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Determinants of Academic Success of Cambodian American Students

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Abstract

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LLM, Hong Kong University, 2001

LLB, Faculty of Law and Business Administration, 1992

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

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Abstract

Cambodian Americans' (CAs) children still exhibit the second lowest rate of academic achievement in the United States, despite the tenets of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2002 that promote equality in American education. Furthermore, there is a gap in the literature on the relationship between the academic success of Cambodian American students (CASs) and the parents' and the children's factors. Using a structural strain theory of deviance of functionalism theory, this correlational study (a) explored whether education, income, birthplace, and gender of parents and age at immigration and gender of children the determinants of academic success of CASs and (b) examined the dimension of gender practices in CAs' households that might affect CASs' academic success. Survey data were collected from a purposive sample of 153 CASs' parents in Long Beach, CA, using a researcher-developed survey. Multiple linear regression was run for the correlation questions and frequency descriptive statistics were run for the gender practices. Findings indicated a significant relationship ($p < .05$) between academic success of CASs and the parents' education in Cambodia and the children's age at immigration to America. The descriptive statistics determined gender disparity in the participant households that might affect the academic achievement of female CASs. The positive social change implications stemming from this study include recommendations to school administrators, nonprofits, local government, and federal government to collect segregate data on CASs' academic outcomes, develop social policies and programs, and allocate appropriate fund to support programs and cultural humility and competency training enhancing CASs' success and parents' involvement in their children's education.

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Dedication

I am so grateful to my lovely mother, Tuon Nan, who instilled in me the value of education despite having grown up under heinous circumstances: the Cambodian genocide, a Vietnamese occupation, civil war, and gender stereotyping. During the genocide from 1975 to 1979, the educated and professional classes in Cambodia were targeted for extermination, and all educational institutions were categorically abolished. The genocide was followed by the Vietnamese occupation and the civil war in the years between 1979 and 1993. Although basic education was reestablished from nothing, it often took place in the ruins, cottages, or under the trees. The ones who knew more taught the ones who knew less. The students were caught up amidst fighting and shelling. At the time, besides war–related security issues, there was pervasive gender discrimination in education. Cambodian society regarded the education of girls as less important than that of boys. In this view, girls were to be married and supported by their husbands; education was, therefore, unnecessary. Girls were not sent to school due to the combined effects of a legitimate fear for their safety and an illegitimate belief that education would undermine their capacity to be "traditional" girls.

My mother, who valued education, cultivated in me a thirst for knowledge at an early age by reciting a poem's spirit at bedtime that, "education is the most precious for everyone's life: it cannot be robbed or stolen as property; it is better than food because it can produce food; and the more education you have, the better you are for the present and the future." Her sweet voice filled my ears and shaped me to be the woman I am today. She also reminded me continuously that she had no property left for me, yet she gave me

the chance to study just as the boys did; it was up to me to make the ultimate choice as to whether I would be educated and advance in my life or be a traditional woman and farm for sustenance. I chose the former. Knowing this choice, she did her best on my behalf, sending me to schools, tutoring me at home, and paying for private tutoring when I needed it. With her support, effort, and encouragement, I became a student who was just as competent as the boys were in school.

I also dedicate this work to my loving father, Dorn Oung, and to my youngest brother, Veasna Oung, who were both killed by the Khmer Rouge genocidal regime. I do not remember much about my father, but I remember his affection and caring for me. Although living under constant intimidation, fear, and imminent threat for his life, my father was able to bond with me even as genocide raged beyond our family walls. I remember how my father always called me “daughter,” a term of great affection and love in Cambodian culture. He placed me upon his lap as he drove the bullock cart transporting fertilizer to the rice fields. In fact, the last time I saw him was at the gate of a large mango plantation. He had been arrested while working in those rice fields. My two elder brothers and I were there running and crying after him, for he and many other former government officials had been taken there by Khmer Rouge militants. We watched him move off into the distance until we could no longer see him at all. We waited in vain for decades to see his face again. Even after the genocidal regime had been replaced, the war ended, the fighting factions united, and the refugees and internally displaced people repatriated, one memory remains: My father, disappearing into the distance, never to be seen again.

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I would like to express my deepest gratitude and appreciation to my Committee Chair, Dr. Victor Augusto Ferreros; my content member, Dr. Lori Demeter; and my URR member, Dr. Kathleen Schulin, for their highly professional guidance, support, patience, and hard work to assist me during the writing of this dissertation.

I would also like to provide a sincere and special thanks to the participants for their great contribution in sharing their information and busy time with me during the interview. Also, I would like to thank the pagoda committee members, restaurant owners, and the other place owners who allowed recruitment in or near their venues. The findings will significantly contribute to the literature gap and possible positive social changes.

I would like to thank Mr. Tony Edwards Sin, Mr. Chov Vay, Dr. Sterling Hang, Mr. Kevin Tran, Mr. Jimmy Cheam, Mr. James Cummings, Mr. Youphon Yen, Mr. Chhay Chhem, Dr. Pete Neff, Mr. Vongmonesekar Vuthy, Mr. Chan Veasna, Mr. Jeff Weaners, Mrs. Florence Davis, and Ms. Judy Cameron for their tireless assistance in helping me to understand the American context, sharing greatly helpful comments, providing motivation, and offering support throughout my writing processes.

Finally, I also thank my wonderful daughters, Chanmealea Thou and Katherine Im, and my son–in–law, Chad Im, for their support and understanding during these academic years marked by constant business. They never demanded anything from me but behaved so well and studied so hard for their own futures. I am so very proud of them. Likewise, I thank my brother, Nareth Oung, and his family for inspiring me throughout my entire academic journey.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Introduction

In this study, I explored the determinants of academic success of Cambodian American students (CASs) by examining the relationship between parents' and children's factors and the academic success of CASs. The study was necessary because among ethnic minority groups, CASs exhibited the second lowest rate of academic success, only slightly higher than Laotians (Akiba, 2010; Chhuon & Hudley, 2010; U.S. Census Bureau, 2010a; Uy, 2011). Some qualitative researchers have suggested that a lack of parental resources contributed to this low achievement (Akiba, 2010; Chhuon & Hudley, 2010; Chhuon, Hudley, Brenner, & Macias, 2010; Ngo & Lee, 2007; Tang, Kim, & Haviland, 2013; Uy, 2011). Because scant research existed regarding the relationship between parental resources and the academic achievement of CASs in particular, in this study I sought to examine that relationship. By investigating the relationship between parents' and children's factors and the academic success of CASs, I sought to fill a gap in the literature and to bring about policy changes affecting the provision of social services, the development of public understanding, and the acceleration of educational equity for CASs.

In Chapter 1, I will present the background of the study, the problem statement, the purpose of the study, the research questions (RQs), and the hypotheses. Moreover, in this chapter I will discuss the theoretical framework for the study, the nature of the study, the definition of key terms, and the assumptions of the study. Finally, the chapter will also include the scope and delimitations, the limitations, and the significance of the study.

Background of the Study

My personal interest in understanding academic achievement among CASs began after moving to Long Beach, CA, in 2008. Few Cambodian staff members with college degrees worked for community institutions such as Cambodian nonprofit organizations and professional businesses. My interest increased during a visit to the largest Long Beach mental health clinic, where there was not a single Cambodian psychologist or psychiatrist serving the Cambodian population, despite the fact that the majority of the clinic's clients were non English speaking Cambodians. In fact, there was no Cambodian psychologist or psychiatrist available in Long Beach until 2011. The reason for this human resource deficit was unclear.

In Cambodian Town, a neighborhood of Long Beach with the largest Cambodian population outside Cambodia, the majority of professional businesses, such as medical clinics, dental offices, and law firms were owned and operated by non Cambodians (Needham & Quintiliani, 2007). Chinese and Vietnamese owned most businesses in Cambodian Town according to my observation. This is notably unlike other ethnic towns, where ethnic members from the most populous group mostly run the businesses serving that group. Through, my interactions with various organizations, such as the Cambodian Association of America (CAA), United Cambodian Community (UCC), Cambodian Town, Parents' Association, and other businesses that were serving the Cambodian community, it became apparent that Cambodians were comparatively unsuccessful academically, and therefore, unprepared professionally to compete as business owners.

The U.S. Census on the Asian Population (2010a) showed that 276,667 Cambodians lived in the United States (p. 14). The majority of Cambodians are refugees who fled the Genocide, the Vietnamese occupation of Cambodia, the civil war, or communist regimes of the mid–1970s to the early 1990s (Needham & Quintiliani, 20011). Long Beach, CA is home to almost 20,000 Cambodians, the largest Cambodian population outside of Cambodia (Khmer Girls in Action [KGA], 2011, p. 6; Needham & Quintiliani, 2007; Needham & Quintiliani, 2011). Cambodians make up about 70% of the Asian population in Cambodian Town, the second largest demographic group after Hispanics (Adebiyi et al., 2013, p. 9).

Any attempt to understand the factors that account for a lack of Cambodian Americans (CAs) success, both in education and in businesses, must do so with the suspicion that poor parental resources might explain the dual underperformance of CASs in education and business. Indeed, the parents of CAS are largely illiterate and poor (Chalasani, 2007; Chhuon & Hudley et al., 2010; Needham & Quintiliani, 2007; Ngo & Lee, 2007; Tang et al., 2013; Uy, 2008). A lack of education, compounded with economic deprivation, perhaps yields a situation whereby poor parents cannot successfully help their children break the cycle of poverty through success in school and life. Perhaps Cambodian parents have not been the role models that their children needed in order to inspire them towards success in school and in life.

Researchers had identified various factors, which are assumed to have contributed to low academic achievement among CASs (Akiba, 2010; Chhuon & Hudley, 2010; Ngo & Lee, 2007; Nguy, 1999; Uy, 2011). These factors included the lack of parental

education (Broucker & Lavallee, 1998; Chalasani, 2007; Chhuon & Hudley et al., 2010; Sticht & Armstrong, 1994; Viadero & Johnston, 2000), the inability to understand a complicated educational system (Alkiba, 2010; SEARAC, 2013b; Wright & Boun, 2011), language barriers (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010a; Glick & White, 2003; Nguy, 1999; Niedzwiecki & Duong, 2004; Tang et al., 2013; Uy, 2008), low income (Caldas & Bankston, 1997; Chhuon & Hudley et al., 2010; Coleman et al., 1966; deCastro, Gee, & Takeuchi, 2011; Nicholas, Stepick, & Stepick, 2008; Schaller, Oglesby, & Barshinger, 2006; Southeast Asia Resource Action Center [SEARAC], 2011; Viadera & Johnston, 2000), gender bias (U.S. Census Bureau, 2013; Chhuon & Hudley, 2011; Ong, 2003; Pho & Mulley, 2007; SEARAC, 2011; Tang & Kao, 2012; United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), 2003; United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), 2012; United Nations General Assembly [UNGA], 2000; U.S. Department of Education, 2014a; Uy, 2011; World Bank, 2013a), and the age of children at immigration to the United States (U.S. Census Bureau, 2008; Rojas, 2015).

Schaller et al. (2006) refuted any marked relationship between parental education and academic success by Spanish children since they regarded the presence of a positive attitude, involvement, and support by parents as the primary factors that contributed to success among children. Researchers and community members also recognize other factors that might explain diminished academic success rates among CASs. These factors include the misperception that CASs are best identified as part of the larger group of *Asian*, which has long been considered a "model ethnic minority," particularly with

respect to educational achievement (Chhuon & Hudley, 2010; Ngo & Lee, 2007). Leaving aside the identity–based problems of conflating widely differing Asian cultural experiences into one monolithic bloc, this misperception also results in resource deprivation by rendering CASs ineligible for affirmative assistance programs, aimed at closing the educational achievement gap of ethnic minority students (Akiba, 2010; Le, 2014; Ngo & Lee, 2007; Olsen, 1997; Pang, Han, & Pang, 2011; Park, 2000; Reyes, 2007; Tang et al., 2013).

According to SEARAC (2013a), the percentage of Cambodian households with limited English proficiency was 39.2%, which is much higher than the 8.7% exhibited by the U.S. population at large (p. 1). In addition, the percentage of single parents among CASs was the highest of any Southeast Asian demographic group, since many of the male spouses were killed in the Genocide (Needham & Quintiliani, 2007; Niedzwiecki & Duong, 2004). Specifically, almost 2 million Cambodians — the majority of whom were male — died from killings, starvation, or disease during the Genocide (KGA, 2011, p. 6; Quintillion, 2009). This tragedy, in turn, renders an overwhelming number of CAs' households as headed solely by individuals who have attained almost no formal education, since female Cambodians traditionally did not attend school (Needham & Quintiliani, 2007; Niedzwiecki & Duong, 2004).

Education among CASs remains a source of concern even though many laws and policies have been directed towards the goal of educational equity in the United States. Indeed, despite major court action and legislation such as *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954), the Civil Rights Act (CRA, 1964), the Elementary and Secondary Education Act

(ESEA, 1965), the Improving America's School Act (1994), and the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB, 2002), CASs have almost the least success in school and in life of any ethnic or racial group (Uy, 2011, p. vii). Only 59.7% of CASs who are 25 years and older graduated from high school, a rate dwarfed by that of Asian Americans (85.6 %), African Americans (AA, 84.2 %), Hispanic Americans (62.9%), and the total U.S. population (85%; U.S. Census Bureau, 2010a; White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (WHIAAPI, 2014). Similarly, among Cambodian college students, only 13.1% graduated with a bachelor's degree, which is quite low compared to 29.3% of Asian Americans and 17.5% of the U.S. population (WHIAAPI, 2014, p. 1). When looking at the ethnic group as a whole, only 4.2% of Cambodians graduated from college or earned a professional degree, compared to19.5% of Asian Americans and 10.2% of the U.S. total population (WHIAAPI, 2014, p. 1).

The repercussions of low educational attainment are dire. CASs are usually the poorest ethnic minority group in measures of poverty and income inequality (Quintiliani, 2009; WHIAAPI, 2014; Wong et al., 2011). According to the WHIAAPI (2014), more than 20% of Cambodian families live in poverty, compared with 11.5% of Asian Americans and 13.2% of the U.S. total population (p. 1). Despite the fact that educational and poverty rates among CASs rank at or near the bottom of every measure, there are comparatively few studies on the population, which could help establish progressive policies to improve CASs educational rates. On the contrary, there were many studies on the other ethnic minority groups such as AAs and Hispanics, which were significantly instrumental in bringing positive social changes on behalf of AAs and Hispanics (U.S.

Federal Government, 2015). Recent examples of policy changes resulting from such studies include the Executive Orders of the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanics and AA Students, Race to Top, Equity and Opportunity, Investing in Innovation, school improvement grants, Promise Neighborhoods, and many other programs (U.S. Federal Government, 2015). These policies and programs provide the opportunities for higher academic achievement of these targeted ethnic minority groups (U.S. Federal Government, 2015).

Given the provided background information, this study where I examined the specific relationship between CASs' academic achievement and their parents' and children's factors was important. First, the findings addressed a gap in the professional literature regarding Cambodians in the United States. The results may serve as a catalyst for social policy and program changes by bringing increased awareness to competent authorities. When allocating resources that affect the education of CASs or when adopting social policies that affect CAs' families, policymakers should be aware of the unique challenges faced by CASs. Ultimately, this study may contribute by improving the quality of life for CASs; over time, it may even help to end the cycle of poverty and dependency, currently exhibited by CA groups (Le, 2014; Quintiliani, 2009; Wright & Boun, 2011).

Problem Statement

Education is a determinant of individual economic and social status (Broucker & Laballee, 1998; Uy, 2008). CASs attending U.S. public schools have the lowest academic achievement rates of any ethnic group, at any grade level (Akiba, 2010; Chhuon &

Hudley, 2010; Le, 2014; National Center for Education Statistics, 2013; Uy, 2011). Among high school students, the rates of achievement by CASs and Laotians are at the bottom of all measures (Le, 2014; Uy 2011). According to Le (2014), 52.7% of CASs do not complete high school, compared to 15.3% of Caucasians, 29.1% of AAs, and 48.5% of Hispanics (p. 1). The college graduation rate among CASs is the lowest of any ethnic group: only 9.2% are college graduates compared to 25.3% of Caucasians, 13.6% of AAs, and 9.9% of Hispanics (Le, 2014, p. 1).

Due to the strong correlation between education and wealth, CAs remained the poorest ethnic group in the United States (Bankston, 2015; Chhuon & Hudley et al., 2010; Coleman et al., 1966; NCES, 2015; Nicholas et al., 2008; Schaller et al., 2006; SEARAC, 2011; Viadera & Johnston, 2000). Approximately 18.8% of CAs lived in poverty, compared to 12.8% of Asian Americans, and 15.7% of the total U.S. population (Center for American Progress, 2015, p. 1). Additionally, Cambodians, Laotians, and Hmong Americans exhibit the highest rates of dependence on public assistance. At 10%, this rate is far higher than the 1% of Caucasians, 4.5% of AAs, and 8.5% of Latinos/Hispanics who are similarly dependent on public assistance (Le, 2014, p. 1).

Not surprisingly, CAs also have the lowest rates of health insurance, leaving many without vital healthcare coverage. Nearly 20% of CAs are uninsured, compared to 15% of Asian Americans and 16% of the total U.S. population (SEARAC, 2011). In addition to low rates on health insurance coverage, according to a press release of SEARAC (2013c), refugee youth from Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam, Bhutan, and Burma were involved in legal disputes at far higher rates than other groups, partially, due to

inequality in educational attainment. As a result, there were 13,000 Americans of Cambodian, Laotian, and Vietnamese descent deported from the United States for violations of the law (SEARAC, 2013c).

The absence of academic success among CASs has been attributed to many different factors, including the following:

- CA parents often never receive a formal American education and even lack the ability to read or write in their native language (Chalasani, 2007; Chhuon & Hudley et al., 2010; Needham & Quintiliani, 2007; Ngo & Lee, 2007; Tang et al., 2013; Uy, 2008). Worsening this problem is the fact that the most educated CA parents were killed in the genocide which left the responsibility of educating children to mothers. Women were traditionally barred from attending school and remain single mothers to this day (Chhuon & Hudley et al., 2010; Ngo & Lee, 2007). Of those Cambodian refugees afforded resettlements in the United States during the 1980s, most men had the equivalent of a fourth grade education, while women had received little to no schooling (Needham & Quintiliani, 2007).
- Approximately 39.2% of CASs lack English fluency (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010a). The lack of English proficiency among CA parents limits their ability to communicate with their children's teachers, to understand their children's educational struggles or accomplishments, and to support their children's efforts to study and achieve competency with academic material (Glick &

White, 2003; Nguy, 1999; Niedzwiecki & Duong, 2004; Tang et al., 2013; Uy, 2008; Wright & Boun, 2011).

- Economic, social, and cultural resources remain scarce among CASs (Bankston, 2015; Chalasani, 2007; Chhuon & Hudley, 2010; Ngo & Lee, 2007; Tang et al., 2013; Uy, 2011). A family's socio–economic status largely determines which school children could attend (Chhuon & Hudley, 2010). Consequently, CASs often attend underfunded urban schools, which are clustered in low–cost neighborhoods (Chhuon & Hudley, 2010).
- Parents of CASs hold modest academic expectations for their children (Carranza, You, Chhuon, & Hudley, 2009; Chhuon & Hudley et al., 2010; Ngo & Lee, 2007; Rumbaut, 2008; Uy, 2008).
- Some CA parents do not understand the importance of education for females, who are expected to become housewives and mothers rather than pursue professional careers (Tang & Kao, 2012). Similarly, parents often fear that adult men will not want to marry an educated female CA (Ngo & Lee, 2007; Uy, 2008). As a result, they discourage educational attainment by daughters either implicitly or explicitly (U.S. Census Bureau, 2013; Chhuon & Hudley, 2011; Ngo & Lee 2007; Ong, 2003; Pho & Mulvey, 2007; SEARAC, 2011; UNESCO, 2003; UNICEF, 2012; U.S. Department of Education, 2014a; Uy, 2008, 2011; World Bank, 2013a).
- Severe discrimination against CA youth affects their academic success (Chhuon, Dosalmas, & Rinthapol, 2010; KGA, 2011; Wright & Boun, 2011).

For instance, Cambodian youth were discriminated against in the areas of language (56%), job opportunities (68%), racial profiling (73%), and educational attainment (74%; KGA, 2011).

- Educational policies have not recognized CASs as a unique ethnic minority group, regarding them as members of a larger "model ethnic minority" whose members easily achieve educational success (Chhuon & Hudley, 2010; Ngo & Lee, 2007). The aggregation of CASs and Asian American students into a single group often conceals the diminished academic success of CASs (Chhuon & Hudley et al., 2010).
- Despite the rapid growth in the number of CASs, researchers have not investigated the relationship between parental resources and academic achievement among CASs (Akiba, 2010; Chhuon & Hudley et al., 2010; Niedzwiecki & Duong, 2004; Uy, 2008; Wright & Boun, 2011), while a strong correlation has been observed between household income and a child's performance in school (Broucker & Lavalle, 1998; Chalasani, 2007).

The White House Executive Order No. 12729 on Educational Excellence for Hispanics underscored the relationship between Hispanic children's academic success and their parental income and involvement (U.S. Department of Education, 1990). Similarly, the Executive Order No. 13621, which promotes education for AAs also recognized the relationship between parental resource and academic success of their children (U.S. Department of Education, 2012a). This directive allocated funds, created concerted mechanisms, and provided special measures to support and accelerate

educational outcomes for AA students (U.S. Department of Education, 2012a). The present renewal White House Executive Order No. 13555 on Educational Excellence for Hispanics continues to underscore the relationship between parental factors and a students' academic achievement (U.S. Department of Education, 2010b). On the 25th commemoration of Executive Order 12729 in 2015, President Obama called for a "commitment to action," which would make "a meaningful and quantifiable contribution" towards improving educational outcomes for Hispanics (U.S. Department of Education, 2015a, p. 1). These measures were fruitful in that they significantly increased both school attendance and graduation rates of AA and Hispanic students (U. S. Department of Education, 2011). Based on this experience, it has been asserted that similar policies directed towards CASs would be effective in improving education and graduation rates (Foster & Jivan, 2009).

Overall, parents should understand the relationship between their own parental resources and their children's academic achievement. This understanding would provide a basis for increasing the academic performance of the aforementioned children (Chhuon & Hudley, 2010; Uy, 2008). Lacking such an understanding regarding the factors related to academic success and absent a definitive change in educational policy, school performance among CASs will likely remain below average. For these reasons, the findings of this study may potentially contribute to the gap in the literature gap, policy development, and an increase in the academic success of CASs.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this quantitative study was to identify determinants of academic success among CASs by examining the extent to which one or more of six predictor variables provide an explanation for the academic success of CASs. These predictor factors included income of parents, the education of parents, the gender of parents, the parents' (rural or urban) birthplace, the gender of the students, and the age of the children at immigration to America. I modeled each predictor variable as a function of multiple predictor variables with corresponding coefficients. The regression or prediction equation was $y = b_1x_1 + b_2x_2 + ... + b_nx_n + c$. In addition, the purpose of the study was also to explore gender roles in CA families that might have effects on the academic success of CASs.

I collected data via the face–to–face interviews of 153 CA parents living in Long Beach, CA. The interviews were carried out with a guidance of a 15–item interview questionnaire (See Appendix A).

Research Questions and Hypotheses

I used two key RQs to investigate the relationship between parents' and children's factors and academic achievement among CASs. The RQs and relevant hypotheses follow:

RQ1: What were the significant determinants of academic success among CASs?

The first RQ contained the following three subquestions:

1. Which, if any, variable(s) among the six parents' and the children's predictor variables—parents' gender, parents' birthplace, parents' education in Cambodia, parents' income, children's gender, and children's age at

immigration to America—are determinants of academic success among CASs?

$H_0$1: None of the six parents' and the children's predictor variables—parents' gender, parents' birthplace, parents' education in Cambodia, parents' income, children's gender, and children's age at immigration to America—are determinants of academic success among CASs.

H_a1: One or more of the six parents' and children's predictor variables—parents' gender, parents' birthplace, parents' education in Cambodia, parents' income, children's gender, and children's age at immigration to America—are significant determinants of academic success among CASs.

2. Which, if any, variable(s) among the four parents' predictor variables—parents' gender, parents' birthplace, parents' education in Cambodia, and parents' income—are determinants of academic success among CASs?

   $H_0$2: None of the four parents' predictor variables—parents' gender, parents' birthplace, parents' education in Cambodia, and parents' income—is a significant determinant of academic success of CASs.

   H_a2: One or more of the four parents' predictor variables—parents' gender, parents' birthplace, parents' education in Cambodia, and parents' income is a determinant of academic success of CASs.

3. Which, if any, variable(s) among the two children's predictor variables—children's gender and children's age at immigration to America—is a significant determinant of academic success of CASs?

$H_0$3: None of the two children's predictor variables—children's gender and children's age at immigration to America—is a significant determinant of academic success of CASs.

H_a3: One or more of the two children's predictor variables—children's gender and children's age at immigration to America—are determinants of academic success of CASs.

With the major hypotheses in this study, I examined the relationship between CASs' academic success and one or more of the six parents' and children's related predictor variables. I entered the predictor variables into a linear regression using a probability of 0.05 as the criterion for inclusion and a probability of 0.10 or greater, as the criterion for exclusion. The goal of the data analysis was to explain the variance observed in the grade of schooling completed by particular CASs.

RQ2: What role did gender play in CASs' education?

This key RQ contained the following six subquestions:

1) Was a son's education more important than a daughter's education if only one child could go to school?
2) Who was more likely to undertake household tasks (i.e., cooking, cleaning, washing, taking care of siblings, taking care of sick/elderly family members, and taking care of the house)?
3) Which gender would you be more comfortable in permitting to move away from home to study in a school far from home?
4) Which child was harder for you to permit going out socializing at night?

5) Who should marry earlier if a son and a daughter are the same age?
6) Would you like your son to marry a woman who attained a higher level of education than his own?

Theoretical Foundation

The theoretical framework I used to guide this quantitative study was functionalism, a prominent theory in education. Spencer developed functionalism in the book, *First Principals*, in 1862. Early functionalist theorists compared a society to the human body whose structures, organs, cells, veins, arteries, and other anatomical parts work together to maintain a health for a well–functioning body (Mooney, Knox, & Schacht, 2007). Functionalism regards society as a complex system, wherein parts are interconnected and influence each other so that a relatively stable social order might be maintained (Mooney et al., 2007, p. 1). To characterize the importance of social order in the theory of functionalism, an individual might note that individuals pay taxes to the government, which in turn provides security, education, and infrastructure in service to an ordered society (Regoli and Hewitt, 2009).

Durkheim, Parsons, Davis, Moore, and Merton later expanded the concept of functionalism (DeMarrais & LeCompte, 1999; Hammond, Cheney, & Pearsey, 2009; Mooney et al., 2007; Pai, Adler, & Shadiow, 2006; Strawn, 2009). The expansion of functionalism was the recognition of the existence of an imperfect society by noting environmental changes, imperfect society, and inequality; this requires an extension of functionalism to encompass insights from the structural strain theory of deviance (Merton, 1938, 1968; Mooney et al., 2007). The structural strain theory of deviance refers

to dysfunction that is present in any system (Merton, 1938). The dysfunction manifests itself when there is tension, which arises from the gap between societal expectations, on the one hand, and existing means for individuals to achieve those expectations, on the other (Merton, 1938). Such a situation suggests change; social components must necessarily adjust in order to achieve stability (Davis & Moore, 1945; Merton, 1938). In the context of this theoretical paradigm, the origins of deviance are as follows: race, gender, disability, and religious discrimination (Merton, 1938). Accordingly, the theory advances a reward system, which works to provide motivation and to stop the inequality that is destabilizing society (Davis & Moore, 1945). I will discuss functionalism in further detail in Chapter 2.

I selected the equality concept intrinsic to functionalism as a lens for this study because it has been used to guide similar studies. For example, Coleman et al. (1966) conducted a social science study looking at equality of educational opportunities for ethnic minority children in America. The federal government conducted this research and found a significant relationship between a student's educational outcome and his or her family's socioeconomic status, education, and other home characteristics (Coleman et al., 1966). These findings, in turn, led to groundbreaking legislation on school desegregation and busing (Viadero, 2006).

Similarly, both Southeast Asians in general and Cambodians in particular, share a sentiment, which states, "If a parent is poor in something, a child is poor in that." Poor in this context not only connotes economic circumstances but also outcomes related to education, critical thinking, analytical skills, goal–setting, good behavior, academic

support mechanisms, and socialization. In short, this key concept implies a positive relationship between parental resources and a child's academic achievement. Consequently, in this study I selected various parents' factors to measure, including parents' education, parents' income, gender of parents and of children, birthplace of parents, and the age of children at immigration to America.

The relationship between parents' resources and children's academic success is broadly granted throughout Western culture. Sticht and Armstrong (1994) concluded that the more highly educated the parents, the greater the probability that their children did well in K–12 schools, became high school graduates, and attended college. Likewise, Viadero and Johnston (2000) suggested that the predictors for school accomplishment were factors beyond schools themselves including household income and parental education. Similarly, Broucker and Lavallee (1998) showed that a family member's success at work often plays an outside role in a child's educational achievement, since that family member could often pay for a given child's educational pursuits. Broadly speaking, I could then say that both Cambodians and Westerners believe that there was an association between parental resources and a child's academic success. Beyond this implicit belief, however, there is scant scientific evidence for how this relationship works in the specific context of the CA population.

Another important aspect of functionalism is its recognition that each part of a society fulfills an important role in maintaining the health of that society. CASs, representing a significant proportion of the population in Long Beach, could make a significant contribution to civic life if they were equipped with suitable means to do so,

along with the expectation that such a contribution is possible. Inequality in educational achievement of CASs continues to prolong their poverty, sustain their governmental dependency, and ultimately undermine the health and prosperity of the Long Beach community at large (Le, 2014; Neidzwiecki & Duong, 2004; Quintiliani, 2009; WHIAAPI, 2014; Wright & Boun, 2011).

Status quo legislation is unfortunately not adequate for laws, such as the Elementary and Secondary Act (1965), its reauthorization as the Improving America's School Act (1994), and the NCLB (2002), along with the White House Executive Orders on Educational Excellence, which all continue to be not beneficial for CASs from the very programs they need to experience equal opportunity of outcome–a concept known internationally as *substantive equality* (Equal Opportunity Commission of Australian Government [EOCAG], 2014; Equality Rights Trust (ERT), 2007; Freeman & Goldblatt, 2015; Government of Canada, 2011; International Woman's Rights Action Watch-Asia Pacific [IWRAW-AP], 2001). Due to broad misunderstandings regarding their levels of poverty and educational achievement, CASs have been left to compete against other groups such as Caucasians or East Asians, who have been in the United States for generations, and therefore, excel in education (Chhuon & Hudley, 2010; Ngo & Lee, 2007). Treating CASs as no different from these groups is not beneficial; CASs cannot fully participate in the U. S. educational system (Olsen, 1997; Tang et al., 2013). Unlike their Caucasian and East Asian counterparts, CASs exhibit limited language proficiency and rely upon comparatively little academic support from their parents (Alkiba, 2010; Nguy, 1999; Tang et al., 2013). This is not surprising, given a cultural context that

parents have minimal education, poor language proficiency, and inadequate knowledge of the American educational system (Chalasani, 2007; Chhuon & Hudley et al., 2010; Ngo & Lee, 2007; Tang et al., 2013; Uy, 2008). Taken together, these discussed points emphasize the need to enlarge the understanding of substantive equality so that others recognize the unique needs of the CAs and pursue affirmative actions in social policies that accelerate the equality of outcome for all CASs.

