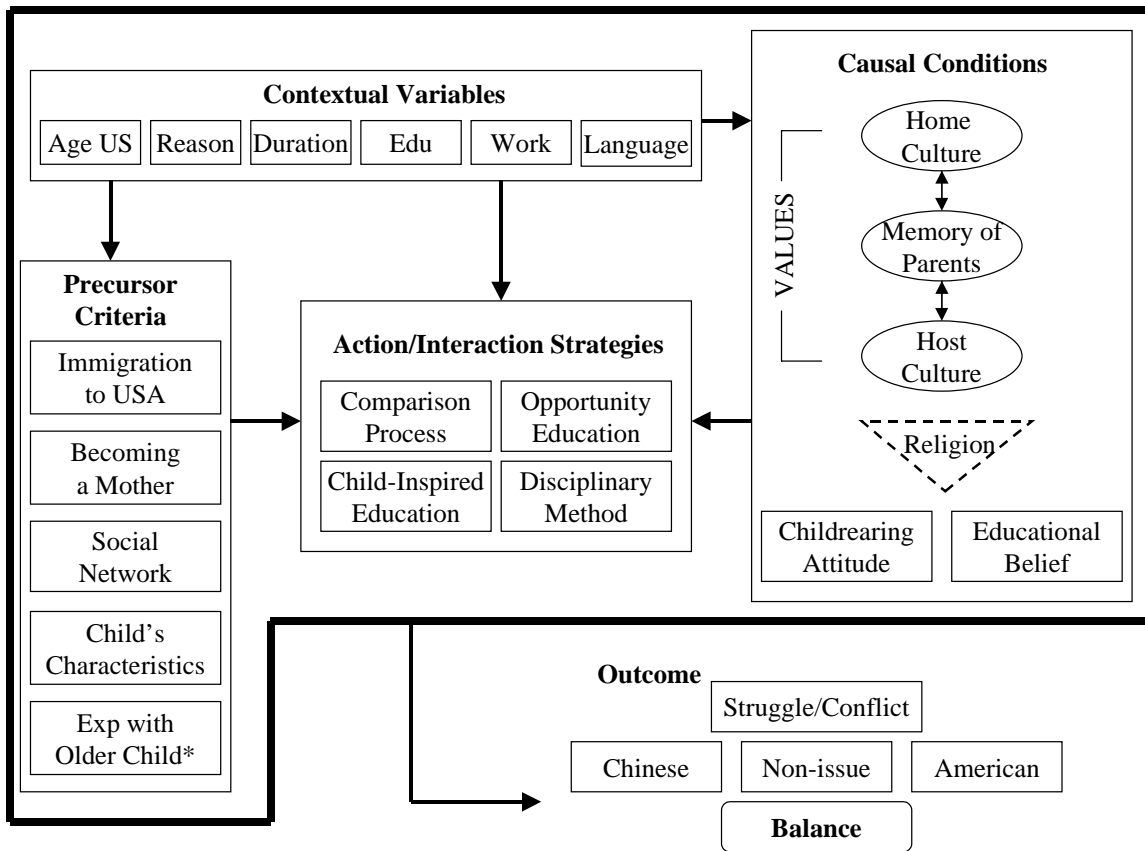


Figure 2: Axial Coding

*comparison process*, are purposeful and goal-oriented in nature and are enacted in order to manage the phenomenon of interest. The causal conditions, which included the *values* from home/host cultures and from the grandparents, which decidedly form the mother's *childrearing attitude* and *educational beliefs* are those conditions that facilitate or constrain the action/interaction strategies taken within the context. Precursor conditions, which consisted of *immigration to USA*, *becoming a mother*, *social network*, *child's characteristics*, and *experience with the older child*, are those events or incidents that

lead to the occurrence of development of the phenomenon. Finally, the outcomes, or consequences of the phenomenon, namely, different variations of *balance* are the result of the interaction of the contextual/intervening variables, the causal conditions, and the action/interaction strategies upon the phenomenon. As categories were created and patterns of relationships began to be constructed, variations of responses within each category were identified and addressed for the sake of pursuing the research question (See Figure 2).

*Selective coding* was the third and final type of coding to which the data were subjected in this study. It was used to relate the core phenomenon to the other categories that emerged from the data and to validate these relationships. It was at this time in the analysis that the “story line” was explicated, the “core category” was identified and other categories were described in relationship to the core category (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Theoretical notes, memos, and diagrams were drafted to explore the core category. Based on the transcripts and categories identified through the open and axial coding processes, the transcripts were reduced into short stories that conveyed the important information regarding the childrearing perspectives of Chinese immigrant mothers. A revisiting of the literature was necessary, providing a secondary source of data which enhanced the completion of the story line and the core process. Strauss and Corbin (1990) stated that using the literature in tandem with primary data increases the theoretical sensitivity of the investigator and enhances the conceptual richness of the theory. As a result, the core category of *compromise: change in cultural values about education and learning* was developed in terms of its properties and dimensional range

and how other categories related to this core category. Eventually, a major category, or central phenomenon, was formed around which all the other categories will be clustered. This cluster of concepts and sets of relational statements were used to explain the general phenomenon of change in immigrant Chinese mothers' views about education and learning.

### Methods to Assure Validity

Implementation of scientific rigor is important in all research. The challenge with grounded theory is knowing what issues to assess and whether the findings are trustworthy. Glaser and Strauss (1967) proposed that results can be published with confidence when one is certain that the analytic framework forms a systematic, accurate statement of the matters studied. Guba and Lincoln (1985) recommended that trustworthiness be established through the following attributes: transferability (generalizability), dependability, and credibility.

#### Transferability

The concept of transferability is comparable to the concept of generalizability or external validity in the conventionalist tradition. In the establishment of grounded theory, conditions that give rise to specific actions or interactions pertaining to a given phenomenon and its specific consequences are to be specified. To account for transferability, the context must be provided with full and accurate description necessary to enable future scientists interested in making a transfer to reach a conclusion about whether transfer can be considered as a possibility. In this study, transferability was



obtained by developing dense (thick) descriptions of the participants and their socio-cultural context (Guba, 1981). It is necessary for the contexts to be similar in order to test the applicability of a grounded theory to similar circumstances. Therefore, detailed contextual information was gathered from participants about their beliefs, attitudes, and experiences of parenting. This resulted in extended descriptions and provided additional assurance as to whether the characteristics of one sample provide the best fit for another sample. One limitation of this study was a sampling issue. Since the participants were self-selected, they might be representative of women who contemplate about parenting issues more than other mothers. Thus, the reader must determine whether the decisions made by the participants of this study would fit for immigrant mothers in a different context. In addition to the descriptions of the participants, the researcher developed tables (see Appendix D) that described each participant on specific characteristics or categories so that the similarities and differences of experiences would be easy to compare.

#### Dependability

Dependability in grounded theory research represents the concept of reliability, or replicability. To demonstrate dependability, another researcher should yield the same theoretical explanation given the same theoretical perspective of the original researchers and following the same general rules for gathering and analyzing data, under similar conditions. Dependability was obtained through standardized questions asked of all participants consequently allowing a consistent method of comparison. Dependability was further improved with consistency in data collection and analysis methods.

Extensive field notes, code notes, theoretical notes and graphical models were kept throughout the study. In this way the methodology insured that the categories were indeed derived from the data and that the process by which the data were collected, analyzed and interpreted are such that an external auditor could follow it in an “audit trail” (Guba, 1981).

### Credibility

Credibility represents the researcher’s declaration that the participants have been accurately and truthfully represented (Guba, 1981). Credibility entails the assurance that the explanations or assertions offered by the researcher accurately represent the phenomenon (i.e., the theory does not omit important categories or inaccurately depict relationship). This concept stems from the notion that there is no one single truth; rather, there are multiple realities and those should be accurately represented in research. In this study, the research used structured interviews and had each participant narrate her experience to better understand her perspective. Documentation of transcriptions and field notes assured that the findings were empirically based to guarantee credibility. The method of constant comparative analysis provided the foundation for credibility due to the different properties and dimensions of categories emerge during the analysis.

Another way of assuring credibility was through testing the proposed model on participants whose experiences had not been included in the initial development of the theoretical model. In order to build credibility, the proposed model was tested by using a hold-out sample and applying the existing model to it. Four random un-coded transcripts were especially excluded from the original analysis until the initial development of the

theoretical model had been done. After the analysis of these four transcripts through the open and axial coding process, the researcher applied the existing model to each participant's experience. The hold-out sample not only closely resembled the original sample in its demographic characteristics and category-formation, but also corresponded with the existing model without any further revision. Consequently, the existing theoretical model was warranted by retaining its explanatory power.

Credibility was also assured by meeting regularly with supervisors to review findings. During the development of this theoretical model, the researcher met with a dissertation committee member who has expertise in grounded theory methodology in order to discuss the findings and the evolving theory. The research also met with another dissertation committee member whose expertise is in the parent-child relationship in multi-cultural contexts. The meetings began in the initial stage of pilot study with the researcher's participation in a research group and attendance in a qualitative methodology class. The committee members read transcripts and critiqued early stages of the coding in order to verify the credibility of the researcher's findings. As the analysis of the data progressed, feedback was provided.

#### Author's Biases

Being a Chinese immigrant myself, I consider the transition from one's home country to a foreign one an intricate process. I do not believe that the dominant socio-cultural perspective provides an adequate or complete explanation of parenting experience of Asian immigrants. As a researcher, I believe there are multiple influences that affect the way immigrants deal with the dual-society and the way parents choose

their childrearing decisions. Other than the apparent acculturative factors, there are economic, familial, societal, cultural factors that play a significant role in how immigrants parent their children in the United States.

My own personal migration experience differs slightly from the participants because I came to the States as a young immigrant child of eleven with my parents, rather than as an adult who had a child in the foreign country. Nevertheless, my bi-cultural “insider’s” background was kept from influencing my inferences and observation by working to maintain an unbiased point of view. Through standardized questions that were asked of all participants, dependability was achieved allowing a consistent method of comparison.

As a married woman who is considering starting a family, I have a personal interest in discovering what factors influence the decision-making processes for Chinese immigrant women in the United States in managing parenting with cultural and familial issues. My goal in conducting this research is to use my own theoretical sensitivity as a tool, while remaining vigilant to assure the trustworthiness of the study.

## CHAPTER IV: RESULTS

This section will first present the central phenomenon in relation to its categories emerging from the data. The presentation of results will then center on the three primary processes that characterize the immigrant mothers' formulation of bi-cultural childrearing strategies. A narrative of the model will represent the results from the qualitative study, as well as some descriptive quantitative aspects. All quotes will be direct transcriptions reflecting the natural pauses and punctuation that occur in verbal language, and will not necessarily be grammatically correct, although allowances need to be made for translation into English.

### The Central Phenomenon

I generated a substantive theory that revolved around the core categories of *deviation*, *accommodation*, and *balance* of views about education and learning. All the participants have experienced *accommodation* as a result of being exposed to both North American values and the Chinese values. Participants' responses to *accommodation* involved searching for the values, beliefs, and practices that they deemed important and valuable from their parents, home, and host cultures. What contributed to their response to accommodation was the conscious decision of *deviation* from the values, belief systems, and practice that they did not want to transmit to their children from their parents, home, or host cultures. Efforts of *deviation* and *accommodation* finally determined how the *balance* or the conciliation of the two cultural values was achieved.

*Balance* is the central goal of the model; however, *deviation* and *accommodation* do not necessarily lead to *balance*. *Balance* is not the final and only resolution of *accommodation*. Other plausible consequences of change in values and beliefs due to acculturation are identified in a later section.

### Categories

The following section describes the major categories that emerged from the data collected in this study and the relationship of these categories to the central phenomenon of bi-cultural childrearing. Each category comprises specific properties that support the classification of the category.

### Contextual Variables

The first categories to arise from open coding of the data dealt with contextual issues. These categories described the pre-existing condition that the immigrant mothers brought to the processes.

Each immigrant mother brought a unique set of demographics to the mechanism of bi-cultural childrearing. These included the age coming to the U.S., the reason for migration, and the duration of stay in the U.S. In addition, the mother's working experience and education obtained in both Taiwan and U.S. were set variables for any given bi-cultural childrearing strategies. The language spoken primarily at home and during the interview (e.g., Mandarin Chinese, Taiwanese dialect, or English) also contributed to the outcome. In this sample, the following patterns appeared to emerge. Mothers who came to the host country earlier (i.e., who had been here for at least half of

Table 4.1  
Contextual Variables

Classi- fication	Age USA	Reason	Dura- tion	TW edu	US edu	Home	TW work	US work	Lang Int	Lang H	Fam Comp
Outcome	Age When Coming to USA	Reason for Migration	Duration of Stay in USA (Years)	Highest Education Obtained in Taiwan (Years)	Education Obtained in USA (Years)	Stay-At- Home Mom (Y/N)	Work in Taiwan (Y/N)	Work in USA (Y/N)	Language Spoken during Interview	Language Spoken at Home w/Ch	Grand- parents visit (Y/N)
Balanced	11	Family	21	6	16	Y	N	Y	EN	Mix	No
Balanced	11	Family	28	6	7-18	Y	N	Y	EN	Mix	No
Balanced	21	Study	17	16	17-22	N	N	Y	EN	EN	Yes
Balanced	27	Marriage	6	16	0	Y	N	N	Mix	CH/TW	No
Struggle	26	Study	6	16	17-18	Y	N	Y	Mix	Mix	No
Struggle	26	Study	9	16	17-18	Y	-	N	CH	CH	No
Struggle	27	Study	14	16	13-18	N	Y	Y	CH	CH	No
Struggle	23	Study	12	16	17-18	Y	N	N	CH	CH	No
Struggle	23	Marriage	19	16	0	Y	Y	Y	CH	CH	Yes
Struggle	24	Study	12	16	17-18	Y	-	Y	CH	EN	No
Struggle	24	Marriage	9	16	0	Y	Y	N	CH	CH	Yes
Chinese	31	Marriage	8	16	0	Y	N	N	CH	CH	No
Chinese	32	Marriage	12	16	0	Y	-	N	Mix	CH/TW	Yes
Chinese	35	Job	5	16	0	Y	Y	N	CH	CH	No
American	31	Marriage	10	15	0	N	-	Y	CH	CH	No

their lives), had lived in the host country the longest (i.e., for about half of their lives), had obtained about the same years of education in the home country as in the host country, and spoke English fluently tended to be more *balanced* mothers. These individual were exposed to the host society just as much as they were to the home society. They came to the bi-cultural childrearing situation with better understanding of both cultures and merged both cultural values in their childrearing attitudes and educational beliefs. Conversely, those immigrants with no working experience in the host country, who came to the U.S. later in life, who did not receive any education in the host country, and who spoke little or no English were less acculturated to the host culture.

They tended to use more Chinese values and beliefs in their childrearing strategies than those who worked and received education in the U.S. Immigrant mothers who experienced conflict or struggles in their bi-cultural childrearing came to the U.S. later than those who were *balanced*. However, these mothers had more working experience and education obtained in the home society. The *struggling* mothers also had more working experience in the host country than those mothers who leaned toward the *Chinese* way of parenting.

The family composition of the immigrant family deserves special attention. Struggles and conflicts about the childrearing based upon the different cultural values were much more apparent when grandparents, whose value systems were mostly based upon the home culture, were present.

All of the immigrant families in this sample were classified as nuclear families which consisted of family members of not more than a father, a mother, and child(ren). Most, if not all, of the immigrants' extended family were still in the home country or not living near the immigrants' residence. All of the grandparents, the parents of the immigrant mothers, and parents-in-law were still residing in Taiwan at the time of the interview. One parent's mother had come to the United States to visit and was present at the interview. Four immigrant mothers admitted to a change of family dynamics when the older generation became involved with childrearing issues of the grandchildren. One mother recounted her experience with difference in childrearing when her parents came visit.



If my parents were here and they're watching my kids eating, they'd think my kids are going crazy when eating because, you know, my son, he would just move around. He never sits still. If we were in Taiwan, I'm sure my parents would tell him, "Sit still!" "Eat." And, "Don't move!" And I'm sure a lot of things, "Hold your bowl with your left hand." Those kinds of manner things. I'm just more relaxed in that.

Another mother found it difficult to explain to her mother-in-law her parenting strategies.

When I live with my mother-in-law, I'd have conflicts with her. Because her concept is, "Why are you still doing it wrong? Why don't you scold him? Why are you on his side and put in good words for him? Why aren't you teaching the kids?" If I try to explain, she'd think that I'm trying to protect the kids and spoil the kids. But I'm saying, no, actually when I was at that age, I'd do the same thing too, and what kind of method should I try to talk to him now? But my mother-in-law would be like, "If it were me, I'd just hit him. You're spoiling the kid!" So it's like that. You know? It's really hard. I don't want to please my mother-in-law and hit the kids. It's actually hurting my heart. So sometimes, it's hard when you're stuck in-between. So I think it's a good thing if you don't have to live with in-laws because you can't change the beliefs of the older generation. Even if you get them to agree with you on one thing, the next thing you cannot get them to understand again. It's very tiring.

The other immigrant mother was blamed by her own mother for not teaching the grandchildren the "right way."

I encountered a lot of conflicts and differences of opinion about childrearing when my parents came to the States to live with us. <laugh> Because they are only here for a short visit, a month or two, when they say, “Why do you do this?” or wonder why my kids do certain things, I feel that it’s because they are not here for a longer duration of the time. They’re not so familiar with us, so they cannot see everything, so sometimes they might want to generalize some things....

She went on to give an example of such conflict.

Like when my daughter gets up in the morning for school... I do tell her that after she finishes the breakfast, she should bring her bowl and glass to the sink. It’s okay that she doesn’t have the time to wash them, but at least bring them to the sink. And she knows that herself. When she remembers, she’d take them to the sink. But sometimes she’s so rushed that she doesn’t even have the time.

When she needs to hurry to school, she’d leave them on the table. When my mom sees this, she’d say to me, “How come you didn’t teach her? What bad manners!” And she’d scold me very severely. I’d feel very wronged. I say to [my mother], it’s not that I didn’t teach [my daughter] these [manners]. She was indeed very rushed and I cannot expect her to do it 100%. So sometimes I’d feel very wronged. It’s not that I didn’t teach her. What can I do if she doesn’t listen to me?

#### Precursor Conditions

The precursor conditions introduced in the process of the bi-cultural childrearing decisions included the immigration to U.S.A., becoming a mother, social network, target

child's characteristics, and the experience with an older child if applicable. Each of them served as a precursor for the action/interaction strategies that the Chinese immigrant mothers used.

### Immigration to U.S.A.

In order to negotiate the bi-cultural childrearing decision, an individual must have migrated to a foreign country. In this study, the context of immigration to the United States of America (e.g., the mainstream American/western culture) is explored.

### Becoming a Mother

In order to explore the psychological processes that an immigrant encounters in bi-cultural parenting situations, the immigrant must first have become a mother in the host culture.

### Social Network

The category "social network" was highly salient in the formulation of each immigrant mother's bi-cultural childrearing strategies. This category comprises the subcategories of sources of information, relations, availability, and quality. These subcategories represent the different foci of the social network.

*Sources of Information.* The origin of the childrearing information that the immigrant mothers received. Due to the unique situation of migration, the immigrant mothers had dual sources of information, from the country of origin and the host country. The childrearing information differs by region and by values and beliefs. According to these data, the mothers chose the place from where they wanted to gather childrearing information, either Taiwan or the U.S. One mother compared her childrearing experience

with her friends back in Taiwan. She learned how her friends enrolled their children in many extracurricular classes. This information became a source of conflict for her and her husband. While the mother accepted their children's gradual learning process, her husband was worried that their children would not catch up with other children in Taiwan.

*Relations.* The contacts or persons serving as a source of childrearing information. Relations mentioned in this study included friends (e.g., Taiwanese, American, sojourners, immigrants, church members, neighbors), family members (parents, parents-in-law, siblings, other relatives), teachers (e.g., from school, religious education, extracurricular lessons), and older child(ren). The mothers were able to pick and choose which relations would serve their situation best. For example, one immigrant mother's husband was pursuing his graduate degree in the U.S., and she found herself surrounded by mothers who were also in the same situation. When she found out she was pregnant, this group of sojourner friends became her support group and gave her valuable suggestions to prepare for the newborn.

*Availability.* The amount of information that each social contact gave to the immigrant mother. There were times when the mothers were not able to receive childrearing information from certain contacts because each individual differed in their social network. Some mothers in the study had their parents or parents-in-law living or staying with them in the U.S. while others' parents were deceased.

*Quality.* The quality of the conversations referred to the integrity of the information. There were times when the contacts gave verbal information about

childrearing issues, such as parenting tips or sharing experiences. Other times, the contacts might provide the immigrant mothers supplemental learning materials. One immigrant mother had her friends and relatives ship Chinese children's books and audiocassettes from Taiwan.

### Characteristics of the Child

"The characteristics of the child" was one category that arose out of open coding of the data. It comprised of the following properties: learning characteristics, social characteristics, developmental capabilities, propensity, gender, and birth order. Depending on the characteristics of the child, the mothers formed a unique set of childrearing methods tailored to each child's needs. Specific action/interaction strategies are discussed in the later section titled "child-inspired education."

*Learning Characteristics.* Learning characteristics of a child consisted of, but were not limited to, intelligence and diligence. According to these Chinese immigrant mothers, these two characteristics contributed to how well and quickly any subject matter was learned. Intelligence contributed to the speed of learning and memorization. Diligence dictated the willingness to participate, concentration/focus, and persistence. If a child was deemed bright but was having trouble concentrating or was unwilling to learn, s/he would have trouble absorbing the learning material. In this case, the mother needed to monitor the child more closely. Alternatively, if a child worked hard to learn the material but was having trouble understanding the material, the parent needed patience to allot more time to the child. In either case, the mother would need to adjust

her strategies to accommodate to her child's learning characteristics in order to facilitate learning.

The third learning characteristic mentioned was imagination. Although not essential to learning capability, creativity and whimsicalness allowed the child to think outside of the box.

*Social Characteristics.* Social characteristics of a child included obedience, assertiveness, and maturity. These three characteristics affected how well a child socialized and was received in a social setting. The Chinese immigrant parents considered obedience one of the most important characteristics for their children. Obedience indicated the absence of boisterous, stubborn, and noncompliant behaviors. An argumentative child who did not do as s/he was told often solicited more rebuke and punishment from the parents than those who obeyed. Assertiveness displayed proactivity and extroversion. An assertive child showed active participation and volunteered in an activity. An assertive child also exhibited more out-going personality than introversion. Lack of assertion in a child meant that s/he was less noticeable in a group setting by peers or adults (i.e., teachers) and participated in more solitary activities by him/herself. Maturity comprised independence, self-control, and understanding more things than other children of the same age. When a child acted older than his/her age, s/he was perceived as mature and accepted better in an adult company.

*Developmental Capability.* Developmental capability involved the chronological age and developmental stage of a child. These Chinese immigrant mothers recognized

their children's developmental capabilities rather than taught their children according to the adults' standards. Further explanation is detailed in a later section.

*Propensity.* By assessing the strengths, the weaknesses, and the interests of their children, the mothers were able to cultivate their children according to their inherent tendencies. These Chinese immigrant mothers oftentimes provided the children assistance by providing extracurricular lessons. Additional detail of the propensity of a child is described in a later section.

*Gender.* There were a total of 19 girls and 11 boys in the entire sample. Twelve girls and 3 boys were target children below the age of eight.

*Birth Order.* Seven target children were the first or only born, and eight children were the last-born. Thirteen out of 15 target children had one or two siblings. Both gender and birth order variables are explained and discussed in the next chapter.

#### Experience with the Older Child(ren)

The target children were between the ages of 15 months old to 8 years old. Eight out of 15 mothers have at least one child older than the target children. Having had the experience of an older child, the mothers were more accustomed to resolve parenting issues and were more established in their formulation of bi-cultural childrearing decisions.

#### Causal Conditions

Two main causal conditions, childrearing attitude and educational belief, emerged from the data. These two conditions were the sum of cultural beliefs and values that were transmitted from the last generation, home, and host cultures. Although religious faith

was not intended to be included into the original scheme, it appeared to be a salient factor present in childrearing beliefs and values for those who were religious.

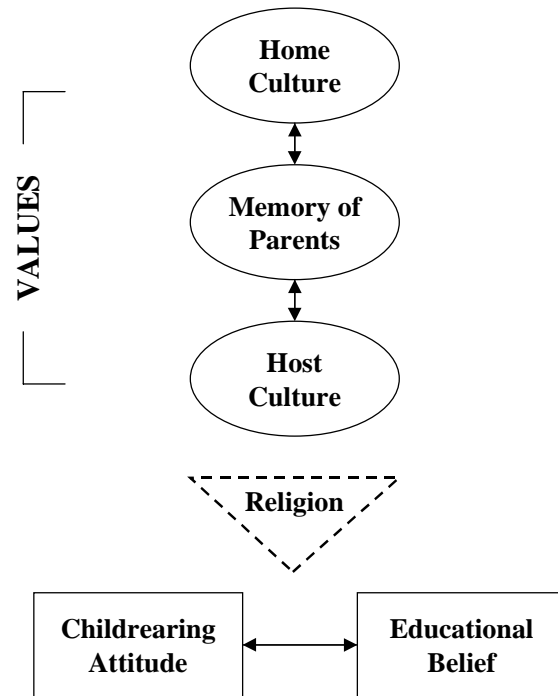


Figure 3: Causal Conditions

### Childrearing Attitude

The childrearing attitudes were formed by a merging process of the mother's experience growing up in the home culture with her own parents and of the parenting knowledge she gained in the host country. Imitating her own parents parenting style initially formed a model of childrearing practices for the mother. When the mother migrated to a foreign country, she was faced with more differences in value systems and cultural traditions. As she encountered different people and circumstances, a pruning



process began. The mission of the immigrant parent was to decide what to adopt and what to discard in order to raise her children the way she saw fit in the foreign land.

