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A Qualitative Study of the Career Experiences of Asian and Asian American Female Administrators in U.S. Higher Education

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This dissertation, directed and approved by the candidate's committee, has been accepted by the College of Leadership and Professional Studies of Abilene Christian University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership

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School of Educational Leadership

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of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership

by

Yunru Shen

November 2024

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to myself, my parents, my husband, the current and future

Asian and Asian American women's leaders, and anyone interested in this topic.

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Throughout the research process, I would like to express special thanks to the six qualified participants who provided their valuable experiences, support, and validation and

Abstract

This qualitative phenomenological study explored the experiences of Asian and Asian American women administrators' career paths in U.S. higher education. The research fills a gap in the literature regarding the careers of Asian and Asian American women administrators. The recruitment process was completed between May 13 and July 9, 2024. Recruitment emails were sent to 25 potentially qualified participants, including a network of 17 people made up of mentors, professors, and colleagues, as well as eight professional associations and LinkedIn. The participants were six Asian and Asian American biologically female administrators at U.S. colleges and universities. These participants currently hold or have held administrative or leadership positions in U.S. higher education for more than 2 years or upwards of 20. For all interviews, informed consent forms were sent beforehand, and no interview was conducted until the qualified participants read and signed the forms. Triangulation was used to strengthen this phenomenological study's credibility by using multiple data sources, Zoom interviews, field notes, and member checking. As a phenomenological study, thematic analysis was used by applying a homogeneity-focused approach and adopting Moustakas's (1994) model: epoché, phenomenological reduction, imaginative variation, and a synthesis of meaning and essence. Five main themes were formed with an additional four subthemes by using the same homogeneity-focused approach. The main themes included *association & networking*, *family*, *discrimination*, *language*, and *mentor*; additional themes were *working experience*, *suggestion*, *education*, and *bicultural/multicultural*.

Keywords: Asian, Asian American, higher education, women leadership, first-generation immigrants, 1.5-generation immigrants, second-generation immigrants

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Recent racial and ethnic demographic shifts in the United States have prompted the increasing trend to replicate these shifts in the composition of full-time faculty at higher education institutions (National Center for Education Statistics, 2021). Although studies have shown that diversity in faculty is able to prompt a connectedness to students who are racially and ethnically similar (Atkins et al., 2014; S. H. Lee et al., 2022), people of color are not as often represented in administrative leadership positions in higher education in the United States. For instance, Asian and Asian Americans are statistically less represented as college and university administrators than they are as full-time faculty (Hartlep, 2022; National Center for Education Statistics, 2021). Moreover, Asian and Asian American women in administrative positions in colleges and universities in the United States, the specific focus of this study, are infrequent (Liang et al., 2018). Because of the rarity of Asian and Asian American women in U.S. higher education administrative leadership positions, relatively few studies have concentrated on this population, which presents the necessity to emphasize current Asian and Asian American women administrators' experiences and backgrounds in the research. As intersectionality theory (Hooks, 2015) explains, women from minority backgrounds have intersections in their characteristics, for instance, an African American woman who is a nonnative speaker of English can cause further marginalization, and this is particularly true when it comes to women of color, including Asian and Asian American women, seeking leadership positions in higher education institutions in the United States. Thus, discovering how these women's experiences shaped their ascension to leadership positions in American higher education institutions could elucidate how it might also be possible for more Asian and Asian American women to rise to leadership positions in academia (Liang et al., 2018; Yosso, 2005).

Background

Even though the ratio of racially and ethnically diverse students and teachers on campus has increased, there still needs to be more representation in college and university leadership (Curtis & Jun, 2013). As enrollment of diverse student groups grows on U.S. college and university campuses, school leadership also needs to become more diverse to represent the student body. This representation is important because it demonstrates that the university values diversity and diverse experiences and opinions. It also adds diverse voices and perspectives to academic conversations and institutional visions and missions (Hernandez & Longman, 2020).