Nature of the Study

In this quantitative study, I investigated the relationship between parents' and children's factors and CASs' academic success. In addition, I also explored the gender roles in their families that might have an effect on the academic success of CASs. The quantitative method was used to provide knowledge derived from direct observation and logical inferences based on direct observation (Rudestam & Newtown, 2007, p. 26). This research method was helpful in looking at both descriptive numbers and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics can be utilized to identify patterns of behaviors (Frankfort–Nachmias & Nachmias, 2008). The descriptive statistics summarily displayed and reported the number of participants and the response rate in an effective way (Frankfort–Nachmias & Nachmias, 2008). They reduced the gathered information into an understandable form. The inferential statistics exhibited the patterns of data on relationships between the variables and helped establish whether the result was statistically significant (Rudestam & Newton, 2007, p. 27, 148; Frankfort–Nachmias & Nachmias, 2008). The general hypothesis I developed for the study was that the measured parents' and children's factors significantly determined the academic grade attained by

CASs. There were two types of variables: an outcome variable and predictor variables. The outcome variable was the academic success of the CASs, which was depicted by the number of years completed in school. The predictor variables were parents' income, parents' education, parents' gender, parents' birthplace, the children's gender, and the children's age at immigration to America.

I used a cross–sectional design in this study focusing on CASs' parents living in Long Beach, CA, at one point in time. This made the data robust because statistical information lends stronger support to the relationships among variables and helps address the complexity inherent in the RQs ((Frankfort–Nachmias & Nachmias, 2008). In addition, a cross–sectional design does not require the random assignment of the sample size (Frankfort–Nachmias & Nachmias, 2008).

I used the face–to–face interview method, specifically 15–item interview questions, to collect data because it was thorough: I had direct access to the Cambodian community, flexibility in the questioning process, and control of the interview situation. There are noted benefits to direct contact, and interviews provide the chance for clarification and a high response rate (Frankfort–Nachmias & Nachmias, 2008). This was especially important as most CASs' parents lacked literacy competence, even in their own language, and could not access the Internet or complete mail–in interview questions. The whole interview process took about 30 minutes with each participant.

I conducted the interviews with 153 purposefully sampled CASs' parents living in Long Beach, CA. Long Beach has the largest Cambodian population outside of Cambodia (Cambodian Town, 2012; KGA, 2011; Needham & Quintiliani, 2007). The

minimal sample required, generated by using *F–Test* of G* Power, was 98 participants (Faul, Erdfelder, Lang, & Buchner, 2007; Faul, Erdfelder, Buchner, & Lang, 2009). To increase statistical power, the number of participants was increased to 153.These participants had at least one child, were aged ≥ 25 years, and attended school anywhere in the United States.

I used *Multiple Linear Regression* (*MLR*; Green & Salkind, 2011) to analyze the data (Questions 1–9). A *MLR* allowed researchers to understand the effects of more than two predictor variables and one outcome variable by combining all different predictor variables into one test (Frankfort–Nachmias & Nachmias, 2008; Green & Salkind, 2011). *MLR* was used to examine the equations that predict the extent of academic success exhibited by CASs, associated with all predictor variables. It was also used to analyze the relationship between and among the two subsets of predictor variables: the parents' and the children's characteristics and the academic achievement of CASs.

Moreover, I used descriptive statistics to analyze the frequency distributions of responses to Questions 10–15, concerning the parents' perception on gender practices that might affect CASs' education in their households. It was also used to analyze the participants' background information and response rates. The results will be presented in tables, figures, and graphs and were interpreted via statistical tests, which were *MLRs* and descriptive statistics. I based my conclusions on the results of testing the null hypotheses.

Definitions

There were two classes of variables that needed to be defined in this study: the outcome variable and the predictor variables. The outcome variable was the academic

success achieved by CASs in a number of academic years completed. Predictor variables consisted of parents' income, parents' education, parents' gender, parents' birthplace, children's gender, and the children's age at immigration to America.

Academic success: Measured by the highest grade or number of years of education completed by CASs (SEARAC, 2011; U.S. Census Bureau, 2010a). It is a continuous scale.

Children's age: The age of a child when a child arrived in the United States (Rojas, 2015). It is continuous scale.

Children's gender: As male or female, which is categorical scale.

Parents' birthplace: The parents' place of birth, whether from Phnom Penh, the capital city of Cambodia, or provinces (rural areas). It is a categorical scale.

Parents' education: The highest grade or number of years of education completed by mother or father in Cambodia (SEARAC, 2011; U.S. Census Bureau, 2010a). It is a continuous scale.

Parents' *gender*: As male or female, which is categorical scale.

Parents' income: The average annual household income of each family member in U.S. dollars, which is a continuous scale (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010a).

Beyond this, the predictor variables were classified into two subsets for data analysis:

Parents' factors: Parents' income, education, gender, and birthplace.

Children's factors: The children's gender and age at immigration to America.

CAs: For this study, I defined CAs as any ethnic Cambodian/Khmer living in the United States, whether the individual was born inside or outside of the United States. CAs are usually of Khmer descent, but they also include Chinese Cambodian, Vietnamese Cambodian, Cham Cambodians, Khmer Kampuchea Krom, and other ethnicities from Cambodia. Cambodia is a Southeast Asian nation bordered on the west and northwest by Thailand, on the north by Laos, on the east by Vietnam, and on the south by the Gulf of Thailand (Bankston, 2015; Ministry of Tourism of Cambodia, 2015).

Assumptions

In order to achieve reliable and nonbiased findings, I identified four assumptions for the study. First, I assumed that that participants responded honestly to interview questions, such that the findings were reliable and represents the sample that was studied. Second, I assumed that that nominal and continuous scales were valid measurements of interviewing items. Third, I assumed that the items were well designed to measure the factors they intended to measure. Finally, my assumption was that the participants understood the interviewing items presented to them in the face–to–face interviews.

Scope and Delimitations

Internal validity concerns participants' experiences or aspects of the interview procedure, which could undermine the ability of the researcher to draw correct inferences from the data received about the population (Frankfort–Nachmias & Nachmias, 2008). To address this, I encouraged participants to be honest during their interviews, pretested the interview questions, and ensured that interview question items were clear and direct, so as to be easily comprehended by interviewees. The interview questions were available

for administration both in Khmer and in English, depending on the interviewee's language preference or competence.

The scope of the study was delimited to Long Beach, CA. Long Beach was chosen as the research site because it harbored the largest Cambodian population outside of Cambodia (Cambodian Town, 2012; KGA, 2011; Needham & Quintiliani, 2007). I conducted interviews with 153 CAS's parents. Each parent had at least one child, who were aged ≥ 25 years and over and who attended school somewhere in the United States.

I anticipated the issue of some interviewees' nonresponsiveness. Nonresponsiveness by study participants can significantly affect findings when generalizing those findings to a larger population (Frankfort–Nachmias & Nachmias, 2008). Respondents were not likely to perfectly represent the original sample used in validating the study (Frankfort–Nachmias & Nachmias, 2008); therefore, this would introduce some bias into the study. For this reason, I placed priority on a high response rate and full completion of the interview questions. Additionally, the findings were generalized only to CASs in Long Beach, since purposeful sampling was used to select participants in this study. The findings could not be generalized to all Cambodians living in CA or the United States.

Limitations

Limitations inherent in the cross–sectional design include a lack of control over alternative explanations and a difficulty in manipulation of the predictor variables to draw unambiguous inferences (Frankfort–Nachmias & Nachmias, 2008). Because the researcher cannot manipulate the predictor variables, "the direction of causation must be

logically or theoretically inferred" (Frankfort–Nachmias & Nachmias, 2008, p. 133). The use of cross–sectional studies improves internal validity by including auxiliary information as a control against rival hypotheses; therefore, cross–sectional research design is frequently employed (Frankfort–Nachmias & Nachmias, 2008) because bias and data collection are generalizable concerns about the outcomes of the study.

In addition, I administered this study face–to–face to ensure greater accuracy and nonbiased data. Face–to–face interviews gave me flexibility in the questioning process and led to a high response rate and fuller information (Frankfort–Nachmias & Nachmias, 2008). However, face–to–face interviews pose issues related to higher costs, interview bias, and a lack of anonymity (Frankfort–Nachmias & Nachmias, 2008). To address the higher cost issue, the interview places were within walking distance for me. To avoid bias, I kept aside my experiences as a Cambodian during the interview. To maintain confidentiality, the names of the interviewees were not collected. Each participant was given a code number as an identity. I thoroughly checked the completeness of the responses to the interview questions.

Significance of the Study

It is important to understand the determinants of CASs' academic success, a topic that is underresearched (Chhuon & Hudley et al., 2010; Neidzwiecki & Duong, 2004; Uy 2011; Wright & Boun, 2011), while CASs' academic success exhibited the lowest in America. Moreover, it is important to develop working recommendations that might improve the education of CASs in America. The findings of this study have numerous positive social change implications. First, the results of the study address the gap in the

literature on the determinants of academic success of CASs. With this study, I provided insights into this relationship. Only a few qualitative studies have been conducted regarding CASs' education; however, there had been no studies known to the author on the relationship between children's academic success and the parents' and children's variables. Therefore, in this study I used parental responses to characterize this understudied, and perhaps, misunderstood relationship. Second, the study results can be used as advocacy tools to lobby policymakers who have the authority to develop effective policies, measures, mechanisms, and resources to improve the educational achievement of CASs and integrate those students into the U.S. educational system more successfully. Third, my findings from the study could prove to be instrumental in raising the awareness of community leaders, social workers, students, grantors, and the general public regarding the unique challenge experienced by CASs and parents who seek to support their children's education. The summary of the findings could be broadcasted in the Long Beach newspaper (*Khmer Post*) and Long Beach Cambodian ethnic radio (*106.3 FM and Radio Free Asia*). I will mail the requests for broadcasting to the media outlets after the study is completed and published. Fourth, my findings from this study could also be used by educators and school administrators as a guide to provide effective intervention services aimed at minimizing low educational achievement rates among CASs, and thereby, improve the lives of CASs academically, economically, and socially.

The results of this study could augment the literature on educational equality and contribute to the formulation of public policies, which promote positive social change for the Cambodian population. After all, this has been a population that has increased by

more than 34.3% between the years of 2000 and 2010 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010a, p. 15) and therefore studying about their academic achievement status will provide the foundation for addressing the gaps.

Summary and Transition

In this chapter, I presented a general overview of the study. Due to the gap in the literature on the determinants of the academic success of CASs, the purpose of this study was to identify the determinants of academic success among CASs by examining the extent to which one or more of six predictor variables provide an explanation for the academic success, or lack thereof, of CASs. Functionalism served as the theoretical foundation for this study. This theory recognized society as imperfect, resulting from the gap between societal expectation and the existing means to achieve it (Regoli & Hewitt, 2009). The theory advocated adjustment to achieve stability through reward and motivation (Merton, 1938, 1968; Mooney et al., 2007). Functionalism supports the idea of affirmative means, rewards, and motivation to address inequality in the education of CASs, something that persists due to the unique experiences and needs of CA parents (Mertons, 1938, 1957, 1968; Regoli & Hewitt, 2009). I used face–to–face interviews to collect data from 153 CA parents, who were selected via purposive sampling. The interviews were conducted over one time period. *Bivariate* and *MLRs* were then used to analyze the resulting data. The significance of the study was to advance theory and knowledge in this discipline, contribute to the creation of better policies and practices, and foster positive social change by improving the academic success of CASs.

In Chapter 2, I will provide a summary and analyses of relevant literature and the theoretical foundations I used in this study that focused on the relationship between parents' and children's variables and academic success, both of students in general and of CASs specifically. The review will contain six main sections: an introduction, a literature search strategy, a theoretical foundation, the background for CASs living in the United States, the literature related to key variables, and the summary and conclusion of the chapter. My examination of the extant literature will provide the foundation for the study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

There is a gap in the literature identifying the determinants of CASs' academic success by addressing the relationship between parents' factors and the academic success of CASs, who have exhibited the second worst educational attainment of any demographic group in the United States (Chhuon & Hudley et al., 2010; Neidzwiecki & Duong, 2004; Uy, 2011). In this quantitative study, I intended to examine the extent to which one or more of six predictor variables provide an explanation for the substandard academic performance noted herein. The findings may minimize the gap in the literature, improve public policies for CASs, and be used as a tool to guide social changes (Mertens, 2003).

Although a remarkable improvement in America's education system towards equal education opportunity has occurred since *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954), the passage of the CRA in 1964, the adoption of the Elementary and Secondary Act (1965), the reauthorization of the Improving of America's School Act (1994), and the NCLB (2002), the educational achievement of CASs and Southeast Asian American children have been significantly below normal (Alkiba, 2010; ; Chhuon & Hudley, 2010; Chhuon & Dosalmas et al., 2010; Chhuon, Hudley, Brenner & Macias, 2006; Ngo & Lee, 2007, Nguy, 1999; SEARAC, 2011; Tang & Kao, 2012; U.S. Census Bureau, 2010a; Uy, 2011; Wallitt, 2008). Many researchers attributed this substandard performance to a lack of parental and children's factors with some finding that the higher the parental education, the higher the educational attainment of their children; well–educated parents have more

skills and knowledge with which to help their children succeed educationally (Broucker & Lavallee, 1998; Chalasani, 2007; Chhuon & Dosalmas et al., 2010; Sticht & Armstrong, 1994; Viadero & Johnston, 2000). Similarly, other researchers concluded that a lack of parental resources contributes to low academic achievement (Akiba, 2010; Chhuon & Hudley, 2010; Chhuon & Hudley et al., 2010; Le, 2014; Ngo & Lee, 2007; Tang et al., 2013; Uy, 2011, 2013). The limited English proficiency evident among many CA parents affects their ability to communicate with school staff, which in turn affects their children's ability to succeed (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010a; Glick & White, 2003; Nguy, 1999; Niedzwiecki & Duong, 2004; Tang et al., 2013; Uy, 2008; Wright & Boun, 2011). In addition, parental socioeconomic status is a general predictor of a child's academic achievement (Bankston, 2015; Chhuon & Hudley et al., 2010; Coleman et al., 1966; NCES, 2015; Nicholas et al., 2008; Schaller et al., 2006; SEARAC, 2011; Viadera & Johnston, 2000).

Gender inequality negatively affects the education of female children (U.S. Census Bureau, 2013; Chhuon & Hudley, 2011; Ngo & Lee, 2007; SEARAC, 2011; UNESCO, 2003, 2010, 2014, 2015a; UNICEF, 2012; UNGA, 2000; U.S. Department of Education, 2014a; Uy, 2011; World Bank, 2012a, 2013b). In various cultures, education has been regarded as unimportant for females (Ong, 2003; Pho & Mulvey, 2007). According to Park (2000) and Tang and Kao (2012), many Asian parents hold higher educational aspirations for their sons than daughters. Furthermore, the age of students when arriving in the United States has a significant bearing on academic success (U.S. Census Bureau, 2008; Rojas, 2015). Details about parents' birthplace might be a

determinant of children's academic success, given the disparate levels of educational resources available in urban and rural settings.

The underperformance of CASs, however, has largely been overlooked (Tang et al., 2013) or invisible (Olsen, 1997; Pang et al., 2011). This is the result of the misperception that CASs are members of a homogeneous Asian ethnic minority, who often excel in education (Akiba, 2010; Le, 2014; Ngo & Lee, 2007; Reyes, 2007; Tang et al., 2013; Wright & Boun, 2011). CASs have frequently been confused with other Asian students, including those from Japanese, Indian, Chinese, and Korean ethnicities, or with those who have lived in the United States for generations, and who may serve as a basis for the faulty "model ethnic minority" stereotype (Chhuon & Hudley, 2010; Ngo & Lee, 2007). In reality, children of CAs are newcomers whose parents sought involuntary refuge in America to escape persecution, the Genocide, and war (Tang & Kao, 2012).

As the result of the "model ethnic minority" overgeneralization (Olsen, 1997; Tang et al., 2013), CASs were not beneficiaries of any state or federal policies such as the Executive Orders of the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for AAs and Spanish, Race to the Top–Equity and Opportunity, Investing in Innovation, school improvement grants, Promise Neighborhoods, and other programs (U.S. Federal Government, 2015). Diminished educational achievement places CASs within a cycle of low paying jobs, poverty, and government dependency (Dyo & Moore, 2003; Niedzwiecki & Duong, 2004; Quintiliani, 2009; Wright & Boun, 2011). Not surprisingly, many Cambodian youth ended up surrounding themselves with peers who violate laws and being detained and sometimes deported (SEARAC, 2013c). Yet, despite these

obvious social problems, there is no study with empirical analysis that adequately examines the relationship between the academic achievement of CASs and the parental factors offered at home.

In Chapter 2, I will provide a comprehensive review of the scholarly literature related to parent's and children's factors and the educational achievement of CASs. In this review, I will discuss the literature search strategy, the theoretical foundation for the study, and the background information regarding Cambodians living in America. This information is imperative if an individual seeks to understand the way in which a group's history might affect their current circumstances. Finally, in this review I will also examine existing literature on key variables.

Literature Search Strategy

I used a wide range of sources to locate the literature included in this review. These sources included the databases and journals of Applied Social Research Institute of Cambodia, Hmong Studies Journal, The Journal of Southeast Asian American Education and Advancement, ProQuest Central, U.S. Census Bureau, U.S. Department of Education, Walden University, United Nations' websites, and WHIAAPI.

I also used the Google search engine to find data and other information regarding CASs, including the Cambodian Coordination Council, Cambodian Town, KGA, and Southeast Asian Americans. Cambodian bibliographies, reference sections in books and book chapters and in articles published by academic journals were examined to locate further literature. I performed searches using keywords and phrases to identify articles containing information related to the relationship between parental resources and the

academic achievement of children. I also performed searches using keywords and phrases related to the specific barriers that thwart educational progress.

To find articles related to individuals of Khmer ethnic extraction, I used the following key search words and phrases: *Cambodian*, *Khmer*, *Khmerican*, and *Cambodian American*. Accordingly, the following phrases were subsequently used as factors for further searches: *academic success, age of arrival in the United States, education, gender, income, language, parental expectations, parental support, parents, birthplace, gender, deportation* and *students*. Initially, my searches were limited to keywords and phrases in sources published after 2010. But after few articles were located using that narrow window, I extended the search further back in time. Even after this change, fewer articles than expected were located. Given the dearth of literature, my search was extended to other ethnic groups who share a similar culture, geography, history, migration pattern, or experience of war. These key words and phrases included: *Hispanic*, *Hmong*, *Laotian*, *Vietnamese,* and *Southeast Asian groups*. The articles I found will be summarized in the following review.

Theoretical Foundation

The theoretical foundation that was used for this study was functionalism. Herbert developed functionalism in the book, the *First Principals* in 1862. Functionalism was expanded to the structural strain theory latter on by Durkheim, Parsons, Davis, Moore, and Merton according to DeMarrais and LeCompte (1999), Hammond et al. (2009), Mooney et al. (2007), Pai et al. (2006), and Strawn (2009). Functionalism regards society as a complex system, whose parts work together to maintain equilibrium, solidarity, and

stability (Merton, 1938; Mooney et al., 2007). Early functionalist theorists compared a society to the human body whose structures, organs, cells, veins, arteries, and other anatomical parts worked together to maintain health for a well functioning body (Mooney et al., 2007). Contemporary functionalists regard society as the combination of societal values and structural institutions and seek to investigate the way in which each part contributes to the stability of the whole (Parsons, 1937). Person claimed that societal value provides general standards for behavior within a given society. It seems that these values include respect for human rights, social justice, equality, cooperation, economic success, higher education, and others. The structural institutions are created to uphold societal values and include families, educational institutions, local and central governments, judiciary, legislation, nonprofit organizations, and religious structures (Durkheim, 1956; Merton, 1938; Mooney et al., 2007; Parsons, 1937; Regoli and Hewitt, 2009; Sydney, 2013). For instance, the family nurtures, educates, and socializes its offspring so that they might become productive citizens and continue the family legacy.

The role of the school is to equip children with knowledge, skills, and culture, which in turn will contribute to the broader society, as those children become adults capable of functioning within a healthy social unit (Durkheim, 1956; Regoli and Hewitt, 2009). The federal and the local governments provide education for children whose families, for their part, pay taxes to maintain government services such as schools (Regoli and Hewitt (2009). According to my observation, currently, the nonprofit organizations provide services and empower various disadvantaged groups, to work toward a future of full participation, as productive citizens. Likewise, religious institutions offer spiritual

support and moral education, so as to build solidarity and foster a peaceful society (Grochdewski & Zani, 2013).

Although functionalism highlights the importance of shared public values in the maintenance of social stability, it recognizes the lack of a perfect match between behaviors and values; since a perfect match would only exist in a perfect society (Davis & Moore, 1945; Merton, 1938; Parsons, 1937; Sydney, 2013). Yet all societies experience environmental changes, such as the dynamic growth of technology or the increased participation of women in the workforce. To maintain equilibrium in the face of social deficiencies, functionalism posits that structural institutions and the interconnections among them need to be adjusted so that they can serve as agents of stability within the newly changed environment (Mooney et al., 2007; Sydney, 2013). For example, as society now sees it, the rise of the Internet brought about a change from store–only purchases to online e–commerce (Sydney, 2013). Similarly, the increasing number of women in the workforce led to the passage of new laws such as those that sought to end sexual harassment and gender inequality (CRA, 1964), and those that encouraged breastfeeding by advising lactation rooms in workplaces (Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 155, 1998). In general, structural institutions serve to modernize and stabilize a society in flux (Parsons, 1937).

The recognition of an imperfect society suggests a reward system or a motivation to stop inequality, which is a destabilizing force in any society (Davis & Moore, 1945). Functionalists further suggest that rewards and motivation themselves, are granted unequally due to existing structural inequality, including disparities in inherited

property, family power, and other factors (Merton 1938). Ultimately, functionalists recognize that the underadvantaged groups require more support from society.

Merton (1938) refined the functionalist theory by developing the structural strain theory of deviance as an extension of the basic functionalist theory to mitigate inequality. Merton's theory of deviance, which refers to dysfunction in the system, recognizes the inevitability of change, as social components must necessarily adjust, in order to achieve stability. When one part of the system is disorganized, other parts are stressed and generate social problems. These problems must be fixed if society is to maintain order, stability, and productivity. When institutions and their interconnections function well, society is orderly, stable, and productive.

Racial, gender, disability, and religious discrimination are the chief causes of deviance. These are primary tensions that result when there is a gap between cultural goals and the means available for individuals to achieve said goals (Merton, 1938, 1957, 1968). Culture establishes expected goals, while social structures provide (or fail to provide) the means by which people achieve those goals. Merton (1938) concluded that in a well–included society, its people use accepted and socially appropriate means to achieve goals. In this case, the goals and the means afforded by the society are balanced; in situations of imbalance, deviance often occurs. Put another way, when there is an imbalance between cultural goals and the structurally available means to achieve them, individuals resort to deviant behavior.

According to Regoli and Hewitt (2009), an important cultural goal in the United States is economic success. The chief means to achieve economic success are the closely

related activities of education and employment. Unfortunately, educational opportunity and employment are not means to which all groups have equal access. The result in the United States has been structural strain, which manifests itself as deviance among individuals who do not have the means to achieve their goals. Members of families with low socioeconomic standing, females, and racial minorities are more likely to face strain because the broader society obstructs their means to achieve success. These groups, therefore, are comparatively more likely to fail in achieving success through accepted means, so they turn to crime and deviance, to achieve economic success. Not surprising, then, is the high correlation between unemployment and crime, a relationship structural strain theory explains quite well (Anderson & Taylor, 2009).

Similarly, the goal of feminism is to advocate on behalf of a society where women are regarded as equal partners with men in every endeavor (World Bank, 2012b). Historically, women have been subordinate to men, which results in obvious forms of gender inequality. Feminists fight for equality by arguing that men and women should share society's opportunities and resources equally. The Declaration of Sentiments was among the first efforts to guarantee equal rights for women and men (Stanton, 1848). Moreover, in 1920, women won the right to vote (U.S. Const. amend. XIX). Similar efforts took place across the Western world; women in Germany, for instance, fought for equality in the social institution of marriage (Eisenstein, 1984; Hamilton, 2007; Jaggar & Rothenberg, 1993; Tong, 1989). Liberal feminists fight for the broad ideal that all people are created equal and should not be denied equal opportunity based on gender (Lord,

Greiter, & Tursunovic, 2012). Feminists frequently focus on affecting social change through legislative and regulatory reforms.

Socialist feminism, in particular, regards the subservient position of women as the result of class–based capitalism; as such, women should have equal opportunity in both the private and public spheres (Lord et al., 2012). Postmodern feminism regards the past conditions as no longer applicable to the current situation. This is due, in large part, to the fact that the global economy brought about by technology, has rendered past forms of social and economic activity, obsolete (Lord et al., 2012). Smith argued for change in women's education, especially in public schools, to allow girls full academic participation (Lord et al., 2012). Gilligan saw justice as a process of focused attention upon the problems endemic to female inequality (Lord et al., 2012).

Njogu and Orchardson–Mazrui (2006) stated that gender is socially constructed, which means the socialization that takes place within families, educational institutions, and other social forces is constitutive of the binary view we have of people as "girls" or "boys." This binary view, in turn, inculcates different expectations where boys and girls are coerced to act in certain ways and to play entirely different social roles. Moreover, this social coercion is affected through rewards and punishment. Much of this is illuminating when applied to the cultural practices, which are often seen in the CAS's context. Among many families of CAs, boys are favored to receive an education that will prepare them to become leaders in the workplace and at home, while girls are denied access to that education, simultaneously curtailing their career opportunities, and making

them subservient at home. They are encouraged to comply with established cultural norms through rewards and punishment.

International laws, particularly the *United Nations*' treaties, recognize the importance of women's full participation in all fields. This is deemed necessary to create a developed, just, and socially ordered society. Article 13 of the Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights [UNOHCHR], 1979) requires member states to recognize the right of each person to an education. In addition, this right is not simply abstract; rather, this Convention mandates that all state parties provide compulsory primary education, as well as grant equal opportunity for secondary and higher education. It also requires governments to eliminate stereotypes, customs, and norms, which result in legal, political, or economic obstacles for women. Article 2 of the International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights (UNOHCHR, 1966) requires member states to eliminate discriminatory laws, policies, and practices—something which was aimed at guaranteeing political, social, economic, and cultural equality for both women and men. Article 4 of the same Covenant requires member states to provide temporary, special measures to accelerate women's equality (UNOHCHR, 1966). Relatedly, Article 10 states that women and men have equal rights to education, including equal access to schools, vocational training, and scholarships (UNOHCHR, 1966).

The actions of individual nations are relevant here as well. For example, the Beijing Platform of Action (United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women[UNEGEEW], 1995b) recognized equal access to education in

formal education, vocational training, science, technology, and higher education. It sought the allocation of sufficient resources to monitor the implementation of educational reform. The Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women (United Nations, 1985) reaffirmed the need for women to receive equal opportunity in developing their full potential. It asserted that women should receive equal access to education and vocational training.

Consequently, empowerment of women has been a long–term goal of the international communities. These efforts have included international conferences such as the Vienna World Conference on Human Rights (UNOHCHR, 1993), the International Conference on Population and Development (United Nations, 1994), and the1995 Fourth World Conference on Women (UNEGEEW, 1995b, 1995b). These conferences declared women's rights to be human rights, and named gender equality as instrumental not only to national development, but also to the institutionalization of democracy and good governance. These conferences also called on federal and local governments to integrate women's empowerment into their legislative activities and to modify any discriminating practices that were preventing women from pursuing their full rights and capabilities.

Equality, a complex and controversial concept, is a primary concern of functionalism and international human rights laws (Kranich, 2001). Broadly speaking, equality denotes fairness with regards to formal equality, equality of opportunity, and substantive equality (EOCAG, 2014; ERT, 2007; Freeman & Goldblatt, 2015; Government of Canada, 2011; IWRAW-AP, 2001). Formal equality treats everyone in a society with regards to laws and policies as being the same regardless of circumstances

(EOCAG, 2014; ERT, 2007; Government of Canada, 2011; IWRAW-AP, 2001). Equality of opportunity means fairness in laws and policies in the distribution of resources, or of the means to achieve a given opportunity by rectifying past discrimination through providing enabling conditions or affirmative actions (ERT, 2007; IWRAW-AP, 2001; Kranich, 2001). Substantive equality ensures achieving equitable benefits, which are results/outcomes/impacts, in laws and policies (EOCAG, 2014; ERT, 2007; Freeman & Goldblatt, 2015; IWRAW-AP, 2001).

Gosepath (2007) identified four types of equality: formal, proportional, moral, and the presumption of equality. Formal equality occurs when individuals have equal status in at least one normatively relevant aspect and are treated equally. Proportional equality occurs when individuals are treated "relatively equal when it treats all relevant person in relation to their due" (para. 2.2). Moral equality occurs when all members in a group are equal but not identical. The presumption of equality means the equal distribution of all goods and that individuals are politically suited for the process of public distribution. Therefore, the ultimate central concept of equality in functionalism is substantive equality, which refers to an equality of impact rather than equality of treatment (EOCAG, 2014; ERT, 2007; Freeman & Goldblatt, 2015, 8; IWRAW-AP, 2001).

Taken together, the mere process of treating all persons equally is not actually equality in any real sense because different individuals have different needs due to specific cultural practices, a history of past discrimination, or current circumstances. According to this understanding of equality, special measures are needed to compensate

for the specific circumstances experienced by individuals or groups, whose lives have been marked by de–facto discrimination (IWRAW, AP, 2001). For instance, American legislation such as the NCLB of 2002 and the CRA of 1964 represent equal opportunity, explicitly stating that each person has an equal right to an education regardless of race, color, national origin, gender, disability, or age. However, children of CAs have consistently achieved the lowest levels of educational attainment, when compared to other ethnic groups. This low level of achievement is due, in large part, to the fact that the CASs has the fewest means to take advantage of equal opportunity, strictly construed.

Equally important for our consideration is the fact that many CASs' parents have unique needs, having lost educated family members during the Genocide, who would normally provide support for a child's schooling. Indeed, Cambodian parents often lacked resources such as income, language, knowledge about school systems, and proficiency with the English necessary to help their children complete school assignments (Wright & Boun, 2011). What does more, Cambodian parents frequently bring a set of traditional cultural beliefs to the United States. One such cultural belief is the presumption that education is more important, and therefore a priority for boys alone. By contrast, a girl's job is commonly thought to consist of domestic tasks associated with cooking and serving in the house. As a consequence of these traditional ideas, many CASs' parents neither support nor motivate their girls in their efforts to attend school. Some parents even actively stop girls from attending school, especially when the family faces economic hardship (Quintiliani, 2009; Taylor et al., 2012).

Another cultural belief affecting the education of female CASs is the fear by many parents that without the accompaniment of a family member, girls cannot be properly socialized, and therefore, risk having sexual relationships before marriage. These misperceptions have resulted in a situation whereby girls in Cambodia are four times less likely than boys to attend high school, and five times less likely to attend college (World Bank, 2013b), even though the Cambodian Constitution guarantees equal educational opportunity to individuals without regard to gender.