This section details the fundamental childrearing attitudes of the immigrant mothers. Different factors dictated a mother's attitudes toward rearing children. Her rearing attitudes reveal the mother's perspective on the purpose of being a parent, the relations with the child, the influence over the future life of the child, and the satisfaction level of being a parent.

*Purpose.* The purpose of being a parent for these immigrant mothers was for either enjoyment or obligation. This concept was derived from their general views of children. Some mothers viewed their purpose of being parents as an obligation toward society and the family. This sense of obligation came about from the responsibilities of reproducing offspring to sustain the family name and providing to better the next generation. Another view on the purpose of being a parent was the pure enjoyment of the process of nurturing children. Having children granted these parents the satisfaction of simple joy of watching their children grow and learn. The mothers who viewed their parental purpose as an obligation leaned more toward the Chinese cultural values in their childrearing attitude. In contrast, those who leaned more toward the American cultural values viewed enjoyment as their purpose of being parents.

*Relation.* Due to the obligatory purpose of being a parent, the traditional Chinese parent-child relationship is a top-down relationship. The uni-directionality of the relationship prompted the parents to view children as an extension of themselves and made the parents treat their children as properties. This relationship pattern was the most

evident in family sleeping arrangements as mentioned by one mother in the sample.

When children were still young, parents tended to sleep with their children in the same bed. Mothers with more traditional Chinese influence were more inclined to will their inclinations and commands onto their children.

On the contrary, having an equal and a bi-directional relationship with their children led the parents to recognize the individuality of their children and respect their children's privacy and freedom. In the case of sleeping arrangements, children were to have their own rooms and sleep in their own beds since birth.

*Influence.* The extent to which the mother believed that she had influence over her child's future life indicated the mother's belief of the effectiveness of her childrearing practice. Ten out of fifteen mothers seemed confident that their effort in childrearing would bear certain impact over the future life of their children. This perceived influence gave the mother confidence and authority over her childrearing decisions. Factors that might cause the mother to lack influence might be the child's current age (i.e., too young to tell, yet), the child's social characteristics, and the ineffectiveness of childrearing practice.

*Satisfaction Level.* Each mother was asked to rate the satisfaction level of being a parent on a scale from 1 to 9, 1 being the least, 9 being the most. Mother's satisfaction level indicated the contentment and experience of being a mother. The ratings ranged from 5 to 9. The rating average was 7. The mothers who rated 7 or 8 thought that they still had much to improve on their part as a mother to better their childrearing experience.

### Educational Belief

*Instillation.* One of the most important values that the parents of the immigrant mothers instilled to them was the value of education. Education was believed to be the very foundation of an individual's future by eleven sets of parents of the immigrant mothers. Financial or social status was irrelevant because education equalized opportunity, which helped to define a newly established social status – the higher education one obtained, the higher status one had in the society. It was believed that education not only yielded sources of revenue, status, and authority, education was also thought to cultivate temperament and to form life philosophy. The level of education was thought to affect an individual for the rest of his or her life, whether it was friendship, marriage, or career.

By understanding the impact of education on their children's future, the grandparents acknowledge that the one thing parents could provide their children was the environment for a satisfactory education. Fourteen sets of parents of the immigrant mothers expressed their unconditional willingness of supporting their children's educational pursuits by providing financial assistance and emotional support.

*Modification.* Modification indicated how the immigrant mothers retained or changed their views and beliefs from their own parents'. Because the location (i.e., home or host countries) and the level of education of each immigrant mother differed from their parents', the only way to determine the changes in mother's attitudes about education was to examine the mother's divergence of attitude from her own parents'. The immigrant mothers needed to decide whether they wanted to adopt or to modify their parents'

traditional view of education. More than half of the mothers decided to stay with the views instilled from their parents. Six mothers indicated that they would not emphasize education so strongly as their parents did. Only one mother thought education was more important than did her parents.

*Intensity.* Intensity referred to the degrees to which the parents went about educating their children. The intensity of educating their children was compartmentalized into three parts: early teaching, supplemental materials, and home drills. Nine out of fifteen mothers believed in teaching their children academic subjects earlier on (i.e., prior to the school curriculum). The subjects that were taught by these immigrant mothers included, but were not limited to, reading (e.g., English alphabets/phonetics and Chinese characters/phonetics), writing, and mathematics. The mothers believed that giving the children a head start before school would not only give them more time to learn the materials and get accustomed to school life, but also encourage learning esteem when the children actually went to school. Therefore, before teaching the children at home, the mothers needed to learn what the school required and taught. Oftentimes, the mothers would purchase or borrow teaching materials that were one or two grades ahead of the curricular requirements. Three mothers even “hand-made” their own teaching materials from scrap papers and recycled materials.

This type of home preparation continued even after a child had begun to attend school. Two mothers assigned homework at home which consisted of lessons or daily drills that were made up by the mothers for the children to do. Besides the homework that was assigned by the school, which many mothers felt was not enough to occupy

grade-school children's free time, these mothers made up similar questions and exercises in order to reinforce what was learned. This type of structured supervising discontinued only after a child started to receive heavier loads of homework from school. Many times the content of the materials children learned in school would eventually exceed what the parents knew themselves or could handle (e.g., the English level exceeded what the parents could tackle). Nevertheless by that time, the parents were confident that the children would have formed a good studying/learning habit that did not require much parental monitoring.

*Satisfactory Outcome.* One question in the interview protocol asked the immigrant mothers' perception of a satisfactory education and a suitable career for their children. Initially, this category was to be used as the ultimate outcome variable. However, utilizing just educational levels and career as parenting goals, or outcome variables, seemed simplistic and fell short for a model that discussed childrearing attitude and educational beliefs in terms of cultural and parental transmissions.

Nonetheless, 13 out of 15 mothers felt that college was the minimum education their children should obtain, while two mothers felt that graduate school was a possibility for their children. Twelve mothers felt that the future career decision was to be left to the children themselves. They recognized the value in each and every occupation. Even though they might have a preference in mind, they would not enforce their wish upon their children. Other parents regarded their children's career path according to their personalities, interests, and tendencies.

## Religious Influence

This particular research originally aimed to explore cultural issues (i.e., American and Chinese) alone rather than combine religious faiths as part of cultural practices. I distinguish the differences between cultural/societal heritage and religious observances for two reasons: First, not all parents in this sample were religious and of the same faith, and second, “religion” points to a set of personal commitment or institutionalized system of religious attitudes, belief, and practices of servicing and worshiping of deity or the supernatural; while “culture” points to a set of the integrated pattern of social forms, customary beliefs of a social group.

Nonetheless, religion plays an essential role in childrearing for parents who are religious in their faith. Parents who are religious educate their children according to their faith or belief, in addition to societal or cultural standards. Therefore, religious influence was incorporated into the model of bi-cultural childrearing decisions. The following sections describe the type of religious faith, the level of religiosity, and the effect of the religion on childrearing strategies.

*Religious Faith.* In this sample, ten immigrant mothers indicated their religious belief: Seven were Christians, two were Buddhists, one was Catholic, three did not have any religious faith, and two were unsure of their faith.

*Religiosity.* Along with the identification of religious faith, each religiosity was rated “extremely important,” “very important,” “important,” “a little important,” or “not at all important” to assess better the degrees to which the mothers use religion as a part of parenting belief and practice. Three mothers who rated their religiosity as “extremely

important” practiced their religious beliefs and/or instill religious values onto their children. Five mothers who rated their religiosity as “very important” instilled parts of their religious beliefs onto their children, regardless of their denominations of faith. Only one mother rated her religion as “important” and one mother rated her religion as “a little important.”

*Religious Beliefs and Practice.* The mother who rated her religion as “a little important” related none of her religious beliefs to parenting issues. The mother who rated her religion as “important” explained how she converted to religion because of her children:

Religion-wise, it’s after having both of my children when I gradually converted to Christianity. Why? Because I worry about the discipline issues of children.

When they grow up and I don’t see them anymore, or when they have gone out of state to study, and we can’t watch/see them anymore, the child needs someone to take care of his heart. To take care of him. If we pass away early, we can’t see him anymore, he’d need someone who inspires him with awe. So my conversion was due to this motive. I wish that he could live his life in church. How should I put it? I want him to grow up with someone above his head, this invisible thing that exists can touch him, his behavioral conducts.

This mother utilized religion as a method that could govern and guard her children. But compared with those mothers who rated religion as “very important” or “extremely important,” she did not instill any religious beliefs to her children, nor did she lead her children to follow a certain set of religious practices according to her faith.

Those mothers who thought religion as “very important,” on the other hand, regarded the religion more as their own. They practiced their religion in a much more concrete way. These mothers used their religion to discipline and cultivate the temperament of their children. One mother said that she incorporated her Christian beliefs into teaching her children to be honest:

We use the honesty policy to play the computer. We tell them to set their own time for 30 minutes, and we trust them to stick to that timeframe. Sometimes I’d check to see if they’re honest. <laugh> And if they’re not honest, of course they’d receive punishment. Like, two weeks no computer. I’d tell them, if you are not honest, don’t think that nobody sees you. God sees you. And He’ll let me know.

A mother who rated her Buddhism as “very important” instilled her religion into her son by teaching him to be a vegetarian, donating his allowance to Tzu-Chi Buddhism Foundation, and reciting the Sutra. She saw reciting the Sutra as a way to help her son increase his abilities to memorize, to learn, and to react. Even though she realized that a young child might not understand what he was memorizing, but as he grew older, he would understand the meanings and actualize the concepts gradually. She believed that “those good things will follow him throughout his lifetime... With the addition of reciting the Sutra, I believe that it’d shape his personality.” This immigrant mother also encouraged her son to donate his allowance to the Tzu-Chi (Buddhism) Foundation. Her primary intention of teaching her son about giving tithe was to give her son the concept of “saving up money and money is not easily earned.” Her other motive of educating her



son about donating was to give out money to help others because she believed that “It’s all in fairness when you do good. You will receive much more in return if you do good. I say to him, if you understand how to do good things often, later on you’d have good fate to guide you. This is a good “cause-effect” chain. If you have a good cause, then you’d have a good effect.”

A mother who rated her Catholic faith as “very important” saw her church as a support group for parenting issues. Because she was very much concerned about her children’s future marriage prospect for fear of infidelity, divorce, and a broken family, this immigrant mother would often seek parenting advice from the more senior mothers from her church and attended presentations or lectures in her church.

Three mothers rated their religiosity as “extremely important.” Compared with those mothers who rated religiosity as “important” and “very important,” the “extremely important” group centered childrearing beliefs and practices on their religion. Rather than focus on correcting or preventing a certain undesirable conduct or behavior, these mothers saw religion as a way of living and a source of all things considered. All three mothers incorporated their religion into their childrearing experience. One mother believed that everything would fall into place if her daughter would just rely on God:

You can have everything in life and still be the saddest, most miserable person in the whole world. But you can be very lacking in physical things or even in everything, but you could be very content and satisfied.... I think if she knows enough where she stays close to God, she will have that – a contentment. So, I

think that would be a source. I think if I build her up her relationship with God correctly, I think everything else would come naturally...

When the mother was asked to elaborate on how she incorporated religion into parenting, she offered:

A lot of time, we try to bring God into our lives, like everything we do. Well, like if she likes a bird, or just something in nature, you know? God made that for you to enjoy. "You don't need a big house or a fancy toy." I say to her, "You'll have a lot of fun just enjoying nature." Or be thankful. I think she's very aware of just being thankful, even for her sister [who is mentally challenged]. She's thankful for her sister, thankful for little things. And I think that at her young age, if we can continue down that road, where she's very in tune and she keeps in mind all the time that God is the source of everything and then I think she'll be fine.

Another mother revealed that she was a devoted Christian and that she tried to teach her children according to the Bible. She believed that children are gifts from God and that parents are merely a keeper of God's possession, the children. She tried to raise her children with compassion and generosity according to the Christian belief. If she had not volunteered this religious aspect of her life, the questions on solely cultural values could not capture the essence of her parenting belief and value. This mother wished her children to grow up to be someone that could be "used by God." She found it comforting that her daughter would get up in the morning to read her Bible by herself and at night her daughter would request her to pray with her. She enjoyed leading her children to prayers and if she forgot, her children would remind her to pray.

I think religious education is very important. So maybe one day they will encounter other religion also, we don't know. But I feel that... right now, the Bible and what the church teaches is helping them. So, we don't need to tell them what to believe. They can experience themselves.

This mother then gave an example how her daughter lived her religion (led a religious life):

One time, it's really funny, I told my daughter, "Whenever you encounter any learning difficulties, you can pray to ask God to help you." Once she told me that Jesus told her she did one of her math problems wrong. "And I went back to correct it!" She would very naturally do this! When I heard this, I was really happy. She lives her religion. And when we're driving in the car, I'd say to them if you encounter some difficulties, you could pray. If you're sick or you don't feel well, you can tell Jesus. Ask Jesus to heal you because you're not feeling well. So, I'd tell them like that, the parent talk. Of course, parents are the closest people they would encounter, so they'd listen. We'd try to teach them the "good."

The third mother who rated her religiosity as "extremely important" incorporated religion into her childrearing by sharing her faith with her daughter whenever an opportunity occurred.

[For instance,] when we're eating or when we see something, we'll talk about God. Sometimes the fruit is so tasty. Thank God! God is indeed very smart! Now my daughter would say that too, "God is so smart! God is smarter than

human beings.” We’d talk about birdies and airplanes. When we see something in the nature, I’d have some reflections or acclimation about God, then I’ll tell them. It’s not that it’s intentionally let’s-have-a-religious-education-lesson-today. It’s just talking about whatever you have on your mind. I think there are a lot of things in your life that is closely related to God. The birdies can make little babies and can sing by themselves. I asked her, “Can airplanes do that?” She said no. I’d say, “People would use clay to make a bird. But would that birdie give birth to little birdies and eggs?” No. “Could it sing songs?” No. I said, “But the birdies that God makes are so incredible because that birdies could give birth to little birdies and little eggies. And those little eggies would become little birdies, and they could fly up and sing songs! It can go find food for itself and take some home.” I’d link everything up.... That is, when I am feeling something, I don’t forget to share it with her. It’s just whatever you see, and you just share it with your children.

#### Action/Interaction Strategies

The action/interaction strategies included comparison process, opportunity education, child-inspired education, and disciplinary method. These were concrete bi-cultural childrearing practices that the Chinese immigrant mothers employed in the United States. Each of these action/interaction strategies describing the processes of bi-cultural childrearing decisions is detailed in the later section of *accommodation*.

### Outcome

The outcome denoted the consequences of the accommodation processes for immigrant mothers' bi-cultural childrearing decisions. *Deviation* from the unwanted values and *accommodation* of adaptable practices finally determined how to achieve the *balance* or the conciliation of the two cultural values. Balance of views about education and learning emerged as the central goal of the model; however, *deviation* and *accommodation* did not necessarily lead to *balance*. The outcome is discussed in further detail in the final section of this chapter.

### A Model of Balance in Bi-Cultural Childrearing

The preceding categories were subsidiary categories chosen to group around the central phenomena of balance in bi-cultural childrearing. This phenomenon united all the categories. Connections among these categories were determined through axial coding. These categories were related to the core phenomenon of balance in bi-cultural childrearing and analytically ordered as suggested by Strauss and Corbin (1990). The model in Figure 4, grounded in the data collected in this study, illustrates the results of this process and is a framework for how balance is exhibited in the bi-cultural childrearing captured in this study.

The following analytical story line is an explanation of how the categories are interrelated and grouped around the central phenomenon of balance in the bi-cultural childrearing. Each category is composed of specific properties that support the organization of the category. The categories are first presented in a linear description in

order to fully capture all of the categories. However, in these data the categories did not unfold in a clean linear fashion, but rather, the interaction of the categories was more recursive in nature.

When an immigrant mother reared a child in a foreign land, several contextual variables were present. Each mother brought a unique set of demographics to this interaction, specifically the mother's immigration condition (frequently tied to the reason for migration), the age of coming to the U.S., and the duration of stay in the U.S.

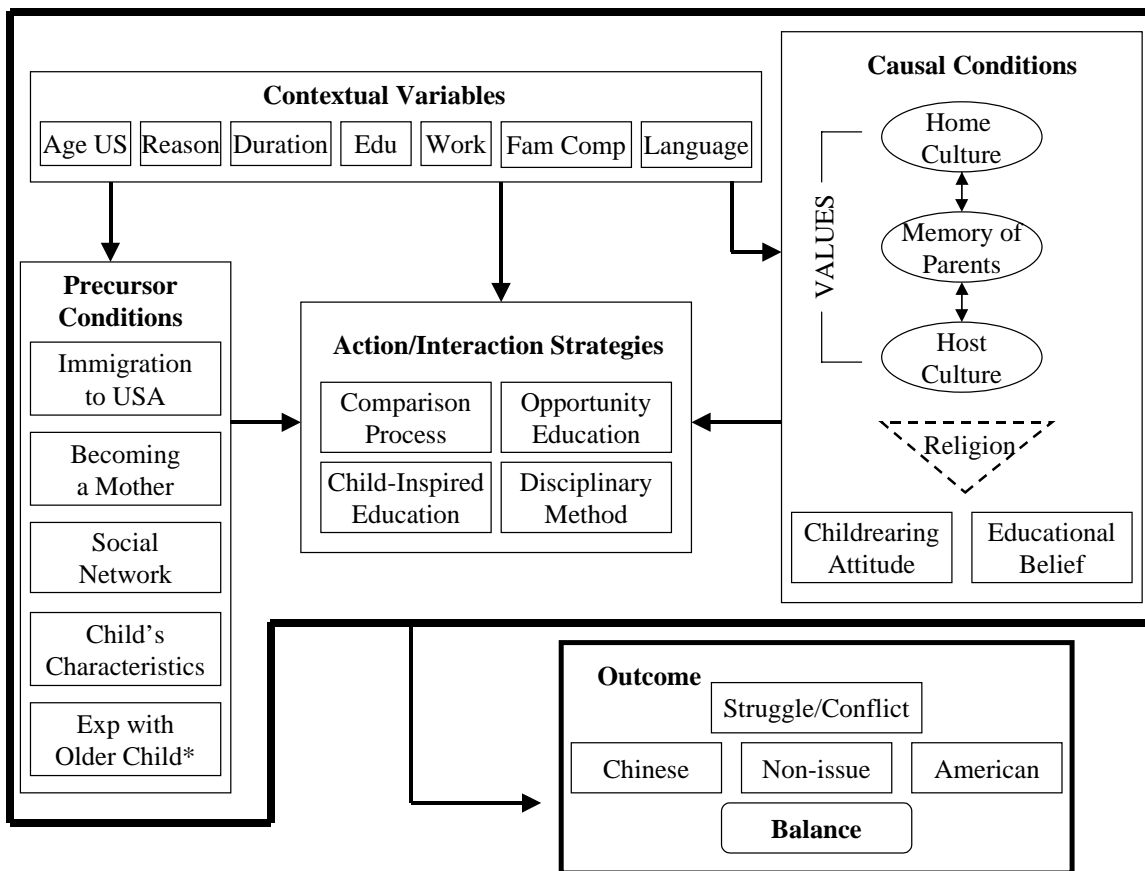


Figure 4: The Model of Bi-Cultural Childrearing

Additionally, the mother's working experience and education obtained in both home and host countries were set variables for any given bi-cultural childrearing strategies. Finally, the language spoken primarily at home and during the interview was a present factor in bi-cultural childrearing. Each of these variables influenced the manner in which the immigrant mothers believed and began to negotiate bi-cultural childrearing strategies.

Given these pre-existing variables, an immigrant must have migrated to a foreign country and have become a mother in the host country to come to negotiate the bi-cultural childrearing decision. In this study, these target children were between the ages of 15 months old to 8 years old. For those who had children older than the target children, the mothers brought a level of childrearing experience to the bi-cultural childrearing strategy that was related both to their years of experience in dealing with bi-cultural issues and to their childrearing knowledge. The social network in which the immigrant mothers were involved, while contingent upon several factors such as locale and relations of shared information, was categorized as a precursor/inclusion criteria because it was a variable from which the causal conditions and strategies arose. Each child's unique characteristics also had to be factored into the childrearing methodology by considering the child's personality, developmental capability, strengths, weaknesses, and propensity.

In these data, immigrant mothers' childrearing attitudes and educational beliefs were derived from and influenced by a mixture of value sources: memories of their upbringing, perceptions of the Chinese and American culture, and for some mothers,

religious faith. Sequentially, these values and beliefs affected what the immigrant mothers tried to imitate and what they tried to avoid reproducing in raising children.

The Chinese immigrant parents used several strategies to negotiate bi-cultural issues of parenting. The primary strategy used by the immigrant mothers was the “comparison process.” Moving from one country to another provided the immigrant parents opportunities to compare and contrast different educational and societal demands. In order to understand the intricacies of specific cultural practices, the Chinese immigrant mothers pulled resources from friends and families from both home and host countries to help them determine the practices that were considered beneficial and adaptable to their children. This entailed the repeated assessment elicited from experiences in which the mothers compared and contrasted the different views and information given to them in order to find a satisfactory balance of their own childrearing practices. An effective comparison process occurred when parents were responsive to adjust their parenting methods based upon different contexts: past vs. now, child vs. child, and Taiwan vs. U.S.A.

Another salient strategy used by the immigrant mothers was their disciplinary method. Although the traditional Chinese disciplinary method was spanking, most immigrant parents chose to exercise verbal reasoning, give encouragement or praise, and express physical intimacy. Another parenting strategy used by immigrant mothers was “opportunity education” in order to facilitate heuristic learning from mundane environments of daily life. A final strategy used by some immigrant mothers was child-



inspired education where individual child's personality, developmental capabilities, interests, strengths, and weaknesses were accommodated.

As mentioned previously, the actual interaction of these categories was of a recursive nature. In order for the accommodation of cultural values to occur, the categories did not necessarily unfold in a linear fashion. Certain categories would be evident initially, but then there would be a back and forth flow among the identified categories. For example, when an immigrant mother came to the United States at an older age, entered a bi-cultural parenting situation with the role of a stay-at-home mother, several of the preceding categories built on one another. If the mother had received education in the U.S. and had sufficient spoken/reading/written English fluency, she tended to be more flexible with bi-cultural childrearing decisions.

This combination of contextual variables, precursor criteria, and causal conditions influenced the action/interaction strategies on the part of the mother. The accommodation processes of this type of immigrant parents were usually more successful, and in instances where the mother had limited contact with the host culture, an older child (the older sibling of the target child) played an important role. This particular person would serve as a "sounding board" with which the mother would modify the strategies in preparation for a more balanced childrearing practice and attitude. These types of interactions produced higher levels of parental satisfaction, established flexible goals for the children, and assumed a more authoritative parental role.

In the data, it was the interaction of the various categories that was influential in determining the immigrant mother's ultimate level of balance and satisfaction. When

looking at various possibilities, more successful interactions, better balance, were those where the mother exhibits these things: higher levels of understanding her child's characteristics, the use of a wide range of social network, and the use of strategies, such as successful comparison process, heuristic style education, child-inspired education, and disciplinary methods. The most successful interactions, highest balance, were those in which favorable contextual variables were present (e.g., fluency in both home and host

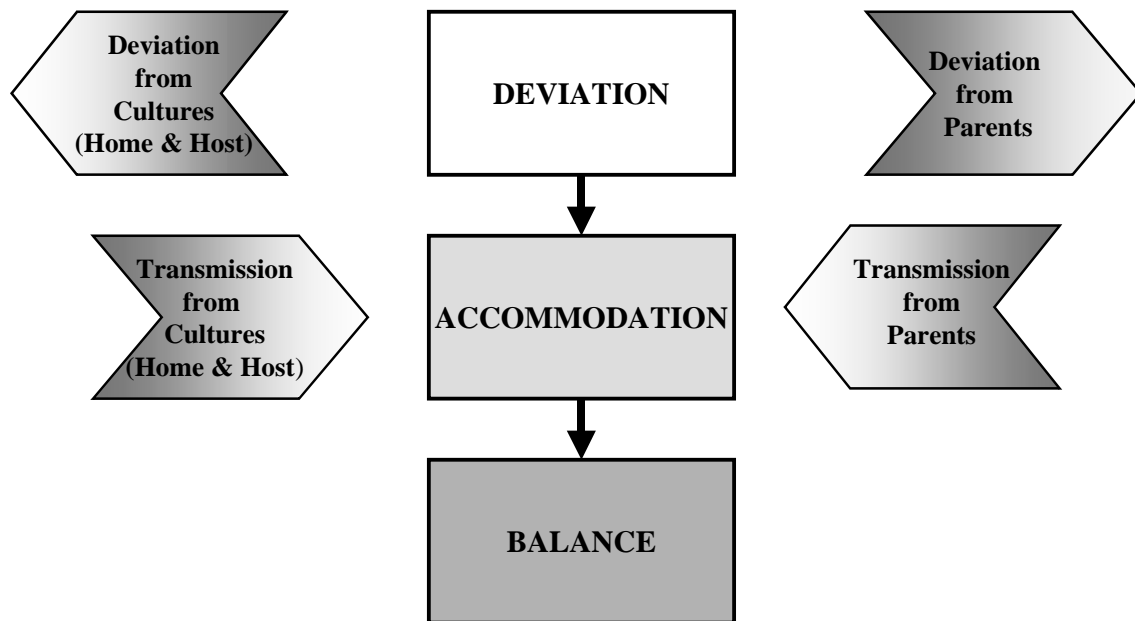


Figure 5: Mechanisms of Value Transmission

languages, education and work experience in both home and host cultures) and mothers engaged in successful comparison processes with a positive childrearing attitude and educational belief and used a variety of strategies. In all of the examined contexts, the flow of these various categories was remarkable whenever the causal conditions were

employed, the use of any other strategy by the immigrant mother, such as heuristic-style of education and child-inspired education, led to a more balanced outlook with high levels of parental satisfaction. This in turn fostered additional use of the same or other strategies, which continued to improve the childrearing attitudes and educational beliefs. This interplay of all the categories ultimately determined whether bi-cultural parenting was accommodated, resulting in higher levels of parenting satisfaction and flexible goals for the children.