In this study, Asians refer to Asians born abroad and legally working in the United States. Asian Americans include Asian immigrants and Americans born of Asian descent, people from Asia, or their descendants from China, Japan, Korea, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran, and other Asian countries (Kieu & Wei, 2020). Although the population of Asians and Asian Americans has almost doubled in number over the last 20 years, from 2000 to 2019, making this demographic one of the fastest-growing minority groups in the United States at approximately 7%, the number of college and university presidents of Asian and Asian American descent, including male and female, is significantly less than 7% at 1% (Budiman & Ruiz, 2021a; Hartlep, 2022; Kieu & Wei, 2020). The discrepancy in percentage shows a need for research to investigate and explore what supports and associations are necessary for Asian and Asian Americans, especially Asian American women, who face the intersecting obstacles of gender and race, to advance to leadership positions at U.S. colleges and universities (Anandavalli, 2021; Hooks, 2015; Yosso, 2005).

Multiple recent U.S. studies have shown that the reasons Asian and Asian American women are less represented in leadership positions are that Asian and Asian American women

encounter a common promotion bottleneck when taking leadership positions in the college workplace or are often not trusted to attain leadership positions (Liang, 2020; Liang et al., 2018; Na & Kawahara, 2022). Research shows that one of the reasons for this bottleneck phenomenon is that Asian and Asian American women do not meet the expectations of what a leader is thought to be because, in the American culture, Asian and Asian American leaders are thought to be soft, passive, and not leadership material (Gündemir et al., 2019; Kodama & Dugan, 2020). Studies have also shown that Asian leaders are often perceived as foreigners and may have language disadvantages (especially first-generation immigrants), cultural differences, and a lack of political knowledge (Anandavalli, 2021; Liang et al., 2018; Yosso, 2005). Furthermore, because of the negative impact of stereotypes, Asians and Asian Americans have a skeptical attitude toward their ability to pursue professional leadership careers, leading to their distrust in applying for leadership positions that have an inactive attitude toward promotion (Liang et al., 2018).

Statement of the Problem

Almost 2 decades ago, Salleh-Barone (2004) pointed out the lack of research on Asian American female leaders in colleges and universities. Most researchers who have studied this topic were doctoral students, and unfortunately, this lack of representation in scholarly research still exists, particularly in studies that use a qualitative approach (Fang, 2023). The problem addressed in this study was the underrepresentation of Asian and Asian American women in administrative positions at higher education institutions in the United States compared to Whites and other minority groups. While only 1% of college presidents hired in recent years are Asian and Pacific Islander (Asian and Asian American women are a subset of the broader category of Asian and Pacific Islander), 6.5% of students at colleges and universities in the United States and

8.4% of faculty are Asian and Pacific Islander, which denotes a disparity in the participation of Asians, Asian Americans, and Pacific Islanders in administrative positions (Gammage, 2012; Hartlep, 2022; Lowe, 2022). Additionally, only 6,544 out of 188,692 professors (or approximately 3.47%) are female Asian and Pacific Islanders in the United States (National Center for Education Statistics, 2021). The underrepresentation of Asian and Asian American women in leadership positions in U.S. higher education as compared to women in other racial groups (Mamiseishvili & Stuckey, 2022; Shao, 2023) also mirrors various types of occupations in the United States, such as those in the STEM and athletic domains (Castro & Collins, 2021; Cunningham et al., 2021; Picariello et al., 2023), making this a much broader concern for a rapidly diversifying U.S. population of which Asians and Asian Americans currently make up about 7% of the total (U.S. Department of Commerce, 2023).

The possible reasons for this bottleneck when it comes to Asian and Asian American women ascending to leadership positions include societal stereotypes that project marginalizing images of Asian and Asian American women as not possessing leadership traits that are conducive to success in U.S. organizations (Cunningham et al., 2021; Gamst et al., 2021; Gamst et al., 2022).