Given this cultural context, it should not be surprising that in order to achieve equality, special measures need to be taken, in order to fulfill current needs and overcome past discrimination affecting the educational prospects of girls and women. These special measures include language access; specific training for parents, to navigate an often-complex school system, to participate in school activities, and to help their children succeed academically; scholarships for CASs; community education to change attitudes, which denigrate girls' education; and leadership programs for CA girls. Such measures are temporary and will come to a conclusion when equal status is achieved. Ultimately, equality should exist not only in law, but also in reality. According to Kranich (2001), inequity occurs both when people are excluded overtly, and when more implicit forces such as a lack of the knowledge, income, equipment, or training results in low levels of access to public services. Fairness demands remedies to redress traditional injustices that have long prevented or diminished access in the first place (Kranich, 2001).

A famous Cambodian tale related well to this notion of inequality was the story of a flamingo that invited friends to a party. The story was summarized as the flamingo

invited friends to a party. These friends included turtles, tigers, elephants, rabbits, snakes, deer, monkeys, and birds. After the arrival of guests and a brief welcome, the flamingo said courteously, ‘dear friends, please enjoy food that I especially prepared for all of you”. The foods were put into small longneck pots, a little bigger than the beak of a flamingo. Only the flamingo and other birds, which have long and appropriate beaks for such pots, could eat. The other animals returned home quietly with empty stomachs and growing anger. The flamingo wondered why most friends did not eat and returned unhappily, too.” In this story, all guests were given the equal opportunity to eat. Many of them, like the elephants, tigers, deer, snakes, turtles, and rabbits could not eat because they did not have beaks to do so. It was an unfair distribution of food because differing natural conditions had excluded some of the animal guests from eating, the result that was intended to be enjoyed equally.

Members of international communities can relate well to the wisdom in functionalist theory, especially with regards to the concept of inequality and the remedies necessary–including special measures, rewards, and motivation–to address that inequality. Social inequality and stratification frequently lead to a meritocracy based on ability (Merton, 1938, 1957, 1968). Social structure conditions can contribute to social inequality, as evidenced by differing educational attainments, wealth, poverty, and occupational levels. Functionalism assumes the need for equality of opportunity, equality of access to the opportunity, and equality of result (EOCAG, 2014; ERT, 2007; Freeman & Goldblatt, 2015; Government of Canada, 2011; IWRAW-AP, 2001; Kranich, 2001). Thus, the study will investigate numerous relationships, including the one between

educational opportunity and outcome, and the one between academic achievement among CASs and parental factors such as income, education, and gender characteristics at home.

Although functionalism was a popular theory among American sociologists during the 1940s and 1950s, it has been criticized by sociologists for the way in which it characterized norm and value creation, for the way it saw the creators of those norms and values, and for its supposed neglect of the negative effects of social order. An Italian theorist, Gramsci (1929–1935), argued that functionalism justified the status quo and the process of cultural supremacy that maintained it. To be fair, early functionalism did not support an active role in changing existing social conditions, even when change could benefit society (Gramsci, 1929–1935).

Equality of opportunity within the strain theory, an extension of functionalism, has been used as the theoretical foundation for various studies. An early social science study on equality of educational opportunity was the Coleman Report published by the U.S. government in 1996 (Coleman et al., 1966). It has been recognized as the first landmark piece of scientific research commissioned by Congress to inform educational policy. It documented the availability of equal educational opportunities in U.S. public schools for Caucasians and for ethnic minority groups such as AAs, Puerto Ricans, Mexican–Americans, Asian Americans, and American Indians. One of the four RQs asked was whether U.S. public schools offered equal educational opportunities in terms of students' socioeconomic backgrounds, parental education, and students' academic aspirations. Coleman et al. examined the input and output produced by the relationship

between parents' income and children's academic success, something it measured using standardized achievement tests.

The Coleman Report's sample consisted of approximately 650,000 participants, including students, teachers, principals, and superintendents from 4,000 public schools. The researchers concluded that families, not schools, made the difference (Gamoran & Long, 2006). Only a small relationship was found between school resources and students' academic success. However, a significant relationship was found between a student's educational outcome and his or her family's socioeconomic status, income, education, and other home characteristics. This finding shaped school desegregation and busing policies (Coleman et al., 1966).

The study not only led to school desegregation and busing, but it helped to clarify the concept of equal opportunity (Coleman et al., 1966). Previously, equality was perceived as an equal distribution of input (or resources) to schools. Coleman et al. reconceptualized equality, seeing it as a measure of results, which were highly dependent on differing individual inputs such as unequal backgrounds, and dissimilar abilities. A striking contemporary example of inequality relates to the measurement of academic achievement by children, who are from Cambodian families speaking Khmer and children from Hispanic families speaking Spanish. Equal opportunity was assumed to extend to children from various social backgrounds in the NCLB (2002), and the CRA (1964). Specifically, NCLB (2002) promotes a value–added approach to achieving equal educational opportunity; this takes into consideration the initial differences present among students (Gamoran & Long, 2006). Language difference is clearly at play here.

All in all, NCLB (2002) presents a more advanced understanding of equal opportunity because it suggests that greater benefits should be directed towards disadvantaged students, in this case, students who are English language learners.

Functionalism was selected as the theoretical guide for this study for four main reasons. First, the theory recognizes that every part of a society fulfills important roles in developing a healthy society. CAs are part of Long Beach society and account for approximately 20,000 members of the Long Beach population, which totals 469,428. As such, they play a potentially important role in making Long Beach a healthy community. Second, functionalist theory supports the goal of equal opportunity as conceived by equal results; therefore, it suggests that all residents have adequate means to achieve personal expectations, which include educational goals. Looking again at the status quo, one finds that academic achievement among CASs is the second lowest in the United States (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010a; Uy, 2011), even though the CRA (1964) promotes equal educational opportunity, regardless of race, color, or national origin. It is clear that CASs contribute to Long Beach in intended and unintended ways due to their educational attainment, or lack thereof. Third, functionalist theory suggests that education serves many important societal functions (Durkheim, 1956). Education socializes children and adults, and prepares them for a productive life in society. Education provides occupational training, especially in industrialized societies like the United States. Unlike in less complex societies such as the one existing in the United States before the 1900s, a time when most jobs and training were passed from parents to children, the majority of jobs in the contemporary United States require workers with at least a high school

education. Moreover, many professions require a college or postgraduate degree. Education clearly serves this function. Fourth, functionalist theory recognizes inequality based on race, gender, and country of origin as causal factors for strain theory, a dysfunctional or destabilized society. In a developed world, individuals need to be rewarded or motivated, just as they need to have true access to the means by which society's educational expectations may be met (Merton, 1957).

Unfortunately, many CASs live in poverty and receive inadequate school support from parents who have minimal education, limited language proficiency, and a lack of knowledge about the U.S. educational system (Wright & Boun, 2011). This study, therefore, will examine the relationship between the socioeconomic means of CASs' parents and their children's academic performance. Again, functionalism assumes that a chief factor for establishing social harmony and stability is education, for education undergirds equality in opportunity and in outcomes by assisting individuals to achieve societal expectations for educational attainment. Finally, functionalism also assumes the need to have adequate and appropriate means to realize the dream of a healthy society.

History of Cambodian Americans in the United States

CAs, a relatively new ethnic group in American society, are vulnerable because of previous atrocious experiences faced through genocide, civil war, migration, and economic hardship. Adapting to the new life and culture of the United States has presented new challenges, but these refugees are survivors. The majority of the upper and middle class Cambodians, including the educated, rich and poor, former teachers, civil servants, and military personnel were extra–judicially killed during the genocidal Khmer

Rouge regime (Yale University Cambodian Genocide Program, 2015). An estimated 1.7 million persons, encompassing 21% of the country's population, were murdered during the Genocide (Yale University Cambodian Genocide Program, 2015, p.1).

In 2010, there were 276,667 people of Cambodian descent living in the United States, an increase of approximately 70,000 (34.3%) since 2000 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010a, p. 15). Among CAs, 231,616 (84%) identified as Cambodian alone, and 45,051 were of mixed identities (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010a, p. 14). There were 111,646 CAs naturalized as U.S. citizens, and 140,886 CAs born in the United States (SEARAC, 2011, p. 9). For majority of CAs, 52.1% were female and 47.9% were male (SEARAC, 2011, p. 6).

The CAs' population is concentrated in the states of CA and Massachusetts. According to SEARAC (2011), until 1975, a mere 4,600 Cambodians lived in the United States. The majority were children of upper–income families or persons receiving government–funded scholarships to attend school. After the fall of Cambodia to the communist Khmer Rouge regime, another 2,700 Cambodians escaped the killing fields and found refuge in the United States between 1975 and 1979 (SEARAC, 2011). After the Khmer Rouge was overthrown in 1979 and until the end of the Vietnamese occupation and resultant war in 1992, a total of 137,744 Cambodian refugees immigrated to the United States (Bunte & Joseph, 1992; SEARAC, 2011, p. 7). Other Cambodians, principally, immigrants and some refugees, came to the United States after 1992, the year the wars ended.

Cambodian refugees were placed into various towns and cities throughout the United States so that they could quickly integrate into the American culture and economy. However, many Cambodians soon migrated to the other States where the climate was similar to that in Cambodia, or to places, their relatives and friends were located, where jobs were available, or where higher government benefits were being offered (Bunte & Joseph, 1992). As a result, the U.S. Census Bureau (2010a) found thousands of CAs living in metropolitan areas (Pfeifer, 2010), with 37% of all Cambodians living in CA, 10% in Massachusetts, and 8% in the state of Washington (See Table 1).

Table 1

Cambodian Americans in Selected Geographic Areas

Population	Metropolitan Areas	State
44,522	Los Ángeles, Long Beach, Santa Ana	CA
24,528	Boston, Cambridge, Quincy	MA–NH
19,240	Seattle, Tacoma, Bellevue	WA
13,000	Philadelphia–Camden–Wilmington	PA–NJ–DE
12,557	Stockton	CA
8,580	San Francisco, Oakland, Fremont	CA

According to the 2012 U.S. Census Bureau and the 2015 WHIAAPI's Key Facts and Figures, CAs have lived in economic and educational inequality compared to the

broader U.S. and Asian populations. More than 100,000 Cambodians lived in CA (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010a), with approximately 20,000 residing in Long Beach (KGA, 2011, p.6). Most Cambodians arrived in the United States without any resources since the Khmer Rouge had confiscated their properties (Needham & Quintiliani, 2007). Furthermore, little belongings left from the Khmer Rouge were further destroyed by a Vietnamese invasion, civil war, and escaping to the refugee camps.

Table 2

Demographics of CAs

Demographics	Cambodian (thousands)	Asian (millions)	United States (millions)
Population	256,956.0	15.5	307.0
Poverty	20.8	11.8	13.2
Unemployed	6.8	3.5	4.2
No high school diploma	35.2	14.4	15.0
High school diploma	23.3	16.3	28.5
Some college education	24.1	20.5	28.8
Bachelor's degree	13.1	29.3	17.50
Graduate or professional degree	4.2	19.5	10.2

Consequently, most Cambodians arrived in the United States with only the clothes on their backs (Chan, 2004; Needham & Quintiliani, 2007, 2011; Quintiliani, 2009). Furthermore, they sustained terrible trauma, either through the genocide, the foreign

occupation, family disappearances, widespread political suppression, civil war, or living as refugees. According to Marshall, Schell, Elliott, Berthold, and Chun (2005), Wagner et al. (2013), and Wright and Boun (2011), Cambodians living in Long Beach often suffer lingering mental health issues, including posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and depression that is due to the violence and starvation they experienced during the genocide. Approximately 60% to 90% of Cambodians cope with PTSD (Marshall, Berthold, Schell, Elliott, & Chun, 2006, p. 3).

According to a quantitative survey conducted by Wong et al. (2011), Cambodian refugees have exceedingly poor health when compared to other Asians and members of the general population. In the survey, nearly 90% of Cambodian respondents rated their health status as “poor” or “fair,” compared to only 18% of Asians and 19% of all CA adults (Wong et al., 2011, p. 5). Similarly, high is the nearly 70% of CAs who are eligible for disability compared to 12% of Asians, and 17% of all CA adults (Wong et al., 2011, p. 5). This widespread disability is the result of experiences ranging from dangerous exposure to starvation, physical injury, infection, to the psychological suppression of traumatic life events encountered during wars and while living in refugee camps (Chan, 2004; Wong et al., 2011, p. 6). These psychological and physical illnesses intruded on the daily functioning capacities of the refugees who were studied, and on their spouses and their Cambodian children (Chan, 2004; Quintiliani, 2009).

Cambodians have suffered in silence, refusing to talk about the genocide or the PTSD that plagues them (Wong et al., 2006). This refusal has resulted from structural barriers, such as the high cost of treatment (80%), language deficiencies (66%), and the

lack of knowledge about where to obtain mental health services (24%). Compounding these issues is the widespread misunderstanding that receiving psychotherapy for mental health is an indication of mental illness, which will lead to discrimination by their own community members (15%; Wong et al., 2006, p. 4). Marshall et al.'s (2006) work did not indicate whether these Cambodians had access to adequate and quality healthcare services, or whether or not they were able to find mental health practitioners who understood their unique circumstances and needs. According to Wagner et al. (2013), the high level of persistent trauma symptoms is significantly associated with an increased risk for disease and decreased access to healthcare services (p. 1071).

Cambodians have suffered a greater loss of private and public resources than the other Southeast Asian ethnic groups (Needham & Quintiliani, 2007; Nguy, 1999). For instance, Cambodian, Laotian, Hmong, and Vietnamese experienced the same war waged by the United States against communism. Unlike other Southeast Asian groups who only experienced the American–led war against communism, Cambodians had to live through the genocide, the Vietnamese invasion and occupation, and a bloody civil war. As a consequence of the genocide, many educated Cambodians were killed outright; educational institutions were shuttered, private property confiscated, and the nation's public institutions and infrastructure demolished. For these reasons, Cambodian refugees and their children, who are coping with loss and living with almost unimaginable trauma, deserve special treatment and services, ranging from education to healthcare, in order that they might recover, succeed, and become fully integrated within American society.

In addition to scars and trauma from the genocide and wars, CA youth encountered increased community violence and serious discrimination through racial profiling (Chhuon & Dosalmas et al., 2010; KGA, 2011; Quintaliani, 2009; Wright & Boun, 2011). Although the refugees received public assistance and job training for low–income jobs, they were resettled in different urban areas around the United States for faster integration (Hing, 2005; Leitner Center, 2010; Marshall et al., 2005; Needham & Quintiliani, 2007). Many of them were resettled in impoverished urban cities that had high rates of crime, gang violence, and drugs (Drennan, 2014, August 19; Hing, 2005; Leitner Center, 2010; Marshall et al., 2005; Needham & Quintiliani, 2007; Wright & Boun, 2011). According to Quintiliani (2009), a large number of Cambodian refugees were living in contiguous census tracts with poverty rates ranging from 30–40% in Long Beach (p. 136). In these same census tracts, 20% or more of Cambodian refugee families were welfare recipients (p. 136). The Cambodian refugees and their American–born children were no strangers to community violence throughout Long Beach (Marshall et al., 2005). Additionally, Cambodian parents had not been given the necessary tools to bring up their children in cities where poverty and crime were rampant, and where the dominant culture was completely different from that of Cambodia (Hing, 2005).

Sadly, many Cambodian youth have faced discrimination and harassment by other ethnic minority groups (Chhuon & Dosalmas et al., 2010; KGA, 2011; Leitner Center, 2010; Wright & Boun, 2011). According to the KGA (2011), 56% of 500, second generation Cambodian youth who participated in a survey, reported that they had faced severe discrimination in many aspects of their lives. This, in turn, impacted their school

attainment, access to economic security, and life in the often–unsafe neighborhoods of Long Beach (p. 3). Cambodian youth also report disquieting levels of racial profiling by law enforcement. Approximately 73% of these youths faced racial profiling, while another 39% were stopped by law enforcement, 38% were pulled over, 23% were arrested, 21% were taken to a police station, and 16% were physically injured during their encounters (KGA, 2011, p. 4).

Violence, discrimination, and profiling have isolated Cambodian youth. They needed support systems; so many of them were forced to create their own support system by banding together, to protect themselves. In one notable example, Cambodian youth who did not know (Drennan, 2014, August 19) or trust the law joined together in schools and communities, for protection against the Mexican gangs running rampant throughout Long Beach (Needham & Quintiliani, 2007). Unfortunately, tensions between ethnic groups brought about the involvement of law enforcement officers. These incidents often turn into criminal convictions, which have immigration consequences — namely deportation (Leitner Center, 2010).

Between 2009 and 2013, there were an average of 120 Cambodian refugee youth deported to Cambodia annually (McClatchy, 2013, July 8), a place they left since they were infants, or born in refugee camps (Drennan, 2014, August 19; Leitner Center, 2010; Wright & Boun, 2011), while about 2,000 more were on the deportation list (McClatchy, 2013, July 8). Most of them neither speak Khmer nor knew about Cambodia (Hing, 2005; Leitner Center, 2010; McClatchy, 2013, July 8). The deportation has been carried out since the signing of the Memorandum between the United States and Cambodian

governments for deportation in 2002 (United States of America and Royal Government of Cambodia, 2002). Six returnees committed suicide between 2002 and 2010 (Leitner Center, 2010).

Deportation is also an example of racial profiling experienced disproportionately by CA families. In fact, one in three youth knew someone in their families or communities who has been deported, or were facing deportation (KGA, 2011, p. 4). The implications of the deportation of Cambodian youth leads to the new tragedy of the separation of family members who survived the genocide, from their spouses and U.S. born children, not to mention the pain inflicted upon the entire community which watches helplessly (Leitner Center, 2010, p. *i*). Human Rights Watch (2009) reported that an estimated 77% of all deported cases in the United States were for committing nonviolent crimes or for no crime at all. Many of the Cambodian deportees are nonviolent and/or mentally ill offenders (Human Rights Watch, 2009). In this way, Cambodian youth, who are not naturalized, are subject to more severe discrimination, compared to their natural–born American counterparts, even when convicted for the exact same crime. It is the CA youth who ends up being deported and permanently separated from family. Moreover, all of this is in addition to the systemic discrimination, which befalls all people of color who experience failing schools, material poverty, racial profiling, and mass incarceration (SEARAC, n. d.). Multiple articles have challenged the morality of the deportation of Cambodian refugees who came to the United States with their parents to escape war and persecution (Drennan, 2014, August 19; Drew, 2014, May 9; Hing, 2005; Human Rights Watch, 2009; Leitner Center, 2010). Moreover, many ethical experts noted the

fundamental conflict between U.S. policy and international law through the treatment of refugees.

Literature Review on Key Variables

The following provides a comprehensive review of the scholarly literature related to the key research factors to be addressed in this study. These factors include parents' education, household income, parents' birthplace, parents' gender, the children's gender, and the children's age at immigration to the America. This review focused on a discussion of the knowledge regarding these factors and points out gaps in the literature.

The Link Between Parents' Education and Children's Academic Success

Research has frequently supported the relationship between parental education and a child's academic achievement. According to Coleman et al. (1966), authors of the largest study looking at the equality of educational opportunities, family background affects students' academic achievement more than school–related factors. This central finding led to the creation of laws and policies. These policies brought about racial desegregation and school busing, aimed at lessening the role played by family income differences, which were broadly influencing students' academic success. Educated parents are more likely to ensure their children's education by providing direct guidance and support (Broucker & Lavallee, 1998; Chalasani, 2007; Chhuon & Hudley et al., 2010; Stricht & Armstrong, 1994; Viadero & Johnston, 2000). Chalasani (2007) concluded:

> Better educated parents . . . spend more time with their children than the less educated. Although parents at all levels of education have increased their time

with children over the years, the better educated have made relatively larger gains. (p.93)

Sticht and Armstrong (1994) suggested that the more highly educated the parents, the greater the chance that their children would succeed in school, complete high school, and attend college. Viadero and Johnston (2000) noted, "Factors outside school such as parental education, can predict school success of their children" (p.3). Broucker and Lavallee (1998) discovered that the higher the education of the parents, the more likely that the children would pursue advanced studies. They further concluded that a family member's achievement at school and work often plays a role in a child's educational achievement since family members provide a supportive environment at home and pay for the higher education of children. Similarly, Schaller et al. (2006) revealed that less educated parents placed their children at risk for lower educational attainment. Other researchers suggested that the lack of parental educational resources contributes in a general way to low learning rates among children (Akiba, 2010; Chhuon & Hudley, 2010; Chhuon & Hudley et al., 2010; Le, 2014; Ngo & Lee, 2007; Tang et al., 2013; Uy, 2011, 2013).

The lack of English proficiency among CA parents affects their communication with schools and their children's educational accomplishment (Glick & White, 2003; Nguy, 1999; Niedzwiecki & Duong, 2004; Tang et al., 2013; Uy, 2008; Wright & Boun, 2011). About 39% of Cambodians in the United States lack English fluency (U.S. Census, 2010a). According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2013), 74% of Cambodians speak a language other than English, compared to 21 % of the total U.S. population (p. 5). Nguy

(1999) studied obstacles to the educational success of CASs in San Diego High School, finding that CASs were less successful academically, compared to Vietnamese American children, even though both ethnic groups were Southeast Asian refugees (Nguy, 1999, p. 1). Cambodian students exhibited greater rates of limited English proficiency (77.8%) in comparison to Vietnamese students (56.1%, p. 7).

Many CASs' parents never received a formal U.S. education and even lack the ability to read or write in their native language (Chalasani, 2007; Chhuon & Hudley et al., 2010; Ngo & Lee, 2007; Tang et al., 2013; Uy, 2008). As noted before, the most educated Cambodian males were killed during years of "The Killing Fields" leaving the educational responsibility of many CASs in the hands of mothers, who as female children were traditionally barred from attending school. More than half of the CA parents are single mothers (Chhuon & Hudley et al., 2010; Ngo & Lee, 2007). Approximately 33.5% of single CA parents lived below the poverty line (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010a). For all these reasons, many CA parents need basic instruction in listening, speaking, reading, and writing to improve English proficiency such that they might be able to assist their children with homework in the same way that other parents frequently do.

The previously cited studies were conducted with different ethnic groups, particularly Hispanics and AAs. No study was found, which looked at the relationships between parents and CASs. This was despite the fact that the aforementioned studies purported to look at students who were underachieving in public schools (Akiba, 2010; Chhuon & Hudley, 2010; Uy, 2011). Accordingly, researchers have not investigated the relationship between parental resources and academic achievement by CASs (Akiba,

2010; Chhuon & Hudley et al., 2010; Niedzwiecki & Duong, 2004; Uy, 2008; Wright & Boun, 2011) despite significant literature that points to a causal relationship between parental education levels and child's performance in school (Broucker & Lavalle, 1998; Chalasani, 2007). Furthermore, the problem continues to grow, as there was a 34% growth rate in the Cambodian population in the years between censuses of 2000 and 2010 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010a).

Educational policies meant to address ethnic minority deficits have simply failed to recognize CASs as a unique ethnic minority group. Instead, these policies regard CASs as members of a broader Asian "model minority" known for highly achieving in school (Chhuon & Dosalmas et al., 2010; Le, 2014; Ngo & Lee, 2007; Nguy, 1999; SEARAC, 2011). This aggregation of CASs into a broad Asian American monolith often conceals the limited academic success rates of CASs (Chhuon & Hudley et al., 2010; Olsen, 1997; Tang & Kao, 2012). Indeed, CAs have had the second lowest rate of educational attainment of any group, when compared with the educational attainment of Asian populations, and the CA population at large (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010b). Approximately 12% of CAs, 21% of Vietnamese Americans, 12% of Hmong Americans, and 8% of Laotian Americans earned a bachelor's degree compared to 19% of the total U.S. population and 32% of the Asian population. Yet policymakers have not advanced affirmative policies to accelerate equal education opportunities for CASs. This is despite the fact that the CRA *(*1964) and NCLB (2002) both promoted education for all, regardless of race, ethnicity, color, nation of origin, religion, gender, disability, or age.

Ultimately, this aggregation has simply led to widespread belief that CASs does not require any additional support.

The White House Executive Order No. 12729 on Educational Excellence for Hispanics (U.S. Department of Education, 1990) underscored the importance of the relationship between parental participation and the academic achievement of children, a concept that subsequent presidents have endorsed. President Obama renewed Executive Order No. 12729 in 2012 when he promoted education for AAs as Executive Order No. 13621, allocating funds, creating concerted mechanisms, and providing special measures to support and accelerate education in that underserved community (U.S. Department of Education, 2012a). Similar efforts and policies would be helpful for improving education among CASs, and for increasing their college graduation rates (Foster & Jivan, 2009).

The lack of knowledge among parents about the local school system prevents them from helping their children's school assignments and other supportive activities (Alkiba, 2010; Wright & Boun, 2011). Parents need to understand the American educational system and to become educational advocates for their children in the United States because school systems in the United States are different from what they were used to back in Cambodia (SEARAC, 2013b). Although the education system in the United States is decentralized such that most of the policy power rests at the state level, the federal government has nevertheless tried to improve education outcomes through various measures. For example, the federal government imposes some requirements upon states or school districts if they are to receive federal funds. In short, they must comply with federal mandates or lose the education funds (UNESCO, 2006). Not incidentally, it

was also the federal government that was first to call for widespread reform of American education by creating the National Commission on Excellence in Education, in 1981. The Commission was to report on the quality of education in America. In 1983, the Commission issued its landmark report, *A Nation Risk.* The report suggested a systemic reform was necessary to save American schools. Such reform efforts included strengthening the requirements for graduation, setting more rigorous and measurable standards, lengthening the time kids spent in school, and improving teaching pedagogy and professionalism (UNESCO, 2006).

The enactment of the Improving America's Schools Act of 1994, which reauthorized the ESEA of 1965, contained some significant developments. This legislation includes Title I, the federal government's largest program providing educational assistance to disadvantaged children. It also includes career development, technical assistance, safe and drug–free schools, community initiatives, and school equity endeavors that focus federal funds in high poverty areas. The legislation also requires states to develop high–quality content and performance standards and assessments, to qualify for federal funding. Nevertheless, it emphasizes local control and flexibility, in exchange for accountability. It shifts the focus away from remedial programs and emphasizes overall school performance (UNESCO, 2006).

Reauthorizing the ESEA and its extension, the NCLB (2002), was a pivotal moment in educational reform that was directed toward improving student achievement, and changing the norms prevalent throughout American education. The improvement has focused on accountability (for measurable results), research–based instruction (for best

practices), expanded parental alternatives (because such involvement is correlated to academic success) and expanding local control and flexibility that appeased "small government" conservatives (UNESCO, 2006). However, the implementation of NCLB has been regarded as a punishing tool rather than an empowering tool for teachers and school administrators. The biggest disappointment is that it seems, at least under some circumstances, to be discouraging teachers from working with the lowest–performing students. Other unintended consequences such as the refusal to admit low–performing students to schools that are otherwise doing well, exist (UNESCO, 2006).

To correct the weaknesses in NCLB, President Obama asked Congress to reauthorize ESEA through issuing a "Blueprint for Reform" in March 2010 (U.S. Department of Education, 2010a). The goals of the Blueprint were to "accelerate student's achievement, close achievement gaps, and inspire our children to shine so that America will again have the highest fraction of college graduates in the world, by 2020" (U.S. Department of Education, 2010a, 2015b, p. A–1). The goals sought to achieve these ends by granting autonomy and innovative flexibility to school districts. This flexibility, in turn, would allow those districts to find new means by which to improve student achievement and prepare students for college or career readiness (U.S. Department of Education, 2010a).

That second part–career readiness–should not be overlooked. In fact, the Blueprint gives states and districts considerable leeway to initiate novel programs, to give students the skills they need to compete for 21st–century jobs (U.S. Department of Education, 2010a). One such program is ProComp, piloted in Denver, Colorado, between

2003 and 2010. This program provided bonuses to teachers based on their "value added," which was measured by adjusting test scores of students in the light of their previous achievement and demographic characteristics (UNESCO, 2006). To date, 41 states have received federal funding for innovative flexibility from the NCLB. Bringing the discussion back to the unique challenges of CASs education, one can see that this flexibility of reform should benefit CASs because as an ethnic minority group, they have been struggling mightily in education and have always been left out of more top–down reform efforts. Hopefully, the next extension of ESEA, which is expected to be reauthorized in the fall of 2015, will do more so that CASs can fulfill the American dream of equal educational opportunity (National Education Association, 2015).

As a general rule, the better educated the parents are, the better educated the children will be. Understanding this relationship is important because it provides a basis for looking at the pivotal role, played by parental resources in generating academic success of their children (Chhuon & Hudley, 2010; Uy, 2008). Without a change in policy that reflects what scholars are now learning with respect to academic achievement and parental resources, the school performance of disadvantaged students–CASs chief among them–will likely remain far below average.

Parents' Income and Children's Academic Success

The children of individuals of low socioeconomic status do not receive the education that children who are more affluent receive (Bankston, 2015; Coleman et al., 1966; deCastro et al., 2011; NCSE, 2015; Viadero & Johnston, 2000). Coleman et al. (1966) used *MLR* analysis to study the relationship between ethnic minority parental

factors and a child's academic performance, finding that family dynamics are highly linked to school success. Likewise, Viadero and Johnston (2000) concluded that factors outside of school such as household income, predicted academic success with remarkable consistency. Other researchers discovered that the lack of adequate parents' income negatively influences learning (Akiba, 2010; Chhuon & Hudley, 2010; Chhuon & Hudley et al., 2010; Ngo & Lee, 2007; Tang et al., 2013; Uy, 2011). Specifically, Dyo and Moore (2003) noted that Cambodians living in Los Angeles County were even more socioeconomically challenged than their ethnic minority neighbors. Tellingly, Cambodians had the lowest median household income ($17,343), the lowest per capita income ($4,639), the lowest college graduation rate (5%), and the lowest home ownership rate (13%) among groups studied. Therefore, a lack of financial resources is suspected as contributing to the poor academic achievement among CASs.

And of course, material circumstances have not changed for CASs since the study by Dyo and Moore (2003). By 2010, 24% of CA families lived in poverty in CA, compared to 13.2% of Vietnamese, 14.5% of Laotians, and 10.2% of the total population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2006; SEARAC, 2009, p. 1). Economic resources were notably scarce for CA families (Chalasani, 2007; Chhuon & Hudley, 2010); thus, since family income largely determined the schools that children attended, it was easy to see how CASs would naturally find themselves in underfunded, urban schools that provide low–quality education.

Recognizing both the inequality of educational achievement, and the importance of equal education opportunity, which lie at the core of American national identity and

economic power, some notable efforts have been made to address manifest problems. Much has been done via ESEA programs when it comes to the poorest performing schools. For instance, both the Bush and Obama administrations tried to increase equal opportunity using targeted reforms. According to the U.S. Federal Government (2015), the efforts in 2007–2008 resulted, broadly in increased rates of educational achievement. Specifically, the national rate of high school graduation increased to the highest recorded level. Likewise, high school graduation among AAs increased five points and among Hispanics, eight points. Just as significant, there were declines in dropout rates for AAs, Hispanics, and low–income youth.

Such promising results have also been reported for earlier grades. According to the U.S. Federal Government (2015), the scores for math and reading, for fourth and eighth graders reached new highs in 2014 on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (p. 1). These positive changes were likely made possible through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, which provided critical formula grant programs for low–income and high–need students. It also furnished strategic investments to promote innovation and reform via programs such as Race to the Top (RTT), Investing in Innovation (i3), School Improvement Grants (SIG), and Promise Neighborhoods (U.S. Federal Government, 2015, p. 1).