The following sections describe the three major mechanisms of value transmission, *deviation*, *accommodation*, and *balance*, which revolve around the central phenomenon of bi-cultural childrearing decisions for Chinese immigrant parents.

### Deviation

#### Deviation from Heavy Emphasis on Scholastic Achievement

A majority of the immigrant parents considered that the most critical value from their parents was the foremost importance of education. Among the 15 mothers interviewed, 92 percent expressed that their parents placed great emphasis on their children's education. A mother of three summarized the general attitude Chinese parents have toward childrearing, "Put going to school and homework first. Besides academics, there is academics. There is nothing else." Another mother also had similar experience, "When we're still studying, they'd say no to everything else." The other mother concurred on the Chinese way of parenting, "Kids have one goal and that is it: to study and be a good student." When the mothers were asked why their parents had such high

scholastic expectation, the most frequent response was that the parents' belief was based on a Chinese maxim that states, "Being a scholar is the highest of all the occupations and being anything else is useless." This exhibited a general consensus of educating children by asking children to fully concentrate on studying without questioning.

This popularized notion of "the scholar is the highest of the occupations" is a common one in Chinese culture, expressed by four mothers and implied by many others. One mother commented on her father's wish for her to obtain a higher education:

Since we were little, my father really liked us to "study." My father's education is not as high as my mother's. For my mother, her education at the time was pretty high already, but it was just during that time she couldn't pursue more education. My father's level of education is a little lower than ours. Due to this, he always felt rather regretful. Whenever he needed to broaden his career to go overseas, he would feel that it was a pity. So, he wished us to learn and to study. It doesn't matter how much money it'd cost. Ever since we were little, we had private tutors at home.

With the hope that their children would be better off than they were, the parents of the past generations saw education as a way *out* of their current living situation and *up* the social ladders. Parents, functioning as the sole caregivers and providers for their children, would nonetheless provide support for the children's education. In describing their parents' efforts, the immigrant mothers often indicated that their parents gave encouragement to their children to further their studies and that their parents would do anything to support their children's education financially. Parents would unquestioningly

provide financial support and resources for their children to further their education.

Twelve out of the 15 mothers reported that their parents would support their schooling provided that the children had the will to learn. One mother remembered what her parents always said to her and her siblings, “If you have the capability to study, then we will definitely support you.” The other mother also described her parents’ support of education:

They believed that for studying, no matter how far you could study, go for it.

They would definitely support us. It all depends on whether or not you want to study.

My parents supported me to whatever education level I was satisfied with, all the way up to college. They were frugal so that the money could be spent on their children’s education.

As a result, the responsibility of providing the education for the children lay on the shoulders of the parents. Aside from school subject materials, children were also accountable for homework and lecture notes from the remedial courses that served as an “aid” to the school courses. One mother recalled the way of learning that she was taught in Taiwan, “They just ask you to memorize this and memorize that.” Another mother’s experience coincided, “The Chinese way [of learning] is more like cramming and memorizing.” Even to this day, the majority of parents in Taiwan still embrace this “disciplinary instructive” way of education. The process of memorizing word for word on academic materials is euphemistically called, “the style of filling the ducks” (tenya

seh). Memorization is believed to be the most efficient way of acquiring knowledge. Ultimately, the information memorized is essential for testing purposes.

Aside from the core curriculum from school, Chinese parents did not let the children forsake other pursuits. The majority of Chinese parents, if finance were not a problem, would send their children to different extracurricular lessons: piano, violin, ballet, soccer, mental/abacus, art, and calligraphy, just to name a few. The immigrant mothers in the study, on the other hand, objected to this kind of rigorous cultivation and would avoid at all cost this kind of “disciplinary instructive” way of education. Compared to friends and relatives in Taiwan, these mothers would not force their children to go to extra lessons outside of school or home. One mother shared her encounters with her siblings who still resided in Taiwan:

My sister and brother told me that, “Second sister, your daughter is very smart, but wow, the education you give her is too relaxing! We Taiwanese compete so much!” “Compete to death!” she said. Her son went to these lessons and to those lessons... [They were concerned about] what kind of ability he should have at his age... They already learned it from earlier on.

The immigrant mothers felt that it was unnecessary to put such pressure onto their own children. Another mother felt the same way about adding so much academic pressure onto a young child:

My sister-in-law and classmates [back in Taiwan]... Their kids are in their kindergarten years. They went to learn the piano, abacus, mental mathematics, English, and arts & crafts, the gymnastics, and the violin. Just like learning this

much! Of course, it's not saying it's not good, but it's just that they'd let them learn so much stuff. In Taiwan, you have to learn so much. It doesn't matter if you have interests or not, you have to learn everything. Like my sister-in-law's children, from after school at 4pm to 9pm at night, the schedule is totally packed!

Being an advocate of such schooling brought forth not only much pressure for the children but also a great disappointment for the parents when the expectation was not achieved. Most participants from this study deviated from this heavy emphasis on education. Nine mothers out of the fifteen expressed that putting intense weight on scholastic achievement was something they would like to avoid when teaching their own children. One mother commented on how she managed to stay away from the notion that academics should be placed first and foremost:

I do not so much like to have the attitude that “wan ban jeh sha ping, way yo du soo gou” [a Chinese maxim: “being a scholar is the highest of all the occupations (compared with all other occupations) and being anything else is useless”] to teach my children. [My son] very much likes to watch the dump truck. I think it's very good. When I go to the backyard to do garden work..., he'll come to help me. I won't say, oh don't play, don't play, you go study. I'd use the Chinese cultural values to cultivate... the cultural background to teach him. But I won't use the “value” per se to teach him.

The immigrant mothers wanted to avoid the rigid style of learning. An immigrant mother of two recognized the pitfall:

The Taiwanese kids are requested to do well in academics, but they are not trained so much in dealing with their problems in life like how to take care of themselves or what to do when they encounter a problem. It's usually the parents that help the kids do this kind of things like cleaning up the toys. Usually Taiwanese parents would pick them up for the kids. Of course in America, some parents might pick up after the kids too. But basically, in western culture, they'd let the kids do it themselves. I think the Chinese focus more on academic excellence and focus less on the training of the aspect of daily life. So... I'd avoid letting my children become machines that know how to study but don't know how to live by themselves.

One mother also foresaw the consequence of such type of attitude as a potential problem for the children in the future:

I think we tend to teach very self-centered kids by over-emphasizing on the academics... I see a lot of families that would tell their kids to just study hard and not to worry about anything else. So, mom and dad would make all sort of sacrifice to make sure that their kids would get everything provided to further his or her achievement and studies... They keep receiving. Also they spend so much time nourishing themselves, so they tend to focus nothing but themselves. So it's always *me, me, me*. In the way their personality and characteristics are lacking in the sense that they don't know as well how to give... I think they tend to be more self-focused and self-centered and self-absorbed in the sense that it's always



about achieving something for themselves, but not so much as paying attention to other people's needs or contributing...

The great expectation from the last generation and the cultural norms of their home society compelled these immigrant mothers to rethink advocating such scholarship. By foreseeing the negative consequences and disadvantages of over-emphasizing academic performance and scholastic achievement, these immigrant Chinese parents chose to deviate from emphasizing scholastic achievement, although not de-emphasizing education altogether.

#### Deviation from Laissez-Faire Style of Education

Coming to America exposed the immigrants to different educational systems. By deviating from the heavy emphasis on scholastic performance from their home culture, the immigrant mothers encountered the educational style of the west. From either their school-aged children or themselves, the mothers learned about the school systems in America. To these Chinese immigrant mothers raised in an eastern background, the education here in America was as different as night and day when compared with the education back home. Being raised in an environment that places so much value upon education, the Chinese immigrants tended to carry that tradition and mindset forth to the foreign land. What these Chinese immigrants discovered was that while the children in Taiwan crammed and studied attentively, those in America seemed to “learn through playing.” This alarming difference caused quite a cultural shock.

An immigrant mother who was formerly a teacher said that the education in “Taiwan is too strict,” while the education in “America is too loose.” Fifty-three percent

of the immigrant mothers interviewed felt that the laissez-faire style of education in the States was an issue for them. The education here in America, according to the Chinese immigrant mothers, was too “loose,” “open,” and “free.” When compared with the education back home, American schools seemed more like a place in which children play rather than they learn. One mother said, “Some of the education in America... [The Children] are very relaxed. Every day it’s like they’re playing.”

One reason why the immigrant mothers thought schooling in the States seemed too lenient and relaxed was that they felt that teachers did not give enough teaching guidance and left the students to learn on their own according to their own likings. One parent found it incongruous that there was no standard curriculum for every student.

American education is a little too open. We’re not really adopted... Maybe this is good for our kids, but I remember when we were little, school would assign us certain books. For example, in language arts, they’d ask us to read certain books. But now like my children, they’re so free. It’s like see what you like to learn and remember what you like. You know? For example, the vocabulary list of the week is composed of words that you find aimlessly. <laugh> It’s like memorize the words you want to memorize! They don’t forcefully assign. This is one thing that I can’t get accustomed to.

The Chinese immigrant parents often found their kids coming home with little homework to do. Because there were so few restrictions and regulations for the children to “obey,” the immigrant parents resorted to filling up their children’s time with self-assigned homework or extracurricular lessons. With all this freedom to roam around, the

immigrant parents found it difficult to teach their children in a foreign country. One mother said,

The differences in learning are a lot. If a child is learning very well, then it will be very good. But if a child is not learning very well, it'd be just like finding a fish in a muddy pond... I feel that it's not so easy to teach children in America because America is too free. And that freedom comes with high risks. The children can either become very good or become very bad.

While the mothers applauded the creativity the American educators insert into classroom teaching, they expressed that the core curriculum lacks foundation and rudiments. Specifically, the subject of mathematics worried these immigrant mothers the most. An immigrant mother who worked as a software engineer went into great detail in describing the differences of teaching mathematics in Taiwan versus America.

The teacher at my son's elementary school... We always think that she's not very good at teaching. Because she thinks that these are all gifted students, so she'd go download a lot of things from the Internet that are educational for them. She'd find some creative projects for the kids to do. But she neglects the fundamentals, like the math, you don't have the fundamentals of addition or subtraction or multiplication or division. The teaching of the school took a long time to look at the problems and not to know how to solve it, so the students spent a long time doing the problems. They care very much about the "steps." They don't care about the results. So we're still very much worried about our son. His calculation ability is very...

The Chinese way of learning rudiments of mathematics is to practice many calculation problems over and over again until one becomes familiar with them. The parents believed that the American way, on the other hand, emphasizes the understanding of the concepts behind the problems by drawing pictures and explaining the logic. This mother compared the Americanized education her son was receiving with the one she received in Taiwan:

[The Americans] spend so long drawing pictures and stuff. They don't care about the results. They get it so complicated and kids get confused and get the answers wrong. For example, every tree has 20 apples, and then they'll add all of them up. "If you have 2 trees, how many apples will you have? If you have 3 trees, how many apples will you have?" We'd say just to calculate the total, and you add them all up together. But they don't teach them like that. So when my son was young, this kind of training of course would stimulate how they think. But on the other hand, their calculation is very bad. He doesn't have any foundation. They don't teach... practice. Not like when we were little, the teachers gave us a lot of problems and we just did like 100 questions until we got familiar with all of them.

The mothers admitted that even though children would eventually "get it" at the end, and learning how to think analytically was a good thing, the slowness on calculation was what bothered them.

When my son was in the middle school, we realized that calculation skills were very important. When the teachers gave him a problem, they didn't care how he listed out the steps. They only cared about giving him 50 problems and he had to

finish them all in one single class period. The teachers only looked at results because now that the students were moving toward to the SATs and high school. It means that the student has to react quickly and calculate fast. Because of my son's training, his calculation is very slow. He thought that he needed to follow the teacher's way. I said to him, "The time that takes you to think is equal to someone who has already done 10 problems." He is not used to writing out the equations. He'd rather spend time thinking the reason why. I don't know... [the American way] has both advantages and disadvantages.

Due to their experience with the American public school curriculums, some immigrant mothers expressed that a child's education cannot be left up to the teachers at school. A mother who was an educator back in Taiwan summarized her decision to deviate from the American *laissez-faire* educational styles:

Overall speaking, you'd feel [that] the Asian kids always perform better than the rest of the American children in school, maybe except sports. Of course, there are very smart and top American kids. But comparatively, it's the Asian children, the Chinese kids, who are excelling in academics.] Therefore, my impression of the American kids is that they're not very smart. How come they don't care so much about their scholastic achievement? Because, to us, that's very important. So, even though I think the Americans are very creative, they're too "fancy." There are a lot of fundamentals they have neglected. Just like what I told you before. I admire American's creativity and their sense of humor. I really feel that they're

more [relaxed] than the Chinese people. Due to their conservatism, the Chinese people are not so relaxed [about the academics].

This mother of three children proceeded to use an analogy of a tree to explain why a firm educational foundation was important.

But I feel that... if you only emphasize on creativity, [some things are lacking].

The things that we Chinese emphasize at home are like the roots that we planted.

On the other hand, the American schools emphasize being creative. I feel that the Americans are heavy-headed and light-footed concerning the things on

academics. Of course, both [rudiments and creativity] are very important. The

larger the branches that grow above are, the thicker the roots deep under the

ground become. But in American society, the tasks of nurturing the branches and

roots belong to the Asians. And the tasks of blossoming flowers and bearing

fruits belong to the Americans. Usually, people would only see the flowers and

fruits, but would rarely pay any attention to the branches and roots. But the

branches and the roots are indeed very important because they are the

fundamental part of education.

The experience in a foreign country exposed these immigrant mothers to a different educational system. They were able to pinpoint what they believed was disadvantageous in educational systems of both cultures for them and their children. The Chinese educational structure was thought to be too rigid; the methods used were too strict and rudimental. On the other hand, the educational style in America was thought to be too free and “loose.” In the next section, these immigrant mothers would extract what

they believed was advantageous in both Chinese and American cultures to transmit to their American-born children.

### Accommodation

By deviating from the unwanted practice of both the home and host cultures, parents now entered the stage of *accommodation*. The process of accommodation required the parents to consider values, beliefs, and practices that they deemed as important and valuable from their parents, home, and host cultures. This section will showcase the various childrearing techniques the Chinese immigrant parents use to educate and socialize their children to be well-adjusted and well-rounded individuals. From changing their own attitudes about education and disciplining their children to catering their parenting strategies to the unique characteristics of the children and using opportune moments to educate children, these immigrant parents searched constantly for a better way to rear their children in this foreign land. All fifteen immigrant mothers were aware of differences, some more than others, in the Chinese and the American ways of parenting; still, each participant used an assortment of her own childrearing techniques.

### Attitudes about Education

Although the immigrant mothers felt that the attitude their parents had about education was too traditional and strict, they nevertheless felt that they had carried the same mindset that education was indeed important for today's society. While the parents of the immigrant mothers might see education as a way out of their current living

situation and up the social structure, the immigrants themselves felt that a decent education could affect an individual for the rest of his/her life. All 15 of these immigrant mothers felt that a college degree was the minimal education they hoped their children would receive. Aside from the more typical reasons for obtaining a college education, such as having job stability and sustaining a livelihood on which all 15 mothers agreed, these immigrant parents felt that an education could positively contribute to a child's future personal, career, and social development.

Five immigrant mothers firmly believed in the effect of education on social development of the children. One immigrant mother insisted that "education" is not just limited to the school system, but every facet of life. Education is extended to social ramification where an individual is defined into a specific social circle of which he or she is a member. She explained, for instance, if a child takes a piano lesson, he or she would gradually develop an interest for music and meanwhile would have the opportunity of affiliating with people of the same musical interests; eventually, a specific taste, lifestyle, or even philosophy would be cultivated. The social circle of such "cultured" group could then influence a child's temperament or characteristic, the mother believed. "A good education," another mother explained, "means that they [the children] could blend into society." By "blending into society," an individual should fit into the environment he/she had chosen to situate him/herself. His or her character would not become an outlier or an extremist that is rejected by others and create problems for society.

Usually if a child receives pretty good and high education, the circle in which he runs is of a higher quality. His value systems would be different also. It's not



because the family or the parents you grew up with are not good enough to let you become bad. It's not that. It's not that the circle you are in is bad and your children will... But the chance of being not good is greater. I want [my daughter] to receive good education and mingle with the people of a high quality in the aspect of lifestyle or temperament.

One immigrant mother related that education could even have implications for anything extending from social peer groups to marriage partners. Although the target children were still too young for parents to be worrying about marriage issues, these immigrant mothers were nonetheless preparing their children well in advance in terms of education to get them to a right start.

Three immigrant mothers believed that education could serve as tools to apply in daily lives. The knowledge gained in learning “opens up things for the future.” They believed that knowledge was power: “The more knowledge you have, the more options or tools you can use.” Education could be used to create opportunities that let a child be exposed to different people, things, and prospects. Education, another mother stressed, could undoubtedly foster a sense of “the world view,” in which the child accepts diversity and embraced unification. They believed that with a decent education, the maturity levels of skill proficiency, emotionality, and personal character would be achieved. Moreover, a decent education could earn “the respect of others.”

### The Education of Love

The immigrant mothers in this sample firmly believed in “the Education of Love,” a term coined by three of the Chinese immigrant mothers and agreed by many others in

the sample. The way they taught their children was without forcefully pushing them or using an authoritative manner. The Education of Love means no spanking and rebuking their children when the children make mistakes or disobey the parents. The Education of Love also means to use encouragement and reasoning as a replacement for spanking and rebuking.

### Spanking

Spanking has been such a controversial and prevalent issue with Chinese immigrant households, nearly all (with 11 out of 15, 73%) of the sampled mothers talked about it, some also recalled their own experiences of being spanked while growing up. According to the immigrant mothers, spanking is an acceptable form of disciplinary practice in the Asian culture, but not in the western culture. One mother recalled, “My parents would beat us. They didn’t just scold. They would spank us. And they spanked us very severely.” Another immigrant mother explained her parents’ perspective on spanking.

Sometimes I would think my parents were very strict with me before which is not so good. So I changed to another method. I think it is because they didn’t have a lot of opportunities for education, unlike us. We have books and other [resources] that we can find. We can even ask other people or read books from the experts. But [my parents] didn’t have that. So, they’d use spanking. What I remember the most is that my older brothers would go play baseball after school. It was very popular back then. <laugh> The professional baseball. The junior league that went to the world championship. They’d get up 2 or 3 a.m. in the middle of the

night to watch the baseball game. And after school, they would go play baseball with their classmates or whomever. My dad would go look for them with a stick, “Come back to do your homework. Hurry!”

Another mother described her mother’s spanking method.

For example, if we did something wrong today, my dad wouldn’t directly scold us. My mom would just come out directly to rebuke us, “Why did you do this?” She’d even spank us. But my dad never spanked kids.... My mom was a stern mother. She spanked all the kids. Sometimes she’d chase us around the house to spank us. <laugh> My dad never spanked kids.

While most of the immigrant parents experienced corporal punishment when growing up, 80% of the parents in this sample never used or believed in physical punishment to discipline their own children. Only three mothers practiced spanking. There were four reasons these mothers offered for using corporal punishment: 1) Spanking is the experience which is learned and transmitted from their own parents, 2) The child cannot be taught by reasoning and lecturing only, 3) Spanking is a fast and effective way to solve behavioral problems, and 4) Parents cannot control their own frustration due to a child’s misbehavior. Two mothers out of 15 practiced minimal spanking: one mother spanked her son on the buttocks when he did not meet her expectation (i.e., did not get a good grade); the other mother practiced spanking until her children reached age five because she believed that a five-year-old child could then be reasoned with. Only one mother in the sample admitted that she practiced spanking often and thought it was necessary to be part of her parenting experience.

Nonetheless, even if they did practice and believe in spanking, the mothers believed that it was better not to use the method of spanking and that they were striving to use alternative ways to motivate their children. One mother offered her reason, “Once you spank the child, the child will become more rebellious.” “Spanking only serves the physical hurt that will go away immediately,” the mother continued. “But the emotional hurt will always leave a scar... Just like how I remember my mother was a tyrant and I’d always remember her (gesturing hand strangle). <laugh>” Another mother explained the power of *not* spanking, “Not spanking has its own effect. That is, when you don’t spank the children, they know that you’re purposely not punishing them.” She believed that it was more important to instill the correct concepts into a child’s mind in order to change his/her behavior in the long run instead of suppressing misbehaviors for a moment. There are times children may misbehave; however, if punishments were necessary, a mother firmly believed in not punishing a child in public. “I would not punish him in public. I would not rebuke him or scold him,” she suggested. “I would take him to another place to talk about the issue. I would not humiliate him in front of other people. I respect his self-esteem.”

### Verbal Reasoning

Instead of using corporal punishment the “Chinese way,” the immigrant mothers would first use verbal reasoning with their children before resorting to the harsher way.

I would reason with my children more. If the child was capable of reasoning, then I will reason with him. In the Chinese culture, children must listen to whatever their parents say. The western culture emphasizes more on reasoning,

talking with you kids. First you try to talk and reason with them, and if that doesn't work, then the alternative would be a more forceful and imposing one. In the days when we were young, we would have to follow whatever our parents said. My parents would not reason with us. We could only obey and follow. But now I will try to use some reasoning, and if it fails after 10, 20, or 30 attempts, then I'll know that the reasoning is not effective. Still, they'll just have to obey what I say.

By exercising The Education of Love, parents would verbally explain the consequences of the unacceptable behaviors to children with patience and demonstrate the correct and acceptable behaviors. One mother illustrated how she managed her two-year-old son's tantrum throwing:

[When my son] wants to watch TV, and I won't let him, he would throw the videotapes around. My method would be telling him to touch the tape and tell him that [the tapes] would "*hurt-hurt*". You have to love it; you need to "*touch-touch*" it. The next time, he still threw. And I still told him that. He *still* threw it. But I would continue telling him just the same. Now his attitude is growing softer. Sometimes he would remind himself. After he throws it, he would say, "*It hurts-hurts*. I can't throw it around like that." I think any kind of learning is not [Chinese maxim:] "effective immediately." That is, do not just look at what the result of their behavior. But the parents' speech and behavior would have an influence on the children later on. [I believe that] my son would gradually change.

Another mother of two girls described an incident when her husband exercised the Education of Love when their daughters broke their father's precious alarm clock:

[One time my children] were playing with my husband's alarm clock, and they broke it. At first I thought he'd be very angry. Surprisingly, he went to find a screwdriver and opened up the clock for them to see. His alarm clock was one of those old fashioned ones, with the wheels and latches and all. He said, "Look, this is what's inside. If you want to fix it, it's very complicated." He went on to tell them [about all the details of the alarm clock]. It was originally a dangerous situation... maybe one of them would get spanked and the other one would cry.... But afterwards, they learned. Later, the older daughter told me, "Mama, I know what's inside of an alarm clock!"

This mother compared the new ways of handling this situation with a way her parents might have handled it.