More specifically, in higher education contexts, research also showed that foreign-born Asians and Asian Americans faced disadvantages in promotion to leadership positions due to language, communication skills, and cultural differences relative to their birthplace compared to Whites (Mamiseishvili & Stuckey, 2022; Shao, 2023). Additionally, stereotypical gender roles from inside Asian cultures that follow a patriarchal model also serve to discourage Asian American women from assuming leadership positions (Aiston, 2022; Bouteska & Mili, 2022; Gamst et al., 2022). First- and second-generation Asian Americans are still profoundly

influenced by such cultural traditions while trying to navigate a dual culture (Gamst et al., 2022). Thus, the converging of forces from outside and inside the culture contributes to this paucity of Asian and Asian American women in leadership positions in higher education institutions in the United States.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to explore phenomena that manifest in the career experiences of Asian and Asian American female administrators in higher education that have served to and continue to shape their career trajectories. The phenomenological research included gaining in-depth participant insights through Zoom interviews, field notes, and member checking (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019; Carter et al., 2014). In addition to the live on-camera Zoom interviews, additional information was used from any subsequent interviews and email correspondence with me to obtain more data (Peoples, 2020). The study was specifically designed to identify key experiences that have, or continue to, shape participants' career trajectories and have assisted them in obtaining leadership positions in U.S. higher education. Furthermore, the findings of phenomenological research were reported in the first person, which included recording rich details of participants' articulated workplace experiences, along with objective factual information (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019; Thomasson, 2005). In addition, the result of phenomenological research may also reveal similarities among the collective experiences of participants (Manen, 2023). Learning through the experiences of current Asian and Asian American female administrators at U.S. colleges and universities could help guide more Asian and Asian American women, and women from marginalized groups in general, to reach leadership positions in such a tough context and envision steps they can take to

be equally successful in aspiring to leadership positions in colleges and universities in the United States.

Research Question

One primary research question formed the foundation of this research study.

RQ1: What is the lived experience of Asian and Asian American female administrators that influenced and further shaped their trajectory toward leadership positions within U.S. higher education?

Definition of Key Terms

Asian. A term to denote people of Asian origin born outside of the United States and used synonymously with Asian-born.

Asian Americans. Individuals of Asian heritage who are either immigrants from or descendants of countries within different regions of Asia (Kieu & Wei, 2020).

Diversity. Variations in age, race, ethnicity, abilities, disabilities, sexual orientations, and gender identities are global demographic-wide trends that impact workforce composition (Mor Barak, 2017).

First-generation immigrants. Persons whose parents or grandparents immigrated from other Asian countries to the United States and worked and settled here (Kieu & Wei, 2020).

Higher education. Higher education refers to postsecondary institutions, such as community colleges, private liberal arts colleges, and public research universities, that offer more profound, specialized knowledge and skills training to students in academic and professional fields to foster societal and economic progress (Mukherjee & Dasgupta, 2023).

1.5-generation immigrants. Individuals whose parents or siblings were born in Asian nations and migrated to the United States during their formative years or adolescence (Rojas, 2012).

Second-generation immigrants. Second-generation immigrants are the children of first- or 1.5-generation U.S. immigrants.

Chapter Summary

Chapter 1 included a comprehensive background and details concerning the issue of underrepresentation among Asian and Asian American female administrators within higher education institutions. This chapter also presented the purpose of this qualitative research, which was to explore individual experiences that have shaped or continue to shape Asian/Asian American women administrators' leadership trajectories in higher education. Although Asians and Asian Americans make up 7% of the population in the United States, which is proportionate to the number of college students (6.5%) and faculty (8.4%) of Asian descent in higher education in the United States, Asians and Asian Americans, especially Asian and Asian American women, are not equally represented in higher education administrative positions at just 1% of the total (Gammage, 2012; Hartlep, 2022; Lowe, 2022). This study sought to collect these women's experiences and perspectives leading to their professional rise, which will be meaningful to other Asian American women who also wish to aspire to leadership in higher education in the United States.