The attendance and graduation of ethnic minority students in colleges has increased noticeably over the past few years, with 38% of AA students graduating in 2015, compared to 30% in 2000, and 32% of Hispanic students compared to 22% in 2000 (U.S. Federal Government, 2015). Much of this, no doubt, is the result of an increase in

federal investments for Pell Grants, college tax credits, and affordable loan repayment options, all of which allowed more students to afford college and graduate with a degree.

The U.S. Federal Government (2015) highlighted that all young people, specifically underserved poor, ethnic minority, and English language learning students, must have the opportunity to graduate from high school, prepare for college, and pursue a career. The reform measures included:

- Race to the Top–Equity and Opportunity: An "initiative centered on improving the academic performance of students in the nation's highest poverty schools" (U.S. Federal Government, 2015, p. 4).
- ESEA–Investing in Innovation Fund: A program to improve educational outcomes for students by developing, validating, and increasing effective practices (p. 4). ESEA accelerates achievement of students who are English learners and fosters meaningful parent and family engagement.
- Title I–The Career and College Readiness Student: A special education grant to states so that they maintain support for students from low–income families attending high–poverty schools (p. 4).
- 21st Century Community Learning Centers: A program to support competitive grants for states, local education agencies, nonprofit organizations, and local governmental entities for projects that provide the additional time, support, and enrichment activities needed to improve student achievement.
- Promise Neighborhoods: A program to provide federal funding to nonprofit, higher educational institutions and Indian tribes so that they can cooperate with

other state and federal institutions in combating the effects of poverty. This means improving education and life outcomes, from birth to college, on to their careers. The program seeks to provide effective achievement–oriented schools and strong systems of support to children and youth in poverty, so as to offer them the best hope for overcoming their circumstances and building a better life (U.S. Federal Government, 2015, p. 4).

- Statewide Longitudinal Data System: A program to support the integration of data on school–level finances, teacher and leader effectiveness, and academic achievement. This data can then be used to analyze links between the distribution of educational resources and student outcomes, with the overall goal of improving the effectiveness and productivity of our education system (U.S. Federal Government, 2015, p. 5).

Additionally, the Advancement Placement Incentive Program provides funds to eligible institutions to support activities that might increase the participation of low–income students in both pre–AP and AP courses and tests (U.S. Department of Education, 2012b, p. 46). Although strong efforts have been made by the federal government to partner with state governments and school districts to close inequality gaps, some groups such as CAs, Laotian Americans, and other Southeast Asian American ethnicities still struggle. Unfortunately, pervasive inequalities are often masked by their local categorization of the aforementioned groups as simply Asian (SARAC, 2013, p. 2), which is an overly homogeneous designation (Reyes, 2007). As a result of this overgeneralization (Olsen, 1997), these struggling groups are presumed to be performing

well and therefore do not receive any assistance (SEARAC, 2013a). Beyond this, there is the simple fact that Cambodian, Laotian, and other Southeast Asian American groups are comparatively small in number. Their struggles rarely stand out on achievement data sheets and are therefore overlooked. It is as if they are invisible (Olsen, 1997; Wright & Boun, 2011).

There is no disaggregated data available on the academic achievement of CASs and other Southeast Asian Americans, even at the school level of analysis. They are counted as Asians or others (SEARAC, 2013a; Wright & Boun, 2011). Thus, some structural changes in the next Federal Fiscal Year Budget (2016) should be made by relevant regulatory authorities at the federal level. First, schools and districts should be made to collect and report disaggregated data on the academic achievement of each Asian subgroup (SEARAC, 2013b, p. 2). Second, there should be increased investment in support for community–based organizations, to provide culturally appropriate academic and enrichment services to English language learners and to the parents of students who have or may soon dropout (SEARAC, 2013b, p. 2). Beyond policies related to the disaggregation of data, localities should develop partnerships with community–based organizations providing in–school and out–school services, because those organizations have already built significant relationships of trust with immigrant and refugee communities (SEARAC, 2013b, p. 2).

The research cited in this literature review supports the conclusion that the higher the parents' income, the better the children's educational prospects. This is largely due to the capacity of more affluent parents to pay for their children's education at all levels.

Federal and state governments have long recognized the link between parental income and a child's academic success, so they have developed special measures to address the inequality challenges endemic to low–income families. Notwithstanding all this laudable progress, CA parents and children have not benefited from the legislative and policy efforts unveiled so far, despite the fact that CASs are the disadvantaged ethnic minority group, with the single lowest group achievement rates (SEARAC, 2013b, p. 1).

The Relationship Between Gender and Academic Success

Researchers have found a correlation between students' academic success, which is number of academic years completed, and the gender of the parents and children (Chhuon & Hudley, 2011; Ngo & Lee, 2007; UNESCO, 2014; Uy, 2011). Similarly, UNICEF's information website (2015) states that educated women are more likely to raise healthy children and send them to school. When children are taught human rights and gender equality at school, they influence future generations. Educated girls and women help stop the cycle of poverty because they, themselves, have increased earning power. One year of secondary education for a girl correlates to a 25% increase in wages later in life. Educated females were also less likely to become drug users (UNICEF's information website, 2015, p. 1). However, females around the globe receive less education due to gender attribution.

Gender inequality refers to "any distinction or exclusion … which has the effect of impairing or nullifying the recognition … on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil, or … field" (UNOHCHR, 1979, Article 1). The Convention against Discrimination in

Education (UNESCO, 1960) defines *inequality in education* as "any distinction, exclusion, limitation or preference which, being based on race, color, gender, language . . . national or social origin, economic condition or birth, has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing equality of treatment in education" (Article 1). Similarly, the World Bank East Asia and the Pacific Regional Report (World Bank, 2012a) defined *gender equality* as "the extent to which men's and women's opportunities and outcomes are constrained or enhanced" (p. 4). The UNESCO (2014) defined gender equality as "inclusion of equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men and girls and boys" (p. 3). Full gender equality in education implies that "girls and boys are offered the same chances to go to school and enjoy teaching methods, curricula and academic orientation unaffected by gender bias (UNESCO, 2003, p. 1). Given all these definitions, it suffices to say gender educational equality is the equal rights pertaining to male and female individuals in education. This, in turn, manifests itself as equal responsibility, opportunity, and sharing of results among the genders.

Most countries are formally committed to eliminating gender inequality in elementary and secondary education by 2050, and to achieving gender parity by 2015 (UNESCO, 2003, p. 1). The Dakar Framework for Action (UNESCO, 2000), the Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action (UNEGEEW, 1995a, 1995b), and Millennium Development Goals (UNGA, 2000) all contain this commitment and specific national education targets set by governments. The main legal frameworks for gender equality in education are the Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (UNOHCHR, 1979) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (United

Nations, 1989). These two frameworks guarantee the equality of education for males and females alike. These conventions are legally binding for the signatory states after ratification. Currently, 189 countries have ratified the Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (United Nations Treaty Collection, 2015a), and 196 countries have ratified CRC (United Nations Treaty Collection, 2015b). The United States is among a few countries that have not yet ratified both conventions. However, the United States signed both conventions as an "acceptance" or "acknowledgment," although it did not commit to complying with the legal framework due to its concerns about parental rights, and the unique circumstances of immigrant children.

Although the United States is not the signatory state to both conventions, it has recognized equal educational opportunity through its laws and policies since the 1960s when Title IX of the CRA of 1964 was instituted. This statute was meant to end various forms of discrimination, including gender discrimination in public education. Subsequently, several strategic plans were put into effect to promote gender equality. The Title IX of the Education Amendment in 1972 prohibits discrimination based on gender, in any federally funded educational program or activity. The subpart 21 of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 promotes gender equity in education throughout the United States, and promotes equity in education for females who suffer from multiple forms of discrimination based on gender, race, ethnic origin, limited English proficiency, disability, or age. The subpart 21 also promotes special administrative, financial, educational, and political measures to accelerate equality. Accordingly, this subpart is referred to as the "Women's Educational Equity Act of 2001" (U.S. Department of

Education, 2001). The Agency Performance Goals No. 4 of the Obama Administration Fiscal Year 2014–2018 Strategic Plan, ensure equity and effective educational opportunities for all students regardless of race, ethnicity, national origin, age, gender, disability, language, or socioeconomic status (U.S. Department of Education, 2011, 2014b). Therefore, one might say that the central purpose of U.S. public education is to guarantee equality of access and opportunity for all males and females, including minorities and the disabled (U.S. Department of Education, 2014b; UNESCO, 2008).

However, the simple fact is that the United States has improved educational equality only for some. There has been notable progress for AAs and Hispanics, but this has not been the case for Cambodians and Southeast Asian Americans. Much of this, as discussed, can be attributed to the fact that these ethnic groups have not been targeted to receive special assistance. Therefore, much work remains to be done to achieve full gender equity for CASs and other Southeast Asian Americans.

The majority (54%) of CAs are women (U.S. Census Bureau, 2013, p. 1). However, CA women are more at an educational disadvantage, compared to CA men, ages 25 and older. Only 62% of CA females are high school graduates or higher, and only 14% completed a bachelor's degree; while 72% of CA males have a high school diploma or higher and the 18% have earned a bachelor's degree (SEARAC, 2011, p. 11). Clearly, there is a gender disparity issue at play here.

According to Taylor et al. (2012), who studied 667 (300 males, 367 females) Cambodians living in Seattle, "men reported significantly higher levels of education, income, and English proficiency than women" (p. 5). This is true even though both

Cambodian males and females receive far less education, compared to the education received by the U.S. population at large. Indeed, more than 85% of U.S. males and females complete high school, and 30% of U.S. males and 30% of U.S. females complete a bachelor's degree (U.S. Census Bureau, 2013).

American females represent about 51% of the total U.S. population U.S. Census Bureau, 2013, p. 1); however, their enrollment in prekindergarten, elementary, and secondary education is less than boys' enrollment. In prekindergarten, for example, there were 46% girls compared to 54% boys; in elementary and secondary school, 49% of girls were enrolled compared with 51% of boys during the 2009–2010 school year (Office for Civil Rights, 2012, p. 1). Concerning student retention, girls represented 39% of students retained in all grades – 41% in elementary school, 36% in middle school, and 39% in high school – between 2009 and 2010 (Office for Civil Rights, 2012, p. 2). When looking at career and technical education during the fiscal year 2009–2010, women made up less than 25% of students in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM, Office for Civil Rights, 2012, p. 3). In postsecondary education, while 57% of females received a bachelor's degree, 63% received a master's degree, and 53% received a doctorate in 2009–2010, only 31% of females received postsecondary degrees or certificates in STEM fields (Office for Civil Rights, 2012, p. 4).

Gender inequality in education affects females worldwide. According to the World Bank (2012 b, 2013b), 93% of boys and 91% of girls graduate from primary school. But after primary school, the trends become markedly worse, as the gap between males and females widens. Boys in Africa and South Asia are about 1.55 times more

likely to complete secondary education than girls are (World Bank, 2014). Only 12% of young women and 20% of young men in Cambodia attend a university (World Bank, 2013b).

Reasons that girls and women lack access to school and do not complete a college education include poverty, ethnic minority status, early marriage and pregnancy, gender–based violence, and gender stereotypes that affect the status and role of women (Quintiliani, 2009; UNESCO, 2003, 2014, 2015b; World Bank, 2013b, 2014; Wright & Boun, 2011). Interestingly, the countries with the highest gender disparities also happen to be the countries with per capita incomes less than $1 a day (UNESCO, 2003). Clearly, economic development and gender equality go hand–in–hand World Bank, 2012b).

There are various obstacles to CA girls receiving an education, the chief of which is the social preference for sons to receive education when a family has limited resources. Quite simply, education is regarded as unimportant for girls (Ong, 2003; Pho & Mulvey, 2007). A woman's role is largely seen as a family caregiver, which reveals a "familism" that enforces an obligation to marry and care for other family members (Pho & Mulvey, 2007; Segal, 2002) and often to become pregnant (Tang & Kao, 2012; Uy, 2011).

According to Tang and Kao (2012), researchers who studied the intersection of ethnicity, gender, and education of CASs in an urban high school, some Asian parents had higher educational aspirations for their sons. Sons, they found, were under increased pressure to study diligently so as to earn high grades, for their parents expected them to be family breadwinners or leaders for the next generation. This study has its limits, however, because Tang and Kao (2012) studied only one specific Cambodian population

— a rather small sample of 16 members: 10 students, four teachers, and two school administrators. This sample size is, of course, too insubstantial to allow generalizations from its findings.

Some CA parents do not fully understand the importance of education as a means by which females pursue professional careers. Frequently, females are simply expected to be gentle, obedient wives and mothers (Tang & Kao, 2012). Some parents fear that adult males do not want to marry an educated CA daughter. They assume that such a woman would not be submissive enough to her husband, or that she would be too old to marry after having worked to complete a college education (Ngo & Lee, 2007; Uy, 2008). In a study regarding the educational experiences of Lao and Khmer high school students, a researcher found that the phenomenon of young girls dropping out of school to marry remains an issue among Cambodian and Laotian Americans (Uy, 2011). Similarly, Tang and Kao (2012) concluded that it was hard for girls to keep their study goals with any regularity because parents expected them to marry and care for the home and family. For its part, the World Bank (2013a) found that girls who completed primary and secondary educations have, on average, far fewer incidences of unwanted pregnancies and early marriage. According to the World Development Report on Gender Equality and Development, a society with greater gender equality in education is a society with a greater number of women who enjoy access to economic opportunities (World Bank, 2012b). These opportunities contribute to income growth, which lowers the incidence of poverty and yields better outcomes for the next generation.

In summary, the literature revealed that there was a significant relationship between gender and a girl's academic success. It also demonstrated that there are many negative effects of gender inequality perpetrated against daughters by their parents. This holds true not only in the United States, but also throughout the world. Moreover, researchers found a link between a girl's education and her success later in life. While we know those things, there is still much to learn about CA families and CASs in particular. As such, there is a need to collect disaggregated data about CASs. This will make for more empirical analysis, which will help us better understand the policy priorities we should be making in the future. After all, promoting gender equality for CASs and other Southeast Asian students in the United States is not only the right thing to do, morally, it is the only sensible thing to do economically.

Academic Success and Children's Age at Immigration to the United States

The age of students when they arrived in the United States was significantly related to academic success (Rojas, 2015). In CA, of the CASs who immigrated to the United States before the age of 6 years, 90% graduated from high school, 9% from a 2–year college, and 22% from a 4–year college. In comparison of students who came to the United States after the age of 6 years, only 67% graduated from high school, 8% from a 2–year college, and 14% from a 4–year college (p. 6). Moreover, among native born CAs, 85% graduated from high school, 7% from a 2–year college, and 27% from a 4–year college compared to the 59%, 7%, and 13%, respectively, of CASs who were born abroad. Taken together, the trend shows that the younger the age of immigration, the greater the likelihood of academic success (U.S. Census Bureau, 2008).

However, these statistics seemed to contradict the CA parents' general view that the more children have matured before moving to the United States, the more likely they are to be successful in education and a career. The idea seems to be related to the misapprehension that children who are born in (or grown up in) the United States lead easy lives and cannot cope with adversity. Grown children from Cambodia had clearly faced hardship abroad, so the relatively minor hardships in American schools ought to be more manageable. Given this seeming contradiction, future research is needed to fill the gap in the literature. Scholars need to clarify the links of causation so that parents, school administrators, teachers, service providers, and policymakers understand the unique needs and challenges of CASs. Whatever specific advantages and disadvantages exist, that pertain to either young or older age at immigration, it is obvious that both the first and the second generation CASs struggle to understand the school system and its policies for education (Tang et al., 2013; Wright & Boun, 2011). The first generation consists of at least the child plus an immigrant parent; the second generation includes a child born in the United States and at least one immigrant parent (Byun & Park, 2011). Most Cambodians in the United States are first– and second–generation Cambodians, having sought refuge in the United States for approximately 30 years, a relatively short time span for immigrant adjustment.

Parents' Birthplace and Children's Academic Success

Parents' birthplace (whether rural or urban) might be a determinant of a children's academic success since Cambodian parents from the capital or other urban areas are more likely to be socialized to appreciate education and professionalism. Parents from the city

are often better educated themselves, so they have a better understanding of government, school systems, and the importance of education, compared to parents who migrated from the rural areas of Cambodia. Rural parents generally have more experience farming and less experience in education or government services. For this reason, they do not typically understand the essence of education as well as their urban counterparts. Thus, the expectations for their children's academic achievement are often negligible. Cambodian communities often anecdotally conclude that the children who are unsuccessful in schools are those from rural areas. Based on Quintiliani (2009), some children were dropouts from schools due to their parents' limited financial and educational resources. In each of these cases, the interviewed parents confirmed that they came from rural areas of Cambodia where educational opportunities were limited or altogether nonexistent (Quintiliani, 2009, p. 137). Needham and Quintiliani (2007) and Wright and Boun (2011) confirmed that the refugees who came in the 80s, were mostly rural farmers with little to no formal education or English capacity. However, no prominent research exists on the link between rural parents and their children's academic success or lack thereof.

Other Factors Related to Children's Success in School

Although this study focuses on six predictor variables, namely, parents' income, parents' education, parents' gender, parents' birthplace, children's gender, and children's age at immigration to the United States, there are many potential predictors of academic success. Researchers have suggested that widely varying factors contribute to school success (Alkiba, 2010; Carranza et al., 2009; Chhuon & Hudley et al., 2010; Duran,

2002; Ngo & Lee, 2007; Rumbaut, 2008; Schaller et al., 2006; Tang et al., 2013; Uy, 2008). For instance, a study on immigrant Mexican mothers of young children in a Dallas early childhood intervention program, found that the child's school performance could progress if his or her parents — even if poorly educated themselves — demonstrated positive attitudes and supportive behaviors regarding school success (Schaller et al., 2006). The same report also noted that parent's daily pro–educational behaviors could overcome the lack of parental educational issue (Schaller et al., 2006). The same report claimed that those parents were able to motivate their children to pursue academic success by participating in that child's learning. Thus, low parental education does not necessarily mean low educational attainment. Instead, in this study, a positive attitude towards education – coupled with guidance on how to channel their positive attitudes towards the improvement of child learning – resulted in promising gains. Among other things, this program showed that good parental behaviors could be taught, as it provided instruction to mothers about mother–child interactions, playtime activities that teach developmental skills, and a mother's role as a child's first teacher.

Other studies found that parental support and involvement also produced positive academic results for at–risk students (Duran, 2002), lower socioeconomic families (Hong & Ho, 2005; National Center for Education Statistics, 2015), and minorities living in any environment (Fuentes, 2005). Henderson and Mapp (2002) noted that when parents were involved with their children's education, regardless of income or background, the child earned higher grades and test scores, enrolled in more advanced programs, passed classes and earned credits more often, attended school more regularly, had better social skills,

showed improved behavior, adapted well to school, graduated, and enrolled in postsecondary education at greater rates (p. 7).

In addition, Nguy (1999) suggested that Cambodian students lack a role model or mentor, as is often the case because educated family members were killed and surviving members were traumatized by war and violence. The research further concluded that Cambodians could "improve their academic success once they learn to adapt and adjust to living in America, like many other Asian groups have" (p. 11). Cambodians remember the teaching of Buddha, who is worshiped by about 96% of Cambodians (U.S. Department of State, 2013, p. 1), which stated that your success depends on your effort; God helps you only when you help yourself. This saying implies that students can be successful if they study hard by themselves. Hong and Ho (2005), who described a possible effect on a child's education is the child's attitude towards him or herself. Tang et al. (2013), who conducted a qualitative study regarding academic success and available social and/or cultural capital of CA college students, concluded that, "parents were very supportive of students to get higher education and sought to be engaged in the process" (p. 5). In reality, "these students seemed to struggle alone because parents lacked skills to support them with many details of education" (p. 5).

Chhuon and Dosalmas et al., (2010) and Seyfried and Chung (2002) revealed that a major component of a child's success is intrinsic motivation, which is instilled naturally when parents value education. Unfortunately, many parents of CASs hold modest academic expectations for their children (Carranza et al., 2009; Chhuon & Hudley et al., 2010; Ngo & Lee, 2007; Rumbaut, 2008; Uy, 2008). Not surprisingly, parental

networking with schools and the community also seems to play an important role in a child's academic success (Chhuon & Dosalmas et al., 2010; Kim et al., 2012; Wiseman, 2010). However, the lack of ethnic minority administrators and teachers working in schools has also affected the ethnic minority children's academic success (Chhuon & Dosalmas et al., 2010; Wright & Boun, 2011). Finally, Ngo and Lee (2007) and Wright and Boun (2011) suggested that a factor related to academic failure was an unsafe school environment within which racial discrimination and prejudice took place. Such environments are obviously not conducive to learning for any child, CA or not.

Summary and Conclusions

A broad scope of factors has been found which contributed to the academic success of children and adolescents (Chalasani, 2007; Chhuon & Hudley, 2010; Ngo & Lee, 2007; Nguy, 1999; Uy, 2011; UNESCO, 2015a, 2015b). This study focused on six primary predictor variables related to the parents' variables, along with the child–related factors believed to account for the substandard education received by CA children in America. public schools. According to Chhuon and Hudley (2010), CASs were "critically underserved in U.S. schools and under–researched in the literature" (p. 1). Most researchers have focused on Americans in general and a few ethnic minority groups. Therefore, the findings in the study would fill a gap in the literature, advance practices, and bring positive social change regarding the education of CA children.

Functionalism theoretical foundation was used as the lens for this study because it regarded a society as a combination of society values and structural institutions, and addressed how each of its parts contributed to stability. Functionalism recognized the

imperfect society, which was a clash between the values and behaviors due to environmental change. It called for adjustment and reward systems to promote substantive equality and society stability.

In Chapter 3, I will address the concise research design, rationales, and methodology. In this chapter, I will cover a restatement of the RQs and the purpose of study. In the methodology chapter, I will discuss the sample population, sampling and procedures, recruitment, data collection, instrument development, and data analysis. The threat to validity and ethical concerns will be reviewed at the end of this chapter as well.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

The purpose of this quantitative study was to identify determinants of academic success among CASs by examining the extent to which one or more of six predictor variables provided an explanation for the academic success of CASs. In addition, in this study I also explored the gender roles practicing in CA households that might have effects on CASs' education. Parents from the Cambodian ethnic group were studied because CASs have not excelled academically in U.S. public schools, ranking second lowest in academic performance among all ethnic groups in the United States (Nguy, 1999; Niedzwiecki & Duong, 2004; SEARAC, 2013a; Uy, 2011). In addition, due to scant research on the issue, studies regarding the discussed Cambodian populations are needed (Uy, 2011; Wright & Boun, 2011).

In this section, I will cover the research design, rationale, and elements of methodology used in this quantitative study. The role of the researcher, the instrument, threats to validity, and ethical concerns will also be described in order to produce a reliable conclusion from the data I collected in the study. I will also describe the data analysis methods to determine if there is significance between the predictor variables and the outcome variable from the data collected.

Research Design and Rationale

The outcome variable in this research was the academic success of CASs as measured by the number of school years completed. The six–predictor variables were parents' education, parents' income, parents' birthplace, parents' gender, the children's

gender, and the children's age at immigration to America. The continuous variables were parents' education, parents' income, and the children's age at immigration to America. The categorical variables were parents' birthplace, parents' gender, and the children's gender. I used correlation analysis to determine the magnitude and direction among relationships and the strength between predictor variables and the outcome variable (Campbell & Stantley, 1963).

I employed the quantitative method and a cross–sectional study design in this study. The quantitative method was reliable and objective for this study and allowed me to determine the description of patterns of relationships between academic success of CASs and the parents' and children's factors from generalizing a statistical finding (Bobbie, 1990; Frankfort–Nachmias & Nachmias, 2008; Hopkins, 2008). The quantitative method can also help identify factors that influenced an outcome (Frankfort–Nachmias & Nachmias, 2008; Rudestam & Newton, 2007). The statistical tests were applied because the quantitative method provides empirical data, which were in numeric form (Hopkins, 2008). The method expresses the relationship understudy with numbers (Rudestam &Newton, 2015). In this study, these included both descriptive statistics, such as means and medians of the studied population, and inferential information from the multiple regression correlation (Rudestam & Newton, 2015). Descriptive statistics enable researchers to organize data, summarize data, and describe collections of statistical observations, thereby reducing a large data set to a more manageable form (Frankfort–Nachmias & Nachmias, 2008). Inferential statistics allowed researchers to make a

conclusion on the main trend of relationship from the statistical findings (Rudestam & Newton, 2015).

The data from quantitative research provides important empirical information for business decisions whereas qualitative research provides valuable data, such as behavior patterns, for use in the design of a product (Madrigal & McClain, 2012). Statistical analysis lets a researcher derive important facts from research data, including preference trends, differences between groups, and demographics (Madrigal & McClain, 2012; Rudestam & Newton, 2015). I used a cross–sectional study instrumentation to collect descriptive and statistical data at one point in time. This was the data collection method most commonly used by social scientists to develop explanations about complex social phenomena and relationships among variables (Frankfort–Nachmias & Nachmias, 2008; Hopkins, 2008).

I used face–to–face interviews with 15–item interview questions to gather data for determining the relationship patterns among variables (Frankfort–Nachmias & Nachmias, 2008). A face–to–face interview enabled me access to the CASs' communities, which benefited from direct contact with 153 CA parents (Frankfort–Nachmias & Nachmias, 2008). This method has allowed researchers to carry out studies in natural and real–life settings (Frankfort–Nachmias & Nachmias, 2008). Face–to–face interviews can minimize nonresponsiveness and maximize the quality of data gathered (Frankfort–Nachmias & Nachmias, 2008; Groves, 1979; Hochstim, 1967). It helped to solicit information from CA parents, who are very reluctant in sharing their information with others. This was because CA parents were deterred by the genocide regime, which asked them to provide

their background information that was then used to kill almost 2 million individuals of the total population of 7 million (Yale University Cambodian Genocide Program, 2015). In addition, the main advantage of the face–to–face interview was the flexibility of the interview process because my presence as the interviewer made it easier for the respondent to either clarify answers or ask for clarification if necessary (Frankfort–Nachmias & Nachmias, 2008). I could also help parents who did not read both English and Khmer navigate the interview questions. Face–to–face interview provided advantages over self–completion methods, such as postal and online surveys because respondents tended to give their focused attention when an interviewer was presented (Rudestam & Newton, 2015).

I used two key RQs to investigate the relationship between parent's and children's factors and academic success among CASs. The following RQs and hypotheses guided the study:

RQ1: What were the significant determinants of academic success among CASs?

This first key RQ contained the following three subquestions:

1. Which, if any, variable(s) among the six parents' and the children's predictor variables—parents' gender, parents' birthplace, parents' education in Cambodia, parents' income, children's gender, and children's age at immigration to America—are determinants of academic success among CASs?

   $H_0$1: None of the six parents' and the children's predictor variables—parents' gender, parents' birthplace, parents' education in Cambodia, parents' income,

children's gender, and children's age at immigration to America—are determinants of academic success among CASs.

H_a1: One or more of the six parents' and children's predictor variables—parents' gender, parents' birthplace, parents' education in Cambodia, parents' income, children's gender, and children's age at immigration to America—are significant determinants of academic success among CASs.

2. Which, if any, variable(s) among the four parents' predictor variables—parents' gender, parents' birthplace, parents' education in Cambodia, and parents' income—are determinants of academic success among CASs?

   $H_0 2$: None of the four parents' predictor variables—parents' gender, parents' birthplace, parents' education in Cambodia, and parents' income—is a significant determinant of academic success of CASs.

   $H_a 2$: One or more of the four parents' predictor variables—parents' gender, parents' birthplace, parents' education in Cambodia, and parents' income is a determinant of academic success of CASs.

3. Which, if any, variable(s) among the two children's predictor variables—children's gender and children's age at immigration to America—is a significant determinant of academic success of CASs?

   $H_0 3$: None of the two children's predictor variables—children's gender and children's age at immigration to America—is a significant determinant of academic success of CASs.

H_a3: One or more of the two children's predictor variables—children's gender and children's age at immigration to America—are determinants of academic success of CASs.

I used this regression model to analyze data: EduSuccess = b_0 + b_1(ChildGender) + b_2(ParGender) + b_3(Parbirthplace) + b_4(ParIncome) + b_5(ChildAgeImmigrat) + b_6(ParEducation).

ParGender: Gender of parents (0 = male, 1 = female)

ChildGender: Gender of children (0 = male, 1 = female)

ParBirthplace: Birthplace of parents (0 = Phnom Penh, 1 = provinces)

ParIncome: Average Annual household income per family member (U.S. dollars)

ChildAgeImmigrat: Children's Age at immigration to America (number of years)

ParEducation: Highest grade completed (years)

I chose the six predictor variables to investigate. The investigation would address the belief among Cambodian community members that academic failure among CASs resulted from the lack of parents' and children's factors. In addition, I explored student–related and parent–related factors individually and in combinations, for their contribution to predicted academic success.

RQ2: What role did gender play in CASs' education?

The second key RQ contained the following six subquestions:

1. Was a son's education more important than a daughter's education if only one child could go to school?

2. Who is more likely to undertake household tasks (i.e., cooking, cleaning, washing, taking care of siblings, taking care of sick/elderly family members, and taking care of the house)?
3. Which gender would you be more comfortable in permitting to move away from home to study in a school far from home?
4. Which child was harder for you to permit going out socializing at night?
5. Who should marry earlier if a son and a daughter are the same age?
6. Would you like your son to marry a woman who attained a higher level of education than his own?

The results of this study represented an important contribution to the professional literature for a number of reasons. First, the findings from the study filled the gap in the professional literature on the relationship between educational achievement of CASs and the parents' and children's factors because there was no known research study on such relationship. Therefore, in this study I used parental responses to characterize the understudied, and perhaps, misunderstood relationship.

Second, my findings from this study could be used as an advocacy instrument to lobby policy makers, who have the authority to develop effective public policies, measures, mechanism, and resources to improve the educational achievement of CASs and to integrate those students into the U.S. educational system more successfully. The results of this study might also prove to be instrumental in raising the awareness of community leaders, social workers, students, grantors, and the general public regarding the unique challenges faced by CA parents who seek to support their children's

education. Finally, educators, school administrators, and social workers could utilize the study's findings as a guide to provide effective intervention services to parents and students in order to minimize the low educational achievement rates among CASs. In these ways, the results of this study might improve the lives of CASs academically, economically, and socially.

Methodology

Population

The study population consisted of parents of CASs living in Long Beach, CA, where the largest population of CASs resides in the United States and outside of Cambodia (Needham & Quintiliani, 2007). The population was selected because of their children having the least academic success in the United States although the NCLB of 2002 promotes equality in American education. This fact, however, remains invisible because CAs are commonly simply classified as "Asian" which places them among the so–called "model ethnic minority" who are usually regarded as excellent students (Chhuon & Hudley, 2010; Ngo & Lee, 2007). This assumption neglects the unique educational needs and lack of disaggregated data on the academic success of CAs. As a result, they have been excluded from federal and state programs aimed at improving the education of neglected groups. Due to a pervasive lack of academic underachievement, majority of CAs are living beneath the federal poverty line and relying upon public assistance. According to available qualitative researches, a principal cause for the low achievement of CASs was the lack of parents' resources.

The population of Long Beach is 469,428 of which 17,242 residents are Cambodians (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010a). There are approximately 4,450 households in Long Beach, a mean of 3.87 Cambodians per household (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010a). An estimated 1,000 out of 4,450 households were eligible for this study.