I think if it were in my parents' generation [to handle this situation], they'd just spank, using the method of punishment. [My parents would say,] "Don't ever touch this thing again, and if you do, I'll spank you." But now, we'd try to use other ways [to deal with this]. You know, if you break this, and it's really complicated and tedious to fix it. Afterwards, she never touched the clock again! <laugh>

One immigrant mother had a philosophy of "don't get angry at the children easily, and don't have conflicts with the children." She believed that when a child whined or did not do what he was supposed to do, she should not scold him immediately or not give

him any choices or chances to change. As a parent, she led the child by asking him the reasons why he could not do as he had been told. “Give the child a break,” this mother advised. For instance, her four-year-old daughter was to drink two glasses of milk every morning: one cow’s milk and one soymilk. The child liked to drink the soymilk more than the cow’s milk. Sometimes the child would finish the soymilk but not the other. When the mother was asked what she would do when her daughter would not finish both as promised, the mother replied:

Of course she’d whine. “Mama, my stomach aches.” “I’m so full.” In the beginning, I actually don’t need to get angry with the child. Do not scold them immediately or not give them any choices or chances to change. In other words, if she breaks her promise, like when she told me she’d finish the milk, when she finished the soy milk and not the milk, I can’t be mad at that instant. If I get mad immediately and don’t give her a chance, then she’d think, “If Mama is mad, then I don’t want to drink it anymore.” So, you have to lead her. I asked her, “Okay, why can’t you finish it?” She’d say, “I’m full. I can’t finish it.” Then, I reminded her that she used to finish them both before. That’s why Mama believed that she could finish them both. “Right now, you’re very full. That’s okay. Mama lets you rest for one minute. You sit there for one minute and then take your time to finish the milk.” I’d try to give her a break and let her still finish the task at the end...

She continued with the reason behind her methods.

Sometimes, don't go, "Why aren't you eating? Why are you taking so long?" And scold her like so. Give her time. Unless she goes off the table to play and then comes back to the food, that's when I have to say something. But if she is just sitting there and eating very slowly, fine, let her. At least she would finish this one task. So, don't get angry with the children too easily. Don't turn your face into a poker face. If you do that, they might not listen.

Another Chinese immigrant mother indicated that she would use the western ways of parenting in dealing with her son in daily lives:

I'd use [the western] way by which parents deal with their children in daily lives because I felt that the Chinese parents are more authoritative. They talk in commanding forms like, "Hurry up and finish your homework before going out to play with your friends." You want him to hurry up and finish it since he wants to go out and play with friends. I see a lot of American parents reason with their kids, so I'd reason with my son or ask his opinion.

#### Encouragement/Praise

All immigrant parents in this sample acknowledged that they could not use the experience from their past to teach their children because they believed that the tactics from the past generations might not be usable in this generation and that the cultural environment is completely different. A substantial difference in the upbringing practice between the east and the west is giving verbal praises to the children's performance and/or behavior. Eight immigrant mothers in this sample shared this concern about



Chinese not praising as much as Americans. One mother explained the root of such a difference:

The Chinese tend to look at the worse side of things; they don't look at too much of the good sides. If the children come home being the number one in the class, the parents are glad. But, if the kids don't get the number one spot and if they only strive for getting 90s, most Chinese parents would go and look to see why not.... But for Americans, if their kids only get 80s or 90s, they think that the kids are doing pretty well already. They like to use encouragement and praise everything that the kids do.

In terms of the verbal praise, the Chinese parents were typically more critical of themselves and their children than Americans. This kind of criticism usually surfaced with a general pessimistic view when the Chinese parents assessed their children's performances or behaviors. The other reason why the Chinese parents did not praise children as often is that, first and foremost, they wanted to instill the virtue of humility. By praising their children directly, the parents feared that the children might be overwhelmed by their temporary success which would impede any further striving for the better. More importantly, the Chinese parents believed that there was always room for improvement and one could not just be satisfied with one's current situation at the current level. This kind of austere criticism was usually combined with an authoritarian tone, which made the comment a little hard to take at times.

Realizing what they had to endure in their own childhood, the Chinese immigrant mothers recognized a more positive way of parenting their children when they came to

the States. By observing their American neighbors, friends, and teachers, these immigrant mothers were able to notice the differences in how Americans parent their children. The number one difference the Chinese parents notice about American parenting is that the American parents encourage and praise their children more often than they do. One mother expressed her discovery of such difference:

When we came to the States, there appeared a lot of different values. One of those that came to my mind is that the Chinese parents rarely praise their children. They are oftentimes pickier. I am still very picky, but I think I'm slowly turning into the American way of praising the children more often. How should I put it? Actually, I find that pretty useful. <laugh> It's more useful than being critical. <laugh>

Another mother coincided with this observation:

I think [the American parents] are more acceptant, you know, to see the differences in each kid. Also, they are more approachable as parents. I think in oriental society, we're supposed to have dads as a more distant authority, you know, strict. But I think in the American culture, parents are more down-to-earth. They're able to mingle with their kids better. And also humor. Yes, I think humor really carries you a long way through life. So, I think that's something I want my kids to see – always the funny side, always the light side of life, rather than just focus on the negative side.

Upon discovering such a cultural difference, one mother learned that she needed to adjust her parenting strategy in terms of encouragement and verbal praise for her second child after what she had encountered with her firstborn son.

My son used to play soccer; we always felt that we would never know how to play anyway. American kids play soccer, but it's impossible for us [Asians] to play. We can't run fast enough and stuff. We didn't know, but our mind already told us [that we couldn't do it]. Kids go up there to kick the ball; how would he know he could do it? Because all of them are American kids, my son couldn't kick better than they.

This negative connotation was coupled with lack of support from her husband who cared less about sports. "He said that [our son] wouldn't score anyway. [So,] he'd just stay in the car to take a nap or just stay at home. I asked him, 'How come you are not watching?' He said, 'What's there to see?'" The mother felt that as parents, they missed a lot of opportunities for parent-child interaction. Moreover, she noticed that because her son was not encouraged, he started to become very passive for things in general.

I'm saying that our sense of winning and losing is too strong. [My husband and I] feel that why we even bother to watch. He wouldn't score anyway, so we might not watch the game, either. My husband has never had any interest in watching my son play soccer. He said that our son wouldn't score anyway. The kid is not being encouraged. He'd think, "It doesn't matter how I play ball. You wouldn't

come see me anyway.” You know what I mean? “It doesn’t matter how hard I try to play soccer, my dad doesn’t have any interest to come watch me.”

The mother felt that with her son, she and her husband shied away from her son’s involvement with sports because athleticism was not something they thought their children would excel. But later she realized that timidity and pride rubbed away the very chance to bond with her son and to build up his self-esteem and social skills. Therefore, with her second-born daughter, this mother changed her tactics and noticed a big difference. .

Then I learned a lot from my son. So with my eight-year-old daughter, I feel that we shouldn’t be like that; [otherwise], the kids’ social skills aren’t good and then their self-esteem will be low. So now when my daughter plays basketball, I will tell her, “Oh, you’re so good!” “You scored! And no one else could do it!” “Wow! No one else can play as well as you!” And she feels honored. And she doesn’t feel that it’s showing-off. You know? Later on lots of the parents came to tell me, “Your daughter is such a good player!”

The other mother gave an example as how to encourage her son to participate in a school performance that he did not like:

[My seven-year-old son] hates to sing. But for the first and second graders, they have to be on stage and perform. He said, “Mama, can you sign a paper and give it to the teacher so that I don’t have to be on stage to sing.” He said, “I hate singing.” He said last year so and so didn’t go up there to sing. But I want to encourage him... not to have stage fright. So, I said to him, “I know you don’t

like to sing. But you know what? Mama really, really wants to see you go up on stage and sing with your classmates. It's really cool to sing with all the other kids on stage." "All right. All right. Okay," he said. "Actually I really liked the Texas song." So, I'd negotiate some things with him like an adult.

By recognizing the cultural differences and the pros and cons of verbal encouragement and criticism, these immigrant Chinese mothers strove to exercise the Education of Love to encourage their children for the better.

It's impossible to do a complete set of the Education of Love. I read so many books that say you should be positive. But when your kid is acting like that or when he doesn't listen to you, you're just wasting time without results. You'd use [a combination of] the tough way and the gentle way.

### Physical Intimacy

Besides using reasoning and encouragement to direct children's behaviors, the Education of Love extended to physical manifestation of intimacy. According to fourteen Chinese immigrant parents, the Chinese culture is more conservative and subtle in the ways of expressing love. One mother observed how her own mother was not used to voicing out "love" and how there was not much physical manifestation expressed. Even though she knew that her parents loved her dearly, she wished their love had been expressed more explicitly. Therefore, she decided to forsake that tradition with her own children.

I would really "love" my kids, like caressing them <demonstrates by caressing her baby boy>, hugging, and giving kisses. I think that is very important... This kind

of indulgence is what is called... being very “sweet” to each other. That kind of intimacy... I think for little kids, we need to give them this emotional venting and resorting. Sometimes it is okay to indulge them a little.

Another mother expressed her enjoyment of becoming a parent and her ways of expressing her love to her son:

After I gave birth to him, it’s very difficult to imagine that this was truly my child, and that I am now indeed a mother... That feeling was very amazing... Right after he was born, the doctor placed him on my bosom. I was looking down at him... Ah, this is my son... At first, it was very tiring. It took time to get used to it. But later, I love it. I love him to death! I have lots of his baby pictures, and I take them out to look at often... Now every night I still tell him, “Mama loves you. Mama loves you to death!” He also says, “I also love you to death!” Every day, hugs, nonstop. That kind of feeling is very good. I am very glad. It’s priceless. The purpose is to make myself happy. That kind of feeling is very good.

Another mother believed that this kind of “love” was the essence of a parent-child relationship. She talked about how her sister and she wanted to express respect and love for their father not out of fear:

[My sister and I] had a lot of respect for my dad [because] we didn’t want to break his heart. And we wanted to be able to make him proud of us, so we really behaved ourselves. We wanted to make sure that he was proud of us and did not have to worry about us. So that’s what I remember. That’s our motivation. So

that's how I teach my kids too. I want to make sure there's enough love... if they were going to do something even without the parents around. It's because they know that we love them, not because of fear. It's not because they're afraid that we're gonna find out something. It's because they know they don't want to break our hearts and that we'd be very sad if somehow they hurt themselves. And that's the main message I want to convey to my own kids.

Ultimately, the practice of the Education of Love aimed for children to grow healthily and happily. These immigrant mothers wished their children to grow in love, not with fear. "I want my children to be happier. I want to let my children grow in the love of the parents; therefore, they will be more normal," said one mother.

#### Heuristic Style of Learning – "Opportunity Education"

In conjunction to the Education of Love, the Chinese immigrant mothers taught their children by employing a "heuristic" (chi fa) style of learning. Ten out of fifteen immigrant mothers in this sample reported educating their children with a "heuristic style." "Heuristic style of learning," coined by the mothers, pertained to the process of gaining knowledge by experiencing rather than by following a certain pre-established procedure.

I use the "chi-fa" style. I'd use a different way to approach [my children]. [I'd try to] use the "chi-fa" style to let them observe the Nature, expose them to everyday surroundings, and inspire them to learn some things from those. Not just from books. [Children should] learn from what they see.

According to these immigrant mothers, heuristic style of education promoted and stimulated children to learn and discover on their own. More specifically, it entailed learning from one's environment with the emphasis on observation and hands-on experience. Rather than obtain knowledge solely from textbooks in school curriculum, children were encouraged to receive stimulation from everyday surroundings that range from community activities, social functions, nature watching, recreational entertainment, and daily routine.

Instead of being an active participant in seeking out the inspiration and discovering new things on his or her own, a child was actually placed into an environment that was thought to be stimulating for him/her. For that reason, heuristic style of learning can also be labeled as "Opportunity Education." The immigrant mothers would most likely create chances for their children to partake in these un-prescribed activities and teach their children life lessons at opportune times. This section will describe and explain the various contexts in which this experiential learning takes place. The mothers actually taught their children through various contexts in hopes of teaching the child to be a "useful" person and not just a "study machine."

### Community

*Library.* Community activities, such as going to the library, the park, or grocery store, served as great opportunities for a child to learn about "life." A library was a great source of information where a child could check out many books, which could facilitate the reading ability and suit the interests of the child. All of the immigrant mothers in this sample took their children to the public libraries.



We'd borrow books from all of the [city] libraries because you could borrow only so many books from each library. So we would borrow from all the libraries and bring a lot of books home for them both to read. Every week is like this. Every week they can read 20 to 30 books. We rarely purchase books, but we always take our children to read books. If I buy books, it'd be when I think it's very necessary. If we buy the books, [my five-year-old daughter] would think that we have them at home and she would not *care* so much. That's why my husband and I both don't really want to purchase books. We want them to *want*. Unless there's one book that she wants constantly and reads over and over again, then we'd buy it for her.

Another mother described that visiting the library was an important part of her six-year-old child's daily routine.

When [my daughter] was in the kindergarten, I let her go to the library to check out one book almost every day, to make reading a habit for her. Now we still try to go to the library from time to time, and now they know how to check books out themselves. I think it's very convenient for me.

This mother continued to reveal the emphasis American schools placed upon extra-curricular reading compared with the emphasis Taiwanese schools placed upon course-related textbooks.

In this aspect, America has done a good job. They let the children very conveniently check out books for themselves as young as they are in kindergarten or the first grade. I don't know how it is now in Taiwan. But back when I was in

school in the countryside, there wasn't even a library. Even if there was a library, there would only be a couple of books. Usually, [Taiwan] doesn't really emphasize on extracurricular reading. The things you read are usually the stuff you read in the textbooks. Right now, it's a lot better. Now every classroom has set up its own little library. [The Chinese] are leaning more on this. So I think that America here has provided more opportunities for reading [than Taiwan]. I think that they've done a good job in this area.

The other mother concurred with the fact that American school systems "really encourage children to read." "Their resources are very abundant," she continued. "Under the circumstances, I can encourage my children to seize this kind of opportunity."

Many immigrant mothers also took their children to many activities the local public libraries sponsor, such as Story Time, Puppet Shows, StoryFest, ethnic celebrations, reading with the authors/illustrators, arts & crafts, and performing arts for young children throughout the year. One mother said, "[We go to] the library every week. Our library here has story time every Tuesday morning. I'd take them there to listen to stories and then read some storybooks. I'd see what kind of storybooks they want, and then we check them out."

*Public Parks.* Another usual community activity these immigrant mothers took their children to is the public parks. According to six mothers, a park was a great place for the children to exert their physical and social skills. These mothers would often take their children to the nearby public parks to play. An immigrant mother of two children

felt that it was very important for children to have a physical outlet to “jump and run around” every day to ensure a healthy appetite and a regular sleeping pattern.

A public park playground also served as an excellent place for children to interact with other children. A mother of a very introverted seven-year-old girl used the park as a great opportunity to assist her to meet and socialize with other children.

*Grocery Stores.* Visiting grocery and commercial stores was also an excellent community activity for children as said by five immigrant mothers in this sample. When a child was still very young in age, the emphasis was on identifying items and saying “please” and “thank you.” When the child was slightly older, a grocery store provided the context to exercise social mannerism. An immigrant mother demonstrated a simple courtesy gesture to her seven-year-old daughter by letting an older lady go before them in the checkout line. Taking a child to stores also provided a great opportunity to teach self-restraint, frugality, and non-materialism.

We won’t permit our children to throw fits. When we were at a store and they don’t get the toy they wanted, they’d start to cry and throw tantrums. We’ve reinforced our policy that we would only buy during sales. At a young age my son already knew certain toys were so expensive that he had to wait until it was on sale.

In addition, economic principles, such as simple commercial transaction, bargain hunting, and commercialism, were introduced to children in shopping centers. A mother of a seven-year-old boy trained her son about non-materialism in a grocery shop.

Ever since he was little, I have trained him not to be so materialistic. Sometimes I'd take him to *Target* or to the mall when he was a little kid who sat in the stroller to look at the toys. I'd tell him, "I can take it down to let you play with it, but you have to put it back and say bye-bye. Mama won't give you whatever you look at because we have a lot of toys at home already."

### Social

In addition to community activities, the immigrant mothers tried to involve their children in a variety of social functions, such as adult parties, children's gym, and Chinese schools.

*Adult Social Functions.* All fifteen immigrant mothers mentioned using social functions to educate their children about mannerism and social etiquette and to let the children be exposed and be familiar with grown-up situations. A mother of two children aged six and nine said, "Wherever we go, the kids go. We do have babysitters, and they stay home sometimes when we go out, but, you know, in general we take them wherever we go, even to the adult parties. We take them there to let them know how to relate to one another. To interact with the adults, other adults, other than their own parents."

Ten Chinese immigrant mothers insisted that their children show respect and courtesy toward the elders when the children interact with the adults, such as addressing elders by their appropriate titles (i.e., "ah-yi" (aunts) or "shu-shu" (uncles)) rather than by names directly; relenting toward those who are older or younger than they (i.e., giving up a seat on the bus for an elderly person or let the other younger child play with his/her toy); receiving guests with warmth and courtesy (i.e., asking guests to sit down, offering

beverage/food, sending farewell at the door until the guests leave); and saying “thank you,” “please,” and “pardon” under the appropriate circumstances.

These immigrant parents instilled a mixture of Chinese civility and American chivalry to their American-born children by immersing them in real life situations that included people older than they are. Firstly, by showing courtesy and respect to others, children were believed to be treated with courtesy and respect in return. Secondly, it was important for these immigrant mothers to get their children acquainted with “the world out there” instead of just staying at home to know only the families and the neighbors because when children are used to exploring new environments around them, “they are not afraid... they don’t withdraw themselves. I want them to be open-minded to everything,” said one mother whose opinion echoed many others’.

*Peer Socialization.* Aside from acquainting children with adults, children were also encouraged to participate in social functions that included mainly other children of the same age. In addition to taking their children to public community parks, as previously mentioned, to exercise their physical and social skills, these immigrant parents sought other places to promote socialization, such as enrolling their children in children’s programs (i.e., Gymboree), arranging playgroups, or inviting other children to play at home. Six immigrant mothers allowed and encouraged their children to invite their friends, neighbors, and classmates over to play at home. The purpose of this parent-monitored environment accounted for more than creating other social opportunities for children. In the comfort of their own homes, the mothers could observe their children’s interaction patterns while they are playing. One mother used this kind of opportunity to

assist her two young children aged 22 months and 3 years old on how to “play friendly” and to find solutions to resolve conflicts:

Usually if I see another child takes something from my daughter’s hand intentionally, I won’t wait until the child has obtained the stuff then to say that they have to share. I’d tell my daughter, “Okay, this child wants to play with this stuff. Do you want to let him play with it?” I create an opportunity for her to be with other children. From the way they play, lead them into the correct way to behave. Lead the child in ways to interact with others. You can teach her through lots of situations in opportune time. You want other’s stuff, what should you say? Either you switch, “You let him play with your toy, and he lets you play with his toy.” Or, when both children are fighting about one toy, we’ll tell them, “Okay, you’ll play with this toy for five minutes, and then he’ll get to play with it afterwards.” Let her know the *solution*. Let her know how to solve a problem in a situation.

Another immigrant mother realized how immense peer influence could be for her children. By inviting other kids to play at home, this mother helped her five-year-old daughter select friends as she observed the habits and manners of the other children:

I think the influence of teachers and peers are very great, so I’d hope that other than her own family, she has classmates. I hope that I can get to know more of her classmates from her class. If I say this person is good, then I would tell her that... [If] I’ve seen this person at school, then I’d tell her that. Because I’m still staying at home, I’d tell her that she can invite him/her to come to play at our

house. Then I'd observe once or twice the habits of this kid and see whether they are good or not. If the habits are pretty close, then I hope she can build up her "buddy-friendship" since she's young.

Besides inviting other children over and observing their manners and habits, this mother also communicated with the parents of the kids to learn whether their habits were similar.

When asked what "sorts of habits, she gave some examples:

Some Americans have really good habits. The habits of the kids of our next-door neighbors are very, very good. Very "ian gin" (strict). You even think that, wow, even more "ian gin" than Chinese. The little kid would clean up after he plays his toys before he looks for another one. That is his habit his own parents taught him. He would ask his parents every time if he could eat anything. Some kids would... If you bring out candies and cookies, they would just grab everything and gobble it all up, or they'll take the food to the second floor and make a mess. [But] some kids are very obedient. You'll tell them, come and eat here at the table. And they'd just sit there and eat like they're told. And like this, inevitably, your children are watching too. If everybody would just grab and run, then your children would follow too. But if there are some kids who would obediently eat like so, then they would follow them. Right, so I'd try to help the selection of her friends. But I don't know how long I can help her do this. <chuckle> I can only try. <chuckle>

A mother of two children recalled how her own mother did not like her bringing friends home when she was growing up because "My mother was a neat-freak, and she

was afraid that the house would get dirty” and “She also didn’t really care about what kind of friends I made at school... My parents only cared about homework, nothing else.” By recognizing the pitfall of such parenting issues, this mother later allowed her son to invite friends over to their house. Nonetheless, she reinforced house rules for her son and friends to follow, such as finishing the homework before playing, eating at a designated area, and cleaning up after playing.

The sole purpose of peer interaction with parent assistance was to provide socialization and security to the children before they entered school, the “big” environment, as one mother put it. When playing was assisted by the parents, emotional security and mental stability act as a safety net that eases the young children as they faced a new environment (i.e., school, teachers, classmates). This mother emphasized, “If [the children] have enough to build up inside them, it’s easier for them to face new challenges and handle new things and embrace the environment.”

*Chinese Schools.* Having the children learn Mandarin Chinese was an integral part of the childrearing obligation for the Chinese immigrant parents. Eleven out of the fifteen Chinese immigrant mothers in this sample enrolled their age-appropriate children in a Chinese language school at some time or another. In addition to sending their children to Chinese school, five mothers have taken up the responsibility of teaching their mother language to their children themselves. The remaining four mothers did not do so stated that this was simply because none of their children had reached the appropriate age for formal language lessons (i.e., enrollment at a Chinese language school) at the time of their interview. Within the sample, two mothers were Mandarin teachers at the local



Chinese schools. One interview even took place at the Chinese School while the two children of this mother were attending the classes. The majority (11 out of 15) of immigrant mothers spoke Mandarin Chinese at home with their children. Three spoke a Chinese-English combination with their children. One mother spoke only English with her children at home.

The purpose of having their American-born children study and learn the native language of the Chinese immigrant mothers had both immediate and long-term outcomes. For now, while the children were still young, these immigrant parents wanted their American-born children to be able to communicate with their grandparents who did not understand English at all. Also, some parents felt that speaking their mother tongue to their children comes easily and naturally. In the long run, many immigrant mothers felt understanding an additional language would prove to be advantageous for their children. Being bilingual could not only serve as a bonus tool in one's credential to communicate with more populations, but also further one's career pursuits. Furthermore, the native language would help tie the new generation of Chinese-Americans to their original roots in Chinese and Taiwanese history and culture.

Since all mothers were immigrants, they all spoke in their native tongue naturally and inevitably. All children have been exposed to Mandarin Chinese ever since they were born because the immigrant mothers communicate with their children, spouses, their parents or other Chinese immigrant friends in Mandarin Chinese. Nonetheless, it was not so easy to teach their children their native language as five immigrant mothers revealed.

I used to work and had a nanny who came from China. Both of our daughters stayed at home and didn't go to the daycare outside. They both speak Chinese. So basically, they are not so exposed [to English]. We used to live in Houston, where a lot of Chinese people were living nearby. Basically, all those kids speak Chinese mostly. But very obviously, when these kids go to elementary school, they used to play and speak Chinese, but now they play and speak in English! The same [playmates, but] the language changed. So you think, wow, the influence is very immense. [We] think that before they enter the school, they should all have a very deep impression of the Chinese language. Or else, they'll forget it very quickly.

Before attending schools, all the children spoke Chinese. But after they went to school, it became increasingly more difficult for them to maintain speaking Chinese because the majority of their friends and teachers did not speak Chinese. Some children even resisted speaking and learning Mandarin as they started to converse in English with their parents while parents conversed back in Mandarin. One mother described how her 7-year-old son resisted learning Chinese.

Sometimes I'd encourage him for half a day, but he'd just ignore me. Sometimes I'd act as if I were mad. Then he said, "Okay, fine." He'd then go practice writing Chinese characters but kept nagging, "I hate writing, learning Chinese." Another mother wondered about the resistance to learn Chinese that her 5-year-old daughter exhibited.

She's now... a little bit like, "Why do I have to learn Chinese?" She's already felt that she doesn't need to learn Chinese at school, which is good [for her]. She already sensed that. So, you'd think, well, that's strange. Even though she's still so very young, she says, "I don't need to learn Chinese; I don't want to read Chinese."

An immigrant mother of an 8-year-old daughter attempted to offer explanations on why young children were having difficulties learning their first language in a foreign country.

We speak Chinese with the kids at home. Before they were in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> grades, they also spoke Chinese to us. After they entered the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, it became very hard. Since none of their friends speak Chinese, it's very difficult... So sometimes they'd use English to tell us what happened at school. And then, we'd always use Chinese to talk to them and they use English to talk back to us. And of course we understand what they're saying.

To deal with this "non-parallel bilingual exchange," some parents insisted that their children speak Mandarin at home. Three parents even told their children that they did not understand English at all in order to get their children to speak Mandarin.

In the beginning, we tricked them and said that we didn't understand English. At first they believed, but later on they said, "How come you can go to work if you don't understand English?" They're not fools. They'd say, "You are lying. You understand [English] or else how can you go to work?"