Chapter 2 contains a literature review that serves to both inform and bolster the current study. In Chapter 2, I introduce acts, events, and history in the United States related to Asians and Asian Americans as a basis for the literature review presentation. I also delve into the historical career trajectories of Asian and Asian American women leaders in higher education,

which uses both intersectionality theory (Hooks, 2015) and community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005) as theoretical lenses for analyzing this topic by providing a multidimensional understanding of the literature. I also explore the following key themes, which are also connected to one or both intersectionality theory (Hooks, 2015) and community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005) to theoretical frameworks: Confucian culture in East Asian countries, patriarchal thinking in the United States, Asian and Asian American women, stereotypical social behaviors expected of Asian and Asian American women, obstacles for Asian and Asian American women in the United States, bicultural individuals, different religions in Asian and Asian American communities, and mentorship support specific to Asian and Asian American women. Chapter 3 discusses the reasons for the research design and methodology used in this study. In Chapter 4, I report the study results, and Chapter 5 discusses the findings, conclusions, and recommendations for future studies.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This research aimed to provide theoretical support for Asian and Asian American female leadership studies. The primary purpose of a literature review is to establish a strong foundation of knowledge and identify gaps in existing research regarding the underrepresentation of Asian and Asian American women in leadership positions within higher education. By systematically reviewing the relevant literature, I intended to illuminate the critical aspects, perspectives, and limitations addressed and overlooked in prior research. This literature review constructed a foundation for addressing this study's research question: What is the lived experience of Asian and Asian American female administrators that influenced and further shaped their trajectory toward leadership positions within U.S. higher education? I also framed this study within the existing academic discourse on these underexplored themes. The analysis delved into past career experiences of Asian and Asian American women leaders in higher education through the following themes: acts, events, and history related to Asian and Asian American women, Confucian culture in East Asia countries, patriarchal thinking in the United States, Asian and Asian American women, stereotypical social behaviors expected of Asian and Asian American women, obstacles for Asian and Asian American women in the United States, bicultural individuals, different religious in Asian and Asian American communities, and mentorship support specific to Asian and Asian American women.

Literature Search Methods

I initially found most of the peer-reviewed articles and books cited in this literature review from databases on the Abilene Christian University (ACU) Brown Library's website by searching terms such as *Asian*, *Eastern Asia*, *South Asia*, *Western Asia*, *Asian American*, *women*, *leadership*, *diversity*, *leaders' traits*, and *higher education*. Also, since there are few studies on

Asian leadership, I searched for different Asian contexts in peer-reviewed journal articles by searching specific Asian countries: China, Japan, Philippines, Indonesia, Korea, Pakistan, Iran, etc. Subsequently, I searched for current literature by utilizing two online resources (elicit.org and Google Scholar) and the ACU Library Distance Learning Portal.

According to Randolph's (2009) suggestion on how to conduct a literature review, I extracted the following keywords from the research question: *Asian and Asian American female administrators*, *career experiences*, *female leadership*, *support*, *associations*, *career trajectories*, *higher education*, and *leadership positions*; and I used these keywords to find additional research. During the process of organizing the literature and drafting this review of the literature, I revisited literature related to unclear explanations of relevant topics and conducted further in-depth research on key themes, including acts related to Asian and Asian American women, individualism and collectivism, stereotypes and prejudices, expectations, Confucian culture, language, cultural and political barriers, mentoring Asian Americans (with a focus on higher education), women leadership, and intersectionality theory and community cultural wealth. The process of organizing the literature and drafting a literature review enhanced the systematic investigation, arriving at a more comprehensive understanding of this topic and connection to one or both intersectionality theory (Hooks, 2015) and community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005) to theoretical frameworks.