Sampling and Sampling Procedures

Purposive sampling was used to select potential participants. Purposive sampling was the most suitable sampling strategy for use in this research study because the researcher could use her subjective judgment in selecting sampling units that appeared to be representative of the eligible parents (Frankfort–Nachmias & Nachmias, 2008; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). The purposive sampling strategy was also convenient for studying this population, which is difficult to reach and thus understudied (Quintiliani, 2009, p. 137).

There were 153 CASs' parents from an estimated 1,000 eligible households with children aged ≥ 25, who attended a U.S. school, and were selected for the interview. The minimal sample required was 98 participants (Faul, Erdfelder, Lang, & Buchner, 2007; Faul, Erdfelder, Buchner, & Lang, 2009). This number was determined by using F–Test of the *G*Power*, a free online software (http://www.gpower.hhu.de/en.html). However, to increase statistical power, the participants were increased to 153. The number of samples achieved statistical significance with a power of 0.80, a *Confidence Interval* (*CI*) of the effect size of 0.15, six predictor variables, and a *Type I error* of 0.05. The power of 0.80 is commonly used and is recommended by Cohen as an appropriate level for statistical significance analysis (Cohen, 1988). In addition, 0.80 represents a large relationship for

studies that are important (Cohen, 1988; Green & Salkind, 2011), whereas the 0.90 is more for critical studies that may have life and death consequences (Cole, n.d.). The *CI* of 0.15 was selected because it represented a medium correlation coefficients result. The *CI* was increased when the power is increased (Green & Salkind, 2011). The significant level of 0.05 was set to calculate the probability of rejecting H_0 when it was actually true because it was a common standard practice. The smaller the Type I error was, the bigger the sample size was (Cohen, 1988; Green & Salkind, 2011). Thus, the Type I error of 0.05 was the most adequate standard of significant relationship outcome. It was also an appropriate sample size that was affordable for the interview based on available resources.

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

The eligibility criteria for recruitment were the parents having children aged 25 years or over. The children used to attend American schools. One parent was selected from each household. The selection of one parent from a household, which has two parents, was alternately made such that the first household was about the mother's information and the second one was about the father, the third was a mother, the fourth was a father, until 153 parents had been interviewed.

One child was chosen from a household that had more than one child by random drawing. The first child was assigned to a drawing number one, the second child was number two, the third child was number three, etc. The selected parent then picked one drawing. Drawing was the best choice over selecting the eldest or the youngest child. Cambodian parents tended to stop the eldest child from attending school to help them

generate family income. The youngest child seemed the most favorite of the parents, who tended to support the youngest children for everything needed. The information regarding the selected child was gathered from the participating parent. Their names and addresses were not collected to minimize confidential concerns. The numeric code was assigned to each participant based on the order of the interview.

These potential parents were approached from specific sections of Long Beach, which is the center of the city's Cambodian population. Cambodian residents in Long Beach and nearby areas visited these places regularly for their ethnic goods and services. These sections were identified by main landmarks along Anaheim Street of Cambodian Town, an area that includes Cambodian markets (e.g., Kim Long, Chaktumok, Kim Heng), restaurant areas (e.g., Dara, Hak Hieng, Monorom), Cambodian Buddhist temples (e.g., Willow Temple, Cheery Temple, 4th Street Temple, Irap Temple), medical clinics (e.g., Khmer Community Wellness Center), local parks (e.g., Park Seven, McArthur Park), nonprofit organizations (e.g., United Cambodian Community, Dream Beyond Foundation), libraries (e.g., Mark Twain, Meatuphoum), and community service centers (e.g., auto shops, salons).

Upon the approval of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) with approval # 06–30–16–0242287, data collection proceeded as follows:

1. I, a bilingual and bicultural Cambodian and English, visited the interview locations. I approached and selected potential participants based on participant's time availability and previously specified criteria. Upon entering a selected location, I stood in front of the mentioned locations and greeted

participants in a Cambodian way. Greeting in a Cambodian way by putting the palms of the hands together (sampash) is very important to show politeness, which is the starting point for friendship and effective interaction.

2. The eligible participants, who agreed to participate in the study, were invited to a quiet place nearby for the private interview. The participant was asked to sign the written informed consent form. The consent form contained the purpose of the study, its benefits, confidentiality information, the expected duration of the interview, voluntary participation, the interview procedure, and my contact information. This process required approximately 10 minutes for each participant.
3. After signing the written consent form, I interviewed participants. The participants' names and addresses were not collected to minimize confidential issues. A numeric code was assigned to each participant based on the order of the interview. Each interview was conducted in English or Khmer based on the participant's preference. It took approximately 20 minutes for each interview. I helped few participants by reading the interview questions because the participants could not read or write both English and Khmer.
4. I reviewed and confirmed the completion of responses after the completing each interview. Responses will be kept for 5 years before being destroyed.

Data collection was conducted at one point of time. The plan for the interviews was 2 weeks. However, the actual interviews took 3 weeks, from July 2 to 24, 2016. The interviews were conducted only during the weekends and holidays.

Instrumentation and Operationalization of Constructs

I developed a 15–item interview questions (See Appendix A) with the integration of some 2013 U.S. Census items, was used to query participants. The participants provided information to Questions 1–9 about their educational level, parents' income, gender, and birthplace. The participants also provided information concerning their children's education, gender, current age, and age at immigration to America. The parents also provided additional information (Questions 10–15) on gender roles practicing in families of CAs, which might implicate the academic achievement of CASs.

For content validity, the interview questions were pretested by administration to a group of 13 members of the community, known to the researcher. These participants were living in Long Beach. The pretest was to determine its suitability and comprehension. Data from the pretest was not included as part of the final study. Questions were revised slightly by adding some answers as needed prior to use in the actual interviews. To address potential language barriers, English and a Cambodian version of the interview questions was constructed and tested.

Data Analysis Plan

After the data were collected, I encoded them into a *Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS)* data file (Green & Salkind, 2011). The data were examined for discrepancies and responses that were less than 90% complete, and thus would be discarded. However, all interview questions were completely filled out and counted.

Descriptive statistics was conducted to calculate frequency distribution of respondent rates to describe the sample population and the questions on gender roles

practicing in CA families (Questions 10–15). Following exploratory data analysis predictor variables, they were analyzed by using *MLR*s (Green & Salkind, 2011) for Questions 1–9 to identify statistically significant predictors of academic success of CASs. The regression model that was used to analyze the RQ1. The data were analyzed, mainly by looking the determinants of the academic success of CASs among the parents' and children's factors. These factors included parents' income, parents' education, parents' gender, and parents' birthplace, children's gender, and children's age at immigration to America. In addition, the data were also analyzed for the relationship between and among the two specific subsets: (a) parents' factors: parents' income, education, gender, and birthplace, and (b) children's factors: children's gender and age at immigration to America. The analyses of these subsets were to specifically determine whether they were significant relationships among the parents' and children's factors.

The null hypothesis was tested with statistical significance set at the .05 level of confidence. The six prediction variables were entered into a linear regression using a probability of .05 as the criterion for inclusion, and a probability of 0.10 or greater as the criterion for exclusion. The goal of the data analysis was to explain the variance in schooling completed, among CASs. The initial model was retested using only statistically significant predictors. In the social sciences, it is rare to find that a single variable accounted for changes in the outcome variable. Often, several variables were associated with the outcome variable. Educational success, for example, was usually predicted based upon several variables, for example, parents' income, parents' education, and the gender of children (Frankfort–Nachmias & Nachmias, 2008).

The results were presented in tables, figures, and graphs, and were interpreted from the statistical test results. Conclusions were drawn from the interpretation of the results based on the RQs and hypotheses, with the explanations of why the results were provided in the manner they were. The explanations might reference the discussed theories, the literature review, and logical reasoning. The implications of the results for practice or future research were discussed.

Threats to Validity

The usefulness of findings is based upon their validity (Patton, 1991). Thus, ensuring the quality, trustworthiness, and credibility of the study was important and the reason for adopting ethical practices. In research, two factors that need to be considered are validity and ethical procedures (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009).

Validity

Internal validity refers to factors that interfere with the researcher's ability to draw accurate inferences from the data about a population. To address this concern, I encouraged participants to respond to interview items honestly and ensured that they understood each item on the interview. This was to get reliable data so that the inferences were made correctly based on the collected information. The generalization of the findings was limited to population of CAs living in Long Beach, not all CAs in CA, or CAs throughout the United States. The benefit of the research was the advancement of Long Beach CAs and of their community.

Construct validity involves the quality of interview questions items and measurements. To ensure the validity of the interview questions, they were pretested so

that the items were clear, direct, and understandable. The interview questions were available in Khmer and English. I, bilingual and bicultural in Cambodian and English, helped few participants to complete the interview questions because they lacked fluency in either language. Moreover, the use of interviews was expected to minimize the number of nonresponses from participants. Ensuring a high response rate and fully completing the interview questions was an important priority for me.

Ethical Procedures

With this or any research study, ethical concerns can arise at any step of the research process. It can be incurred when crafting the research problem, constructing RQ, developing purpose, collecting the data, analyzing data, writing the report, and disseminating the findings (Frankfort–Nachmias & Nachmias, 2008; Rudestam & Newton, 2007). Responding to these concerns, I endeavored to be careful and thoughtful at all points throughout the research study.

In developing the problem statement, I made sure that the study would benefit the participants and not further marginalized or disempowered them. In the purpose and RQs, the primary intent of the study was described to the participants so that they understood its purpose within academic research and social discourse. In data collection, procedures approved by the IRB with approval # 06–30–16–0242287 were strictly followed. There was no change to the approval. The protection of participants against any abuse was of high priority. Each participant was asked to sign a written informed consent form before being interviewed. The contents of the consent form included the identity of the researcher, the manner in which the sample population was selected, the purpose of the

study, the benefits for participation, the level of participation expected of respondents, the guarantee of confidentiality to participants, and the assurance that any participant may withdraw from the study at any time without reason. A contact list of professional counselors was attached to the consent form for the event that participants feel negatively affected by the process of reminiscing about wartime and genocide–related experiences and needed help.

The participants joined the study voluntarily. They could withdraw at any time from the interview. The participants were kept confidential by not collecting their addresses, which minimized the confidentiality issue. Each participant was assigned a coding number in accordance with the order of the interview. Trust between participants and I was maintained through the signing of the confidentiality agreement.

In data analysis and interpretation, the data were checked thoroughly for accuracy. The accurate account of information was provided. The discussion and conclusions were based upon the data.

In writing and disseminating the study results, the following were avoided: the use of biased language, the interference of my personal interest and beliefs, and the falsification of findings to meet the predetermined needs of the audience or of mine. The preliminary draft of the study was available to participants for their review and comments. Data were reported only as aggregate data and not as individual data. Upon request, a copy of the final report would be e–mailed to the requesting participants. My e–mail address was noted under the contact information in the consent form (Appendix A). I expected that the findings would be beneficial to participants post the research

period. It would fill the literature gap and raise awareness about the participants. Moreover, it might provide politicians and school administrators with knowledge that endorses public policies that enhance parental resources and advance outcomes of CASs' education.

Summary

In Chapter 3, I described the quantitative methods used to conduct this research study, which sought to determine factors that predict the academic success of CASs. It also covered an in–depth analysis of why the quantitative method was chosen as an appropriate methodology for the study. By using this design, I was able to quantify the relationship between variables, and to obtain statistical and inferential information for determining the degree of the relationship. A face–to–face interview, the nonexperimental cross sectional study, and collecting data at one point of the time were used for the study. The face–to–face interview approach was selected because it provided me the chance to make clarifications, and help read the interview questions to the participants who did not understand or were unable to read the interview questions. Some participants could not read or write both English and Khmer languages. A purposive sample of 153 CASs' parents with children aged ≥ 25 years living in Long Beach, CA were selected for the interviews. The child of each participant attended or was attending a school in the United States.

Descriptive and *MLR* analyses were employed to analyze data. *MLR*s were favored because it had been a powerful multivariate test that allows researchers to understand the effect of more than two predictor variables, and one outcome variable by

combining all different predictor variables into one test. In addition, in this chapter I also discussed the validity and ethical challenges and ways to address them.

In Chapter 4, I will discuss the purpose of the study and review the RQs and hypotheses. In Chapter 4, I will also report the outcome of the pretest of the interview questions. Finally, I will present the data collection process and the results of the study. Data will be presented in tables, figures, and self–descriptive comments.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to identify determinants of academic success among CASs by examining the extent to which one or more of six predictor variables provided an explanation for the academic success of CASs. The findings are significant as they can be used to facilitate advancing theory and knowledge on this topic, create public awareness about CASs' academic gap, and provide recommendations for the adoption of better public policies and services to foster the positive social change of accelerating equality of educational opportunity for CASs. To investigate the relationship between CASs' academic success and the parents' and children's variables, I developed the following key RQs and hypotheses.

RQ1: What were the significant determinants of academic success among CASs? This first key RQ contained the following three subquestions:

1. Which, if any, variable(s) among the six parents' and children's predictor variables—parents' gender, parents' birthplace, parents' education in Cambodia, parents' income, children's gender, and children's age at immigration to America—were determinants of academic success among CASs?

   $H_0$1: None of the six parents' and children's predictor variables— parents' gender, parents' birthplace, parents' education in Cambodia, parents' income, children's gender, and children's age at immigration to America—was a significant determinant of academic success of CASs.

H_a1: One or more of the six parents' and children's predictor variables—parents' gender, parents' birthplace, parents' education in Cambodia, parents' income, children's gender, and children's age at immigration to America—were significant determinants of academic success of CASs.

2. Which, if any, variable(s) among the four parents' predictor variables—parents' gender, parents' birthplace, parents' education in Cambodia, and parents' income—were determinants of academic success among CASs?

   H_02: None of the four parents' predictor variables—parents' gender, parents' birthplace, parents' education in Cambodia, and parents' income—was a significant determinant of academic success of CASs.

   H_a2: One or more of the four parents' predictor variables—parents' gender, parents' birthplace, parents' education in Cambodia, and parents' income—were a determinant of academic success of CASs.

3. Which, if any, variable(s) among the two children's predictor variables—children's gender and the children's age at immigration to America—were determinants of academic success among CASs?

   H_03: None of the two children's predictor variables—children's gender and children's age at immigration to America—was a significant determinant of academic success of CASs.

   H_a3: One or more of the two children's predictor variables—children's gender and children's age at immigration to America—were determinants of academic success of CASs.

I developed the major hypotheses in this study to examine the relationship between CASs' academic success and one or more of the six parents' and children's related predictor variables.

RQ2: What role did gender play in CASs' education? This key question contained the following six subquestions:

1. Was a son's education more important than a daughter's education if only one child could go to school?
2. Who was more likely to undertake household tasks (i.e., cooking, cleaning, washing, taking care of siblings, taking care of sick/elderly family members, and taking care of the house)?
3. Which gender would you be more comfortable to permit moving away from home to study in school far from home?
4. Which child was harder for you to permit going out to socialize at night?
5. Who should marry earlier if a son and a daughter were the same age?
6. Would you like your son to marry a woman, who attained a higher level of education than his own?

In Chapter 4, I will cover in detail the pretest of the study to verify the credibility and simplicity of the interview questions. I will also discuss the data collection process. Furthermore, the results of the study and the evidence of quality will be discussed.

Pretested Interview Questions Results

I conducted a pretest of the interview questions to ensure that the questions were functional, easy to understand, culturally sensitive, and user friendly. Moreover, I aimed

to collect feedback on the interview questions prior to the actual interview with the sample population. The pretest was conducted on July 2, 2016. I went to interview friends and former coworkers at homes in Long Beach. Before the interviews were conducted, each participant was asked to sign the informed consent form (See Appendix A). I explained the contents of the informed consent form, which contained the purpose of the study; the reasons that they were chosen to participate; the risks and benefits of the study; the confidentiality clause; the interviewing procedure; the duration of the interview; the voluntary and unpaid participation; and the contact information of me, the committee chairperson, and the IRB. Also, provided was a list of local counselors, should they become uncomfortable discussing their experiences in Cambodia during the genocide or wars.

During the pretest, 13 participants were interviewed, compared to my plan to interview of 12–15 participants in the actual study. Seven interviews were conducted in Khmer and five in English. I checked the completeness of responses after each interview. Each participant was asked to share feedback on the interview questions, procedures, and language used. Finally, the participants received appreciation and gratitude for their participation. There were no issues with missing data as all interview questions were completed entirely. All participants confirmed that the interview questions were simple, easy to understand, and user friendly and that the procedures were well explained and clear. They felt comfortable with the interview because they had the choice to be interviewed in either Khmer or English and the freedom to stop the interview at any time.

None of the participants suggested any modifications to the procedures or the interview questions. However, there were two minor challenges during the pretest.

The first challenge was that some participants could give more than the three reasons requested in Interview Questions 10–15 (See Appendix A), while some could only give less. The second challenge was that few participants provided answers that were not contained in the provided answering checkbox. For instance, in Question 11 on who was doing more household tasks (See Appendix A), I provided two answering checkboxes as son or daughter, but few participants replied that both the son and daughter took turns or that parents performed household tasks. To address the first challenge, I requested that the participants simply provide reasons for their chosen answers. For the second challenge, I added more answering checkboxes for "both" and "parents". The IRB was not contacted for the modifications because the chairperson said that it was a normal occurrence in research.

Data Collection

In this section, I will describe the data collection timeframe, the actual recruitment of participants, and the response rates. In addition, I will take into account any discrepancies in data collection from the plan I presented in Chapter 3. I will also report baseline descriptive and demographic characteristics of the sample and discuss the representation of the sample.

I began data collection on July 3, 2016 and ended 3 weeks later on July 24, 2016. The IRB approved the data collection plan for 2 weeks. However, if it could not be completed in 2 weeks, the IRB approved the extension until the recruitment was

completed (See the approval # is 06–30–16–0242287). Two hundred and fourteen potential participants were approached for the interview. The research participants lived in Long Beach, CA. One hundred fifty three parents ended up participating in the interviews. According to my plan, the interviews should have been conducted with only 150 participants. Among the 153 participants, 30 participants had children of one gender. One hundred twenty three interview questions were completed in their entirety (Questions 1 to 15). Thirty interview questions were only completed from Question 1 to 9. These 30 participants could not participate further than Question 15 because these questions required parents who had children of both genders (male and female) in order to participate. This occurrence was well anticipated because some families had only a daughter(s) or son(s).

I conducted analysis of the demographic information I collected from the interview questions using frequency statistics in the *SPSS*, Version 23.0. Table 3 and Table 4 indicate the parental demographic variables of birthplace, gender, highest academic grade completed in Cambodia, highest education level completed in the United States, and parents' income. As detailed in the tables, 77% of the parents were from different provinces in Cambodia, and 23% from the capital city of Phnom Penh. The respondent parents' gender distribution was 67% male, and therefore, the responses were male oriented. However, there was only a slight gap between the male and female respondents. Seventy three percent of parent respondents had no high school degree, 15% had only high school degree, 5% had some college education, 5% had a bachelor's degree, and 2% had a graduate/professional degree, with an average highest academic

grade completion of 9 years in Cambodia. After immigrating to the United States, 60% of these parents attained no high school degree, 0.7% attained only a high school degree, 33% attained some college education, 5% attained a bachelor's degree, and 1% attained a graduate or professional degree. Overall, CASs' parents completed an average of 6 years of education in the United States. Table 4 also showed an average annual parents' income of $5,988 per household member. Table 3 indicated 62% of households earned under $5,000 annually; 20% of households earned from $5,000–$9,999; 8% from $10,000–$14,999; 5% from $15,000–$19,999; 3% from $20,000–$24,999; and 1% for $25,000+. A majority of each household member belonged to the average income grouping of under $5,000, while $5,000–$9,999 was the second highest grouping.

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics for Parents' Demographic Variables (N=153)

Variables	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative
Parents' birthplace			
Phnom Penh capital city	35	22.9	22.9
Provinces	118	77.1	100
Total	**153**	**100**	
Parents' gender			
Male	102	66.7	66.7
Female	51	33.3	100
Total	**153**	**100**	
Parents' education in Cambodia			
No high school degree	111	72.5	72.5
High school degree	23	15.0	87.6
Some college education	8	5.2	92.8
Bachelor degree	8	5.2	98.0
Graduate/professional degree	3	2.0	100.0
Total	**153**	**100.0**	
Parents' education in America			
No high school degree	92	60.1	60.1
High school degree	1	.7	60.8
Some college education	50	32.7	93.5
Bachelor degree	8	5.2	98.7
Graduate/professional degree	2	1.3	100.0
Total	**153**	**100.0**	
Average parents' income			
Under $5,000	95	62.1	62.1
$5,000–$9,999	31	20.3	82.4
$10,000–$1,4999	12	7.8	90.2
$15,000–$19,999	8	5.2	95.4
$20,000–$24,999	5	3.3	98.7
$25,000 +	2	1.3	100.0
Total	**153**	**100.0**	**62.1**

Table 4

Descriptive Statistics for Parents' Demographic Variables (N=153)

Variables	*N*	Minimum	Maximum	*M*	*SD*
Parents' highest Education in Cambodia	153	0	23	8.54	4.597
Parents' highest education in America	153	0	18	6.06	6.701
Parents' income	153	800	30000	5987.96	5757.105
Total	**153**				

Table 5 and table 6 present the children's demographic variables of gender, age at immigration to the United States, and the highest completed academic grade of children. Data demonstrated that 53% of the gender distribution of participating parents' children was female. The average age of the children at immigration to the United States was 5 years. Seventy one (71%) of these children belonged to the age group of 0–5 years old at immigration to United States. The average highest education accomplishment was 15 grades. Nine (6%) of children had no high school degree, 23 (15%) had only a high school degree, 39 (26%) had some college education, 62 (41%) had a bachelor's degree, and 20 (13%) had a graduate/professional degree. The first highest number of children belonged to the average academic grade attainment group of bachelor's degrees, and the second highest was the group of having some college education.

Table 5

Descriptive Statistics for Children Demographic Variables (N=153)

Variables	*N*	Minimum	Maximum	*M*	*SD*
Age of children	153	0	29	5.01	7.260
Children's highest education	153	6	23	15.10	3.048
Total	**153**				

Table 6

Descriptive Statistics for Children Demographic Variables (N=153)

Variables	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative
Children's gender			
Male	72	47.1	47.1
Female	81	52.9	100
Total	**153**	**100**	
Children's age			
0 – 5 years old	108	70.6	70.6
6 + years old	45	29.4	100.0
Total	**153**	**100.0**	
Children's highest academic success			
No high school degree	9	5.9	5.9
High school degree	23	15.0	20.9
Some college degree	39	25.5	46.4
Bachelor degree	62	40.5	86.9
Graduate/professional degree	20	13.1	100.0
Total	**153**	**100.0**	

Results

In the results section, the descriptive statistics that characterize the sample, the evaluation of statistical assumptions, and a statistical analysis findings based on the hypotheses and RQs including the use of tables are reported. The data showed that 153

parents participated in the interview. Seventy seven (77%) percent of respondents were from provinces of Cambodia rather than the capital city of Phnom Penh, 67% were male, 73% had no high school degree from Cambodia, 60% had no high school degree in the America, and 62% earned under $5,000 annually. The parents' highest average educational level completed was Grade 9 in Cambodia and Grade 6 in the United States. Concerning the children, 53% were females and 71% arrived in the United States when they were less than 6 years old. The children's average highest education obtainment was 15 grades. It was impressive to see that the children's academic attainment is higher than their parents' academic obtainment in Cambodia and United States.

Three *MLR* analyses were conducted to evaluate key RQ one. Each *MLR* analysis was carried out to assess each sub question. These subquestions asked whether there were correlationships between the outcome variable of CASs' academic success, and (a) the parents' and children's predictor variables (parents' gender, parents' brithplace, parents' income, parents' education in Cambodia, children's gender, and children's age at immigration to America), (b) parents' predictor variables (parents' gender, parents' brithplace, parents' income, and parents' education in Cambodia), and (c) children's predictor variables (children's gender, and children's age at immigration to America).

Before conducting *MLR* analysing models, the statistical assumptions of each subquestion were observed. According to Field (2009), statisitical assumptions for the *MLR* statistical analyses were predictor variables were continuous and/or categorical, while the outcomevariable wascontinuous; perfect culticollinearity was not present; there was no correlation between that predictor variables; there was homsecedasticity; and

errors were independent. Moreover, statistical assumptions examination included normally distributed errors, independent values, and linerity (Field, 2009). *Scatterplots* helped determine the linear relationship of the variables and if the model fit the data (Field, 2009).

The results of theassumption analyses of all three subquestions were met or addressed as required when outliers presented. The outcome variable of CASs' highest academic success was measured on a continous scale, which consisted of the completed highest academic grade, as required. In each subquestion, there were more than two predictor variables that were continuous or categorical scales. The predictor variables of parents' education in Cambodia, parents' income, children's age at immigration are continuous scale, wherearas the predictor variables of parents' birthplace, parents's gender, and children's gender are categorical scale. These categorical scale variables were converted into dummy variables. The dummy variable of parents' birthplace was assigned as Phnom Penh Capity city = 0 and provinces = 1. The dummy variable of parents' gender was assigned as male = 0 and female = 1. The dummy variable of childrens' gender was assigned as male = 0 and female = 1.

The evidence of perfect *multicollinearity* was not presented when there was no correlationship that had $r > 0.9$ among predictor variables (Field, 2009). The relationships in this study had values not greater than .9. Furthermore, Field (2009) also indicated that there was collinearity when the largest *VIF* was less than 10 and tolerance greater than 0.2. The assumptions generated from the analyzed data showed that *VIF* of all three *MLR* models were less than 10 and the tolerance levels were above 0.2, indicating that the

requirement of no multicollinearity was met. In addition, *Eigenvalues* were between 0 and 1, and evenly distributed across the dimensions of the three models, which also indicated that there was no multicollinearity. The data also showed homoscedasticity, which is where variances along the line of best fit remain similar as it was moved along the line.The scatterplot (SRESID * ZPRED) helped to determine the linear relationships of the variables and to determine that the models fit the data (see Figure 1).

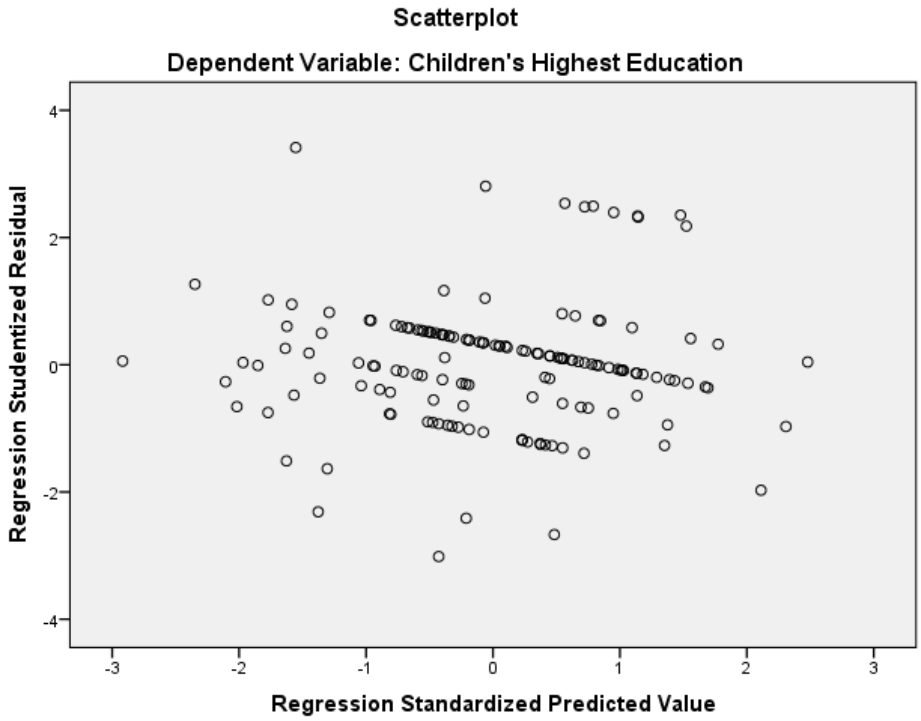

Figure 1. Scatterplot shows homoscedasticity.

Statistical assumptions determined that the residuals errors were normally distributed (Figure 2). It is normally distributed because the dots generally followed the diagonal line (Figure 3).

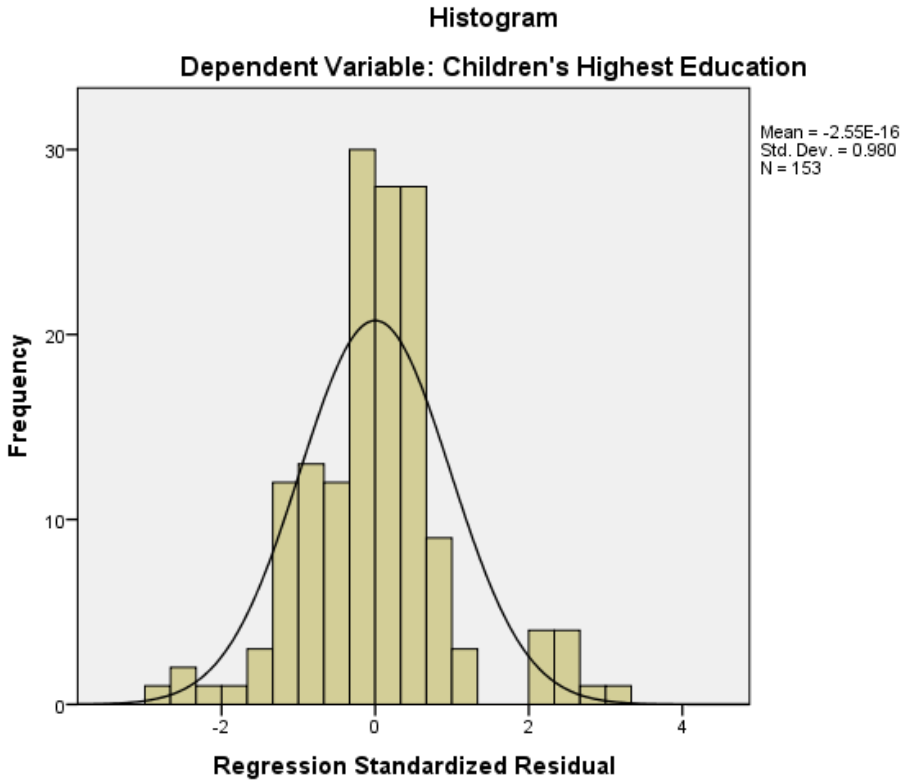

Figure 2. Histogram shows a normality distribution.