Realizing how important Chinese was to her personally, one mother was proud that her son was able to speak Chinese so well. In the meantime, she painstakingly used many reinforcements to enhance her son's interest in learning Chinese:

A lot of people would talk to him, and they'd be surprised at why [he] can speak Chinese so well. But I did not forcefully push him. It's because we always speak Chinese at home with him and he is used to speaking Chinese with us without any accents. When he has free time, or sometimes he has long weekends when the Chinese school is off, we'd go to the Chinese community center. It has a library with lots of good children's magazines. A lot of them have phonetics with large prints; we'd go borrow them. Either I read to him or he can read them by himself. We also borrow the Chinese videotapes on the Chinese proverbial stories, Chinese folk stories, etc. He'd watch those. I don't like to push him to learn a certain Chinese word and force him to write that word 100 times. This would make him [not want to learn].

Another mother boosted her seven-year-old son's interest in learning Chinese by "showing off "his capability of knowing another language to his friends at school:

One time I volunteered at his school and during the lunchtime I sat with my son and his classmates. A boy saw my son speaking Chinese to me and asked what we were saying. I used this opportunity and said, "[Son's name] knows how to speak Chinese! Isn't that cool? Can you speak Chinese? [Son's name] can! He can speak English *and* Chinese! Isn't that really cool?" <laugh> And all the little kids were like, "Wow! That's really cool!" and that made my son think, hey,

it is “cool” to speak Chinese. And now he always speaks Mandarin to the Chinese people: me, my husband, and other adults. Everybody is surprised that he speaks so well!

A mother who herself was a Chinese teacher at two of her local Chinese schools had a more lenient attitude about learning Mandarin:

Yes, [all three of my children went to Chinese school]. But my firstborn only studied 1 or 2 volumes. <laugh> He’s not so into it, and I won’t force him too much. I think the way of learning language is like this... Nowadays a lot of parents take their children to Chinese schools. A lot of people may think since I am a Chinese teacher myself, how come I feel this way? But I feel that if I force him to death and create tension between the parent and the child, at the end, all will be in vain. When he grows up, if he feels that Chinese is important and is self-motivated, then he’ll go learn it himself. I have already given him some foundations. If he wants to pursuit more and be better, he can go push himself.

Regardless of many efforts that were put into familiarizing their children with their mother tongue, these immigrant mothers felt that learning Mandarin Chinese was definitely worth the trouble because having their children speak Chinese without doubt bridged the gap between their American-born children and themselves.

### Activity

By getting involved in a variety of activities, the children were educated to socialize in their most enjoyable and comfortable environments or situations by their immigrant mothers. All fifteen mothers addressed this category. Eight types of activities

were identified in the interviews: television, toys, music, playing, books, sports, arts and crafts, and computer/video games. These activities took forms in three sub-categories based upon the nature and purpose of these entertainment sources: extra-curricular lessons, leisure, and electronic media.

*Extracurricular Lessons.* Extracurricular lessons included music lessons and sports. The Chinese immigrant parents saw music lessons and sporting activities as ways to let their children explore different options and enhance the skills they usually would not obtain from regular schooling. Fourteen (93%) Chinese immigrant mothers took their children to learn one or more kinds of music lessons: singing (3), piano (14), violin (3), KinderMusic (2). The purpose of providing music lessons for the children was not to expect to discover yet another musical genius or “Mozart, Jr.” The intention, rather, was to get the children to learn to enjoy and appreciate music.

When I was a child, I didn’t have the opportunity to learn the piano, so now I want my son to at least learn how to appreciate music. I hope he can build a solid foundation. Of course I don’t expect him to become a great musician, but at least he’ll have some fundamental understanding of music. So when people discuss about music, he’ll know what they are talking about and won’t be left out.

In the meantime, by introducing or providing their children access to a music-filled environment, these mothers hoped that their children’s character and temperament would thus be cultivated and that their children would be able to blend in with a more sophisticated crowd.

Although these Chinese immigrant mothers emphasized sports less than music, they valued what sports could bring to their children. Sports could not only boost confidence in children and build up their physique, but also teach good sportsmanship and athleticism and provide socialization and a healthy dose of competition for children. Ten (67%) of mothers signed their children up for more than one sporting activity: soccer (2), basketball (1), gymnastics (4), ballet (5), skating (2), folk dance (1), swimming (2), Little Gym (1), and Gymboree (1). These mothers allowed their children to explore their own interests in different sporting activities, but they insisted on their children's persisting.

*Leisure.* The next category of activity was leisure. Leisure consisted of playing/games, toys, books, arts/crafts. All children from this sample participated in leisure activities in one form or another. Besides the structured school/classroom instructions and extra-curricular lessons, the unstructured leisure activities are considered a large and important portion of the children's lives. The unstructured leisure activities let young children decide how they like to spend their free time. These Chinese immigrant mothers were deliberate in providing the optimal environment for leisure time. Rather than focus solely upon the structured learning experience, they understood that playing was an essential part of their children's normal development. Even though much of the playing was peer-related (playing with friends or siblings), parent-child play interaction was also evident. One mother described how she used pretend play to socialize her seven-year-old daughter.

[My daughter] likes to play “pretend,” so we’ll play “pretend” like either grocery shopping or seeing a doctor. She’ll play a baker, a doctor, a taxi driver, a teacher, or just anything [she can think of]. And we just learn daily living stuff, [such as] manners and social skills. She’ll ask me questions on how to do certain things, and we’ll go from there... Well, for instance, she’ll say she’s a cashier, and I’m in line trying to check out my items. Or like, if you see an older lady, you might want to let her go first. Or, I’d pretend to be a rude customer having a bad day. We’ll just go think up some hypotheses as to why I’m in a bad mood. Then she’ll learn to think that maybe I’m not a mean person but [just have a bad day]... I think she’ll learn how not to take it personally. She’ll learn and be exposed to [different scenarios, such as] maybe I’m just having a really bad day that day or something.

Another mother of two young children (aged 5 and 22 months) believed in the powerful interplay between learning and playing.

I think when kids are learning things, the important thing is that you don’t let them know that they’re learning. They need to be happy. They need to play. Like my daughter, I’d play “Jie Long” (“Connect Dragon”: a word game that asks each player to connect new words with the previous word called out) with her, with language or with cards. [For instance,] one card image should be matched with another card image. Compare. She’d feel that it’s really fun. But actually, it’s a training of the ability of discernment. I’d utilize the method of “play” to teach her.



In most cases, the task of playing with the children fell on the shoulders of the fathers, rather than the mothers.

My husband would help me take care of the kids. His way of taking care of children is playing with them, from reading to the children and playing hide-and-seek and playing with toys to taking them outdoors for a walk.

Playing with the children promoted social skills and learning capabilities for the children, and provided more opportunities for parent-child interaction, especially between the fathers and the children.

Besides playing with others, playing with toys was another part of leisure activities for children. In selecting toys for their children, two mothers were very insistent and particular about what types of toys they would purchase for their children. These mothers only purchased educational and cognitive toys that could help children's learning capabilities.

Ever since he (seven-year-old boy) was young, we have purchased a lot of computer games. Learning related. Like phonetics, reading, writing, and math. I won't be stingy with those kinds of things. I'd let him... Mostly educational games. But I won't purchase junk toys for him.

Another mother explained why she was so selective about the toys she purchased for her 7-year-old son.

In principle, he'd play Lego. I am generous with the money to purchase the really good Lego for him. [I'd buy toys that] emphasize hand-eye coordination, the composite ones that can be programmed by computers, or the ones that are solar-

powered. I'd buy those really excellent electronic Legos. I'd go to Taiwan and purchase those best ones, the very educational and cognitive ones, the ones that can be used in the long run. I'm very generous with those. But for those so-called trash which I call them "stupid toys," I would try not to give to him.

Three mothers used toys as tools to teach their children proper social interactions, such as sharing, responsibility (i.e., cleaning and tidying up), and donating. One mother used toys to encourage her seven-year-old-daughter to play with others.

We also used a lot of methods [to encourage her to befriend with other children,] so we have a lot of toys at home. We always tell her, "Ask your friends to come home to play and share your toys with them. If they don't know how to play with the toys, you can teach them how to play."

Another mother tried to teach her seven-year-old son about helping the poor and being non-materialistic by donating toys:

I'd teach him how to donate. He has to donate. But it is very hard. He said, "I hate those poor people. They all want my toys!" <laugh> Because ever since he was young, I'd say, "You have outgrown these toys. Okay? You are all grown up now. We can't pass it down someone (a younger sibling), then why don't we donate it? What do you think?" But he started to associate poor people with people who want his toys. Very bad! <laugh>

In contrast to playing with others or toys, reading books was an entertainment venue which required much less physical exertion. All mothers in this sample encouraged their children to take up the habit of reading. Even though reading seemed

like a simple activity, these Chinese immigrant mothers tried to expand their children's literacy horizon by introducing them to various literary genres and print forms according to their interests at different time intervals and places. When one mother realized that her daughter did not like reading chapter books, she encouraged her eight-year-old daughter to read more novels.

We asked her to focus on novels because her school asked the students to read at a higher level. But ever since she was young, whenever her older brother was reading, she was also reading. [But] my daughter doesn't like novels as much. She likes the kind that has more "knowledge." She likes information. She likes to read the encyclopedia. She likes those. She rarely reads a book with many chapters in it, so we ask her to focus on those. We read novels with her.

Most mothers would take their children to public libraries, as the previous section *Community-Library* suggested. Several mothers suggested other places, such as community centers and bookstores that also offer book-reading opportunities for children. One mother liked the fact that different genre of books could broaden the world of her six-year-old:

The teachers at school would also recommend some books. But there's only one book for the entire class, and the teacher's recommendation of books is limited. It's always the same categories of books. If she goes to the library, she can go explore different books in different areas. Now she really enjoys going to the library.

Instead of regular bounded books, some mothers would ask their children to read different forms of prints, such as magazines, newspapers, and the Bible.

I subscribe TIME magazines for him. When it's here, he'd go read it. I don't assign him to read it or whatever. I don't go into details like that. I just want him to read freely. [It's not that] I want him to read this, so go read. [I'd rather him] go find a topic that he likes reading and reads on his own. After he reads, he doesn't need to tell me what it is about.... So now, because I want my son's reading and writing to be good, so I'd subscribe things for him to read. It's just reading whatever he wants. I just tell him, just read one or two topics today. Sometimes he'd read on for hours and I just let him. I tell him, if you have the time, just read on. And you don't have to tell me what you have just read. If you want to share, share. You don't have to write a book report for me. It's not necessary.

All mothers and/or their spouses read bedtime stories to their children. However, reading to/with the children did not occur only before bedtime. A mother stated that whenever her five-year-old daughter was bored, "she would go upstairs for 20 to 30 minutes, sometimes one hour. She wouldn't come down, and she would be reading. She has a ton of books." Another mother said that her eight-year-old daughter would "get up in the morning to read her Bible."

According to two mothers, reading should be an enjoyment that gradually becomes a habit and a pastime which can last an entire lifetime. A mother fondly

recalled her late-father who helped cultivate her interest in literature, writing skills, and even her attitude for life by telling stories.

[My father] was a Chinese teacher at Taipei First Girls' High School. His expertise in the Chinese language was very good. For this I am thankful because I read lots and lots of Chinese literature when I was young. I have been really confident of my writing capability ever since I was young. I often entered the composition competitions because I was influenced by my father.... He loved to tell stories... We lived in an old neighborhood where everybody knew everybody. Every night after dinner, all the kids would come out to play. My dad would tell us to sit there to watch the stars and relax and then he'd tell us stories. He told many, many stories, like The Twenty-Four Filial Piety, like those. Whenever I'm mad at my mom, my dad would tell me stories from there. He'd tell me those stories that would make me feel sorry for my action for not being good to my mom. But my dad never spanked kids. He never told me directly what I did wrong. He'd tell me a story. He'd use a proverbial story. And I'd know that the story is talking about me.... He'd use the story to let me know what I did just now was wrong. He'd save my face because little kids have egos to protect, too.

Another mother also recalled how her parents transmitted the love for reading to her that shaped her outlook on life. She described how it was unusual for a Chinese teenage girl to seek out part-time jobs. Because of her reading, she was able to learn information she otherwise would not have.

I didn't go to the National Taiwan University or National Chengchi University or that kind of good school, but I had read the Reader's Digest, Little Henry, and the books published by the Chinese Daily News ever since I was very young. My mom bought so many of those for us to read. So in a lot of ways my way of thinking is a lot more mature than the rest of my peers. I really admired the American kids who could work part-time to earn some money on their own. But I couldn't go deliver the newspapers in Taiwan because it was too dangerous. But I'd seek out jobs to work and earn some allowances to buy more Reader's Digest. I'd do things a lot differently than the peers of my age.

The other mother revealed that besides music, reading was her "lifeline" that "pulled me throughout my critical periods of my life" and that she wanted to pass on the legacy to her children.

[My father] bought *a lot* of books. Back then, the books were very, very expensive. That's one thing I really remembered and am very thankful for. That's [one] thing I learned from him. He gave us that... He wasn't really well off. He wasn't rich. But he was very generous in spending money on books. I feel that it is one gift that he has given me – the hobby – of enjoying reading, so, I'm very thankful that my dad did that for me.

Arts and crafts are the last leisure category in *activities*. Arts and crafts consist of drawing, cutting (with scissors), pasting, sculpting, etc. Eight mothers indicated arts and craft as one of their children's favorite things to do on their own. Arts and crafts not only served as a creative outlet for children, but also allowed the young children to develop

hand-eye coordination and finger muscles. As many parents realized, knowing how to use a pair of scissors or holding a pen properly denoted a young child's progress in his physical development.

One mother was originally an art teacher and her husband enjoyed carpentry. In their household, the mother found it "very easy" to teach her two children to make arts because her children were "naturally adapted" to use markers, scissors and other tools to make crafts. Another mother was pleased with her five-year-old daughter's inclination when she discovered that her daughter's talent in arts and crafts, so she provided more art supplies and artistic ideas to better enhance the artistic gift.

Her teacher told me that she could use the scissors to cut a horse out. She didn't need to trace a draft first. After she cut it, she made a ring that you could wear on your fingers. And then when she came back, she presented us one each. Yeah, she's very... inclined in this aspect. At first I didn't know how to teach her. So afterwards, with friends and other people I learned how to make some arts & crafts. I try my best. If I see some construction paper that's special, I'd let her try them out.

*Electronic Media.* The final category of activity was electronic media. These electronic multi-media included television, computer, the Internet, and video games. In most cases, these multi-media are designed to attract the youngsters' attention with their ever-changing on-screen display. Because these multi-media are usually self-directed and often without a proper closure, (i.e., TV programs that come one program after another, computer/video games that comes one game after another) children are more

likely to persist in engaging in these multi-media activities. These Chinese immigrant parents recognized that prolonged engagement in these activities might diminish socialization opportunities, distract the children's concentration, and weaken reading, analyzing, and problem-solving abilities. All these issues alerted the parents to be the "monitors" in these electronic entertainment activities. These multi-media activities were often used as "incentives" due to the restriction parents place upon children for their addictive attraction to children.

He tells me he loves to play computer games the most and Nintendo 64 and PlayStation 2. He has all of those. But I'd set rules that he could only play those every other week. I won't give them all. I will not *not* give them to him because it's impossible. But I'd give him accordingly and see if he could control himself. More often than not, children liked to watch television, play the computer, surf the Internet, and play video games. Parents often allowed these electronic entertainment activities as "incentives" to award children's good behaviors or to take away to punish the bad conduct.

So, what you need to discipline them is take away what they *want*. But you never take away what they *need*. You can't send them to bed without dinner. That's taking away what they need. But you can take away their computer time or TV time. That's better.

Restrictions were placed not only upon time limitation, but also on content appropriateness. For television programs, eight mothers mentioned that they allowed their children to watch only educational programs.



[My son] rarely watches TV. He is only allowed to watch PBS station. He's always been an active and vigorous child, so we restrict him from viewing shows or cartoons that have foul languages and violence. He watched PBS while growing up, so he shouldn't be getting wrong ideas...

The same was for the computer games: Seven mothers indicated that they only permitted their children to play educational-themed games.

Ever since he was young, we have purchased a lot of computer games...

Learning related, like phonetics, reading, writing, and math. I won't be stingy with that kind of things. I'd let him [have] mostly educational games. But I won't purchase junk toys for him.... First, I played with him, but later on he did not need my help. Unless he really doesn't understand, then he'll ask me....

After playing with computer games, he naturally developed reading skills.

With these electronic media, the Chinese immigrant mothers would often go one step further than just monitor from aside. They would watch televised programs or play computer games together with their children and were to explain what their children had just watched and/or to answer any questions they might have. One mother gave her seven-year-old daughter an "opportunity education" from a television show about a bully at school they had just watched together.

This new boy [from the show] conveyed his insecurity [toward the new environment] by picking on and laughing at other people... He was very lonely and he didn't know how to make friends. He was trying to attract attention so that's why he was teasing and giving people a hard time. So, after the show, I

told [my daughter] sometimes that was what bullies did. I asked her the same questions, “What do you do? Do you have bullies at school?” Yes or no, and we’ll go through different options and reasons why kids [act the way they do]. I questioned her, “If you were a bully, why do you think you want to pick on other kids? Why do you think people do that?” You know? So she would say, “Well, maybe because I think I’m good, or I’m better than some other people or something....” But usually after the show, she’ll say, “Well, maybe I just feel lonely or [whatever]...”

Aside from community activities, and social functions, these Chinese immigrant mothers utilized various activities to assist the children’s exploration of their surrounding and heighten the children’s sensitivity to a variety of stimuli and circumstances. At the same time, they provided assistance for their children’s exploration of their surrounding and thus heighten their children’s sensitivity to a variety of experiences. What these parents tried to achieve by providing their children with these activities was not only for pleasure, but also for educational and informative purposes in many ways.

### Daily Routine

Daily routine denoted a regular and habitual course of tasks that were done each day. Daily routines for young children could simply be a car-ride to school, eating, bath time, bedtime, etc. Routines could also include daily activities that adults engage in along with their children, such as cooking, gardening, or fixing things. Daily routines are usually seen as mundane, repetitive, and even tedious to most people, especially for stay-at-home caretakers. Nonetheless, these Chinese immigrant parents found that a child

could learn something from the most insignificant events if they were careful and observant enough to be there to “catch them.”

Nine Chinese immigrant mothers reported that they used daily routines to educate and socialize their children. They believed that every minutia of daily life should be valued. They regarded every moment, however trivial, as an opportunity to educate and socialize their children. One mother even insisted that “routine” itself was good for children because a regular routine told a child exactly what to do and when to do it. She believed that a routine lifestyle included regular meals, exercise, and sleeping patterns, which promoted mental and physical well-being for her children. She also believed that a regular routine could train a pre-school child about discipline and self-control so that he would adjust better in group settings (e.g., school) later on.

So I think it’s all interconnected. I believe that a regular routine and schedule enable a child to eat and sleep well. She’d be willing to be active. If she is active, then she’d have the desire to eat. If she is willing to eat, then she’d have nutrients. If she exercises, she’d want to sleep and sleep well. Right. This is one of my philosophies.

Each segment of daily routine offered countless opportunities to aid the children to be self-sufficient and independent. For instance, dining could offer opportune moments to teach young children more than just table manners. A mother of two young girls encouraged her daughters to try new foods and not to waste food. By noticing her five-year-old daughter’s behaviors both at home and at school, the mother was able to rectify her child’s conduct.

In the beginning, it was very strange that the container that [my daughter] brought back home was always empty, but once she stepped into the house, she'd say she was hungry.... So after a week, I went to her school and had lunch with her. It was then when I realized that all the other kids wouldn't eat after taking two bites off their lunch. They'd start chatting with their classmates and whatnots. And when the teacher called time's-up, they'd just dump out the food. So, [my daughter]'d throw her lunch away like the rest of the kids.... [So I told her] if she didn't finish [her lunch], she could bring it home. That way, I'd know how much she had eaten and how much was left over. It's not that I'm cherishing the food, but I think I still value some things. Isn't there a Chinese saying that goes, "One grain of rice, one ounce of labor?" I feel she doesn't need to be wasteful like that....

Another mother also discouraged wastefulness by setting a household rule to demand her children to finish eating all of their meals before leaving the table. She would first rationalize why a child could not finish all his food and implement different strategies to help her children finish their food. She made three assumptions: first, the child ate too much beforehand (i.e., snacks) and could not finish them all, second, the child did not like certain types of food given to her, and third, the proportion given to the child exceeded what she could finish. The mother would ration the food and limit snacks between meals. At the same time, the mother would explain to the child her strategies.

You'd tell her, "Linda, look. Today you didn't finish your food. Mama gave you very little already. But you still couldn't finish. This means you ate too many

snacks. So Mama thinks that if you can't finish your meals, then Mama can't give you any more snacks." I'd tell her directly, so she knows. Typically little kids loves snacks. Of course she'd get anxious, but I'd tell her, "It's okay. If you want snacks, I'd still give you some. But you'll have to finish all of your food in your bowl before Mama can give you any snacks." Usually kids can do that.

In the meantime, this mother was sensitive to the child's personal needs by helping the child verbalize the reasons.

If she can't finish the food, at first we'd ask her what her reason is. If she can't verbalize it, then we'll help her rationalize it. Was it she who ate too many snacks? Or did I give her too much food this time and I needed to give her less the next time? Like that. Let her gain back her appetite. Also it might be that she did not exercise enough, not active enough. I believe that if she's not active enough, she might not eat. That's our way.

Yet another mother taught her six-year-old daughter to be thankful for the food that she received and to remember those who contributed to bring forth the food on the table.

[The Chinese culture] will teach little children that before eating a meal, they must thank those people who let them have food; for example, those who planted the rice, daddy who went out to work, and then mommy who cooked the meal. It teaches her to be thankful, so eating a meal is not just a simple task anymore... I feel that [this tradition] is a very good stuff that can last.

These immigrant mothers recognized that parenting takes place in the most unexpected places and times. When a mother drove her seven-year-old son to school, she chastised him for bad-mouthing a fellow classmate:

The original intent is to teach him to do good. It's all in fairness when you do good. You will receive much more in return if you do good. I say to him, "If you understand how to do good things often, later on it doesn't matter if you socialize with friends or do business with others, you'd have good fate coming to help you." I say this is a good "cause-effect" chain.... You must maintain a good heart and not say bad things about other people. He'd often say, "Oh Mama, today there's this new girl at school. She's soooooo fat!" Blah, blah, blah. I said, "If you say that she'd be sad." He said, "I didn't say it in front of her." I said, "But you talked about her with another kid in the back of the car that I carpooled." I think those are very bad things to talk about because you're criticizing other people... I said, "Be nice. Even when you are talking, you must be careful. Your thinking must be careful. Don't worry so much about what others do. Just monitor yourself."

A mother trained her two young children to "focus" during their mealtime and bedtime story.

When they eat, the TV is never on. One thing that I emphasize is that they may leave the table only after they have finished eating. Afterwards, it's up to them whether they want to watch TV, play, or read. I don't want them to eat and watch TV at the same time. Another tip to train focus is through reading. Every night

before [my daughter] goes to sleep, I'd read a book to her. If she wiggles or runs around, then I'd stop reading. After she comes back to me, then I'll continue reading. Training focus is not an easy task especially when the child is very curious, and she'd like to look around.

The mothers emphasized that a lot of things were very "trivial and insignificant." However, not everything indicated a "lesson." Many times, a simple task could promote the closeness of parent-child relationship. One mother insisted on having a sit-down dinner every night in her household and forming dialogues with her son.

I spend a lot of time talking with him. I don't treat him like a child by shutting him up and not telling him anything... Don't ever think that because your kids are young, so they don't know anything. If you tell them what's on your mind, they'll understand what the parents are thinking. [My son] would also tell me his things. There's this reciprocal interaction between us. He can learn things from the grown-up world and I will know what is happening at his school.... It's not like this is your matter and that's my matter, and everybody is like nothing is going on. Just say hi and ask how your health (day) is. Can't do that. That's not enough. You need to spend time to do this... Every day we will sit down and have dinner together.... Some families are too busy and can't be together. But at our house, that won't happen.

Another mother enjoyed the simple moments when she took the children to school or tucked them to bed.

We pray with our children every night... At night she would request me to pray with her. Then, every day when I'd take them to school, I'd lead them to prayers on the way to school. <laugh> Recite the Lord's Prayers. <chuckle> Sometimes, if I forget, they'd be like, "Oh Mom, pray!" They would initiate!

### Conclusion

In the aspect of the "heuristic style of learning," these Chinese immigrant mothers made a conscious decision to spend time with their children. Twelve mothers out of the fifteen in the sample chose to be stay-at-home mothers. Out of those twelve stay-at-home mothers, five had a college degree and six had 18 years or more of schooling. Three mothers who worked full-time were also aware of the importance of spending time with children. By spending time with their children, especially when children were still young (before school age), these mothers believed that they are able to "catch something unexpectedly where they knew that [the children] need help on something." The mothers were able to implement "chance education" by just being there and catching the unanticipated. Since the mothers understood the impact they could have on children's learning experience, they were able to show "a correct pathway to guide [the children]" and to facilitate bonding experience with their children by using a chance education.

A full-time mother who worked as a software engineer emphasized the significance of the parents' spending time with her children and reminisced how she modeled after her father's childrearing practice:

It's impossible for a child to "catch" everything. It's an accumulation of bits and bits. You have to spend time [with them] before they go to school. It doesn't



matter what you do with them -- whether it be drawing or reading with them. I always think back to the time when my dad used to spend with me. Even if he was very tired, he'd still spend time reading with me. [With] math... I remember how my dad drew and explained questions after questions. He'd repeatedly asked me whether I understood or not. After he did [the problem] with me, he'd make up another question for me to do. [Now] I do this with my children. I don't know if this is right or wrong, but I was taught like this by my father.