Moreover, my literature collection is managed electronically by Zotero software, which is an application that collects, organizes, and cites references. During each literature reading, I took notes, marked key points, and classified file names so that I could easily read the original documents and my documents over and over in subsequent writing. This chapter focuses on themes that were divulged through a reading of the literature. They include acts related to Asian

and Asian American women, background diversity leader, bicultural individual, Christian Asian American, Buddhism Asian American women, case studies of successful Asian leaders, Confucian culture, expectation, Indian American women, individualism and collectivism, language, cultural, and political barriers, mentoring Asian Americans (focus on higher education), stereotypes and prejudices, intersectionality theory (including African Americans), and community cultural wealth (including African Americans). The literature on African Americans was included because the relevant literature and successful cases of African American female leaders are worthy of study and reference in my research because the intersectionality theory and community cultural wealth were originated by African American female leaders (Hooks, 2015).

Furthermore, after reading a great deal of literature, I found that some studies use Asian, Asian American, and Pacific Islander as umbrella terms, and the participants are usually not asked to identify how they should or want to be identified within these terms; this challenged me while I was researching this topic. These terms are sometimes used in a haphazard way because Asians can refer to Asian Americans, and Asian Americans can be referred to in the literature as Asians because there is not a measure in the research as to people's personal identity as Asian, Asian American, Pacific Islander, Korean, Chinese, Japanese, Indian, etc. Thus, I have included specific definitions in the Asian and Asian American chapter sections, including Asians, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPI), Asian Americans, first-generation immigrants, 1.5-generation immigrants, second-generation immigrants, and additional generations of immigrants. These definitions were influenced by the difficulties that I found while reviewing the literature. After reading much relevant literature, the definitions I wrote were verified by Asian American and Pacific Islander experts.

In addition, during the research process, it was discovered that different religions in Asian culture have different impacts on Asians. Therefore, I researched Christianity, Buddhism, and Hinduism. Because my knowledge of religions other than Christianity is limited, I found two other Asians and Asian Americans who are Buddhist and Hinduism to verify the authenticity of the contents of the documents regarding Buddhism and Hinduism. Except for religion, during the research process, I also found that there were relatively few sources in which the historical background of Asians is mentioned, so I sorted out the relevant documents and resources and analyzed them at the beginning of the literature review. Collecting and reading literature is iterative and incremental, so newly discovered topics may be added later.

Theoretical Framework Discussion

Both the intersectionality theory (Hooks, 2015) and community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005) frameworks have separately been applied in previous research studies. Peters (2012) utilized the intersectionality theory framework to incorporate the dimension of age into previous research on successful African American female school leaders. Liang et al. (2018) applied the intersectionality theoretical framework used in Peters' (2012) study to further advance the literature on Asian American women by introducing the dimensions of historical context and geographical location related to age.

Additionally, community cultural wealth has been used in studies about African Americans (Cooper et al., 2017; James-Gallaway, 2022). James-Gallaway (2022) argued that the foundation of Yosso's (2005) concept of community cultural wealth could be traced back to critical race theory. Cooper et al.'s (2017) study demonstrated that community cultural wealth has a positive impact on African American female college athletes in their academic and educational pursuits at both a Historically Black College/University (HBCU) and a Historically

White Institution (HWI). As Asians and Asian Americans are also asked to navigate the dominant culture in the United States that marginalizes and oppresses their racial and cultural backgrounds, community cultural wealth can also be applied to Asian and Asian American populations (Jaumot-Pascual et al., 2021).

Additional research has used intersectionality and community cultural wealth together successfully, but the research has mostly included African American women. Few studies have been found that have used both intersectionality theory and community cultural wealth to explore the experiences of Asian and Asian American women solely. For instance, three empirical research studies on women of color (WOC) in graduate programs in computing used both the intersectionality and community cultural wealth frameworks to talk about Asian American or mixed-race females (Hodari et al., 2014; Hodari et al., 2015, 2016; Jaumot-Pascual et al., 2021). Thus, this study addressed a specific gap in the literature by utilizing a qualitative research approach that employed both intersectionality theory (Hooks, 2015) and community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005) to comprehensively investigate the experiences, challenges, and successes of Asian and Asian American women leaders in higher education institutions.