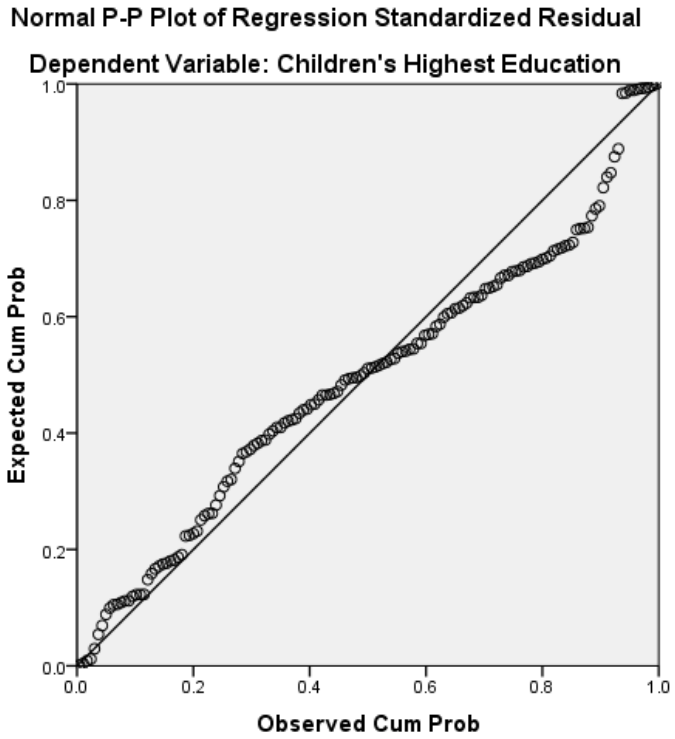

Figure 3. P–P Plot shows the dots followed the diagonal line.

Finally, there must be no significant outlier value, which is the critical value of the degree of freedom or highly influential points. The critical value can negatively affect the regression equation that is used to predict the value of the outcome variable based on the predictor variables. Based on the *Residuals Statistics*, the critical value from *Maximum Value* of *Mohalanobis Distance* was 23.078, 22.420, and 11.211 in the three assumption analyses models, respectively. The critical value of the degree of freedom (see *Chi–Square Table* $X^2.050$) with the confident level of 95% for Subquestion 1 that contains six predictor variables is 12.592, for Subquestion 2 comprised of four predictor variables is 9.488, and for Subquestion 3 that consists of two predictor variables is 5.991. Thus, the outlier values were detected in all three models because the critical values of

data were larger than the critical value of degrees of freedom. In order to address the outlier values, the data that contain critical values higher than 12.488, 9.488, and 5.991 were filtered out by conducting *SPSS* > Select Case in all three assumption analysis models. *The Cook's Distance Values* of three models were less than 1, which met the requirements. Thus, all three assumptions analyses were met as required after the outliers were removed.

To approach Subquestion 1, a *MLR* using dummy variables was conducted to evaluate how well the prediction of CASs' academic success from the parents' and children's factors is. The predictors were the six variables: parents' gender, parents' birthplace, household's income, parents' education in Cambodia, children's gender, and children's age at immigration to America, while the outcome variable was the highest academic grade achieved by CASs. The result of the linear combination of parents' and children's factors was significantly related to academic success of CASs, $R^2 = .12$, $F(6,141) = 3.20$, $p = .006$, 95% CI [9.84, 16.43]. The sample multiple correlation coefficient was .35, indicating that approximately 12% of variance of academic success in the sample can be accounted for by the linear combination of parents' and children's variables.

Table 7 shows variables to indicate the relative strength of individual predictors of the parents' and children's factors. Bivariate correlations between the six predictor variables showed that three predictors (parents' income, parents' education in Cambodia, and children's gender) were positive. The other three relationships (the parent gender, parents' birthplace, and children's age at immigration to America) were negative. If the

value is negative, it predicted a decrease in outcome variable. If the value is positive, it predicted an increase in outcome variable.

Among these six predictor variables, two predictor variables (the parents' education in Cambodia, and the children's age at immigration to America) were statistically significant ($p < 0.05$). The partial correlation between predictors for the parents' education and the children's age and academic success were statistically significant predictors. Parents' education accounted for 5% (.225 = .05) of the variance for prediction. Children's age at immigration accounted for 5.9% (–.243 = .059). The variable of parents' education in Cambodia was a positive predictor of outcome variable to academic success of CASs. This suggested that an increase of parents' education levels from Cambodia was associated with an increase in CASs' academic success in America. It also inferred that the higher education level the parents had from Cambodia, the more academically successful their children were in America.

The variable of children's age at immigration to America was a negative predictor of outcome variable to academic success of CASs. The results also suggested that an increase of children's age at immigration to America was negatively associated with, the CASs' academic success. Equally, it translated that the older the children were when they arrived in America, the less successful they were in education. On the basis of these correlation analyses, it is tempting to conclude that useful predictors for academic success were the parents' education and the children's age predictors. They accounted for 10.9% (5% + 5.9%) of variance of academic success, while the other variables

contributed only an additional 1.1% (12%–10.9%). However, judgments regarding the relative importance of these predictors were difficult because they are correlated.

As far as the dummy variables, even though gender (female), parents' birthplace (Phnom Penh city), children's gender (female), and the continuous scale variable of parents' income were not statistically significant, the signs of the regression coefficients were in the expected direction (positive), except the dummy variable of parents' birthplace (Phnom Penh city), which was negative. The 95% *CI* showed that if 100 samples were drawn randomly, in 95 of these samples, the coefficient for the predictors of parents' education and the children's age would be between the value supported by the lower and the upper 95% *CI* boundary boxes.

Table 7

The Results of the Multiple Linear Regression Analysis for predictors of Parents' and Children's Variables (N=148)

Variable	**Model *β***	***B***	95% ***CI***	Correlation	Partial
Parents' and Children's variables					
Constant	13.13		[9.84, 16.43]		
Parents' gender	.42	.07	[–.66, 1.49]	–.05	.07
Parents' birthplace	–.11	–.02	[–1.27, 1.04]	–.08	–.02
Parents' income	4.32	.08	[.00, .00]	.18	.08
Parents' education	.14	.21*	[.02, .27]	.23*	.19*
Children's gender	.40	.07	[–.55, 1.35]	.05	.07
Children's age	–.11	–.24*	[–.18, –.03]	–.24*	–.24*

*$p < .05$

The null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypothesis was accepted. The findings of this study indicate that two out of six predictor variables of the parents' and children's variables were significant determinants of CASs' academic success. These two predicator variables were parents' education in Cambodia and children's age at immigration to America. The signs of the coefficients of the dummy variables, parents' gender (female) and children's gender (female), and of the continuous scale variable, parents' income indicate that even though they were insignificant, they were in the expected direction (positive). In addition, the sign of the coefficient of the dummy

variable, parents' birthplace (provinces) was insignificant and in the unexpected direction (negative).

To approach Subquestion 2, a *MLR* using dummy variables was conducted to evaluate how well the prediction of CASs' academic success from parents' factors is. The predictors were the four indices: parents' gender, parents' birthplace, household's income, and parents' education in Cambodia; while the outcome variable was the highest academic grade succeeded by CASs. The result of the linear combination of parents' factors was significantly related to the academic success of CASs, $R^2 = .08$, $F(4,139) = 2.90$, $p = .024$, 95% *CI* [10.28, 16.57]. The sample multiple correlation coefficient was .28, indicating that approximately 8% of variance of academic success in the sample could be accounted for by the linear combination of parents' factors.

Table 8 presents the variables to show the relative strength of individual predictors of the parents' factors. In analyzing the bivariate correlations between the four predictor variables, it was noted that two predictor variables, the parents' gender and parents' birthplace, were negative. The relationships of the other two predictor variables, parents' education in Cambodia and the parents' income, were positive. If the value was negative, it predicted a decrease in outcome variable. If the value was positive, it predicted an increase in outcome variable. Among the four predictors, only the predictor variable of parents' education in Cambodia was below 0.05, which was significant. Only the partial correlation between parents' variables for the parents' education and academic success was significant. Parents' education accounted for 5.4% (.233 = .054) of the variance for prediction. The variable of parents' education in Cambodia is a positive

predictor of the outcome variable, academic success of CASs. This indicated that an increase in parents' education levels from Cambodia was associated with an increase in CASs' academic success in America. In the same way, it simply meant that the higher education parents had from Cambodia, the more academically successful their children were in America. Based on these correlation analyses, the only useful predictor of the parents' variables for academic success was parents' education. It alone accounted for 5.4% of the variance of academic success, while the other variables contributed only an additional 2.6% (8%–5.4%). However, judgments regarding the relative importance of these predictors were difficult because they are correlated.

Concerning the dummy variables, even though the gender (female), the parents' birthplace (Phnom Penh city), and continuous scale variable of the parents' income were not statistically significant, the signs of the regression coefficients were in the expected direction (positive), except the parents' birthplace (Phnom Penh city), which was negative. The 95% *CI* showed that if 100 samples were drawn randomly, in 95 of these samples, the coefficient for the predictors of parents' education in Cambodia would be between the value supported by the lower and the upper 95% *CI* boundary boxes.

Table 8

The Results of the Multiple Linear Regression Analysis for predictors of Parents' Variables (N=144)

Variable	**Model *β***	***β***	95% ***CI***	Correlation	Partial
Parents' variables					
constant	13.43		[10.28, 16.57]		
Parents' gender	.17	.26	[–.93, 1.27]	–.06	.03
Parents' birthplace	–.16	–.02	[–1.35, 1.03]	–.06	–.02
Parents' income	.00	.16	[.00, .00]	.22	.15
Parents' education	.13	.17*	[.00, .26]	.23*	.17*

**p<.05*

The null hypothesis was not supported and the alternative hypothesis was accepted. The parents' education in Cambodia among the parents' variables had a significant relationship with academic success of CASs. The sign of the coefficient of the dummy variable, parents' gender (female) and of the continuous scale, parents' income, even though insignificant were in the expected direction (positive). Although the sign of the coefficient of the dummy variable, parents' birthplace (provinces) was insignificant, it was in the unexpected direction (negative).

To approach Subquestion 3, a *MLR* using dummy variables was conducted to evaluate how well the prediction of CASs' academic success from children's factors is. The predictors were the two variables: children's gender and children's age at immigration to America, while the outcome variable was the highest academic grade

succeeded by CASs. The result of the linear combination of children's factors was significantly related to academic success of CASs, $R^2 = .08$, $F(2,144) = 5.85$, $p = .004$, 95% *CI* [13.65, 16.80]. The sample multiple correlation coefficient was .27, which indicated that approximately 8% of variance of academic success in the sample could be accounted for by the linear combination of children's factors.

Presented in Table 9 are the variables to indicate the relative strength of individual predictors of the children's variables. It was observed under the bivariate correlations between the children's variables that the predictor variable of children's gender was positive, and children's age at immigration to America was negative. If the value was positive, an increase in outcome variable was predicted. If the value was negative, a decrease in outcome variable was predicted. Among these two predictor variables, one variable, children's age at immigration to America was significant ($p < .05$). Only a partial correlation between the children's variables of children's age at immigration to America and academic success was significant. Children's age at immigration accounted for 7.2% (.269 = .072) of the variance for prediction. The children's age at immigration variable carried a negative predictor sign of outcome variable to academic success of CASs. This suggested that an increase in children's age when arriving in America results in a decrease in academic success of CASs. This has the same meaning as the older the children were when arriving in America, the less successful they were in education. Based on these correlation analyses, the only useful predictor of the children's variables for academic success was the children's age at immigration to America. It accounted for 7.2% of variance of academic success, while

the other variables contributed only an additional 0.8% (8%–7.2%). However, judgments regarding the relative importance of these predictors were difficult because they are correlated.

Regarding the dummy variable, even though gender (female) was statistically insignificant, the sign of the regression coefficients was in the expected direction, which is positive. The 95% *CI* showed that if 100 samples were drawn randomly, in 95 of these samples, the coefficients for the predictor of children's age at immigration to America would be between the value supported by the lower and the upper 95% *CI* boundary boxes.

Table 9

The Results of the Multiple Linear Regression Analysis for predictors of Children's Variables (N=147)

Variable	Model ***β***	***β***	95% ***CI***	Correlation	Partial
Children's Variables					
Constant	15.23		[13.65, 16.80]		
Children's gender	.32	.05	[–.66, 1.29]	.03	.05
Children's age	–.14	–.27*	[–.21, –.06]	–.27*	–.27*

**p<.05*

The null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypothesis was supported. One of the children's factors, children's age at immigration to America predicted academic success of CASs. The sign of the coefficient of the dummy variable, children's gender (female) even though insignificant, was in the expected direction (positive).

In summary, the first key RQ explored what the significant determinants of academic success were among the predictor variables, parents' gender, parents' birthplace, parents' income, parents' education in Cambodia, children's gender, and children's age at immigration to America. This study revealed that two out of these six predictor variables were significant determinants of CASs' academic success. The two significant determinants were parents' education and children's age when immigrating into America, which predicted academic success of CASs. The higher the completed academic grades the parents had from Cambodia, the higher the academic success of CASs in the United States. The older the children were when arriving in America, the less academic success the children achieved in America. The study further determined that those four predictor variables, parents' gender (female), parents' birthplace (province), parents' income, and children's gender (female) were insignificantly correlated with CASs academic success.

The study included six additional open–ended text questions (Questions 10–15) in the interview questions. There were 123 parents who participated in Questions 10–15 because they have both son and daughter. These questions were analyzed using frequency statistics of *SPSS,* to count the frequency in number and percent.

The first question asked, "Was a son's education more important than a daughter's education if only one child could go to school?" The responses were multiple choices of "yes" and "no." The response was coded with a "yes" if the son's education was more important, and a "no" if the son's education was not more important. The participants could choose only one answer. If the response was a "yes", the participants

were further asked to give some reasons. The provided reasons were coded as main themes or categories. Table 10 illustrate the frequency responses to the question and Table 11 indicate reasons for answering "yes" regarding the son. Seventy eight participants (63%) responded that the son's education was not more important than the daughter's education and forty five respondents (37%) responded that the son's education was more important than the daughter's education.

Table 10
Was a Son's Education More Important than a Daughter's Education? (N=123)

Answers	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid				
Yes	45	29.4	36.6	36.6
No	78	51.0	63.4	100.0
Total	**123**	**80.4**	**100.0**	
Missing System	30	19.6		
Total	**153**	**100**		

Forty–five (37%) participants responded that a son's education was more important than a daughter's education. The main themes from the interview responses on the reasons for this include beliefs that: (a) a man would be the breadwinner, supporter, and protector (71%); (b) a man would be a leader/head of family, community or nation (69%); (c) a culture of a man's privilege for education (22%); (d) a son would be a successor of the family's lineage (18%); (e) a man needed to be more mature, more independent, and stronger than a daughter (16%); (f) a man would need a good job

(11%); (g) a man was an educator (9%); (h) a son was intelligent, more capable, and more socialized at school (4%); and (i) a woman was unimportant or would be incapable in performing an important job (Khmer derogatory slang: srey noam min huos keng = girl cannot even urinate far from her heel (2%). It was surprising to see the data, which show a gender bias in education. A high number of parents still considered that a daughter's education was not as important as a son's education even now that they lived in America, where education was viewed as equally important for both boys and girls.

Table 11

Reasons that a Son's Education is More Important Than a Daughter's Education (N=45)

Variables	Frequency	Percent
1. A man would be a breadwinner, supporter, and protector.	32	71
2. A man would be a leader/head of family, community, or nation.	31	69
3. The culture of a male privilege in education.	10	22
4. A son would be a successor of the family's lineage.	8	18
5. A man needed to be more mature, more independent, and stronger than a daughter was.	7	16
6. A man would need a good job.	5	11
7. A man was an educator.	4	9
8. A son was intelligent, more capable, and more socialized at school.	2	4
9. A woman was unimportant or would be incapable to perform important job.	1	2

The second open–ended text question asked, “Who is likely to do more household tasks: cooking, cleaning, washing, taking care of siblings, taking care of sick/elderly family members, and taking care of the house?” The responses were multiple choices of “son”, “daughter”, “both”, and “parent(s)”. The response was coded with a son if the son was likely to do more household tasks, a daughter if daughter was likely to do more household tasks, both if son and daughter equally took turns to do household tasks, and parents if the parent did all household tasks. The participants could select only one answer, which best corresponded to their answer. If the response was a daughter, the participants were further asked to give some justifications for their answers. The responses were coded as main themes or categories. Table 12 illustrate the frequency of responses to the question, and Table 13 provide justifications for responses that daughters were likely to perform more household tasks.

Thirteen participants (11%) responded that the son performed more household tasks, 70 participants (57%) responded that the daughter performed more household tasks, 19 participants (15%) responded that both son and daughter performed household tasks, and 21 respondents (17%) answered that parents performed more household tasks. Therefore, a majority of household tasks were solely performed by a daughter in Cambodian households.

Table 12

Who was Likely to Perform More Household Tasks? (N=123)

Answers	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid				
Son	13	8.5	10.6	10.6
Daughter	70	45.8	56.9	67.5
Both	19	12.4	15.4	82.9
Parents	21	13.7	17.1	100.0
Total	123	80.4	100.0	
Missing system	30	19.6		
Total	**153**	**100.0**		

Seventy (57%) participant parents who responded that the daughter was likely to do more household tasks provided a wealth of responses that provide insight into the roles of gender in CA communities of Long Beach. These responses included: (a) the household tasks were a woman's mandatory job, role, or duty because household tasks were unimportant work (74%); (b) a daughter wanted to help mother when understanding the mother's difficulties (23%); (c) a daughter had to follow mother's footsteps (17%); (d) a husband would love his wife more if she could cook (9%); (e) a daughter enjoyed and was available to do household tasks (7%); (f) parents wanted to train daughters on household tasks to be ready for marriage (6%); (g) a son was lazy or a daughter was more industrious (4%); and (h) a daughter knew how to cook and to manage a home (3%). Thus, the responses suggested an unequal distribution of household tasks in Cambodian

households. A high majority of daughters performed household tasks as a mandatory task while most of the sons were not required to do so.

Table 13

Key Explanations for Why a Daughter was Likely to Perform More Household Tasks than a Son was (N=70)

Variables	Frequency	Percent
1. The household tasks were a woman's mandatory job, role, or duty because household tasks were unimportant works.	52	74
2. A daughter wanted to help mother when understanding the mother's difficulties.	16	23
3. A daughter had to follow mother's footsteps.	12	17
4. A husband would love his wife more if she could perform household tasks well.	6	9
5. A daughter enjoyed and was available to do household tasks.	5	7
6. The parents wanted to train a daughter on household tasks to be ready for marriage.	4	6
7. A son was lazy or a daughter was more industrious.	3	4
8. A daughter knew how to cook and to manage home.	2	3

The third open–ended text question asked, “Which child would you be more comfortable to permit leaving home for schooling that is far from home?” The responses were multiple choices of “son”, “daughter”, “both”, and “not permitted.” The responses were coded with a son if it was more comfortable to permit the son to move away from home for schooling that was far from home; a daughter if it was more comfortable to permit the daughter to move away from home for schooling that was far from home; both if it was equally comfortable to permit the son and daughter to move away from home for schooling that was far from home; and not permitted if both son and daughter were not permitted to move away from home for schooling that was far from home. The participants could only choose the answer that was most relevant to their response. If the response was a son, the participants were further requested to give some reasons. The provided reasons were coded as main theme or categories. Table 14 illustrate the frequency responses to the question, and Table 15 offers reasons for answering that they were more comfortable permitting sons to move away from home for schooling that was far from home.

Sixty five parents (53%) responded that they felt more comfortable in permitting a son to move out to study in a school far from home than in permitting a daughter; three participants (2%) responded, daughter; forty nine respondents (40%) responded, both; and six respondents (5%) responded that both son and daughter were not permitted to leave for study far from home. Most parents who did not permit both son and daughter to go to schooling that was far from home felt sorry for their decision. They said that it was a wrong decision because their children had low education levels and lived in poverty.

Their children kept blaming them every day. Some younger children, who had been permitted to go to schools far from home, got higher education and had good lives. A high majority of CASs' parents were only comfortable permitting a son, not a daughter, to move away from home to study in a school far from home.

Table 14

Which Child did You Feel More Comfortable Permitting to Move Away from Home to Study in a School Far from Home? (N=123

Answers	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid				
Son	65	42.5	52.8	52.8
Daughter	3	2.0	2.4	55.3
Both	49	32.0	39.8	95.1
Not permitted	6	3.9	4.9	100.0
Total	**123**	**80.4**	**100.0**	
Missing system	30	19.6		
Total	**153**	**100.0**		

Sixty five (53%) participants responded that they were more comfortable permitting the son to leave for studies far from home. The provided reasons were coded into themes. These themes include: (a) a son was safer from sexual predators and possible pregnancy, stronger to handle challenges, and could protect himself (78%); (b) remaining acceptable of premarital sexual misbehavior of a son, but not a daughter (participants

compared a son to pure gold and a daughter to white cloth; if the pure gold and white cloth dropped into the mud, the pure gold was still the pure gold after cleaning, but the white cloth became the stained cloth after cleaning; Khmer metaphor: bros chea meas tek dorp, srey chea kro nat sor, 34%); (c) a culture assuming man's superiority privilege as being more mature, intelligent, courageous, responsible, confident, trustworthy, socialized, independent, and born leader (participants compared man to a person who has a five–arm length chest, Khmer metaphor: bros deum troung pram hat, 34%); (d) a son's inherited right to freedom of movement and independent living (participants referred to a boy as a free–rein horse/long–leg boy, Khmer metaphor: ses ort kro los/bros chheung veng, 18%); and (e) parents were more confident with a son's ability to operate an automobile by himself (8%). Thus, the data show a greater gender prejudice towards a daughter in choosing a dream school that is located far from home and requires her to leave the family to study there.

Table 15

Reasons that Parents Felt More Comfortable in Permitting a Son to Move Away to Study in a School Far from Home (N=65)

Variables	Frequency	Percent
1. A son was safer from sexual predation and possible pregnancy, stronger to handle challenges, and could protect himself.	51	78
2. Remaining acceptable for premarital sexual misbehavior of a son, but not for a daughter.	22	34
3. A culture assuming a son's superiority privilege as being more mature, intelligent, courageous, responsible, confident, trustworthy, socialized, independent, and born leader.	22	34
4. A son's inherit rights to freedom of movement and independent living.	18	28
5. Greater confidence with a son's independently safe driving ability.	5	8

The forth open–ended text question asked, “Which child did you feel was harder to permit going outside the home to socialize at night?” The responses were listed as multiple choices of “son,” “daughter,” “both,” and “not permitted.” The responses were coded with “son” if a son was harder to permit out to socialize at night; “daughter” if a daughter was harder to permit out to socialize at night; “both” if a son and a daughter were equally hard to permit out to socialize at night; and “not permitted” if both son and daughter were not permitted out to socialize at night. The participant parents were asked to choose the single most suitable answer. If the response was a daughter, the participant was further asked to provide some justification. The justifications to the responses were coded as themes. Table 16 illustrate the frequency responses to the question, while Table 17 provide justifications for the parent who was more reluctant to permit a daughter out to socialize at night.

Five parents (4%) responded that they felt it was harder to permit their sons to go out to socialize at night than daughters; seventy seven participants (63%) responded they were more reluctant to permit the daughter out; twenty six respondents (21%) responded that they were reluctant to permit either child to go out; and fifteen respondents (12%) responded that neither son nor daughter were permitted to go out to socialize at night. According to these data, the high majority of CASs’ parents were reluctant to permit a daughter to go out for socialization, compared to a son.

Table 16

Which Child Did You Have a Harder Time Permitting to Going Out to Socialize at Night? (N = 123)

Answers	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid				
Son	5	3.3	4.1	4.1
Daughter	77	50.3	62.6	66.7
Both	26	17.0	21.1	87.8
Not Permitted	15	9.8	12.2	100.0
Total	**123**	**80.4**	**100.0**	
Missing system	30	19.6		
Total	**153**	**100.0**		

Seventy seven (63%) of the participating parents responded that they were more reluctant to permit their daughters to go out at night to socialize. Justifications for the responses were classified into themes. These themes include: (a) personal security against sexual predation and possible drug use, given the physical weakness of the daughter (66%); (b) the loss of reputation as a good and gentle woman being criticized, looked down, laughed at, or negatively judged regardless of whether the daughter did nothing wrong during the social activity (39%); (c) disrespect of culture protecting virginity that prohibits a daughter from having a boyfriend, premarital sex, or illegitimate pregnancy (38%); (d) that a daughter was weaker, less thoughtful, and less capable in addressing

emergencies (19%); (e) that, simply stated, she was a woman or female (9%); (f) the Khmer culture of protecting the status of a daughter more than a son by not permitting daughters out at night (4%); and (g) parents not confident in a daughter's driving skill compared to a son's (1%). The data show a concerned bias towards not permitting a daughter to go out socializing at night. The majority of responses indicate that parents were reluctant to permit a daughter out due to her gender. In contrast, few parents suggested concerns over a son going out to socialize at night.

Table 17

Main Justifications for Parental Control Over Daughter's Socialization (N=77)

Variables	Frequency	Percent
1. A personal security against sexual predation and drug use, given the physical weakness of the daughter.	51	66
2. The loose of reputation as a good and gentle woman's image from being criticized, looked down, laugh at, or negatively judged regardless of the daughter did nothing wrong during the social activity.	30	39
3. Disrespect of the culture protecting virginity that prohibits a daughter from having a boyfriend, premarital sex, or illegitimate pregnancy.	29	38
4. A daughter was weaker, less thoughtful, and less capable in addressing emergencies.	15	19
5. That she was, in essence, a woman or female.	7	9
6. Culture of protecting a daughter's status more than a son's by not permitting a daughter out at night.	3	4
7. Parents were less confident in a daughter's independent driving skill as a son's.	1	1

The fifth open–ended text question asked, “Which child should get married earlier if a son and a daughter were the same age?” The responses were multiple choices of son, daughter, and both. The answers were coded with “son” if the parent thought the son should get married at an earlier age; “daughter” if the parent thought a daughter should be married at an earlier age; “both” if a parent thought both son and a daughter should be married at any age they chose. The participants could select only one answer, which most closely fit their opinion. If the response was a daughter, the participating parents were further requested to provide some grounds for this choice. The grounds for responses were coded as categories. Table 18 demonstrated the frequency responses to the question, while Table 19 noted grounds for answering that a daughter should marry at earlier age than son.

Ten parent respondents (8%) responded that a son should marry at an earlier age than a daughter; fifty four participants (44%) responded that a daughter should marry before a son; and fifty nine respondents (48%) responded that they should marry whenever they chose. The data illustrate some equality in choosing the wedding age between a daughter and a son.

Table 18

Who Should Marry at Early Age if a Son and a Daughter Had the Same Age? (N = 123)

Answers	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid				
Son	10	6.5	8.1	8.1
Daughter	54	35.3	43.9	52.0
Both	59	38.6	48.0	100.0
Total	123	80.4	100.0	
Missing system	30	19.6		
Total	**153**	**100.0**		

Fifty four (44%) parents answered that daughters should get married at a younger age than sons should. The grounds for this choice were categorized into themes. These themes include: (a) that the preference followed the Khmer culture of marrying a younger woman because a man had a steady mind, regardless of their age, for always ardently loving a younger woman because a younger wife could fulfill a husband's desire sand prevent him from having affairs (35%); (b) a woman needed to be fed, protected, secured, or led by the husband (33%); (c) a daughter had limited time for getting pregnant and giving a safe birth (17%); (d) additional time allowed a son to be more mature, thoughtful, educated, strong, patient, experienced, responsibility, and a capable provider before marriage (13%); (e) parents were less worried about a daughter's premarital sexual misbehavior and had less burden to enforce daughter's decent behaviors (13%); (f) a

daughter had less chance to marry because her beauty could fade away faster and it would be difficult to attract a suitable man to marry her when she was older (Khmer slang: kror mom chas pi bak rork bdei reu ei= the old virgin is unsalable, 11%); and (g) the cultural stigma of marrying an older woman because the society would consider the man as weak, criticized, looked down, and laughed at (6%). The data showed gender bias that a man could marry only a younger woman while the woman could not marry a young man.

Table 19

Main Grounds that a Daughter Should Marry at an Earlier Age than a Son's Age (N = 44)

Variables	Frequency	Percent
1. Preference followed a Khmer culture of marrying younger woman.	19	35
2. A woman needed to be fed, protected, secured, or led by husband.	18	33
3. A daughter had limited time for getting pregnant and giving a safe birth.	9	17
4. An additional time allowed son to be more mature, thoughtful, educated, strong, patient, experienced, responsible, and a capable provider before marriage.	7	13
5. Parents were less worried about a daughter's premarital sexual misbehavior.	7	13
6. A daughter had less chance to marry because her beauty could fade away faster and it would be difficult to attract a suitable man to marry her when she was old.	6	11
7. The cultural stigma of marrying an older woman because society considered the man as weak and looked down on him.	3	6

The sixth open–ended text question asked, “Would you like your son to marry a woman who had a higher education level than his?” The responses were multiple choices of “yes” and “no.” The responses were marked with “yes” if the son should marry a woman who had a higher education level than his own, and “no” if a son should not marry a woman who had a higher education level than his own. The participants could pick only one answer. If the response was “no,” the parents were asked to supply some rationales**.** The rationales were coded as themes. Table 20 illustrate the frequency responses to the question and Table 21 explain the rationales for answering that a son should not marry a woman who had a higher education level than his own.

Eighty parent respondents (65%) answered that their son should marry a woman who had a higher education level than his; forty three participants (35%) responded that their son should not marry a woman who had a higher education than his education. Therefore, a high majority of parents had no objection to their sons marrying a woman who had a higher education of level than his.

Table 20

Should Your Son Marry a Woman Who Has a Higher Education Level Than His Own? (N=123

Answers	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid				
Yes	80	52.3	65.0	65.0
No	43	28.1	35.0	100.0
Total	123	80.4	100.0	
Missing system	30	19.6		
Total	**153**	**100.0**		

Forty–three (35%) participants responded that their sons should not marry a woman who had a higher education level than his own. The rationales of responses were coded as themes. These themes include: (a) the loss of social status because the son would lose dignity by being looked down on, being mocked, and being criticized by the community and society (60%); (b) the son would be disrespected and controlled by his wife (47%); (c) unhealthy marriage due to the lack of understanding by spouse from having different levels of education, adultery–especially by the higher educated wife, and the prospect of divorce (35%); and (d) indication that the husband was a weak man because the woman took over the role of family leader (16%). The data indicated that the main grounds for a son to not marry a woman who had a higher education level than his

own were to maintain community respect, prevent the control of home by his wife, and having a healthy marriage.

Table 21

Rationales that the Son should not Marry a Woman who had a Higher Education Level than his Own (N=43)

Variables	Frequency	Percent
1. Loss of social status because the son would be looked down, mocked at, and criticized by community and society.	26	60
2. The son would be disrespected and controlled by his wife.	20	47
3. Unhealthy marriage due to the lack of understanding by spouse from different levels of education, adultery– especially by the higher educated wife, and prospect of divorce.	15	35
4. Indication that the husband was a weak man because the woman took over the role of family leader.	7	16

Overral, the second key RQ with its six open–ended text questions provided insights into the gender understanding, sensitivity, and practices in the CA community of Long Beach, CA. The main findings from these questions show gender bias and prejudice

towards the daughter and her lower status in Cambodian households in all aspects of life from education, family role and responsibility, freedom, and marriage life.

Summary

This study addressed two key RQs: (1) What were the significant determinants of academic success among CASs? (2) What role did gender play in CASs' education? The study results from the analysis of key RQ 1 demonstrated that combinations of the predictor variables are determinants of academic success in CASs. The result for Subquestion 1, the parents' education in Cambodia and the children's age at immigration to America were significant predictors of the parents' and children's variables for the academic success of CASs. The higher the education level the parents had from Cambodia, the more academic success the children obtained in America. The older the children's age at immigration, the less their academic success. For Subquestion 2, the study determined that the predictor variable of parents' education in Cambodia had a significant relationship with academic success of CASs. For Subquestion 3, only the variable of children's age at immigration was a determinant of academic success of CASs. This suggests that the younger the age of the children at immigration, the greatest their academic success. Thus, the variables of parents' education in Cambodia and children's age at immigration were predictors for Subquestion 1; the variable of parents' education in Cambodia was the determinant of academic access of CASs in Subquestion 2; the variable of age at immigration had a significant relationship with CASs' academic success in Subquestion 3. All three null hypotheses were rejected and the alternative

hypotheses accepted because there was at least one predictor variable of each null hypothesis that had a significant relationship with the academic success of CASs.