### Child-Inspired Education

As these parents considered transmitting certain values or beliefs to their children, they also contemplated *how* to transmit those values and beliefs. Instead of directly replicating the methods that they were taught as children, these immigrant mothers realized that they could not use the same set of childrearing practice their parents or their counterparts used in their home country to teach their children. One mother often reminded her husband and herself not to use the same methods they were brought up. "I tell him often that he can't use the experience from his past to teach the children. It's not correct." She continued, "You have to look at how children are nowadays." One primary reason for this change of childrearing methods was that the context in which the immigrants educate their children was dramatically different from their own original context: The immigrant parents received their formal education in Taiwan, while their American-born children were receiving education here in the United States.

All fifteen Chinese immigrant parents recognized that different children might perceive the same concept very differently and it was up to the parents to try to relate to

the child from the child's point of view. This concept stemmed from the Confucian principle of education *yin tsai se jiao* (teach according to the child's capability). There were four steps tracing how these Chinese immigrant mothers devised the Child-Inspired Education: 1) attune to each child's individual needs, 2) adjust strategies to see what works for the child, 3) guide the child without imposing too much, and 4) leave the performance entirely up to the child. Different individual needs require different strategies. The immigrant mothers altered and adjusted their childrearing practice by adhering to the five different areas of children's individual characteristics: personality, developmental capability, strength, weakness, and interest. The *pentagonal guideline*,

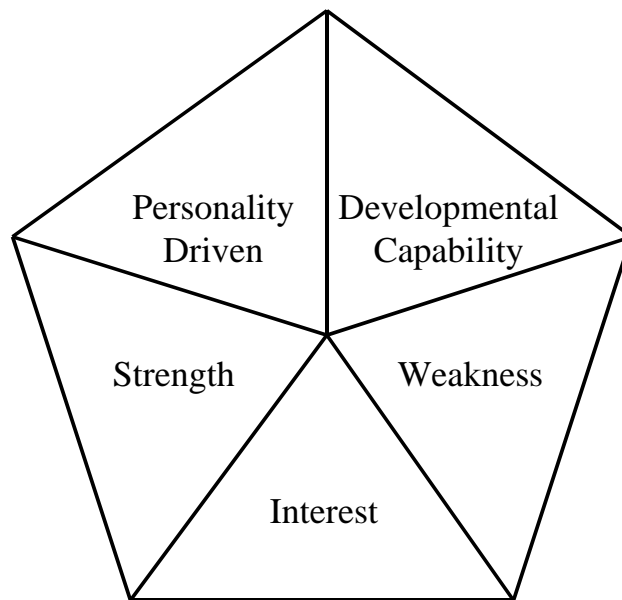


Figure 6: Pentagonal Guideline to Child-Inspired Education

which I developed to represent the five areas, will be demonstrated in the following sections to show how these Chinese immigrant mothers use these four steps to devise a set of parenting method that is both suitable and acceptable to each child by tuning into the individual differences of the child.

### Personality-Driven

Seven immigrant mothers educated their children according to their children's individual personality. Mothers who had more than one child were the most sensitive to each child's individual differences. Experiences of having more than one child indicated to them that their parenting strategy had to change depending on each of the children in the family. A mother of two children firmly stated that different kids needed to learn different things because their personalities differed. Another mother made an observation of her two young daughters aged five and three, whose personalities differed when they encountered new situations and interacted with other people.

[Our firstborn] is kind of a shy girl. She's slow to warm up to new things. She's more observant. If we have some new food, she won't try it right away. You would need to coax her. After a while she'd eat it, but definitely not before you tell her, "You tasted this last time, remember?" At first when we first moved here, we had some little kids as our neighbors, and because she was with me all the time, she only knew how to speak in Chinese. Every time the kids next door or across the street came out to play, she'd hide behind my back. She was very shy versus our second born. She didn't care if she spoke Chinese, and other people didn't understand. She'd go play with other people. As long as she could

play, she didn't care about that. [Our second born] is different from her older sister. [Our firstborn] would play with you only if she gets to know you better. By understanding the unique personality of each child, the task of parenting became much easier for the parents. Rather than stick to a specific methods that might or might not work on the child and be frustrated and upset with the child when the methods did not work, these immigrant parents used the personality of their children as a guide to relate to their children better. Here, one mother gave an example of how she resolved sibling bickering between her children by understanding her children's personalities.

I feel that she is the type of person who only takes the gentle way and won't take the tough way.... When she is fighting with her older brother, if I use the gentle way by cajoling her and telling her that if she does this, then isn't that better? If I speak nicely to her, then she'll compromise. If I am tough with her, then she'll get tough with me too.... She needs me to use the gentle way. Just like when my son tattletales on his sister, "Little Sister is messing with me! She's annoying me!" So I tell him to tell his sister, "Little Sister, could you please not do that?" She'd immediately say, "Okay, sure!"

Instead of telling the children to stop fighting, the mother guided her son to use the "gentle way" to talk to his sister into a compromise. Eventually, the children themselves resolved the bickering.

Another mother made use of her daughter's personality to better understand her as a person. She described her a three-year-old daughter as a "tomboy" because she was

very athletic, spirited, and active. The mother also noticed that her daughter identified herself more with her father and wished that she had been a boy.

She is a girl, but she likes to dress like a boy. For example, she likes to wear pants and doesn't like to wear skirts. She likes short hair, not long hair. She likes to play with peers who are boys. She always thinks that she's a boy. She'd say, "Mom, I'm a boy. Little Brother is a girl." She always wishes that she were a boy.

This behavior of "wanting to be a boy" troubled the mother because she worried that her daughter "couldn't differentiate her own gender." Instead of being angry with her daughter and hiding her pants, this mother decided to consider her daughter's personality and work out a compromise with her child, unlike what her own parents did when she was a child.

There was one period of time I couldn't understand why my daughter didn't like to wear skirts. I was very mad, and I'd hide her pants. <laugh> But I know this is not right because this will cause her not to believe in me. If she doesn't believe me and she knows that I will get mad at whatever she does, then she won't tell me anything. I know I can't do that; therefore, I have to think of other ways like negotiating.... Later I told her she could wear whatever she wished, but she had to be reasonable. I told her the reason why Mama wanted her to wear skirts sometimes. Because we were going to attend a wedding, it was a courtesy to wear a skirt. After that she didn't have any objection.... [Because] she listens to

reasoning, so I let her have some ownership to make her own decision. Once I let her decide for herself, she listens more closely to me.

By understanding her daughter's identification with her father and her daughter's willingness to listen to reasoning, this mother directed the child into a more appropriate behavior with which both the parent and child were comfortable. In return, the mother found that her daughter was more trusting and abided by her parenting decisions in the future. This mother then reflected back to her childhood where her parents did not consider much of her opinions and tried to influence her with theirs.

Speaking of this issue, my mother didn't do this with us. My father and my mother always wanted to influence us with their opinions. So, later on, we became more rebellious. This is how we grew up. My parents and I had lots of arguments.

#### Developmental Capability (Age/Stage)

Nine Chinese immigrant mothers adopted parenting methods in accordance with their children's developmental abilities. These mothers recognized that their children were in their tender years. The parents could not and would not treat or teach the children according to the adults' standards but rather to each child's developmental capability. For instance, an immigrant mother would constantly remind herself of the tender age of her 15-months-old daughter when she encountered difficulties teaching her child new things. "I have to keep in mind that she's very young. I just have to keep trying, and eventually she'll get it," she said. By putting themselves in the shoes of the children, the mothers were able to capture the needs of the children more accurately. One

mother demonstrated how she related to her young daughter by imagining what a child might be thinking or worrying about when she played with her daughter.

Playing with her... Not really lowering myself to her, [but] in a sense I'd play, trying to imagine what a 3 or 4 or 5 or 6-year-old-girl would be thinking about, and play at that level. Basically, I address her fears or questions. I think once you build up some kind of relationship, the kid will be more open to ask questions. A mother of a seven-year-old boy revealed how she literally "got down" to her seven-year-old son's level when talking with him.

When he was smaller, I'd squat down to talk with him. I respect him on the same level [so that] I'm not all high up. Because I'm tall and he's a little baby, so I'd squat down to talk with him. I learned that from the Montessori's style. I view the world from the same level as he. Once I level myself with him with respect, I can speak to him more easily.

Another mother stopped herself before reprimanding her seven-year-old son and considered things from a child's point of view.

I place myself in the shoes of the child: if it were me today who is being scolded, would I want to be scolded like that? I would think in his shoes, "When I was 7-years-old, what was I like?" If I can think like that, then I will be able to understand the child better.

By tapping into the developmental capability of the children, rather than making unrealistic expectations from the children, these immigrant parents found themselves more at ease dealing with some basic childrearing issues. One immigrant mother, for

example, was very sensitive about the separation anxiety in toddlers and how it could possibly affect trust issues between parents and children later in life. She described how she dealt with her daughter's going to a daycare for the very first time at two years old.

She used to have separation anxiety before. At age 2 when I dropped her off at the Mother's Day Out program, at first she'd cry for 30 minutes. I knew she'd cry. I also knew that circumstance was embarrassing. But I'd tell her I would come back to pick her up, to give her a sense of safety. At first she wouldn't care about what I told her.... But I said to her firmly, "You will stay here to play with other children. You have so many kids to play with you. You can play with many toys. And the teacher will teach you singing and drawing." I kept telling her the advantages of going to school. [I kept stressing to her that] Mama will definitely come back to get her. After a summer, she didn't cry anymore. She knew that I'd come back for her.... Sometimes, I have to go out, like taking her little brother to the doctor or something, and I'd drop her at a friend's house.

She's now very willing to stay at the friend's house.

Another mother refused to impose too much "learning" onto her children before they were "ready" to learn. She insisted that only when children's own "timing has come" to learn, the entire learning process would become smooth and fast. The mother used an example of her daughter's taking the piano lessons before "she was ready" to illustrate why it was not the right time for the child to learn to play the piano at the time.

At the time she was 4 years old when she went to learn to play the piano. Perhaps she was too little then, so when she practiced every day, it was really painful for



her. But in fact, it was only 10 to 15 minutes. Little kids love to play, and it's impossible for them to sit still. So, every day she would cry and throw temper tantrum. I felt that hmm, okay, maybe she didn't want to learn that right now, so we stopped. My belief is that if the child wants to learn something and when the time is right, the learning progress will be very fast.... [I could tell if her timing had come by] trying things out first.... I'd take her to try playing the piano for a little while.... If I think she's ready, then she should be enjoying learning. But if she's not enjoying it, she'd complain or whine... If it is not the effect that I'm hoping for, then we'd wait for her to be a little bigger.

Not only are sensitivity and awareness toward children's developmental needs and capability important, but it was essential to adjust parental roles by "considering children's age" because it was believed that children need different sorts of guidance at every stage of development. According to five mothers, they grew up with their children together. When their children were still young, parents were there to guide, teach, and discipline them. But when the children reached adulthood, these parents hoped to become friends with their children.

So far... she's still little. [In the future] I want to be a friend to whom she can talk everything. I still want her to see me as an elder, so she can listen to what I have to tell her. But I think up to now, she still cannot decide what she wants to do, so basically I still want her to follow my instructions. In the future, I wish that she could see me as a friend and not just a mother. Like a lot of children, they tell everything to their friends at school or outside. I think if she regards me as her

friend, she will tell me everything. I think a lot of people even though they have grown to be adults, they are still friends with their parents and share a lot of things together. I think that's very nice.

### Strengths/Weaknesses of Children

By tuning in to children's personality tendency and developmental capabilities, ten immigrant mothers discovered the strengths and weaknesses that lay in their children's capabilities and how they assisted their children accordingly. In comparison with their own experiences and the children's peer group, the mothers learned what was considered as "normal" in developmental capabilities within a certain age group. These immigrant mothers kept a close eye on anything more or less than the norm. When the mothers became aware of their children's strong and weak points, they then focused on either enhancing and developing their strengths or aiding and reducing their weaknesses with the means that were available to them.

Six immigrant mothers expressed being able to detect the strengths that their children possess, and some of them were still searching. One way a child's strength was realized was when s/he exhibited developmental capability that exceeded his/her peer groups. Once children's strength of capability was detected, these immigrant parents hoped to foster it. Upon discovering the strong linguistic ability that her 5 ½-year-old daughter possessed, one mother decided to enhance it by supplying her with vocabulary flashcards.

When she was younger, I showed her Chinese words... At 2 years old, she learned how to recognize about 200 Chinese characters.... I not only gave her the

words for fun, but I also let her know that those are Chinese words. The learning progressed very fast, 8 sheets per day. Because learning is a lifetime thing, so I took them away. Afterwards, she kept saying that she liked it. She wanted words, and she wanted to *find* words. So, I brought 6 volumes from Taiwan, and she soon finished reading them all. Later on I also gave her the English [ones] to read, and she finished the English ones, too! <laugh> For about 2 years, I didn't give her anything to read, so she forgot about 2/3 of the words, but when I reviewed with her she picked up very quickly. The teacher at the Chinese school says that her linguistic ability is "super good." Her level of Chinese, like the pronunciation, is very good. As to how good her English is, [she sounds like any average American child.] She is special in languages.

By considering the strength of a child's capabilities, this mother was able to let her child take the lead in the learning.

On the other hand, the same mother also noticed that her daughter's motor development was slightly delayed. This five-year-old girl had difficulties using the scissors and holding pencils to write with her hands. Later on, the mother found a way to help and improve her physical development by doing crafts.

Last year, I went back to Taiwan for more than 3 months. I took her to play with mud (play dough). I was thinking to let her train her finger muscles and little muscles and the like. She is not doing well consistently because I know her physical development is slower. That is, her mentality and physique differ. Because her brain is always thinking, reading books, looking at things and

pursuing areas of linguistics. So, her [physical] development is not so good. Of course, I want her to be balanced. That's why I signed her up for some activities.

Concerning weaknesses, parents first needed to "recognize what a child needed to learn" and then noticed what s/he was lacking. One mother knew what her six-year-old daughter needed to learn and noticed that she was either learning the wrong way or was having difficulties, so the mother set out to teach and help her daughter.

Her teacher at school [assigned] these little math questions, problem-solving questions. They were very simple subtractions, and she got them right away. The teacher saw that she had gotten them correctly, so she gave her more difficult ones. I think the question is somewhat like if you have 50 cookies and you eat 33, how many will be left? Instead of doing a nice subtraction sentence, she drew 50 lines and crossed 33 out. Then she counted what was left. But I realized, hey, that's not the most efficient way to solve the problem. So I teach her what is the most efficient way....

When assessing the strengths and weaknesses of children's capability, cultural considerations were also taken into account. These Chinese immigrant mothers took either or both the American and Chinese cultural variations when educating their children. One mother pointed out, regarding the strengths and weaknesses of her children's capabilities, she decided not to fuss over the weaknesses but instead to emphasize the strengths. She pointed out that she made the change because now she was raising her children in America. Had she stayed in Taiwan, she might not have done the same.

If I were still back in Taiwan and if my children's academics were not so good, I would be very angry and frustrated. I would worry about the what-to-dos about their schooling. But here, I think American society is more well-rounded which makes me realize that even though my child isn't good with this one thing, I'd go look at his good side and then find a way for him to develop from there. I think if I were back in Taiwan, I would think the same, too. If I know that my child is not good at A, and maybe he's good at C, I'd emphasize his C.... But if I were back in Taiwan, in that kind of environment, it might be hard for me to think that maybe he's good at C so that I would emphasize his C and let him develop his C. But because I am in the United States, this atmosphere here convinces me to not to be so angry just because my child's academics are not successful. Here, I'd have the opportunity to admire the good sides of my child.

These immigrant parents hoped to foster the strengths of their children's capability. In the meantime, they had to be flexible in catering to their children's natural tendencies. Although parents might anticipate certain levels of expectation by trying out new approaches with their children in order to find what works with their personality and age group, the progress was ultimately left to children's own potential.

### Interest-Driven

The immigrant mothers paid special attention to specific interests in their children's preferences in certain areas in learning. They noted that "interest" was unlike "strength." One might be interested in getting involved in certain activities or wanting to learn more about some things, but that did not guarantee that one would excel in doing

them. On the other hand, one could master some areas, yet not enjoyed the process of them. According to all fifteen Chinese immigrant mothers in this sample, they invested their energy and time in helping their children find their interests. They wanted to discover what interests their children. After finding the source of amusement, they hoped to cultivate that particular interest further by enhancing it with formal lessons or reinforcements. As mentioned before, although these Chinese immigrants parents did not enroll their children in extracurricular lessons as much as the Taiwanese parents in Taiwan, they still believed that extracurricular activities could help to “draw out” any interests that might motivate their children. One mother took her daughter to try out numerous extracurricular lessons because she wanted to find out where her daughter’s interests lie.

Mainly, I want her to try to see which activity is suitable for her. I would like to insist that after 5 or 6 years old, we can gradually know the extent of her physical ability and where her interests lie. Depending on where her ability lies, I’d want her to persist. I wouldn’t force her on things that she doesn’t have any interest in. As children were exposed to various areas of disciplines, these parents were careful to let them learn and develop freely without imposing too much pressure. One mother compared her views on developing her children’s interest with parents in Taiwan.

The kids of my sister-in-law and my classmates [back in Taiwan] are in their kindergarten years. They went to learn piano, abacus, mental mathematics, English, arts & crafts, gymnastics, and violin.... Of course, I’m not saying it’s not good, but it’s just that they are letting them learn so much stuff. But now like

us, we're looking to see what they want to learn, then we'll [let them]... [For instance,] she wanted to learn ballet. Last year we took her to ballet lesson for a period of time. But maybe she was too young at the time, she danced once or twice, and then she lost her interest, and she said she didn't want to learn anymore. So, we stopped. Recently, she said she wanted to learn ballet again.

So, I might take her to try once more. If she really has interest, I'd take her.

This mother mentioned that had she resided in Taiwan, she might have felt pressured to take her children to all those lessons because it would be hard that "all the other kids are doing significantly while your own kids are idling in the streets." Conversely, living in the States gave the parents the freedom to let their children follow their own interests. Eight mothers stressed the importance of letting their children take the lead in learning. One stipulation that the parents placed upon letting the children learn according to their own interest was that if they wanted to learn something, persistence was the key.

Thus far, I would try [to follow her interests] now. But, my own thought on that is that if they want to learn, I want them to persist. [She must] persist longer to see if it could become her interest. If she really couldn't do it, then give up.

Right. But I don't want it to be like in Taiwan where you have to learn so much.

It doesn't matter whether you have the interest or not, you have to learn everything. Like my sister-in-law['s children], their schedule is packed from after school at 4 p.m. all the way to 9 p.m. at night.

The main reason that these parents focused so much upon the interests of a child was that they believed that pure enjoyment in any field could eventually lead to a satisfying career path and lifestyle. Unlike the parents in Taiwan, these Chinese immigrant parents did not feel the need to force their children to pursue certain professional routes (e.g., doctors, lawyers, or engineers). Instead, they believed that it was essential that their children found what really interests themselves and followed that interest as a guide for their future career.

I just feel that each person has his own specialty (han han tsu chuan yuan). As far as where their specialty is at right now, I'm still searching for them. They're still too young. I just want them to have the interests, so I'd let them learn more. I'd [expose them to many things.] If they like to make/do something, I'd let them do it. I'd select more materials for them to read/look at. I'd try my best by [giving them] children's magazines, or [letting them play] the computer, or taking them to the library. We'll just try at that.

### Balance

This section will now describe how these Chinese immigrant mothers combined the Chinese and American views on academic issues. It will also discuss the nature of balance and struggle these mothers faced as they strive to reach that compromise.

A physical removal from the culture in which the immigrant mother was raised leads to separation of herself from her family's home culture values, beliefs, and practices. All fifteen mothers interviewed were able to identify the virtues and the



limitations of their parents', original, and host cultural parenting belief and practice regarding educational issues. These immigrant parents were also able to make a conscious decision as to what they deemed best for raising their children in a foreign country. Efforts of *deviation* and *accommodation* finally determined how the *balance* or the conciliation of the two cultural values was achieved. The importance attached to the combination of both Chinese and American cultural values on educational views was significantly evident throughout the interviews. All fifteen participants experienced *accommodation* and *deviation* as a result of being exposed to both North American values and the Chinese values. *Balance* of views about education and learning was the central goal of the model; however, because *deviation* and *accommodation* did not necessarily lead to *balance*, only four out of fifteen mothers in the sample have experienced *balance*.

#### Conflict/Struggle

Although balance of views about education and learning was the central goal of the model, deviation and accommodation did not necessarily lead to balance. The model of balance in bi-cultural childrearing is synonymous with a scale that tries to balance the American and the Chinese values on either side (See Figure 7). Prior to reaching a stabilized state, two sides of the scale weighed so negligibly close that the scale could not determine which side weighed more. Under these circumstances, the scale fluctuated back and forth, creating an imbalance which represented the conflict and struggle an immigrant mother encountered as she adapted her practices according to the different cultural values.

**I'm still more Chinese, but I want to go to... So if I were to write it out, this is the middle, I'd be right... here [between Chinese and the mid-point]. But when I try to go here [the mid-point], I'd go back and forth, back and forth. I have this struggle inside me. I'd tell myself that all the things I've learned and seen... I know what I *should* do, but right now, I just feel that it's really hard.**

Seven out of the total of fifteen Chinese immigrant mothers struggled with bi-cultural childrearing issues at the time of interview. Five of them came to further their education in the United States. The struggling mothers have been in America for less time than the balanced ones. They also migrated to the U.S. later in age than the balanced mothers did. Because they obtained their higher education in the United States, over half of them had some work experiences in the U.S., unlike those mothers who leaned more toward the Chinese way of parenting. The struggling mothers also had a wider range of social network that consisted of both Chinese and American relations. This made them exposed to the American cultural system but could still retain the Chinese beliefs from home.

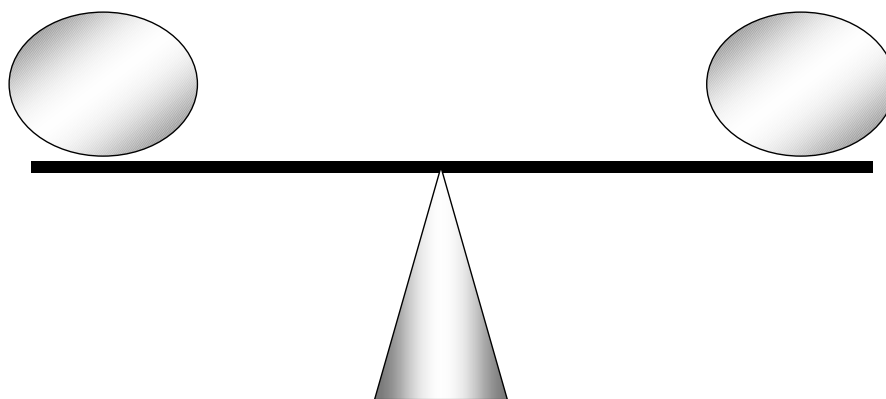


Figure 7: A Balanced Scale

Before achieving balance, the notion of conflict and struggle of cultural values played an important role. The study participants were sensitive to the conflicts or struggles they faced. Because they felt bound to maintain their cultural values, the immigrant mothers experienced pressure from their extended family and community to maintain their home cultural values and to see their children do the same thing as well. On the other hand, they felt the need to “revise” their values by incorporating the new host cultural values in order to better suit their children’s needs in the States in the future. Seven sources of conflicts were identified in these mothers from being exposed to dual cultures. Each source of conflict is illustrated below with an example from the seven struggling mothers.

#### Reasoning vs. Discipline

A mother of a 7-year-old boy and a 1½-year-old girl had difficulty choosing between disciplining and reasoning with her son. The mother felt that she should not scold her son even though she wanted to discipline him.

I have some difficulty trying to teach the older one. He’s very stubborn, so it’s very difficult trying to reason with him. After a while I would just want to discipline him, but we know that in America you cannot discipline your kids too harshly, so often I just get very frustrated. I think that is the greatest difficulty (trying to reason with him). In Taiwan parents are allowed to use more dominant methods. He’d tell me, “Yes, I understand” and turned around and repeated the

same mistake again 5 minutes later. For the older one I would need to devise strategies on how to teach him and how to reason with him.

### Praise vs. Criticism

This immigrant mother of two (boy, 9 and girl, 5) struggled between choosing to praise or criticize her children. Her upbringing of being scolded and spanked justified her doing the same to her own children. Living in American made her realize that encouragement has positive effects on the children. However, as much as she tried to restrain herself not to criticize her children, she still had difficulty using more praises.

The Americans like to use encouragement and praise everything that the kids do.

I think that is going to spoil them. Their ears could only take beautiful praises.

Of course, praise has an encouraging effect, I know that too. When you get praises all the time, your self-esteem gets very high and you would work harder.