Intersectionality Theory Framework

The intersectionality theory, which is grounded in both critical race and feminist theories, was originally introduced in an article by Kimberlé W. Crenshaw in 1989; it explained the intersections between characteristics of minority women, including race, gender, socioeconomics, language, etc., that cause them further marginalization (Crenshaw, 1989, 1991, 2021). Intersectionality theory was initially applied to African American women, emphasizing the dual challenges of race and gender faced by African American women; it has also been extended to include women in additional minority groups such as Native American, Hispanic,

and Asian women (Crenshaw, 1991; Hooks, 2015). Hooks (2015) mentioned some intersectional issues among other minority groups, including Asian women, but she did not delve into the cultural background behind them and just generally classified them as other minority groups. Compared to Hooks (2015), Liang et al. (2018) expanded the intersectionality theory framework into research involving the Asian and Asian American female community from the scope of historical time and place. According to intersectionality theory, language plays a role in further relegating Asian women who are not nonnative speakers of English. This amalgamation can potentially intensify the marginalization experienced by minority women, positioning them as outsiders within the prevailing White-dominant, native English-speaking, patriarchal fabric of U.S. society (Hooks, 2015; Liang et al., 2018). Furthermore, in recent research, Kim et al. (2023) explored Asian American identity from a collaborative self-study by Korean immigrant scholars in a critical reading group of Asian women. This study introduced intersectionality and pointed out through research, which sought to understand how individual and groups' interconnected systems of domination based on race, gender, and culture foster the process of Asianization, that Asian culture, history, social experience, and other factors, including intersectionality, play a role in shaping Asian American identity (Kim et al., 2023). Of note, another recent study by Cai (2023), which is close to my research theme, is an intersectional study of Asian American women in educational leadership roles, including K–12 school principals. However, for this study, the intersectionality theory helped explain why Asian and Asian American women might get fewer leadership opportunities and face greater marginalization when trying to rise through the ranks generally and in U.S. higher education contexts.

Other studies in the limited literature that link intersectionality theory to Asian women include studies on Asian and Asian American female high school students (Jang, 2023) and a

class in intersectionality focused on Asian Pacific American politics (Perez, 2022). In addition to the United States, there are a small number of international studies on Asian and Asian American women using the intersectional framework. In the United Kingdom, a qualitative study focused on East Asian female migrant workers using the intersectional framework that focused on privilege and disadvantage (Hwang & Beauregard, 2022); in Canada, two different researchers have focused on young people from South Asia and understanding their cognitions within an intersectional framework (Dhillon & Gammage, 2023; Tan & Weisbart, 2023). Although some of the above studies have different perspectives on the intersectionality theory for Asian women, they all converge on one point: the marginalization caused by these interconnections of characteristics on Asian women's lives and work, especially on educational campuses.

Community Cultural Wealth Theory

While the social capital required to navigate American society is influenced by Western ideals, as explained by Bourdieu (1996), it is important not to assume that minority cultures and racial groups lack their own distinct strategies for both adapting to and challenging American societal norms. Yosso's (2005) concept of community cultural wealth illustrates six strengths within minority cultures (including Asian/Pacific Islanders), enabling them to maneuver within and challenge Western patriarchal institutions successfully. The significance is that Yosso's (2005) concept of wealth in community cultural wealth is not traditional in terms of income, nor is it specific to Whites and the middle class; rather, it refers to "accumulated assets and resources" of minority groups under "macro and micro forms of oppression" (p. 77). The six minority cultural assets and resources are as follows (Anandavalli, 2021; Yosso, 2005):

- Aspirational: the ability to dream and transcend reality.
- Social: social network communication and mutual assistance with friends.

- Family: interaction with family members.

- Resistant: resistance to unfairness.

- Linguistic: the ability to communicate in a particular language.

- Navigational Capital: cross-domain and different races' cultures.

These six forms of community cultural wealth are used to promote social mobility and improve living and well-being (Cooper et al., 2017; Yosso, 2005).