Key RQ 2 sought to determine the role of gender in CASs' education. For the first open–ended question, this study found that majority (63%) of responses asserted a son's education as not more important than a daughter's education. However, the data still showed a high percentage of respondents (37%) believed that a son's education was more important than a daughter's education. The most dominant themes for believing that a son's education were more important included the belief that the man was the breadwinner and protector, the leader at home and society, culture of a male's privilege for education, the family's lineage successor, a son needed to be more mature, stronger, and more independent, a man needed a good job, a son was more intelligent, more capable, and more socialized at school, the man was the educator, and a woman was unimportant or incapable of doing important work.

The second open–ended text question asked who was likely to perform more household tasks. The majority of responses were the daughter (57%). The main justification was that it was a woman's culturally mandatory role, that a daughter wanted to help a mother, that a daughter had to follow mother's footsteps, that a husband would love his wife more if she could perform household tasks well, that a daughter enjoyed and was available to perform household tasks, that parents wanted to train daughters how to do household tasks to be ready for marriage, a son was lazy or a daughter was more industrious, and a daughter knew how to cook and manage the house better.

The third open–ended text question asked, “Which child would you be more comfortable permitting to move away from home to study in a school far from home?” A majority of parents (53%) responded that they felt more comfortable in permitting a son to move away from home and 2% responded that they were more comfortable in permitting a daughter. The main reasons for the choice to permit the son was due to the belief that the son was safer from rape and possible pregnancy, and stronger in handling challenges and could protect himself; that a son’s possible premarital sexual misbehavior was acceptable; a culture of a son’s superiority privilege because a son was more mature, intelligent, trustworthy, independent, and a born leader; that a son inherited the rights to freedom of movement and independent living; and parents had greater confidence with a son’s driving ability.

The forth open–ended text question inquired which child it was more difficult to permit in going outside the home at night to socialize. The data showed that in a vast majority of responses, parents were more reluctant to permit daughters to go out at night (63%), compared to sons (4%). The key justifications for this choice were for the daughter’s safety, keeping reputation as a good and gentle girl, respecting a cultural taboo against premarital sex for woman, a daughter’s inability to handle emergencies, the very issue of her gender itself, a culture of protecting a daughter more than a son, and parents having less confidence in a daughter’s driving ability than a son’s.

The fifth open–ended asked, “Who should get married earlier if a son and a daughter were the same age?” A majority (48%) of parents provided equal rights to a son and a daughter to choose their age of marriage. However, a high percentage (44%) of

parents responded that a daughter should marry at a younger age than a son. The main grounds for a daughter to marry at a younger age comprised of respecting a traditional culture that a man marries only a younger woman, that a woman needed to be provided for and protected by a husband, that a woman had limited time for reproductive and sexual health, that the additional time allowed a son to become more mature and a capable provider before marriage), that parents were less worried about and less responsible for protecting a daughter's sexual misbehavior after marriage, that a daughter could lose the chance to get marry at an older age, and avoiding the cultural stigma that a man incurs by marrying an older woman.

The sixth open–ended question asked whether the parent would like a son to marry a woman who had a higher education level than his own. A high majority (65%) of parents had no objection. However, it was still a high concern for 35% of parents who responded that their son should not marry a woman with higher education than him. The rationales for the negative response included social stigma from being criticized and looked down, high possibility of disrespect and control by his wife, the prospect of an unhealthy marriage, and the indication of a weak man.

The open–ended text questions provide insight into the understanding, sensitivity, and practices of gender roles in CASs' community of Long Beach, CA. Gender bias, inequality, and disparity are still highly prevalent in CASs' community. The son has always been treated better than a daughter in all aspect of life, from home to school and from school to civil rights.

In Chapter 5, I will provide an interpretation of the study findings, limitations of the study, and recommendations for future study. Moreover, I will discuss the policy implications for organizational and academic settings, as well as the positive social change implications of the study, specifically concerning the improvement of CA education. Finally, in Chapter 5 I will consider national implications for policy and social change.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusion, and Recommendations

Introduction

In Chapter 5, I will discuss the interpretation of the findings, limitations of the study, recommendations for future research, and implications for positive social change. The goal of this study was to examine the relationship between the parents' and children's variables and academic success of CASs. I further explored the role of gender in CASs' education as well. The results of this study suggested implications for organizational and social change for CASs' education. Currently, CASs who attended public schools had the lowest academic achievement (Akiba, 2010; Le, 2014). However, educational policies did not recognize CASs as a unique ethnic minority group that required special needs after the destruction of the Cambodian educational system by wars and genocide. CASs are considered a part of the model ethnic minority group whose members exhibit high levels of academic achievement (Chhuon & Hudley, 2010; Ngo & Lee, 2007). The aggregation of CASs with high–achieving Asian Americans as a single group often concealed the diminished academic success of CASs (Chhuon & Hudley et al., 2010). The participants in this study provided a great deal of information regarding policy implications on the academic success of CASs.

The participants in this study were Cambodian parent residents of Long Beach City, CA. Study results for the key RQ1 indicated that the variables of parents' education in Cambodia and the children's age at immigration to America were the key predictors among the parents' and children's variables for the academic success of CASs. Of the parents' variables, the predictor variable of the parents' education in Cambodia was the

key determinant of academic success of CASs. Only the variable of children's age at immigration to America of the children's variables predicted the academic success of CASs. The parents' education in Cambodia and the children's age at immigration to America were the only determinants that predicted CASs' academic success in this study. The higher the education grade that parents completed in Cambodia, the greater academic success the CASs had. The older the children upon arrival in America, the lower the level of academic success they had; the younger the children's age at immigration, the greater the level of academic achievement.

The findings for key RQ 2 revealed that a high majority of respondents (63%) considered a son's education as equally important as a daughter's education. However, it was observed that a high percent (37%) of parents responded that a son's education was more important than a daughter's education. The key justifications for this response included the parents' belief that males were breadwinners and protectors, leaders at home and in society; a culture of a son's privilege to receive an education; the safeguarding of the family lineage; that a son needed to be more mature, stronger, and more independent than a daughter; and that a man needed a good job in order to be a provider.

A majority of responses (57%) indicated that the daughter carried out household tasks. The main reasons that the daughter had to perform household tasks were that it was woman's mandatory cultural role, that a daughter wanted to help her mother in order to learn a mother's role, that a husband would love his wife more if she was good at performing household tasks, that a daughter enjoyed and was more available to do

household tasks, and that parents wanted to train a daughter on household tasks as a preparation for marriage.

The results of the study revealed that a majority of parents (53%) responded that they were more comfortable in permitting a son than a daughter to move out to study at a school far from home. The main grounds for this was variety. These included the belief that a son would not be subject to sexual predation and possible pregnancy, that a son's premarital sexual misbehavior was acceptable, a traditional culture of male superiority and independence, and the son's inherent right to freedom of movement and independent living.

The data from the study also showed that a majority of respondents (63%) felt that it was harder to permit a daughter to socialize at night. The key justifications for this response included a concern about rape and drug use, negative implications on the daughter's reputation as a virgin, disrespect of a culture that opposes premarital sexual relationships and illegitimate pregnancies, and that a daughter was less capable of handling emergencies. So, the daughter's freedom of movement is restricted.

Almost half of parent participants (48%) believed in the right of their children to choose their age of marriage. However, fewer respondents (44%) believed that a daughter should marry before a son if both were the same age. The main explanations for the daughter to get married earlier included honoring the culture of a man to marry only a younger woman, that a woman needed to be provided for and protected by a husband, that a woman had limited time in reproductive and sexual health, that additional time allowed a son to become a more mature and capable provider before marriage, that

parents would not fear sexual misbehavior from a married daughter, and that a daughter had less chance to marry because her beauty would fade away faster.

Finally, in this study I found that a vast majority of parental respondents (65%) agreed that their son could marry a woman who had a higher education level than his. However, there was still a concerning 35% of parents who responded that their son should not. The rationale of the 35% who disagreed included the social stigma of being negatively judged and looked down on by society, a high probability of disrespect and possible control by his wife, the prospect of an unhealthy marriage, and the indication of the man's weakness.

Taken together, the parental respondents supplied a valuable context for understanding the variables that predicted academic success of CASs and the role of gender in CASs' families and education. This insightful information can be a useful resource or tool for policy and social change to improve CASs' education. The findings also help to clarify the general view of parents and CA community members on the determinants of CASs' academic success.

Interpretation of the Findings

The results from this study confirmed, disconfirmed, and broadened the knowledge in the literature and the field. My findings corroborated that the variables of parents' education level in Cambodia and the age of children at immigration to America predicted the academic success of CASs. The other variables in this study, such as parents' gender, parents' birthplace, parents' income, and children's gender, were not predictors of the academic success of CASs. In the study, I also found a high level of

gender bias present in Cambodian households that might affect CASs' level of educational achievement. The following subsections contain my analysis of the findings of each variable in this study.

Parents' Education in Cambodia had a Relationship with Academic Success of CASs

With this study, I addressed the question of whether the parents' education in Cambodia predicted the academic success of CASs. This was clearly the case. My findings endorsed those of Coleman et al. (1966), who revealed that family background such as education affects student's academic achievement more than school–related factors. Similarly, Chalasani (2007) found that educated parents are more likely to ensure their children's educational achievement by providing direct guidance and support. Sticht and Armstrong (1994) suggested that the more highly educated the parents, the greater the chance that their children would succeed in school, complete high school, and attend college. Viadero and Johnston (2000) noted that factors outside of school, such as parental education, could predict the academic success of their children (p.3). Broucker and Lavallee (1998) discovered that the higher the education of the parents, the greater the likelihood that the children would pursue advanced studies. Correspondingly, Akiba (2010), Chhuon & Hudley, (2010), Chhuon & Hudley et al. (2010), Le (2014), Ngo and Lee (2007), Tang et al. (2013), and Uy (2011, 2013) suggested that the lack of parental education contributed to lower levels of academic achievement for their children. My findings confirmed and expanded on the previous literature because after analyzing the

results of this study I concluded a significant relationship existed between parents' education and the academic success of CASs.

However, the results of this study did not support the findings by Schaller et al. (2006), who claimed that parents' poor education had no effect on the academic success of their children. Schaller et al. believed that it was only positive attitude, involvement, and parental support that were primary predictor factors for the academic success of children. In addition, Schaller et al. suggested that the parents were able to motivate their children to pursue academic success simply by participating in the children's learning process and showing daily proeducation behaviors.

Children's Age at Immigration to America was a Determinant for Academic Success of CASs

In this study, I further found that the variable of the age of the child at immigration to America was a significant predictor for the academic success of CASs. The younger the children at arrival, the more successful they were in education. This finding is consistent with U.S. Census Bureau (2008), which found that the younger the age of the immigrant, the greater the likelihood of academic success. This is also in line with Rojas (2015), who found that of Californian CASs who immigrated to United States before they turned 6 years old, 90% graduated from high school, 9% graduated from a 2–year college, and 22% graduated from a 4–year college. By contrast, of students who came to the United States after the age of 6 years, only 67% graduated from high school, 8% graduated from a 2–year college, and 14% graduated from a 4–year college (Rojas, 2015, p. 6). The findings also confirmed Rojas's results that native born CASs were more

successful in education than CASs who were born abroad, with 85% being high school graduates, 7% graduating from a 2–year college, and 27% graduating from a 4–year college; compared to the 59%, 7%, and 13%, respectively (p. 2).

Although the findings in this study indicated the younger the children at immigration to America, the more successful they were in education, Cambodian parents did not share this general view. The parents' general view was that the more mature the children were at arrival, the more successful they were in their education and career, mainly because the grown children from Cambodia experienced much greater hardships and could more easily cope with and manage the minor difficulties in American schools. However, according to Tang et al. (2013) and Wright and Boun (2011), whatever the specific pros and cons pertaining to the influence of age at immigration, it was obvious that both the first and the second generation of CASs had been struggling to understand the educational system and its policies. Based on this finding and the existing literature, CASs have different challenges at different levels regardless of how old they were at immigration, although the ones who arrived in the United States before the age of 6 years old had been more successful academically.

Gender of Parents and Children was not Predictor Variable for Academic Success of CASs

In this study, I also found that parents' and children's gender was not a significant predictor of the academic success of CASs. It did not support the findings of Chhuon and Hudley (2011), Ngo and Lee (2007), UNESCO (2014), Uy (2011) and UNICEF's information website (2015), who found a correlation between the student's achievement

and the gender of parents and children. My findings in this study also disconfirmed those of Taylor et al. (2012), who studied 667 (300 male and 367 female) Cambodians living in Seattle and found that men had significantly higher levels of education than women (p. 5). Equally, SEARAC (2011) reported that CA women were educationally disadvantaged compared to CA men, aged 25 years and older. Only 62% of CA females had a high school diploma or higher degrees, and only 14% completed a bachelor's degree, while 72% of CA males had a high school diploma or higher degree and 18% earned a bachelor's degree. Likewise, U.S. Census Bureau (2013) reported that Cambodian females receive far less education than the total U.S. population where more than 85% of U.S. females complete high school and 30% complete a bachelor's degree. Similarly, the Office of Civil Rights (2012) revealed that girls only represented 39% of students in all grades between 2009 and 2010 (p. 2).

Also, the study findings were inconsistent with the World Bank report (2013b; 2014), which both found that gender inequality in education affected females worldwide. World Bank (2013b) found that 93% of boys and 91% of girls graduate from primary schools worldwide, and the pattern worsened as the gap of education between males and females widened after primary school. For instance, boys in Africa and South Asia were about 1.55 times more likely to complete secondary education than girls were (World Bank, 2014). Only 12% of young women compared to 20% of young men in Cambodia attended university (World Bank, 2013b).

Although there was no relationship between CASs' academic success and gender based on the responses, it has been a challenge for girls to complete their education in the

United States and around the world. This finding imposes a question regarding the relationship between gender and the lack of socialization of female CASs. In fact, the female CASs might have more time to study since they are unlikely to be permitted to spend time outside the home for socialization at night, according to the findings of this study.

Parents' Birthplace did not Predict the Academic Success of CASs

The findings from this study demonstrated that parents' birthplace did not predict the academic success of CASs. This was in contrast to Quintiliani (2009) who found that parents of children who dropped out of high school came from rural areas of Cambodia where educational opportunities were limited or altogether nonexistent. Similarly, Needham and Quintiliani (2007) and Wright and Boun (2011) also found that the refugees who came in the 1980s were mostly rural farmers with little to no formal education or English capacity. This study's findings also disconfirmed the general view of the Long Beach Cambodian community that often anecdotally concluded that children who were unsuccessful in schools were those from rural areas or who had farmer parents. No previous study has confirmed the relationship between parents' birthplace (rural or city) and their children's academic success, and therefore, this study findings provide a unique conclusion that parents' birthplace (rural or city) had no relationship with their children academic success. This finding will fill the literature gap for clarifying the parental view that the older the children at the immigration the better their chance of success.

Parents' Income was not a Significant Predictorof the Academic Success of CASs

This study found that the relationship between parents' income and the academic success of CASs was negative. The result was inconsistent with the famous finding of Coleman et al. (1966), who used *MLR* analysis to study the relationship between ethnic minority parental factors and children's academic achievement, and found that family dynamics such as income were highly linked to the academic success of their children. This study's findings also disconfirmed the results of studies made by Viadero and Johnston (2000) who concluded that parents' income predicted academic success. This finding also refuted findings by Akiba (2010), Chhuon and Hudley (2010), Chhuon and Hudley et al. (2010), Ngo and Lee (2007), Tang et al. (2013), and Uy (2011), who reported that the lack of adequate household income negatively influenced learning. It also disproved the other findings of Bankston (2015); deCastro et al., (2011); Dyo and Moore (2003); and NCSE (2015) who revealed that children of low socioeconomic status parents performed more poorly than those from affluent backgrounds. It was also surprising to the researcher that the academic success of Long Beach CASs had no relationship to their parents' income. The lack of relationship might be the result of government investment factors rather than parents' income. This was indicated by the U.S. Federal Government (2015), which reported that the graduation of ethnic minority students in colleges had increased noticeably over the past few years, with 38% of AA students graduating in 2015, compared to 30% in 2000, and 32% of Hispanic students compared to 22% in 2000. It was due to an increase in Pell Grants, college tax credits, and affordable loan repayment options that allowed more students to afford college and

graduate with a degree. This finding concluded that household income was not a predictor of CASs' academic success. This might be a result of the availability of financial aid. If it is the case, financial aid plays a critical role in reducing one of the CASs' academic challenges.

Some Parents Considered Education of a Son and a Daughter as Equally Important

This study found that majority (63%) of respondents considered a son's education as equally important as a daughter's. In contrast to this finding, Carranza et al., (2009); Chhuon and Hudley et al. (2010); Ngo and Lee (2007); Rumbaut (2008); and Uy (2008) claimed that parents of CASs hold modest academic expectations for their children. However, there was still a high number (37%) of parents who considered that a daughter's education was less important than a son's education. These findings confirmed the literature by Ong (2003), and Pho and Mulvey (2007), who found that education was regarded as unimportant for females in some cultures. Similarly, according to Park (2000) and Tang and Kao (2012), many Asian parents hold higher educational aspirations for their sons than daughters, when resources were limited. Moreover, Chhuon and Hudley (2011), Ngo and Lee (2007), Ong (2003), Pho and Mulvey (2007), and Uy (2008, 2011) concluded that some CASs' parents did not understand the importance of education as a mean by which females could pursue professional careers. Finally, UNESCO (2003), UNICEF (2012), and World Bank (2013a) revealed that some parents around the world, including Cambodians, considered a son's education more important than a daughter's education.

This study showed that the key justifications for considering a son's education as more important than daughter's education included: that the son would become the breadwinner and a leader at home and/or society; the culture of male privilege for education; and the male as the family's successor. These findings validated the study of Tang and Kao (2012), who proved that a son was expected to be the breadwinner and leader for the next generation. Furthermore, Ong (2003) claimed that education was more important for boys because boys would be a family's successor.

This study was not designed to analyze the relationship between CASs' academic success and gender role practices predictors. However, previous studies revealed that gender inequality negatively affects the education of female children (U.S. Census Bureau, 2013; Chhuon & Hudley, 2011; Ngo & Lee, 2007; SEARAC, 2011; UNESCO, 2003, 2010, 2014, 2015a; UNICEF, 2012; UNGA, 2000; U.S. Department of Education, 2014a; World Bank, 2012a, 2013b; Uy, 2011). This literature was congruent with the findings of Ong (2005), and Pho and Mulvey (2007) who concluded that gender role and family expectation of preferential treatment of sons over daughters in education might affect a daughter's education. It is clear that CASs' parents still carry with them the troubling taboo that girls' education was less important to America since more than one third of them responded that girls' education was less important. This stereotype will continue to negatively affect female CASs' education outcome.

Household Tasks Were a Woman's Culturally Mandatory Role

This study showed that a majority of respondents (57%) indicated that the daughter carried out household tasks. This finding was the first study to understand the

dimension or magnitude of the role that daughters played in household tasks in CA community. It confirmed that the majority of female CASs have been responsible for carrying out household tasks in addition to studying. These household tasks include cooking, cleaning, washing, taking care of siblings, taking care of the sick or elderly family members, and taking care of the house in general. This is in line with Tang and Kao's (2012) findings that girls were expected by families to carry out household tasks and take care of dependent family members, while boys were not expected to do so after school.

The main reasons that the daughter was relegated to performing household tasks were: household tasks were considered to be unimportant (Khmer language translated: ka ngea ptash chea ka ngea kam pich kam pok); it is a woman's cultural role; it was a role inherited from the mother; the daughter wanted to help her mother; that her husband would love his wife more if she was good at doing household tasks. This study corroborated earlier findings that a woman's role was largely seen to be as a family caregiver, not as a highly-educated career professional (Pho & Mulvey, 2007; Segal, 2002; Tang & Kao, 2012). In the same way, the studies by Quintiliani (2009), UNESCO (2003, 2014, 2015b), and World Bank (2013b, 2014,) claimed that the reasons that girls and women lacked access to school and did not complete a college education included gender stereotypes that affect the status and role of women. Equally, Tang and Kao (2012) asserted that it was hard for girls to achieve their academic goals because parents expected them to care for the home and family. Wright and Boun (2011) suggested that CASs' parents neither supported nor motivated their daughters to attend school because

they commonly thought that a daughter's job was domestic tasks associated with cooking and serving in the house. The results of this study confirmed the existing literature that household tasks had been considered as a woman's role, which impacted girl's education because it took away study time typically from the girl, not the boy.

Parents Were More Comfortable Permitting a Son than a Daughter to Move Away to Study in a School far from Home

The majority of parents (53%) responded that they were more comfortable sending a son than a daughter to study in a school far from home. Only 2% of responders stated that they were more comfortable in permitting a daughter to move. This represented a large gap of comfort with the son over the daughter. Five percent of parents did not permit their children to move away from the home to study at a distant school. But most of these parents admitted that they felt guilty about their decision. One father related that his eldest daughter blamed him for preventing her from attending a distant college, and as a result, she had a low level of education and had consequently been living in poverty. His younger children, who were permitted to move away from home to study at a distant school had higher educational achievement and had good jobs and lives. In 2012, a World Development report on gender equality and development concluded that a society with greater gender equality in education was one with a greater number of women with access to economic opportunities (World Bank, 2012b). These opportunities contributed to income growth, lowered the incidence of poverty and yielded better outcomes for future generations.

Parents were more comfortable in permitting their sons to move away to study in a distant for several reasons: The parents believed that their sons would be safer than daughters due to the risk of rape and pregnancy because the son could protect himself and was stronger in handling challenges. Also, parents believed that it would be acceptable if a son had a premarital sexual misbehavior without losing value or getting criticism as a Cambodian saying stated that the pure gold is still pure gold even after it dropped into the mud or melted by fire (Khmer Language translated: meas sot nov tae sot tuos thlak knong pleung). In contrast, if girls lost their virginity before marriage, they had no more value and would be criticized or looked down on by society. Moreover, the parents believed that their sons were entitled to inherit freedom of movement or independent living as stated by the Khmer old saying that a boy had long legs or liked a horse with free rein (Cambodian language translated: bros chheung veng/ses hout kror los). A son inherits freedom of movement and independent living because of the cultural belief that considered a son as superior for being more intelligent, more confident, more responsible, more independent, more mature, more trustworthy, courageous, and a born leader. In addition, the parents were more confident with a son's ability to drive an automobile.

There was no doubt that this cultural predisposition provided a greater opportunity for sons to experience greater independence and to achieve higher education. In contrast, female CASs' education and confidence levels suffered from restricted opportunity.

This is the first study exploring the dimension of parental comfort in permitting their children to study at a distant school. The majority of CASs' parents were only

comfortable sending a son to study far from home. There was no any earlier literature found to either corroborate or disconfirm it.

Parents Were Less likely to Permit a Daughter than a Son to Socialize Outside Home at Night

This study showed that the overwhelming majority of responders (63%) were reluctant to permit a daughter to socialize at night. The rationales were various. Parents were concerned about the sexual predation, possible drug abuse, and personal security, given the daughter's physical weakness in protecting herself. Parents also wanted to keep protecting the good reputation of the daughter as a good and gentle role model (white cloth). Cambodian society still believes that a woman is not good if she goes out at night to socialize regardless of activity. The parents also did not permit the daughter to go out to socialize at night to honor a culture protecting virginity that prohibits a daughter from having a boyfriend, premarital sex, or illegitimate pregnancy. Furthermore, parents did not permit their daughters to go out to socialize at night because they viewed that a daughter was weaker, less thoughtful, and less capable in addressing emergencies. Twelve percent of responding parents did not permit their children, especially a daughter, to go out for socialization unaccompanied by them. Overprotecting the daughter might play a role in putting a daughter in isolation, creating dependency, low self–confidence, lack of social skills, and limited social networking opportunities to socialize and network. This might have implications on the education and higher dropout of female CASs because the female educational rate had been always lower than the boy's rate (SEARAC, 2011). In the same way, World Bank (2013b) confirmed that a cultural belief

affecting the education of females in Cambodia was the fear by many parents that without the accompaniment of a family member, girls could not be properly socialized. Because of this belief, girls in Cambodia were four times less likely to attend high school, and five times less likely to attend college compared to boys. However, neither this study nor the existing studies examined the relationship between CASs' academic success and a socialization predictor variable. This belief may advantage the daughter's academic success for having more time to study by not going out. It also may disadvantage daughter for lacking a confidence and networking skills from being unable to go out for socialization.

Some Parents Provided Equal Rights to a Son and a Daughter to Choose Their Marriage Age

The finding showed that parent respondents (48%) gave equal rights to their children to choose the age of marriage. Slightly fewer respondents (44%) agreed that the daughter should marry earlier than the son, if they were of the same age. This finding was backed by previous studies claiming that a woman's role was largely seen as a "familism" that enforced an obligation to marry and take care of family members (Pho & Mulvey, 2007; Segal, 2002) and often to become pregnant (Tang & Kao, 2012; Uy, 2011). Uy (2011) demonstrated that the phenomenon of young girls dropping out of school to marry has remained an issue among CASs. Tang and Kao (2012) verified that it was hard for girls to achieve their study goals because parents expected them to marry and care for the home and family. In short, girls would be considered too old to marry

after completing a college education (Ngo & Lee, 2007; Uy, 2008). The findings of this study are consistent with the existing literature.

There were numerous justifications given for the responses. Parents argued that a daughter needed to marry earlier to honor the culture of a man marrying a younger woman. The younger woman could fulfill a husband's sexual desire and prevent extramarital affairs. Parents also justified that daughters needed protection, support, and leadership from a husband, and had limited time in reproductive and sexual health. Parents also believed that a son needed additional time to be more mature, thoughtful, educated, strong, patient, responsible, experienced, and a capable provider before marriage. Also, marrying off a daughter earlier helped reduce their worry and the burden of preventing sexual misbehavior. What is more, parents were afraid that their daughter would lose the chance to marry because beauty could fade away faster and therefore, a daughter would be difficult to marry off, when she was older. Avoiding social stigma for the husband was also noted. The husband could be criticized, looked down on, or ridiculed as a weak man for being unable to marry a younger woman. The results of this study provided a more comprehensive understanding of key justifications than the available literature. The findings supported the available literature supported that a woman would be considered too old to marry after having completed a college degree (Ngo & Lee, 2007; Uy, 2008). The finding also confirmed Ngo and Lee (2007) and Uy (2008), who concluded that it clearly affected girls' educational achievement. According to the findings and the literature, although parents permitted both son and daughter to choose when they should marry, parents still thought that the main role of a woman was a

reproductive role and to be fulfilled within limited time, that coincide with possible late high school and college. The belief negatively impacts girls' academic accomplishments and future independence.

Some Parents Approved that a Son Could Marry a Woman who had a Higher Education Level Than his Own

The finding also revealed that a high majority of parent responders (65%) agreed that their son could marry a woman with a higher education level than his. It was an unexpected, but positive finding that CA parents valued a more highly educated woman by approving of this kind of marriage. One female parent told me that her son changed from being an alcohol and drug–addicted man to a very responsible husband and parent after marrying a more highly educated woman. His wife was a pharmacist, and he had children and a happy family. This positive view might help encourage women to aspire to higher education. However, there was no literature found to confirm this finding. Still, a high number (35%) of interviewed parents responded that their son should not marry a woman who had a higher education level than his. This finding confirmed the findings of Ngo and Lee (2007) and Uy (2008), who found that some parents feared that adult males did not want to marry a more educated CA woman. The parents assumed that such a high educated woman would not be submissive enough to her husband, or that she would be too old to marry after completion of a college education (Ngo & Lee, 2007; Uy, 2008).

The rationales for this response were varied. Parents were afraid that the son might lose social status. They were also afraid that the wife would disrespect and control their son because she had more knowledge; that the marriage would be unhealthy due to

the lack of understanding between the couple, possibly adultery, especially by the more educated wife, and finally the prospect of divorce. By accepting this norm, parents might discourage implicitly or explicitly, a daughter from attaining higher education (U.S. Census Bureau, 2013; Chhuon & Hudley, 2011; Ngo & Lee 2007; Ong, 2003; Pho & Mulvey, 2007; SEARAC, 2011; UNESCO, 2003; UNICEF, 2012; U.S. Department of Education, 2014a; Uy, 2008, 2011; World Bank, 2013a). This finding was in line with Tang and Kao (2012), who found that females were often simply expected to be obedient wives and mothers, rather than pursue professional careers. Not permitting a son to marry a more educated woman could discourage a woman from getting a higher education, and subsequently impacted the family's potential sources of income and educated parent teacher for helping their future children's education.

The findings explored in further detail the existing literature and collected data on what predicts CASs' academic success and the roles of gender in CASs' households and education. Six variables relationship examinations and participation of CASs' parents were incorporated into this study. Other existing studies did not include these variables in their studies. The findings of this study confirmed that parent's education and children's age at immigration were the predictors of academic success of CASs. While the literature review shows that Cambodian parents had the least education compared to all ethnic groups in America, relative to their children, based on this study, one third of CASs arrived in the America after age of 5 and, therefore, missed preschool completely, which is a critical stage in children's learning and development. Thus, both CA parents and CASs were at a disadvantaged position regarding education, which could be a chief cause

of social deviance and instability (Merton, 1938). They need more support, motivation, or reward to succeed in a well–educated society.

This study also sought to learn what role gender played in CASs households and education, through six opened–ended questions. These questions focused on gender roles in education, household tasks, socialization, and marriage. Although the findings of this study did not determine the relationship between gender and CASs' academic success, it showed the clear pattern of insightfully unequal treatment between boys and girls in CASs' households that might affect a higher potential of female CASs in education. The stereotype of unequal treatment still largely prevailed among CA parents who were born in Cambodia and abide by their culture that socially subordinates a woman to a man by giving less priority to, and restricting a woman's freedom and fundamental rights. It is clear from the literature that the elimination of this stereotype has been advocated for more than a century by governments, feminists, and international law advocates. These institutions called for equal share in society's opportunities and resources between man and woman and equal partnership in both public and private spheres because full participation of woman proved advancement of society (World Bank, 2012b). Special measures should be instituted to remove legal, political, education, and economical obstacles for accelerating substantive equality. Previous studies touched on some elements of the role of gender in households and in education, but not with comprehensive interview questions. Finally, this study added to the literature by providing additional information on CA parents, additional knowledge regarding CASs'

academic success and its relationship to the predictor variables, and identified as a gap in the literature (Chhuon & Hudley et al., 2010; Neidzwiecki & Duong, 2004; Uy, 2011).

Limitations of the Study

There were significant limitations to this study. The most significant limitation was the difficulty in establishing trust with potential participants due to the background of war and the genocide of the Pol Pot regime and the impact of the assassination of the very well known and respected political commentator and government critic, Dr. Kem Lai. The other limitations were the limited female participant response due to cultural predilections discussed in this dissertation, the enormous amount of time required for each detailed interview and the ability of generalizing the findings of the interviews.