Of course you need this. But I think criticisms and praises must be parallel. I believe in order to achieve balance, you must adopt the good sides of both American and Chinese and combine them together. This takes learning and doing. This is a struggle for me internally because inside I am a Chinese, but I'm thinking about how other people are doing it. Between praise and criticism, my husband would scold immediately when our kids do something wrong. I'd criticize also, but I'd think to myself, "If I keep on scolding the children, will I ruin them?" Last time I went back to Taiwan and read a book that mentions scolding ruins children severely - If you keep on scolding them, they'll behave even worse. Actually when I look back at my childhood, if we did anything

wrong, our mother would nag and scold us. I'd make myself retreat back. I believe that because I am living in America now, I should learn how to praise my children in opportune times.

### Proactivity vs. Passiveness

This mother of two (boy, 12 and girl, 8) went into great length in describing her struggles with the issues of proactivity and passiveness. In her description, she mentioned how difficult it was to battle the different values from her upbringing, the Chinese and the American cultures. Her working and educational experiences in the United States made her realize what it took to survive and excel in the United States. However, she still had difficulty finding a way to deviate from the Chinese influence to adapt the American way.

She first identified how the Chinese value humbleness and how the Americans value proactivity.

The Chinese culture teaches that you should endure everything. If you seek only peace in your heart, then everything will be in its place. I am still under this kind of influence. But after I went to work here in the States, I discovered that I had a huge problem. Everything now is about competition. If you don't voice your opinion in the company and you're quiet about everything, no one will know how well you are doing. It's like you have to know how to self-advertise yourself. Due to the way my father taught us, we don't know how to brag about ourselves. In some ways it's good, because if you're humble to people, they will respect you.

However, if you are too humble, you're not aggressive. If you're not aggressive enough, then you're not proactive.

She then described how this different set of values created problems for her when she went to school and worked in the United States.

The struggle that I have encountered is that people [here in the States] love proactive individuals at school and at work. When you go to school, American teachers love proactive students who ask questions frequently. But for the Chinese, we avoid asking questions of the teachers in school. If the teacher says "A," then it is "A." <laugh> Our education is like that. We are even afraid that we might answer incorrectly. If you answer wrong, you'll be punished to stand in the corner and be shamed. So, we'd always avoid [doing such a thing]. Later this is the one thing that I struggle so much.

Because of her own struggles, she tried to teach her children differently from the way her own parents taught her – a way for them to be successful and recognizable in the American environment.

Now, I tell my children to go for it. Whatever you can do, go do it. If you do well, you have to let your teachers know. Or else your teachers won't know that you know!

This mother recalled her childhood. She remembered that proactivity was not stressed in the Chinese education.

When we were younger, it was better that the teachers didn't pay attention to us as long as we could get good grades. But I wouldn't be such a show-off or tell them

I wanted this or that. It is the lack of competitiveness and proactivity. I think this is one thing bad about the Confucius thinking. <laugh> I don't know whether this is good or not, but I think nowadays, you have to be this way. My husband is also like that because he received the same education: just do your best, and that is it. We didn't care about obtaining any honors or the first place or anything. My husband's study is very smooth sailing. Although he is Number One all his life, he hasn't *competed* for it.

What worried this mother was that she saw the same passive characteristics in her own daughter. She was troubled that her daughter would not be able to stand up for herself in America where leadership and competitiveness were valued.

When our daughter sees that her mom and dad aren't the type of people who will compete with others, she is affected, too. Whenever I go to the conference with the teachers, I always get, "Your daughter behaves very well." She listens, and she follows what the teachers say. She's a good girl. But conversely, she lacks the leadership quality. The kids who say, "I want it! I can do it" and ask weird questions are the ones that have leadership qualities. Those kids would compete better than the others later on in life because they show their capability, and people would nominate them to be leaders. America trains children like this: It's okay if you're wrong when you raise your hand. But Oriental kids are being suppressed because of the education of our generation. I'd tell my kids, "You go, go!" They'd protest, "No! No way! Why me?" They don't have any language problems, but they're just afraid. She's not like all the other kids who would just

wave their hands in the air. Those kids don't even know the answers but they'd just aimlessly raise their hands and say, "I know! I know!" when as the matter of fact they actually don't know.

This mother then reflected on her own parenting strategy for creating this conflict of passiveness versus proactivity.

Since my children were young, I asked them, "Do you know what this is?" When they answered wrong, we weren't like the Americans who would say, "Good answer! Good try!" I'd say, "Silly! This is so easy, but you don't know!" "I've already told you!" And gradually kids would start to protect themselves. They want to avoid being scolded. They want to avoid being wrong, and that will lead to their non-proactivity. I keep on telling my husband about this, and he also agrees. We still need time to think about this...

#### Dependence vs. Independence

This immigrant mother of two girls (ages 4 and 5) struggled with teaching her children to be more independent. In Taiwan, children's dependence on parents is valued and thought to bring closeness to the family. However, because she believed that independence is valued in the United States, her children's dependence on her worried her.

I think in America, you must rely on yourself 80% of the time. The rest of the time, parents could only act as the role of assisting and helping on the side....

[My husband and I] are kind of afraid that we'd do too much [for our children].

Actually, it becomes kind of ironic. If we do too much, then they'd really rely on us.



The mother gave an example of her children's dependence on her.

It'd turn out that when I am at home and when my daughter goes to the bathroom, she looks for me. Her older sister acts the same way, too. She knows how to go to the bathroom by herself at school. But once she comes home when she wants to go to the bathroom, she would come look for me. I'd ask her, "How come you could go to the bathroom by yourself at school, but when you come home you need Mama to help you go to the bathroom?" She said, "Because Mama is here, because I know how [at school], but at home I don't know how." She became like, "I need to rely on Mama." I think it's not so good that she became so dependent. I want her not to be so dependent. In this country, you need to be independent. It's better that way.

#### Conservatism vs. Wastefulness

A mother of two girls (ages 4 and 5) was struggling with teaching her children the concept of conservatism. After volunteering at her daughter's school, she was alarmed by how wasteful the American children could be with school materials. She was even more alarmed when her daughter began to imitate her classmates.

At school, [the American students] use things very wastefully. After they draw one line [on a sheet of paper,] they'd say, "Oops, I messed up." Then they threw away the paper. Even though paper is not an expensive item, I personally think that you can still write other things on the blank spots left on the sheet or do other things. I'd think I want to give her some [Chinese] value concepts, so she won't be like the rest of the kids in school.

### Schoolwork vs. Supplemental work

This immigrant mother of two girls (ages 6 & 2½) discussed the different types of educational system in both Taiwan and the United States. Because of the educational differences, she indicated that most Chinese immigrant parents felt compelled to supplement what they believed was lacking in the American education. She tried hard not to feel that her children were falling behind, compared with the Taiwanese children. However, conflicts still dwelled in her mind. She began by comparing and contrasting the differences in the educational styles between Taiwan and the United States.

The American educational style is a lot freer [because] they don't give a lot of academic (homework) pressure on children. When they teach something, it's not the "fill-the-ducks" style like in Taiwan. When they talk about the structure of a flower, they won't tell you to memorize the parts of a flower: these are the petals, these are the stems, etc. It's not so much the "jiao teow se" (the doctrinal style) - I tell you this, and you only have to remember this. I feel that the American [education] is more through observation, letting the children develop their own interests and remember materials naturally. But if you are too "loose," then the children don't know what to learn. If you don't give them a particular way or the topic is too broad, it would confuse them and they would not know what to learn. Or, if you have too much freedom, then the child would feel that, "Hey, it doesn't matter if I know this." For the time being, I am debating between these two educational methods to find a better mid-point.

She compared the learning progress of her sojourner friends' children.

For example, some of my friends here in the States have children the same age as my daughter. After they went back to Taiwan, it's very competitive... the children there learn a lot more stuff. Their time is almost completely occupied after school. Her kids attend a bilingual school: both English and Chinese. In that kind of environment, their English and Chinese ability naturally improved dramatically. Besides that, the Taiwanese parents would let their children take piano lessons, ballet, mental mathematics, etc... Lots and lots of extracurricular stuff. Because her children are in a bilingual school, their English is also really good. In Taiwan, ever since a child enters kindergarten, the school has already requested him/her to write complete sentences. I'm talking about English sentences. They also have to memorize a lot of English vocabulary.

She then revealed why she was experiencing the conflict of schoolwork versus supplemental work.

My husband would think... "Look at that child in Taiwan, and see how good his Chinese is already!" He would most definitely compare - "How come my daughter doesn't memorize as much?" He thinks that our daughter has not learned enough, and so do I sometimes. But it is because we didn't like the Taiwanese education that we decided to stay in the U.S. We have experienced the very same thing ourselves. I try to avoid this because I don't want to give my children that kind of pressure. But sometimes in my mind I'd have that conflict.

### Optimism vs. Pessimism

This mother of two (boy, 9 and girl, 5) felt that she was shadowed by the pessimism of Chinese upbringing, and she struggled to be more optimistic about her children's behavior and performance.

The Chinese are pessimistic, very pessimistic. The Chinese only look at the bad sides.... The Chinese way is like, if you do something 80% or 90% right and do only 10% or 20% wrong, people tend to lecture you about what you didn't accomplish. They'd scold and reprimand you to death! And they'd ignore the things that you have done. They don't appreciate that 80% or 90% portion. They put so much emphasis on the things you have done wrong. I think this is what the Chinese are different from the Americans. Even though my heart inside is like the Chinese way, in some ways I want to be open like the Americans - to see things from some other points of view. This is something we Chinese should learn from the Americans.

In each source of conflict, each immigrant mother went through both mini- and macro- processes in order to achieve the balance. During the mini-process, the immigrant mother assessed each side of cultural values, internalized what she deemed best, and decided what values to transmit to her children. On the macro-level, actual childrearing practices that the immigrant mother implemented were demonstrated. Because of their migratory status, these immigrant mothers were keenly aware of cultural differences. Details of both mini- and macro-level processes were depicted in the above sections.

### Toward Chinese

Aside from being balanced, two kinds of stable phase occurred when one side of the scale contained a definite heavier weight than the other side.

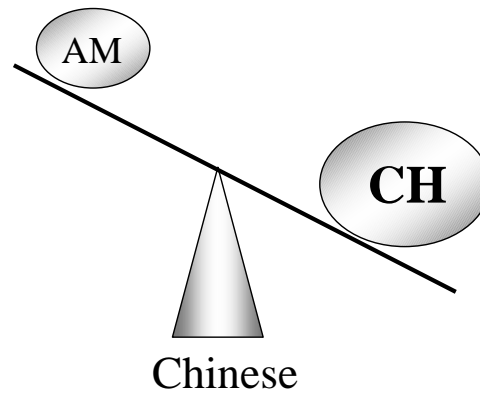


Figure 8: Scale Leaning Toward the Chinese Way of Parenting

When an immigrant mother has not fully immersed into the host culture and has already been influenced very much by her own cultural values, her childrearing belief and practice would lean more toward the Chinese way. Three Chinese immigrant mothers in the sample indicated how their childrearing strategies and attitudes retained the traditional Chinese way of parenting.

I feel that [I don't have many struggles]. Perhaps it's because I have never worked in the States so... To be honest with you, I am not really *into* American society. Basically I am a homemaker, and I have some interactions with other [Chinese] mothers. That is, they have older children, and from them, I can learn

about how they teach their children in order to select which [value or practice] is more suitable. So I think my way still leans more toward the Chinese style.

As indicated by the scale at a standstill position, an immigrant mother that leaned toward the Chinese way of parenting would experience no conflict or struggle internally or in practice, since her value system has not been influenced by an alternative.

#### Toward American

The degree of immersion of the immigrant mothers to the United States determined whether or not they would reach the state of consolidation where an immigrant adapted to the host cultural values. As a result of their greater exposure to the new culture, the more acculturated immigrant mothers absorbed American values and beliefs, the more likely they would adopt the American way of parenting. Only one immigrant mother indicated that she was taking up the American way of parenting.

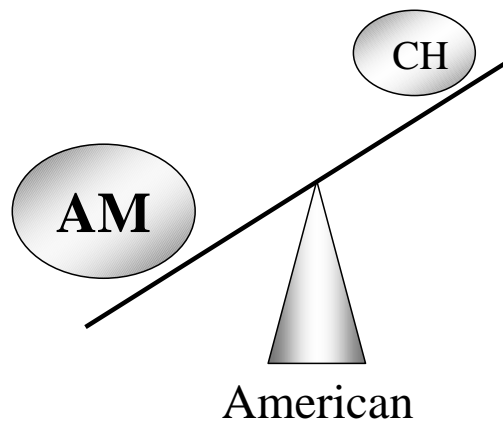


Figure 9: Scale Leaning Toward the American Way of Parenting

Because we're Chinese, I don't think we can totally forsake the Chinese way of teaching our children. [But] I think I am leaning on the American way more. Maybe 70% (American) to 30% (Chinese). Actually I find that a lot of things here are good. I don't think to follow the way the schoolteachers do is bad.

### Balanced

The only time the scale was at an equilibrium state was when both sides of the scale contained equal weight. After an immigrant mother found a comfortable balance in reaching a compromise with both her home and host cultural values, she was said to have reached a *balanced* state in her bi-cultural childrearing beliefs and practices. Four mothers from the data have reached a balance in their bi-cultural childrearing experience. When the immigrant parents' goals and expectations for children from both the traditional Chinese parenting strategies and the American childrearing strategies have reached to a consolidated state, a balance was achieved.

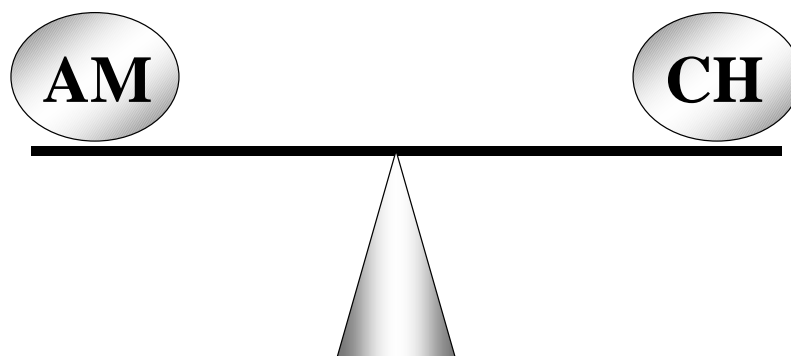


Figure 10: Scale Balancing the Chinese & the American Way of Parenting

Two variations of *balance* thus emerged: 1) the mother internalized the bi-cultural values and chose which cultural practice to use in her childrearing and 2) the mother presented both cultural values to the child and let the child make the ultimate decision in choosing which cultural practice to adhere to in his/her adulthood.

In the first variation of *balance*, internalization of the bi-cultural values was indicated by the “groundedness” in which the mothers expressed and appreciated their belief about their Chinese roots and the American culture. Two immigrant mothers showed their bi-cultural internalization by choosing cultural values that they believed were the most advantageous for their children. Since these mothers have internalized both the Chinese and American cultural values, it was more difficult for them to identify “which” value was from which culture.

I have my own ways. I don't know if it's either the Chinese or the American. I try to pick the ones that I think has the most advantages [for] that certain issue. Since the mothers fused the two distinct cultural values to be their own, the cultural values and practice that they exercised in their childrearing were pre-selected and were believed to be the most advantageous for their children.

In the other variation of *balance*, two immigrant mothers believed that the decision in choosing which cultural practice to adhere to was up to their children as they grew up. What they could do now, as the immigrant parents, was just to introduce their children openly to the positive values and practice of both cultures.

The point is how we teach our children to accept our (Chinese) culture. And they can also find a balance from the (American) culture here. As to what kind of



values to pick, it's our job to teach them. It's impossible for us to lead them for the rest of their lives by telling them what to do and how to do it because that is not the point [of childrearing].

The other mother concurred that the struggle of balancing bi-cultural issues was placed more on the American-born children of the immigrant parents:

I think it's not the way we teach [that matters], but the struggle [will be] for the kid, [who is] trying to reach a balance of who they are, trying to find the *self*.

You know, the self-id. I think that's where the struggle is.

The immigrant parents who evolved from the *deviation* of non-adaptive cultural values/practice to the *accommodation* of favorable cultural values/practice and finally to the *balance* of the two worlds pointed out:

We just show them the positive sides of both [cultures]... I think that in fact they have the most advantage because [if] you're raised in America, all you see is the American culture. If you're raised in Taiwan, all you see is the Chinese culture. But here we have a combo. You know, you can get the best out of both sides. And I think what we can do as parents is to show them the best sides and let them do their best to combine those.

One *balanced* mother humorously highlighted the advantage of being bi-cultural:

Yah! They celebrate Christmas. They celebrate Halloween. They celebrate Thanksgiving. In the meantime, we also celebrate the Chinese New Year. I guess my kids are better off than all [the other] people because they get to celebrate

ALL! So they get “red bags or envelopes.” They get Christmas gifts. They get [them] all! <laugh> In that aspect, they are very lucky.

## **CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION**

This chapter will revisit the main issues that highlight the purpose and goal of this study. First, the concept of “parenting” is redefined by examining the process of intergenerational transmission. Next, the transmission of values is discussed. I demonstrate how the processes of cultural and intergenerational transmission of values are linked to the mechanism of accommodation of bi-cultural childrearing beliefs and practices for Chinese immigrant mothers. The accommodation process will center on the change of beliefs about education and learning, family values, disciplinary methods, and child-centered perspectives. This chapter concludes with directions and implications for future research.

### **Overview**

This research identifies the unique and critical features of bi-cultural parenting strategies that the Chinese immigrant mothers decide to use. How these features are related to acculturation due to their distinctive migration background is also identified. In addition, this study describes the changes in cultural values due to immigration. Using qualitative research methods, specifically grounded theory methodology and constant comparative analysis, I was able to identify and unite these issues.

This study has several strengths and makes a unique contribution to the two large areas of research on migration and transmission. This research not only addresses for empirical research on the role of acculturation in changing and modifying the central ideals of group culture values, but also broadens the area of migration by examining in

depth the change of cultural values in the context of migration. By taking the approach of familial level of analysis (i.e., by using the memory of the parents as a factor contributing to the outcomes of parenting beliefs and practices), the continuity of value congruence from parents to children in the context of dual cultures is achieved. The difference between intergenerational transmission and cultural transmission is connected as well. Furthermore, this study explores value congruence between parents and offspring by taking not one, but two, cultures into account.

The results of this study indicate that the Chinese immigrant parents in the United States engage in the accommodation of cultural values with their bi-cultural childrearing actions. Although the pace at which the accommodation process occurs differs with every mother, a remarkably similar psychological process from *deviation*, to *accommodation*, and *balance* is revealed. The findings of this study thus provide evidence that the immigrant Chinese parents must first *deviate* from their perceived negative values or beliefs from those of their own parents, the Chinese culture, and the American culture before *accommodate* to the perceived favorable values. In reaching a *balance* to their bi-cultural childrearing decisions, the immigrant parents may encounter struggles and conflicts as they formulate a new set of parenting strategies dissimilar but complementary to that of their Chinese upbringing and American society.

Together, the factors involved in these issues lead to the major finding in this study, the three psychological processes of bi-cultural childrearing decisions. Specifically in order for the *balance* in their bi-cultural childrearing decisions and parental satisfaction to occur, the immigrant mothers must *deviate* from the perceived

negative cultural values and *accommodate* to the perceived positive cultural belief of both home and host countries. The complexity of the processes in this model necessitates another look at the decision to focus on the negotiation of the bi-cultural childrearing practice of a new generation of the Chinese immigrant parents.

### Parenting Redefined

Typically, one would prefer to look at the parental behavior or parenting styles when examining childrearing issues. For example, Maccoby and Martin (1983) presented a classification of parental behaviors according to two dimensions: accepting-rejecting and demanding-undemanding, and Baumrind (1968) presented a categorization of authoritative, authoritarian, and neglect parenting styles. However, parenting strategy is contingent upon many complex variables and requires a different approach for measurement. In the context of immigration, the immigrant parents may wish to communicate values to their children that resemble those in the new culture in addition to the values that they learned from their own parents. However, if their own values differ from those prevailing in the host culture, they must combine or choose between two value systems.

According to cross-cultural developmental researchers, the most popular method of parenting is direct observation of behavior – parent as how your parents parented you (Bornstein, 1991). This pathway, typically thought of as “parenting,” is now termed as “intergenerational transmission,” which indicates a static and unidirectional relationship between two groups of people: one conveying an established and unchanging set of

values and the other involved only in understanding those values and accepting them as their own (Goodnow, 1997). This two-step process flows from *transmission* to *internalization* and from one generation to the next – that is, transmitting values from the native Chinese grandparents to the immigrant parents. First, a particular source of internal direction or commitment from the last generation is presented to the individual, the immigrant mother. This is accomplished by teaching, childrearing, and imitating. The receiver of the transmission then selects and absorbs or internalizes some of these external points of view as her own. In this particular study, another segment of *transmission* is added onto this flow to make the entire process for the phenomenon studied as *transmission-internalization-transmission*. The last transmission occurs when the immigrant parents sequentially pass what is internalized down to their American-born children. The current study adds further support to Goodnow (1997), which demonstrated how parenting was transmitted by internalizing values.

### Value Transmission Process

Because much of the parent-child relationship is involved with the transmission of values, as demonstrated in these data, a logical point of inquiry is the components of the transmission process: the content of transmission – in this study, values - and transmission belt, which are conditions or factors that enhance transmission (Schonpflug, 2001b). One of the two transmission belts investigated in this study is relational, the causal conditions: parental, home, and host cultural influences. The other kind of transmission belt includes two types of socio-developmental conditions: precursor

variables and contextual variables. The immigration to the United States, becoming a mother, social network, the characteristics of the target child, and the experience with the older child(ren) serve as the precursor criteria in this study. Contextual variables include the age coming to the U.S., the reason for migration, and the duration of stay in the U.S. In addition, the mother's working experience and education obtained in both Taiwan and the U.S. are predetermined variables for any given bi-cultural childrearing strategies. The languages spoken primarily at home and during the interview (e.g., Mandarin Chinese, Taiwanese dialect, or English) also contribute to the transmission process.

Mothers who came to the host country earlier (i.e., for at least half of their lives), lived in the host country the longest (i.e., for about half of their lives), obtained about the same years of education in the home country as in the host country, and spoke English fluently tended to be more *balanced* mothers. These individual were exposed to the host society just as they were to the home society. They came to the bi-cultural childrearing situation with better understanding of both cultures and merged both cultural values in their childrearing attitudes and educational beliefs. Conversely, those immigrants with no working experience in the host country, who came to the U.S. later in life, who did not receive any education in the host country, and who spoke little or no English were less acculturated to the host culture. They tended to use more Chinese values and beliefs in their childrearing strategies than those who worked and received education in the U.S. Immigrant mothers who experienced conflict or struggles in their bi-cultural childrearing came to the U.S. later than those who were balanced. However, these mothers have more working experience and education obtained in the home society. The *struggling* mothers

also have more working experience in the host country than those mothers who leaned toward the *Chinese* way of parenting. Furthermore, if the grandparents came to live or visit the immigrant family in the U.S., the home cultural and the intergenerational transmissions of values is intensified.

Cultural transmission does not entail full replication of culture in successive generations. This is because culture is shaped in ongoing interactions between persons and their social environment (Cavalli-Sforza & Feldman, 1981). Due to the immigration context, the effectiveness of transmission from the Chinese society to the American culture might be less effective due to non-adaptability of the home cultural values in the host country. Seven sources of conflicts are identified in these mothers from being exposed to dual cultures: reasons vs. discipline; praise vs. criticism; proactivity vs. passiveness; dependence vs. independence; conservatism vs. wastefulness; schoolwork vs. supplemental work; and optimism vs. pessimism. This process further complicates the effort of accommodation because the immigrant parents must take their American-born children's adaptability in the United States into consideration. Therefore, conflicts and struggles might surface before a balance of values is achieved.

#### Accommodation of Bi-Cultural Childrearing Beliefs and Practices

Of the 15 Chinese immigrant mothers in this study, all acknowledged having gone through the processes of accommodation of dual cultural values, some more intensely than others. By coming to America, these immigrant mothers' ability of acculturation was brought forth and thus induced changes in their childrearing values and beliefs



(Marin & Gamba, 2003). Moreover, these changes in values and beliefs caused by the acculturative process were shaped into a set of newly developed childrearing practices. These immigrant mothers employed comparable yet modified strategies which reflected the themes in the Asian parenting literature, family as center, control and strictness, and educational achievement (R. Chao & Tseng, 2002), as well as European American's socialization goal of independence (Harkness, Super, & Keefer, 1992; Richman, Miller, & Solomon, 1988) and self-maximization (Harwood, Miller, & Irizarry, 1995).