Research shows numerous ways that Asian and Asian Americans are supported by their community cultural wealth, mainly in aspirational, familial, and navigational wealth (Anandavalli, 2021; Kim et al., 2022; Leigh et al., 2021; Yosso, 2005). Aspirational wealth is the capacity to dream and surpass one's current reality; for example, despite encountering numerous language barriers, Chinese participants in two studies identified remaining steadfast in their commitment to achieving their goals (Anandavalli, 2021; He & Hutson, 2018). Family and cultural strength play important roles for these Asian and Asian American female leaders in their career trajectory and success (Cai, 2023; Leigh et al., 2021). Leigh et al.'s (2021) research detailed how Asian American female doctoral students' mothers, as first-generation Cambodian, Vietnamese, Korean, and Chinese-American immigrants, inspired them to go into leadership positions. The research of Cai (2023) also made a similar point of family strength and explained the cultural reasons behind it, focusing on the Asian heritage; the family values of Asian American female principals come from their collectivist culture.

Anandavalli (2021) identified navigational capital as the ability to navigate across domains and cultures; minority cultures often devise means and tactics and develop resilience for navigating spaces dictated by the dominant group. For example, international students seek resources, such as writing centers, on college campuses that help them excel in writing in

English. In addition, some research showed how the community cultural wealth theory should be used to strengthen the Asian community, especially the Chinese community, while people's fear and hostility toward Chinese people extended to Vietnamese, Japanese, and other Asians and escalated in the United States during the COVID-19 epidemic (Anandavalli, 2021; Cho, 2021). Therefore, this research focused on this minority group and explored some of Yosso's (2005) six minority cultural strengths, as suggested by Anandavalli (2021).

Literature Review

Acts, Events, and History Related to Asian and Asian American Women

At the beginning of this review, I introduce the relevant laws and history of Asians and Asian Americans in the United States because the laws and history are the societal background of this study and explain how Asians and Asian Americans navigated their studying and working amid macro-level oppression (Yosso, 2005). Acts, events, and history influenced the academic environment across the United States and their impact on Asian and Asian American women's immigration and workplace positions. After researching the literature, some negative and positive impacts were found. First, the decisive negative impact of the social environment includes external factors such as the working and learning environment. For example, the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic was an external factor that had an impact on people of Asian descent and Asian Americans, especially Chinese Americans, experiencing discrimination and hate at work, which made it difficult for people who are perceived as foreigners in the workplace, especially people of Chinese descent, and even Asians (Anandavalli, 2021; Cho, 2021; Sabharwal et al., 2022). Stigmatization of Asian descent and Asian Americans serves as another external factor that creates social stereotypes. There are documented cases of Asians and Asian Americans being called "permanent foreigners," a term created by European explorers in the 13th century

(Sabharwal et al., 2022, p. 536; Zhou & Tuan, 1999). These external social influences not only have a negative impact on the job promotion of Asian groups but also have a negative impact on the opportunities for Asian groups to study on campus. Discrimination against Asians on college campuses has also existed in the past decade; in 2017–2018, there were lawsuits related to discrimination against Asian students in the admissions process (Thelin, 2019). These negative macro-level oppressions can be regarded as critical race, which is the basis of Yosso's (2005) community cultural wealth theory (James-Gallaway, 2022). Also, the social environment as the external factor is consistent with the intersectionality theoretical framework because it is explained through the historical axis inspired by Peters' (2012) and Liang et al.'s (2018) studies. Therefore, introducing external factors or macro-level oppressions is consistent with the intersectionality theory (Hooks, 2015) and community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005) frameworks.

Second, documents record that the first Chinese immigrants came to the United States in the early 19th century, and many documents record that the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, which marked the initial and noteworthy legislation imposing limitations on Chinese immigration, directly banned Chinese workers for 10 years; also, the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 is the historical reason for anti-Chinese and Chinese Americans in the United States (Chinese Exclusion Act, 1882; Sabharwal et al., 2022). Third, this bill targeting Asians not only targeted Chinese Americans, but there was also the Immigration Act of 1924, also called the Johnson-Reed Act, which targeted mainly Asians and especially imposed Japanese immigration restrictions (Immigration Act of 1924, 1924). Whether it was the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 or the Immigration Act of 1924, these two acts directly restricted the opportunities for Asian immigrants to enter and reenter the United States to work. The historical perspective of the law is

consistent with the intersectionality and community cultural wealth theoretical frameworks, as these historical bills can explain the reasons cultural ambivalence at the least, and antipathy at the most extreme, toward Asians, including Asian and Asian American women, under both frameworks.