Some potential participants hesitated to participate in interview. There were 29% of potential participants (61 out of 214 participants) declined to participate in the interview. The main reason for denying the interview request was a lack of trust of government due to their traumatic experience during the genocide and the current repressive political situation in Cambodia. Potential participants who declined the request for an interview told me that they were in fear of their safety and lives if they were to visit Cambodia in the future. Some feared that I was a spy for the current government. They openly told me that they feared that the current Cambodian government would detain or execute them, as was common when they revealed their personal information to the Khmer Rouge. They were still traumatized and deterred from the experience during the Khmer Rouge when about 2 out of 7 million populations were died. To assuage their fear and secure their participation, I tried her best to explain the purpose and the

processes of the interview clearly, her role in it, and that she was a student and not a government operative. I also asked the participants to share their interview experience with other potential participants, to reinforce that the interview questions regarded solely the education of CASs and nothing beyond this.

As a result, 21 potential participants, who had initially declined to be interviewed, agreed to be interviewed. Many of these interviewees knew my late husband and his family and agreed to be interviewed when informed of his name by few participants who were aware of my background. This allowed my access to a greater degree of explanatory and anecdotal material than may otherwise have been available in the course of a normal interview. They trusted me after learning about my family background. Most of these participants were friends of my late husband and his siblings. After the interview, they were also excited to ask me about her family since they had not heard from each other about 40 years. This prolonged the time with each participant than expected. I totally unexpected to release my personal family information; however, it was necessary to release it in enabling this traumatized and separated community to trust me.

Potential participants were clearly distracted from the study and other aspects of life to mourn for or discuss the assassination of Dr. Kem Lai. He was assassinated in Phnom Penh capital city, Cambodia, on July 10, 2016, two weeks after the interviews began. His assassination was being mourned and discussed everywhere, in public or private spheres such as homes, pagodas, restaurants, supermarkets, clinics, human service organizations, parks, senior centers, and other gathering places. Some pagodas in the heart of the Cambodian town and Long Beach were flocked with hundreds of mourners in

his symbolic funerals. These places were the target places for the interview. Thus, it was challenging for the researcher to introduce herself into this hot, emotional, and sorrow mood of the potential participants. Dr. Kem Lai was well known for his outspoken comments and critique of the government. His funeral was also celebrated widely throughout the United States, and around the globe where there were Cambodians. There were reports that about 2 million people attended his funeral in Cambodia. To address this issue, I requested the chief of the monks, or respected community leaders attending the funeral to help in announcing her presence, the purpose of the study, and to encourage participants to join it.

Another significant limitation was the low participation of single female parents. Not many single female parents were found in those targeted gathering places. Most of them who showed up in those places declined the interview, out of fear and because of previously discussed cultural norms. As a result, I interviewed more single male parents than single female parents. For two parent households, the interview subjects were equally male and female.

An additional limitation was the amount of time required for the face–to–face interviews. The researcher lives in the San Francisco Bay Area and had to travel about 800 miles to and from the interview site on weekends when the interviews took place. The face–to–face interview was a challenge but was chosen due to its necessity for this traumatized group compared to online surveys, where I would not need to travel.

The final limitation was the generalizability issue because this study was limited to only CAs living in Long Beach, CA. The findings could not be generalized to

Cambodian populations living in the other states or across the United States as a whole. The size of the sample also limited the ability to compare predictor variables with parental attitudes towards the role of gender in education.

Recommendations for Future Research

This study highlights the current underachievement and limited research of CASs' education and calls for additional CASs' academic research. A great deal more researches should be conducted based on the results of this study and the review of prior literature:

1. Future research should include a quality study that explores further the reasons that children who were less than 6 years old at immigration to America are more successful than children who arrived in America after the age, a fact confirmed by this study. This quantitative study supports the relationship between the children's age at immigration to America and their future academic success, but did not provide clear evidence for why this is the case.
2. Future research should be the exploration of rationales that there was no relationship between CASs' academic success and parents' birthplace as found by this study.
3. Future research should include a study that identifies additional variables contributing to the academic success of CASs. These additional variables should contain the factors that negatively affect academic achievement of students, such as the status ranking of schools that CASs are attending (Chhuon & Hudley, 2010); the prevalence of violence against CASs in schools (Ngo & Lee, 2007); unsafe school environments within which racial discrimination and prejudice are

obviously not conducive to learning for any child (Wright & Boun, 2011) and other barriers that CASs are facing. This research will update the latest literature on obstacles to the educational success of Cambodians in America conducted by Nguy (1999). Such future research should be a mixed method study, which obtains both numeric and textual information, to add to the literature, guide stakeholders in education, and help the struggling CASs.

4. Future research could include a study on how well CASs might adapt and adjust to living in America and be successful in education as concluded by Nguy (1999). This future study should be a quantitative study to show numeric data suggesting the main trend. Ngo and Lee (2007) supported the need for additional literature about Southeast Asian students, including CASs, on their identities and adaptation experiences in U.S. schools and society and the roles of teachers, peers, and school in this adapting process. The result of this research could fill significant gaps in the literature.

5. Future research should include an assessment of the local and federal government's existing policies and services to find out the best practices to improve CASs' education and fill the policies and services gaps. The study should be a qualitative study to provide knowledge on what has been done, and what is still lacking.

6. Future research should include a qualitative study of parents' participation in their children's education. The study should aim to learn what activities and networks to employ to help CA children to be successful at school. Such a study

would help filling the gap in the literature related to CASs' parents' involvement in their children academic success.

7. A study should be conducted related to the training needs assessment of CASs' parents. The findings of such an assessment would add to the literature and help education administrators and community–based organizations to provide appropriate knowledge and skills training to parents, in helping to support their children's schooling.

8. Future studies should be conducted on the positive implications of CASs' academic success, based on the availability and accessibility of Cambodian school administrators, counselors, and teachers working in schools in Long Beach. The findings will be valuable to the field, and for future policy reforms based on the findings that suggest that the lack of ethnic minority administrators and teachers affected an ethnic minority's academic success (Chhuon & Dosalmas et al., 2010; Wright & Boun, 2011).

9. The future study should continue to examine the relationship between CASs' academic success and the other predictor variables to identify what the additional statistically significant predictor variables. These variables might include, but are not necessarily limited to: parents' marital status, parents' English proficiency, parents' expectation on their children's academic success, CASs' intrinsic motivation, parents' role model or mentor for their children's education, religion, CASs' self–effort in study, financial aid, zip code of CASs' residency, household tasks, socialization, permitting children to move away to study in schools far from

home, and parents' engagement and networking in CASs' education. Such a study should be a mixed methods study to triangulate information for offering insight into the dimension and the pattern of academic success.

Additional future research about CASs' education will add to the literature as well as continue to support the need for improving CASs' education. Additional research on educational context and how to improve CASs' education would be a resource for providing evidenced–based practices for policy makers, school administrators, community–based organizations, teachers, and parents. Ongoing research can serve as a stage for the voice of CASs to obtain an acknowledgment of the invisible academic issues experienced by CASs. Research needs to become a priority for all the stakeholders in education. When the academic issue of CASs becomes a generally understood issue among educational stakeholders, there will be an increase in acceptance of CASs' educational issues.

Implications for Positive Social Change

The findings of this study provide implications for positive social change via literature enrichment and policy recommendations. This study enriches the literature by identifying what specifically predicts CASs' academic success in Long Beach, CA. It found that parents' education and the age of the children at immigration are the dominant predictors of CASs' academic success. This study also found that there is an alarming gender bias, inequality, and disparity practicing in Cambodian households in Long Beach that may negatively affect daughters' education. These gender biases have been confirmed as factors negatively affect girls' education (U.S. Census Bureau, 2013;

Chhuon & Hudley, 2011; Ong, 2003; Pho & Mulvey, 2007; SEARAC, 2011; Tang & Kao, 2012; UNESCO, 2003; UNICEF, 2012; UNGA, 2000; U.S. Department of Education, 2014a; Uy, 2011; World Bank, 2013a).

The findings also provide enormous implications for social change via policy, not only for CASs, but also for all stakeholders who are interested in education. To improve CASs' education via policy and social change, there is a need for acknowledgment of the lowest education achievement rate of CASs and the barriers by federal government, Long Beach city and CA governments, school administrators, community–based organizational leaders, media, and CASs' parents. The following are recommendations for policy developments and implementation for different levels of stakeholders to contribute improving CASs' education:

Federal Government

The federal government could be a source of policies. The federal government could pass a policy to distribute an educational kit, including a chart of the educational system and some basic instructions about education in both Khmer and English languages, to parents at the arrival ports. This proposed policy is similar to the current federal government program that provides marriage information kits to the sponsored spouses at the arrival ports. The marriage information kit has been helpful for instructing the sponsored couple on what to do to fulfill immigration requirements after arrival in America. Similarly, the education kit will be useful to raise awareness of parents about American school systems and their children's education after arrival. Parents need to understand the American educational system and how to become educational advocates

for their children's education in the United States because school systems in the United States are different from what they were used to back in Cambodia (SEARAC, 2013b). One interviewee told me that it was funny that his parents, who were refugees, did not send him to school. He was seven years old at the time after resettlement in America until they received a government letter warning them of the legal consequences of not for not doing so. Although his parents were university educated in Cambodia, they did not know that education was compulsory for children in America. His parents were struggling with settlement and working to get a roof over their heads and food on the table.

Furthermore, the federal government could also issue an executive order for excellence education as a special measure to improve substantive equality of CASs' and other Southeast Asian students' education, to be at equal footing with the other ethnic minority groups and mainstream Americans. Issuing such executive order indicates the recognition of CASs and other Southeast Asian students, as a unique ethnic minority group that received the lowest education, and has a great special education need due to the experience of wars, genocide, or lack of education in their original country. The executive order to close the education gap of ethnic minority students, chiefly, African and Hispanics, has significantly increased both school attendance and graduation rates (U. S. Department of Education, 2011. From this experience, it is reasonable to assert that similar policies directed towards CASs would be effective in improving education and graduation rates among CASs (Foster & Jivan, 2009).

In addition, the federal government could improve academic rates of CASs by having the Bureau of Census and national educational agencies provide segregated data

about CASs' education outcomes because the issue of CASs' education has been invisible or even overlooked (Olsen, 1997; Pang et al., 2011; Tang et al., 2013). Segregated data and information would be an instrumental tool for local policy makers, researchers, school administrators, service providers, and other interested stakeholders.

Finally, the federal government could allocate special funds in its Fiscal Year Budget Strategic Plan to promote CASs' education because the educational attainment of CASs and Southeast Asian American children is significantly below normal (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010a; SEARAC, 2011). The recommendations are in line with the Functionalism, which supports affirmative means, rewards, and motivation, to address inequality (Merton, 1938, 1968; Mooney et al., 2007).

Local Governments (Long Beach City and CA Governments)

Local governments could also play various critical roles in improving CASs education. Local governments could pass an affirmative policy for closing the education gap between CASs and the U.S. total population. Moreover, local governments could pass a policy to allocate adequate funding to support special measures aimed at schools that have substantive numbers of CASs and nonprofit organizations working to improve CASs' education in Long Beach. These organizations include Khmer Parents Association, KGA, Cambodian Association of America, United Cambodian Community, and other new initiative programs. In addition, local governments could have a policy that requires school district to collect segregated data about CASs' education. Furthermore, Long Beach city government could seriously intervene to stop and prevent community violence, discrimination, and racial profiling against CA youths. Cambodian

refugees and their American–born children have experienced community violence throughout Long Beach (Marshall et al., 2005) and Cambodian youth were discriminated in the areas of racial profiling and educational attainment (KGA, 2011).

School Administrators

School administrators could set various policies to improve CASs' academic success, including a policy that provides access to bilingual Khmer teachers, counselors, or translators for CASs and parents who have limited language proficiency. Children who have difficulty in understanding the instructions in English could have access to teachers, counselors or translators who could help them to understand their questions in their own language or cultural context. The parents should have access to translated school documents and translation during the open house, school orientation, during parents' association meetings, while communicating with school administrators, or participating in other school activities. This policy is needed according to Chhuon and Dosalmas et al. (2010) and Wright and Boun (2011), who asserted that the lack of ethnic minority administrators and teachers working in schools affected the ethnic minority children's academic success.

In addition, the nonbilingual teachers and school administrators should be required to get a cultural humility and competency training so that they could assist CASs properly to succeed at schools. For instance, CASs, culturally, respect an adult, especially the teacher, by not challenging or confronting them. With cultural competency training, the teacher might encourage them to participate by asking questions, or making them answer questions.

Furthermore, a school, which has a considerable number of CASs, could provide a catchup classes after school hours as a special measure, or affirmative action to improve CASs' academic success because their parents do not have enough knowledge to help them with homework or address educational questions CASs may have. This special measure or reward system is promoted by functionalism (Merton, 1938).

School administrators should also separate data on demographic information and education outcomes of CASs as a single group from the Asian category. The aggregation of CASs as a single group of Asian American students often conceals the diminished academic success of CASs (Chhuon & Hudley et al., 2010). Asian American students have been considered as a model ethnic minority, whose members are excelling in education, while CASs has achieved the lowest education levels in America (Chhuon & Hudley, 2010; Ngo & Lee, 2007).

In the same way, the school administrator should pass a policy of nondiscrimination, and promote equality and a safe environment that is conducive to learning for all students. Ngo and Lee (2007) and Wright and Boun (2011) concluded that a predictor of CASs' academic failure was an unsafe school environment, and racial discrimination. Currently, severe discrimination and harassment against CA youths affects their academic success (Chhuon & Hudley, 2011; Chhuon & Dosalmas et al., 2010; KGA, 2011; Lietner Center, 2010; Wright & Boun, 2011). According to the KGA (2011), the second generation Cambodian youth faced severe discrimination in many aspects of their lives.

Finally, school administrators should have a policy to provide counseling services and support to CASs. Some CASs have been affected by trauma from the genocide, wars, and refugee life, directly or through their parents' traumatic life experience (Chan, 2004; Quintiliani, 2009). The trauma plays a role in CASs' Academic success (Chan, 2004; Quintiliani, 2009; Wong et al., 2011).

Nonprofit and Community–Based Organizations

The nonprofit and community based organizations could play critical roles in improving CASs education through creating policies that provide training to empower parents and direct services to support CASs. Concerning the training for parents, the nonprofit and community–based organizations could set their first program priority as enhancing parents' capacity and skills through trainings. These trainings should include:

1. Adult literacy on basic general education
2. English language classes because CASs' parents have limited English proficiency; about 4 times higher than U.S. population at large (SEARAC, 2013a; U.S. Census Bureau, 2010a).
3. Training parents on the importance of education because parents of CASs hold modest academic expectations for their children (Carranza et al., 2009; Chhuon & Hudley et al., 2010; Ngo & Lee, 2007; Rumbaut, 2008; Uy, 2008).
4. Gender training so that they treat their sons and daughters equally in households and education. The findings from this study revealed an alarming gender inequality and disparity in Cambodian families in Long Beach, CA.

Regarding direct services, the nonprofit and community–based organizations should include their strategic goals to provide after school or weekend programs for CASs, to help them succeed at schools. These programs could provide language, math, and homework tutoring to students who need assistance. The art, leadership, civic education, and mentoring programs are also important to provide to CASs, to empower them to be active citizens in schools and in adult lives. Furthermore, the nonprofit and community–based organizations could also motivate CASs' education by holding congratulating ceremonies or providing awards for the successful CASs, and sharing best practices on how to be successful. Finally, the nonprofit and community–based organizations could do home visits to follow up with students who have difficulties with education and provide the necessary assistance based on their needs. Special attention should be given to CASs who arrived in America after the age of 6 years old.

Mainstream and Cambodian Ethnic Media (Khmer Post, Radio 106.3 FM, Radio Free Asia)

The media has played an important role in raising awareness about the Cambodian community, especially on deportation. However, the media could still do much more to contribute to the improvement of CASs' education. The media could disseminate the study findings and recommendations to raise awareness of the public, policy makers, and school administrators on educational outcomes, barriers, and the needed support services for CASs' educational success. Moreover, the media also could advocate that policy makers and school administrators adopt adequate policy aimed at improving CASs' education. In addition, the media could raise awareness to encourage

the effective intervention to stop discrimination, racial profiling, and violence against CASs to create safe environment for CASs at schools and at homes. According to Chhuon and Dosalmas et al. (2010), KGA (2011), Quintaliani (2009), and Wright & Boun (2011), CA youths encountered an increased community violence and serious discrimination through racial profiling, which impacted their school attainment.

Parents of CASs

The role of parents is a vital enabling factor to CASs' academic success. It is confirmed by the findings of this study that parents' education is a predictor to CASs' academic success. Recommendations for parents to help improving their children's education include active participation in trainings aimed at enhancing their knowledge and skill in helping their children's schoolwork. Additionally, parents should treat daughters and sons equally in both private and public spheres.

Parents could join the parent's association to be advocates for their children's education, health, and safety. Parent Association's mission is to make every child's potential a reality by engaging and empowering families and communities to advocate for all children (National Parent Teacher Association, 2016). Moreover, the parents could also participate in open house meetings with their children, to understand their children's school and to build up contacts with administrators and teachers. Furthermore, parents could help their children with homework, or help them to get extra support to finish their homework through after school program. Also, parents could encourage and help their children in joining extra–curricular and library activities that enhance their school

achievement. Lastly, the parent could regularly follow up with teachers or school counselors to ensure that their children's education accomplishments are satisfactory.

This study provides multiple policy recommendations at various levels of how CASs' education can be improved. If these policies were formulated and implemented, there would be great implications for positive social change. For instance, if CASs' education outcome information is segregated as a single group, and made available to the public, policy makers, services providers, media, and other interested stakeholders, CASs educational issues will be acknowledged as a serious issue to address. Consequently, CASs' academic issues may no longer be an invisible issue that has continued affecting CASs. In addition, as CASs' poor academic performance issue is acknowledged, the school, media, educational service providers, Cambodian community, and other stakeholders may advocate for policy reform, funding, and services aiming to improve CASs' education performance. Furthermore, when there is policy and funding allocation for improving CASs' education, there will be support services for CASs, their parents, and the community to help CASs succeed at schoolsin a comparable manner to the general U.S. population's academic success rate. If CASs' education issue is addressed appropriately, there will be a decrease in dropout rates and an increase in graduate rates. When CASs are successful at schools, CASs will get a good job. Their success will end the cycle of poverty and government support for the long run. CASs also have knowledge to help their children succeed at school in the future. Moreover, when violence, racial profiling, and racial discrimination against CA youth at schools and community is revealed, measures will be taken to stop it, making schools a safer and more conducive to

learning place for all students, not just CASs. When violence stops, the community is safer and happier. To sum up, from this study, there are plenty of recommendations to regulating agencies, schools, nonprofit and community–based organizations, media, and individual parents that could potentially impact positive social change for CASs' education.

Conclusions

The findings of this quantitative study indicate that the parents' education level and the age of children at immigration to America played a fundamental role in the academic success of CASs. The more education the parents had from Cambodia before moving to the United States, the more academic success their children received in America. The older the children were when they arrived in America, the less successful they were in education. This study also showed a great gender bias, inequality, and disparity in Cambodian households that might have a negative relationship with CASs' academic success. It was impressive to see that CASs' average academic level achieved is higher than the parents' educational level in this study.

Reviewed literature showed that CASs attending U.S. public schools have the lowest academic achievement rates of any ethnic group at any grade level (Akiba, 2010; Chhuon & Hudley, 2010; Le, 2014; NCES, 2013; U.S. Census Bureau, 2010a, Uy, 2011). The issue of CASs' educational underperformance has been largely ignored (Tang et al., 2013) and invisible (Olsen, 1997; Pang et al., 2011) due to the fact that there is no segregated data of CASs' academic outcomes (SEARAC, 2011).

There are multitudes of policy recommendations to improve CASs' academic success rate. First, the segregation of data on academic achievement of CASs and the acknowledgment of CASs' abnormally lowest achievement rate as a serious issue is a point to start. When there is acknowledgment among school administrators, nonprofit and community–based organizations, media, local and federal governments, and parents, then policy can be developed and implemented that can create social change, both locally and nationally. Second, continued research on the topic of CASs' education outcomes and barriers will validate the need for literature regarding policy that supports the advancement of CASs' substantive equality in education. Third, changes in special policies and funding of the federal and the local government to include CASs as one of the beneficiaries may help CASs succeed in schools. Empowering parents' capacity and their participation in advocating for their children's academic success, providing appropriate support to CASs at school, ensuring cultural understand of CASs, and enhancing networks among service providers to advocate for policy change, and implementation will guarantee the success. Forth, finally, policy changes toward improvement of CASs' education will emphasize a brighter future for CASs to be productive citizens, who can contribute to the community positively, and take care of themselves and their families without government assistance.

This study provides multiple implications for policy development and implementation. For instance, the findings of this study will minimize the literature gap on the relationship between parents' and children's factors and CASs' academic success, and gender roles in Cambodian households that could affect CASs' academic success. In

addition, the findings could be resourceful in raising awareness to the public, policy makers, community leaders, parents, and governments at different levels, to address the issue. Moreover, the findings could help improve public policies for advancement of CASs' academic performance after the issue has been acknowledged. Finally, the findings could guide program developments to make social changes towards better academic success of CASs. These programs could include training for CASs' parents and direct services to support CASs' academic achievements as discussed earlier.

Taken together, the findings of this study will augment the literature on substantive educational equality, and contribute to the formulation of public policies and implementation, which will promote positive social change for a CA population that has increased by more than 34.3% between the years of 2000 and 2010 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010a, p. 15). Each part of society is equally important as noted by Merton (1938); each part contributes to the equilibrium, the solidarity, and the stability of a society. When it does not, or cannot contribute, the result may be social dysfunction.

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Appendix A: Interview Questions in English

Name of interviewer: _____Date of Interview: _____

Case Code #: _____

I. Parental Information (Chosen alternately between mother and father)

1. Gender: ☐ Male ☐ Female Zip Code: _____
2. Where is your birthplace? ☐ Phnom Penh ☐ Province/rural area
3. What was your household income per year when your child was at school?

   _____US$, Household #: _____

4. What is your level of education in Cambodia?

   ☐ No high school (Grade 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12)

   ☐ High school degree (Completed Grade 12)

   ☐ Some college education (1, 2, 3, 4)

   ☐ Bachelor Degree education (Completed Grade 4 with diploma)

   ☐ Graduate/professional degree (Master, Doctor, PhD, Lawyer, engineer)

5. What is your level of education in America?

   ☐ No high school (Grade 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12)

   ☐ High school degree (Completed Grade 12)

   ☐ Some college education (1, 2, 3, 4)

   ☐ Bachelor Degree education (Completed Grade 4 with Diploma)

   ☐ Graduate/professional degree (Master, Doctor, PhD, Lawyer, engineer)

II. Children Information (A child will be chosen by drawing)

6. How old is your child now? _____

7. What is gender of your child? ☐ Male ☐ Female

8. How old when your child immigrating into the United States? _____

9. What is your child's level of education in the United States?

   ☐ No high school (Grade 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12)

   ☐ High school degree (Completed Grade 12)

   ☐ Some college education (1, 2, 3, 4)

   ☐ Bachelor Degree education (Completed Grade 4 with diploma)

   ☐ Graduate/professional degree (Master, Doctor, PhD, Lawyer, engineer)

III. Gender Understanding (Answer only if you have both son and daughter)

10. Son's education is more important than daughter's education if only one child can go to school? ☐Yes ☐No

    If yes, give reasons: _____

11. Who is likely to do more household tasks: cooking, cleaning, washing, taking care of siblings, taking care of sick/elderly family member, and taking care of the house?

    ☐ Son ☐ Daughter ☐ Both ☐ Parents

    If the daughter, give reasons: _____

12. Which child would you be more comfortable to permit leaving home for schooling, which is far from home? ☐ Son ☐ Daughter ☐ both ☐ not permitted

    If son, give reasons: _____

13. Which child is harder for you to permit going out for socialization at night?

    ☐ Son ☐ Daughter ☐ both ☐ not permitted

    If daughter: give reasons: _____

14. If they are the same age, who should get marry earlier ☐ Son ☐ Daughter ☐ both

    If daughter, give reasons: _____

15. Would you like your son marry a woman, who has a higher education than him?

    ☐ Yes ☐ No

    If no, give reasons: _____

Thanks for your kind participation in the interview. Wish you well and good luck!

Appendix B: Interview Questions in Khmer

សម្ភ័ន្ធយ:សំនួរសំរាប់សំភាសន៍

ឈ្មោះអ្នកសំភាសន៍_____

កាលបរិច្ឆេទនៃការសំភាសន៍_____

លេខសំងាត់_____

I. ពត៍មានអំពីឪពុកម្តាយ (រើសម្តាយ និងឪពុកឆ្លាស់គ្នា)

1. ភេទ ☐ប្រុស ☐ស្រី លេខកូដកន្លែងរស់នៅ _____
2. តើលោក/លោកស្រីមានស្រុកកំណើតនៅឯណា? ☐ភ្នំពេញ ☐ខេត្ត
3. តើលោក/លោកស្រី មានប្រាក់ចំណូលប្រចាំឆ្នាំប៉ុន្មាន នៅពេលកូននៅរៀន?

   _____US$ចំនួនសមាជិកគ្រួសារ?_____
4. តើការសិក្សានៅកម្ពុជារបស់លោក/លោកស្រីមានកំរិតណា?

   ☐ គ្មានសញ្ញាប័ត្របាក់ឌុប (ថ្នាក់ទី១,២,៣,៤,៥,៦,៧,៨,៩,១០,១១,១២)

   ☐ មានបាក់ឌុប (រៀនចប់ថ្នាក់ទី១២)

   ☐ បានរៀននៅមហាវិទ្យាល័យខ្លះៗ(ឆ្នាំទី១,២,៣,៤)

   ☐ មានសញ្ញាប័ត្របរិញ្ញា (បញ្ចប់ឆ្នាំទី៤ និងទទួលសញ្ញាប័ត្រ)

   ☐ មានសញ្ញាប័ត្រជាន់ខ្ពស់ឬរិដ្ឋាជីវ: (អនុបណ្ឌិត បណ្ឌិត មេធាវី វិស្វករ)

5. តើការសិក្សានៅសហរដ្ឋរបស់លោក/លោកស្រីមានកំរិតណា?

- ☐ គ្មានសញ្ញាប័ត្រជាក់ឌុប (ថ្នាក់ទី១,២,៣,៤,៥,៦,៧,៨,៩,១០,១១,១២)
- ☐ មានជាក់ឌុប (រៀនចប់ថ្នាក់ទី១២)
- ☐ បានរៀននៅមហាវិទ្យាល័យខ្លះៗ (ឆ្នាំទី១,២,៣,៤)
- ☐ មានសញ្ញាប័ត្របរិញ្ញា (បញ្ចប់ឆ្នាំទី៤ និងទទួលសញ្ញាប័ត្រ)
- ☐ មានសញ្ញាប័ត្រជាន់ខ្ពស់ឬវិជ្ជាជីវៈ (អនុបណ្ឌិត បណ្ឌិត មេធាវី វិស្វករ)

II. ពត៌មានអំពីកូន(ឪពុកម្តាយចាប់លេខ)

6. តើកូនអាយុប៉ុន្មានឥឡូវនេះ?_____

7. ភេទរបស់កូន ☐ ប្រុស ☐ ស្រី

8. តើកូនមានអាយុប៉ុន្មានពេលទៅដល់អាមេរិក?_____

9. តើការសិក្សារបស់កូននៅអាមេរិកមានកំរិតណា?

- ☐ គ្មានសញ្ញាប័ត្រជាក់ឌុប (ថ្នាក់ទី១,២,៣,៤,៥,៦,៧,៨,៩,១០,១១,១២)
- ☐ មានជាក់ឌុប (រៀនចប់ថ្នាក់ទី១២)
- ☐ បានរៀននៅមហាវិទ្យាល័យខ្លះៗ (ឆ្នាំទី១,២,៣,៤)
- ☐ មានសញ្ញាប័ត្របរិញ្ញា (បញ្ចប់ឆ្នាំទី៤ និងទទួលសញ្ញាប័ត្រ)
- ☐ មានសញ្ញាប័ត្រជាន់ខ្ពស់ឬវិជ្ជាជីវៈ (អនុបណ្ឌិត បណ្ឌិត មេធាវី វិស្វករ)

III. ការយល់ដឹងអំពីភេទ(ឆ្លើយប្រសិនមានទាំងកូនប្រុសនិងកូនស្រី)

10. ការសិក្សារបស់កូនប្រុស សំខាន់ជាងការសិក្សារបស់កូនស្រី

ប្រសិនបើលោក/លោក

ស្រីអាចបញ្ជូនតែកូនម្នាក់ទៅរៀន? ☐ បាទ / ចាស ☐ ទេ

ប្រសិនបើឆ្លើយថា បាទ/ចាស សូមផ្តល់មូលហេតុ_____

11. តើកូនម្នាក់ណាដែលធ្វើការងារផ្ទះ ដូចជាចំអិនអាហារ បោសសំអាតផ្ទះ

បោកខោអាវ មើលថែទាំបងប្អូន ថែទាំសមាជិកគ្រួសារដែលឈឺ

និងថែទាំផ្ទះសំបែងច្រើនជាងគេ? ☐ កូនប្រុស ☐ កូនស្រី

☐ ទាំងពីរ ☐ ពុកម្តាយ

ប្រសិនបើកូនស្រី សូមផ្តល់មូលហេតុ_____

12. តើកូនម្នាក់ណាដែលលោក/លោកស្រីមានអារម្មណ៍ស្តួលជាងក្នុងការបញ្ជូនទៅរៀ

ននៅសាលាដែលនៅឆ្ងាយពីផ្ទះ?

☐ កូនប្រុស ☐ កូនស្រីទាំងពីរ ☐ មិនអនុញ្ញាត

ប្រសិនបើកូនប្រុស សូមពន្យល់មូលហេតុ_____

13. តើកូនម្នាក់ណាដែលលោក/លោកស្រីមានអារម្មណ៍លំបាកជាងក្នុងការអនុញ្ញាតិ

ឱ្យទៅដើរលេង ឬចូលរួមការជួបជុំនៅពេលយប់?

☐ កូនប្រុស ☐ កូនស្រីទាំងពីរ ☐ មិនអនុញ្ញាត

ប្រសិនបើកូនស្រី សូមផ្តល់មូលហេតុ_____

ប្រសិនបើកូនប្រុសនិងកូនស្រីរបស់លោក/លោកស្រីមានអាយុស្មើគ្នា

តើកូនម្នាក់ណា គួររៀបការមុន?

☐ កូនប្រុស ☐ កូនស្រី ☐ ទាំងពីរ

ប្រសិនបើកូនស្រី សូមផ្តល់មូលហេតុ_____

14. តើលោក/លោកស្រី

ចង់អោយកូនប្រុសរៀបការជាមួយស្ត្រីដែលមានការអប់រំខ្ពស់ជាងខ្លួនទេ?

☐ បាទ/ចាស ☐ ទេ

ប្រសិនបើឆ្លើយទេ សូមផ្តល់មូលហេតុ_____

ខ្ញុំសូមថ្លែងអំណរគុណយ៉ាងខ្លាំង ចំពោះការចូលរួមសំភាសន៍របស់

លោក/លោកស្រី និងសូមឱ្យលោក/លោកស្រីមានសុខភាពល្អ និងសំណាងល្អ!