### Beliefs about Education and Learning

Most parents are concerned about their children's intellectual development (Harkness & Super, 2002; Hill, 2001). This research shows that most Chinese immigrant parents opt to actively teach their children early literacy skills, instead of just playing and entertaining them. Ten mothers out of fifteen in this sample taught academic subjects prior to their children's entering school (i.e., the first grade). The academic subjects taught at home by the Chinese immigrant mothers themselves included colors, shapes, English (alphabet, phonetics, reading, writing), Chinese (phonetics, characters, reading, writing, poetry recitation), and mathematics (numbers, addition, subtraction, the multiplication table). These immigrant parents not only introduced the subject matters to their children, but also actively assigned homework and regularly enforced daily drills at home. This result is consistent with R. K. Chao's (1994, 2000) finding that Chinese American parents tend to use two approaches to support children's learning: a "structural" approach that includes monitoring after-school time and providing tutoring, extra homework, and a "managerial" approach that includes hands-on, direct practices,

such as helping with homework and meeting with the child's teacher. The Chinese immigrant mothers believe that by establishing the foundation of the subject matters at home first, a child would have a head start when they start going to school. The mothers believe that when a child learns before he absolutely needs to, it allows him to have more freedom and time to learn. By seeing his progress is ahead of his peers after the child enters school, he gains confidence in his learning experience which conveys to himself that learning is easy and interesting.

This type of early education could even be extended from the time a fetus is still in the mother's womb. "Fetal education," also known as "tai jiao" in Chinese, comes from a long tradition of belief and practice that dated back in the ancient days recorded in the Chinese ancient scrolls *Leh Nu Chuan*, "The Legends of Victresses." In it states a quote vividly, "If a pregnant woman avoids looking at and listening to filthy and adulterine things and at the same time recites the Book of Poetry and studies righteous things, she can thus give birth to a child who is upright and intelligent." It tells how a pregnant woman should avoid unpleasant sensory stimulations to maintain a peaceful state of mind so as to give birth to an intelligent and attractive child. Fetal education comprises providing a harmonious environment for the embryo in the womb, minding the necessary nutrients in the mother's diet, listening to classical music, and engaging in "umbilical dialogues" (Verny & Weintraub, 2002).

Aside from teaching their children earlier on, a good proportion of the immigrant mothers believe that exposing their children to a variety of stimulating experiences is the best way to enhance their development in the intellectual domain. This "facilitative"

approach that includes providing children with varied learning opportunities and stimulating experiences is typically preferred by European Americans (Hess, Holloway, Dickson, & Prince, 1984). Interestingly enough, the Chinese immigrant parents not only recognize but also practice this approach in their childrearing practice. This bi-cultural practice incorporates the “opportunity education” (Fung, 1999) by learning heuristically through everyday environments, ranging from home and school to cultural/religious rituals and community activities. In addition, the Chinese immigrant parents have the means to enroll their children for extracurricular lessons (i.e., music, sports, arts) and let the children be exposed to a wider variety of experiences. However, compared with their native Chinese parents and their Taiwanese friends or relatives, the educational expectations of these immigrant mothers are much more relaxed (Miller et al., 1996).

#### Family Values

Aside from learning and educational goals, the socialization goals of family loyalty and respect for one’s elders that these Chinese immigrant mothers promote are consistent with a survey of the existing literature on the Asian cultural models of childhood socialization (Chiu, 1987). In this study, the immigrant mothers demonstrate their emphasis and dedication to their family by being stay-at-home mothers even though all have college education or above. The Chinese immigrant mothers also place heavy emphasis on frugality, social etiquette, and ethics. Although the concept of filial piety is one of the major principles that upholds the Confucian tradition, it is not at all expected from the immigrant mothers’ children. In fact, these immigrant mothers indicate that taking care of one’s aged parents (i.e., living with their aged parents or financially

supporting aged parents) and performing the ceremonial duties of ancestral worship are unnecessary and are not expected from their American-born children. Even though certain level of obedience is anticipated from their children, the principle that one should conduct oneself so as to bring honor and not disgrace to the family name was not stressed in the Chinese immigrant parents' childrearing beliefs. Instead, the immigrant Chinese mothers report that they prefer to guide their children, hope to become the children's friends when they reach adulthood, and do not expect any filial duty from their children. This finding is consistent with Chao's (1995) and Gorman's (1998) results that contemporary immigrant Chinese mothers do not appear to associate filial piety with family interdependence.

#### Disciplinary Methods

One of the most salient themes in Asian parenting literature is control and strictness. Also, the importance of shame in the Chinese culture is reflected in its emphases on face, criticism, and evaluation in interpersonal relationships (Fung, 1999; Gabrenya and Hwang, 1996; Ho, 1976; Hu, 1944; Hwang, 1987; King & Myers, 1977; Zhai, 1995). Miller and colleagues (1997) noted the different cultural framework which the Chinese and European American families use to socialize their children. While the Chinese families operate with an explicitly evaluative, overtly self-critical interpretive framework, the European American families use an implicitly evaluative, overtly self-affirmative framework in childrearing strategies. With regard to disciplinary methods, the Chinese immigrant mothers' beliefs and practices reflect the most dramatic shift from the Chinese parenting perspective. In this study, all fifteen Chinese immigrant mothers

deviate from using harsh punishments and forcing restrictive control. Instead, they opt for “the education of love” – that is, using encouragement and reasoning in place of spanking and rebuking, teaching children without forcing in an authoritative manner, and praising children with minimum criticism. This research is consistent with Jose et al.’s (2000) findings that Chinese American parents seem to be more acculturated with regards to disciplinary practices. Furthermore, the Chinese cultural model of “shame” is not detected in the bi-cultural parenting. The Chinese immigrant mothers hope to eliminate criticisms and emphasize the positive traits in their children by using more encouragement and praise. This practice seems to overlap with “self-maximization,” which is a socialization goal used by the European American mothers to promote young children’s self-confidence and self-esteem in the family context (Harwood, Miller, Irizarry, 1995). Such an accommodation process indicates a dramatic change in cultural values for the Chinese immigrant mothers residing in the United States.

#### Child-Centered Perspective

In addition, these Chinese immigrant parents also value independence, an important socialization goal among European American parents (Harkness, Super, & Keefer, 1992; Richman, Miller, & Solomon, 1988). These immigrant mothers encourage their children to learn to do things on their own, to express themselves freely and creatively, and to develop unique and individual selves. The immigrant mothers also engage in a variety of practices that seem to reflect accommodation to the perceived needs of children. Compared with their parents, the Chinese immigrant mothers believed they are more likely to be attuned to each child’s individual needs, adjust strategies to see

what works for the child, guide the child without imposing too much, and leave the performance entirely up to the child. All in all, without de-emphasizing the importance of education, the expectation for their children becomes much more relaxed than their native Chinese parents. This result is consistent with Lin and Fu's (1990) finding that immigrant Chinese parents reported higher ratings on encouragement of independence than the Caucasian-American parents.

#### Directions & Implications for Future Research

This study points to several implications and directions for future investigations of bi-cultural childrearing processes of Chinese immigrant mothers.

#### Immigrant Generational Status

Most research on immigrants confounds generational status, combining newly arrived immigrants, first-generation, second-generation, and even third-generation immigrants in a single category (Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2001). The experiences of recently arrived immigrants are in some ways unique and must be analytically isolated from issues facing the subsequent U.S.-born generations. This particular study has strict criteria for participation. The Chinese immigrant parents in the sample are the first generation immigrants who are more likely to hold more traditional values than the second or third generation families. Nonetheless, research has shown that adapting to modern society is often accomplished while preserving the values of duty to parents and elders stressed in the principles of Confucianism among Chinese-origin families (Wang & Hsueh, 2000). Future research on the role of accommodation in bi-

cultural childrearing should make the generational status of the immigrants explicit to ensure the soundness of research.

### Context of The Immigrants

The average age of the immigrant mothers is 37.3 years ( $SD = 3.94$ ) and the range is from 32 to 44 years. Rather than classify their experience by chronological age, it is imperative to consider the developmental stage, or the cohort effect, in which the immigrant mothers are experiencing (e.g., having children, migration to the States, duration of stay in the States) (Inglehart, 1990, 1997). In understanding development as a dynamic system, it is important to recognize that processes are nested in time and in levels of organization.

### Age of Target Children

The sample of the immigrant mothers is limited to target children with ages 8 and younger. The reason is threefold. First, this study shares the same data set with a larger study that looks at young children's education and learning (Suizzo et al., in press). Secondly, this study is not about "schooling," but education, which begins in infancy. This study aims to understand how parents conceptualize learning and how they teach their children. Lastly and most importantly, I wanted to obtain the unmodified beliefs and attitudes of the immigrant mothers without confounding with the possibility of a more defined characteristics of the children which might further influence and alter parenting strategies. Future studies might consider exploring bi-cultural parenting with older target children. However, it should be noted that mothers with older children would encounter a different set of issues and concerns in bi-cultural parenting. Issues and

concerns may include, but are not limited to: dress code, peer selection, dating, marriage, drugs, alcohol, and the involvement with schoolwork.

#### Gender & Birth Order Variables for Target Children

Due to the age restriction for the target children, only mothers with children with ages 8 and younger were chosen. In all, there are 12 girls and 3 boys as target children in this study. If the mother has more than one child who is under the age of 8, she was asked to select which child she wanted to talk about. In some cases, when two children are both within the qualified range of age, the immigrant mothers always choose the firstborn, regardless of gender. Their explanation for such a choice is because the mother has “had more parenting experience with the older one since [she] spent more time with

Table 5.1: Gender & Birth Order of the Target Children (Target children in bold; Children out of age range in italics)

	1 <sup>st</sup> Born	2 <sup>nd</sup> Born	3 <sup>rd</sup> Born
Balanced 2	<i>Girl</i>	<b>Girl</b>	
Chinese 1	<b>Girl</b>	Boy	
Struggle 4	<b>Girl</b>	Girl	
American 1	<i>Girl</i>	<b>Boy</b>	
Struggle 7	<i>Boy</i>	<b>Girl</b>	
Struggle 6	<i>Boy</i>	<b>Girl</b>	
Struggle 2	<b>Boy</b>	Girl	
Struggle 3	<i>Boy</i>	<b>Girl</b>	
Struggle1	<b>Girl</b>	Girl	
Balanced 3	<i>Boy</i>	<b>Girl</b>	
Balanced 1	<i>Girl</i>	<i>Boy</i>	<b>Girl</b>
Chinese 2	<i>Boy</i>	<i>Girl</i>	<b>Girl</b>
Chinese 3	<b>Girl</b>		
Balanced 4	<b>Girl</b>	Boy	
Struggle 5	<b>Boy</b>		



him/her.” Future studies should strive for a balanced sample according to gender and birth order (e.g., same numbers of girls and boys; same numbers of first-borns and second-borns).

Prior to data collection, I hoped to obtain information on different parenting goals based on gender differences because gender biases are not uncommon in traditional Chinese society (i.e., preferring to have a male child more than a female child, having higher expectation for a male child, being stricter with a female child, having a female child learn to do housework, and having a male child learn to do heavy chores). Therefore, as the case emerged when parents employed different parenting strategies for each of the children, I addressed this issue by asking the parents directly the reasons for the differences in the parenting strategies and goals for children. Out of the five mothers that were asked this question, four mothers attributed the differences in their parenting methods to the personality/characteristics of their children and not gender differences. One of the mothers held different goals for her children because one had been physically ill since birth, and the mother did not want to burden the sick child with heavy training.

#### Father’s Involvement with Childrearing Decisions

The ethnic composition of the immigrant mothers’ husbands includes 13 Taiwanese Chinese, one Cantonese Brazilian, and one Taiwanese Malaysian. All the fathers in the sample of this study are Asian Americans/immigrant Chinese. The purpose of such sampling is not to exclude fathers of a different ethnic background; however, a non-confounded result is attained through a rather homogenous sample. If an immigrant

Chinese mother marries someone of a different ethnic background (e.g., Caucasian-American), it is an indication that she is more acculturated to the American culture than those who married an Asian American. According to Gordon's assimilation model (1971), marital assimilation, or amalgamation, indicates the fourth stage of assimilation to a host country, only to be followed by attitude-receptional assimilation, behavior-receptional assimilation, and civic assimilation. In such a case, the spouses in an intercultural marriage would tend to have a different perception of cultural values than individuals who marry within their own ethnic group.

There is a wide range of father's involvement with the childrearing decisions in this sample. Involvement with childrearing includes giving financial support, discussing with the mother about childrearing issues, playing with the children, and monitoring the children's homework. This is consistent with a body of literature that has dedicated to study the father's role, which suggests that fathers are primarily playmates who engage in more play activities in contrast to mothers who are primarily caregivers that provide maintenance care (e.g., physical care, playing to teach new skills, and getting up at night). (Grossmann et al., 2002; Lamb, 2002; MacDonald & Parke, 1986; Roggman, Boyce, & Cook, 2001).

Although some immigrant mothers might not have struggles about cultural issues, they might experience conflict with the value system of their husbands. Consequently, the mother's perception of parenting satisfaction is affected, but not the enjoyment level of parenting. This conclusion is supported by research which demonstrates that the fathers' sense of competence in the paternal role is predicted by parental satisfaction and

the perception that their partners view them as competent fathers (Bouchard, 2000).

Future studies could be directed to incorporate the father's perception and beliefs about cultural transmission in the migration context.

### The Locale of Sampling

The participants of this study reside in a major city in the southwestern region of the United States. There, the Chinese American comprises 1.2% of the total city population of 681,804, which is diminutive compared to either Los Angeles (1.7% of a total population of 3,845,541) or New York City (4.5% of a total population of 8,104,079) (City-Data, 2005). Future studies should take note of the density of the Chinese American population where the sample is collected. The nature of assimilation and acculturation to a host culture might be different due to the concentration of the same home culture immigrant in the host culture. That is, the level of assimilation and acculturation to the host culture might not be as significant and apparent if an immigrant resides in a place that is densely populated with his own ethnic population.

In Schwartz's (1992) international study on value dimensions, effective transmission between generations in migrant groups points to segregation from the majority culture in the host country when host culture and culture of origin of a migrated group differ considerably. The migrant parents who insist on maintaining the culture of origin in the host country will emphasize the transmission of culture of origin, whereas parents who have oriented toward adaptation in the host society will hold back cultural transmission and let their children adapt behavior patterns that are functional in the new environment (Schonpflug, 2001b). As a result, the immigrant parents living in the

enclosed context of their culture of origin should transmit their value orientation more intensively than those living in a context where they allow the permeability of the host culture. In other words, an immigrant might experience less struggle and conflict if he surrounds himself in a place that exposes him to no host cultural values. In such a case, the accommodation of balance might not occur since there will be no dual cultural values to deviate from or accommodate to.

#### Implication for Other Ethnic Groups

Similar patterns of accommodation of bi-cultural parenting could be expected from those of an ethnic or cultural group who have migrated to a society that is distinctly different from their own. Proximity of the host culture and culture of origin must be distinct enough for the model of accommodation to occur. For instance, an American immigrant who resides in Canada might not experience the same intensity of the *deviation-accommodation-balance* process as a Puerto Rican immigrant who resides in Russia.

#### Conclusion

I began this research by looking at the general academic success in Asian American students compared with all the other ethnic groups – What contributes to such a difference, and could this pattern of academic success be emulated for other ethnic groups? For a nation that has been plagued by high rates of high school dropout, nearly 50%, according to the TIME magazine (Thornburgh, 2006), this is an important question we must ask ourselves, both parents and educators alike. Since the education all students

receive from school is constant, the focus is turned onto the family education where value beliefs of education and learning are first born. I decide to study the Chinese culture because it is a culture with which I am familiar. For a culture that emphasizes so much upon scholarship and early education, it is important to understand how parents are utilizing these values to teach their children. I then explore the parenting strategies by exploring the process of intergenerational transmission and cultural transmission. The immigrants' status provides quite an interesting circumstance because the acculturative process has powerful impact on changing basic cultural values or beliefs. The ability of acculturation to elicit change in these values has important implications for the immigrants' continued existence, for defining the characteristics of an ethnic group (Marin & Gamba, 2003). These changes bring forth the decisions immigrant parents must come to decide: whether they should stay the way their parents taught them and the way they were brought up in their home culture, or they should adapt the value systems of the host culture. The immigrants come to make a decision whether they should deviate from the non-adaptable cultural values or accommodate the favorable values. Traditional values and practices that are deeply rooted in Confucian principles still seem to have a great deal of influence on their child-rearing practices. These values could possibly facilitate bicultural socialization so that their immigrant children would be able to function effectively in both the subculture of the immigrant Chinese and the culture of the society at large. From this line of inquiry, I am able to detect, and perhaps utilize, the key mechanisms that drive the basis of the excellence of scholarship and eventually the progress of society, not just for Asian Americans, but for all mankind.

## **APPENDICES**

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## Appendix A: Recruitment Letter

My name is Angel Soo-Zoon Liang and I am a doctoral candidate of the Department of Educational Psychology at the University of Texas at Austin. I am conducting this dissertation study in hopes to learn how Chinese immigrant parents rear their children in the America. The purpose of this study will attempt to discover perspectives and patterns of parenting experience from immigrants' points of view on how they negotiate childrearing decisions with two cultural backgrounds.

You were selected as a possible participant because you are a mother or primary caregiver of a child between the ages of 1 day and 8 years old. If you choose to participate in this study, you will complete a background information sheet about yourself and I will personally be interviewing you about your beliefs, attitudes, ideas, and feelings toward a variety of topics on parenting, and about your relationship with your parents and child(ren). The interview will take not more than two hours in a place of your choosing where we can meet. You may also choose to be interviewed in either Mandarin Chinese or English whichever makes you more comfortable.

Participation in this study may offer you several benefits. If you do choose to participate, you may find it to be an interesting experience, a chance to reflect on your beliefs and attitudes, about your relationship with your child(ren) and parents, and possibly gain insight and understanding through this process. In addition, you may request personal copies of the interview transcripts or audiotapes of your interview. Any information that is obtained in connection with this study will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission.

Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your future relations with the University of Texas at Austin. If you decide to participate, you are free to discontinue participation at any time. Your signature indicates that you have read the information provide above and have decided to participate. You may withdraw at any time after signing this form, should you choose to discontinue participation in this study.

If you think you may be interested in participating in this interview study, and would like to learn more about it, please fill in your name and telephone number and/or e-mail address below so that I may contact you to set up a time where we can meet at your convenience. If you have any questions now or in the future, I will be more than happy to answer them at 512-320-0987 or [angelz@mail.utexas.edu](mailto:angelz@mail.utexas.edu).

Thank you!

Angel S. Liang

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Name of Principal Investigator	Signature	Date
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Please **print** and **sign** your name:

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Name of Parent or Primary Caregiver	Signature	Date
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Telephone Number	Electronic Mail Address
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## Appendix B: Background Information Survey

<b>Your Sex:</b> oMale _____ Female _____ <b>Your Current Age:</b> _____	<b>Your Date of Birth:</b> ____/____/____ month day year	<b>Your Birthplace</b> (State or Country) _____					
Where were your <b>parents and grandparents</b> born? Your father: _____ Your fathers' parents: _____ Your mother: _____ Your mothers' parents: _____							
If you immigrated or moved to the U.S. from elsewhere, how old were you when you arrived? ____							
Your <b>marital status</b> (check all that apply): oSingle oMarried oDivorced oWidowed oOther: _____							
What is yours and your spouse or partner's <b>ethnic background</b> ? Check off the best description below:							
<b>You</b>  <b>Your Partner</b>	Asian, Asian American, Oriental _____ _____	Black, African American _____ _____					
Latino, Mexican, Mexican American _____ _____	White, Euro- American, Caucasian _____ _____	American Indian Native American _____ _____					
Mixed or Other (write in below): _____ _____							
Do you have a <b>religion</b> or <b>faith</b> today? No ____ Not sure ____ Yes, <b>name of religion</b> : _____							
If you answered YES, how important is your religion/faith to you? o Not at all o A little important o Important o Very important o Extremely important							
Are you employed? oNo oYes, _____ hours per week		What is <b>your occupation</b> ? _____					
What is <b>your</b> occupational category? (Write number from list below): _____							
(1) Laborer (2) Semiskilled worker (3) Farmer, Forestry, Fishing (4) Mechanic, Tradesman, Crafts	(5) Police, Firefighter (6) Clerical, Sales (7) Nurse, Teacher, Technician (8) Executive, Administrator	(9) Doctor, Lawyer, Professional (10) Homemaker (11) Unemployed					
What are your spouse's and your parents' <b>occupational categories</b> ? <b>Write the number</b> from the list above. <b>Spouse/Partner</b> : _____ <b>Father</b> (during your childhood): _____ <b>Mother</b> (during your childhood): _____							
As of today, how much schooling have <u>you</u> , <u>your partner</u> , and <u>your parents</u> received? Check off the number of years:							
	7 yrs. or less	8 - 9 yrs.	10 - 11 yrs.	12 yrs. finished high school	13-15 yrs	16 - 17 yrs./ college degree	18 or more yrs.
<b>You</b>	o	o	o	o	o	o	o
<b>Partner</b>	o	o	o	o	o	o	o
<b>Father</b>	o	o	o	o	o	o	o
<b>Mother</b>	o	o	o	o	o	o	o
<b>Sex, current age</b> (years and months) of each of <b>your children</b> (example: <i>boy: 2 yrs. and 6 months; girl: 4 mos.</i> ):   							
<b>How many of each of the following people</b> live with you in your home? <b>Write number.</b> Your Child(ren): ____ Other family members (e.g., grandparents): ____ Other persons: ____ Your Spouse/partner: ____ Yes ____ No							
If you have a child under 5 yrs. old, who is this <b>child's primary caregiver during the day</b> , for most of the week? ____ Child's Mother ____ Child's Father ____ Child's Grandmother ____ Child's Grandfather ____ Child's older sibling ____ Day care center or Preschool ____ Pre-Kindergarten Other (write in): _____							
If your child attends a day care center or other program, <b>how much time during the week</b> ? ____ hours per week							

### Appendix C: Subject Background Composite

ID	Age	Birth Place of Self	Birth Place of Parents	Age at Marriage	Age at Bearing First Child	Age at Coming to USA	Duration of Stay in USA	Religion	Religiosity	Age of Target Child	Gender & Birth Order of Target Child	Level of Education	Current Occupation (Past Occupation)
BAL-1	39	Taiwan , R.O.C.	Taiwan, R.O.C.	24	26	11	28	Christianity	Extremely Important	7 yrs	Girl 2 <sup>nd</sup> /2	18 yrs or more	Homemaker
CHN-1	39	Taiwan , R.O.C.	Taiwan, R.O.C.	32	33	31	8	Christianity	Important	5 yrs 5 mos	Girl 1 <sup>st</sup> /2	16-17 yrs (college)	Homemaker
STG-4	35	Taiwan , R.O.C.	China, P.R.C.	-	30	23	12	Christianity	A little Important	5 yrs 1 mo	Girl 1 <sup>st</sup> /2	18 yrs or more	Homemaker
AMR-1	41	Taiwan , R.O.C.	Taiwan, R.O.C.	30	32	31	10	Christianity	Extremely Important	5 yrs 2 mos	Boy 2 <sup>nd</sup> /2	13-15 yrs	Accountant
STG-7	33	Taiwan , R.O.C.	Taiwan, R.O.C.	23	24	24	9	Christianity	Extremely Important	5 yrs 5 mos	Girl 2 <sup>nd</sup> /2	16-17 yrs (college)	Homemaker
STG-6	35	Taiwan , R.O.C.	Taiwan, R.O.C.	-	26	24	12	None	-	3 yrs	Girl 2 <sup>nd</sup> /2	18 yrs or more	Homemaker (CompSci Engineer)
STG-2	35	Taiwan , R.O.C.	Taiwan, R.O.C.	28	28	26	9	Buddhism	Very Important	7 yrs	Boy 1 <sup>st</sup> /2	18 yrs or more	Homemaker
STG-3	41	Taiwan , R.O.C.	China, P.R.C.	-	29	27	14	Catholicism	Very Important	8 yrs	Girl 2 <sup>nd</sup> /2	18 yrs or more	Software Engineer

Name ID	Age	Birth Place of Self	Birth Place of Parents	Age at Marriage	Age at Bearing First Child	Age at Coming to USA	Duration of Stay in USA	Religion	Religiosity	Age of Target Child	Gender & Birth Order of Target Child	Level of Education	Current Occupation (Past Occupation)
STG-1	32	Taiwan	Taiwan	26	26	26	6	Not Sure	-	6 yrs	Girl 1 <sup>st</sup> /2	18 yrs or more	Homemaker
BAL-3	38	Taiwan , R.O.C.	China	25	28	21	17	None	-	6 yrs 2 mos	Girl 2 <sup>nd</sup> /2	18 yrs or yrs	Research Scientist
BAL-1	32	CA, USA - moved to TW @ 3 mos	China	18	21	11	21	Christianity	Very Important	15 mos	Girl 3 <sup>rd</sup> /3	16-17 yrs	Homemaker Student
CHN-2	44	Taiwan	Taiwan	26	28	32	12	None	-	8 yrs	Girl 3 <sup>rd</sup> /3	16-17 yrs	Homemaker (Chinese Teacher)
CHN-3	40	Taiwan	Taiwan	30	33	35	5	Christianity	Very Important	7 yrs - born in Malaysia, came to US at 2 yrs	Girl 1 <sup>st</sup> /1	13-15 yrs	Homemaker
BAL-4	33	Taiwan	Taiwan	27	29	27	6	Not Sure	-	3 yrs 10 mos	Girl 1 <sup>st</sup> /2	16-17 yrs	Homemaker
STG-5	42	Taiwan	Taiwan	23	34	23	19	Buddhism	Very Important	7 yrs	Boy 1 <sup>st</sup> /1	16-17 yrs	Home-based Business

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## VITA

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