Not all bills in the United States have a negative impact on the career development of Asians. Yosso's (2005) community cultural wealth theory demonstrates that historically, minority groups have leveraged their social capital to access education, legal, justice, employment, and others. Some bills have indirect positive impacts on Asian and Asian American women, especially in higher education. Although little literature on Asians and Asian Americans addresses the impact of the Morrill Land Grant College Act of 1862 on Asian women, Cross (1999) explicitly mentions in his book, "Before 1862 American university students were affluent, White males, Land-grant colleges opened the door of higher education to women, Blacks, the working classes, immigrants, and other minorities" (p. 88). Although the main beneficiary groups of the Morrill Land Grant College Act of 1862 are African American students and women in addition to White men (Cross, 1999; Sorber, 2018), this act also indirectly affected Asians and immigrants. It was a success achieved primarily by African Americans and other races (including Asian women) and both genders in the South of the United States (Sorber, 2018). After several decades following the implementation of this legislation, U.S. policy discussions about Asian Americans as a minority group became increasingly specifically focused on their unique heritage with new policies and financial aid supporting the development of diversity in U.S. higher education by the 1980s (Thelin, 2019). The positive effect of the bill, the Morrill Land Grant College Act of 1862, and recent U.S. policy on Asian Americans, is consistent with Yosso's (2005) community cultural wealth theory's view of social capital such as when minority

students obtain scholarships during college through resource connections related to their communities. It has been documented that the University of Texas at Austin and the University of California, Berkeley, have a majority of racial minorities, including Asian and Asian American students (Thelin, 2019).

Confucian Culture in East Asian Countries

Anandavalli (2021) stated that minority and international students focus on the values of their families of origin, which belongs to the resistance capital of community cultural wealth theory because they tend to keep their original culture and may tend to resist U.S. culture. Therefore, before discussing Asian and Asian American women, it is necessary to explore the roots of Asian culture and Confucian culture. Confucian culture has always been an explanatory behavior and thinking framework for Asian, particularly East Asian, behaviors, with China, Japan, and South Korea as its primary manifestations, and this "pedagogic" culture constitutes the cultural heritage of modern East Asia (Kim, 2009, p. 857). The two dominant values of Confucianism are submission to authority and male dominance (Chen & Hsieh, 2017). This culture is primarily manifested in the attributes of education, with its prominent expression found in filial piety and respect for family authority (Kim, 2009). About the submission to authority, Sandhu (1997) noted that in contrast to the individualistic tendencies of Western culture, Asians and Pacific Islanders are influenced by a collectivistic culture, which emphasizes collective interests and the group's needs, and individuals from Asian backgrounds are likelier to obey leadership because they place the group's goals and values above their personal needs, such as Asians value the respect of authority figures in the workplace. Therefore, Asian employees are less likely to challenge their supervisor, even if their supervisor may be wrong; they are also less likely to question inequalities in promotions, salaries, and recognition. In addition, the Confucian

culture's practice of collectivism also brings positive effects in the workplace. Research in South Korea indicated that a Confucian-based culture aligns with workplace practices, fostering significant employee commitment (Kim & Hamilton-Hart, 2022). While it may be challenging for Asian Americans to establish new relationships in their workplace, once formed, these relationships tend to be more intimate and enduring, potentially leading to higher commitment in a professional context (Kim & Hamilton-Hart, 2022; Sandhu, 1997).

Patriarchal Effects on Leadership. Nyitray (2010) reported that Confucian culture embodies patriarchal values. Zhang et al. (2005) wrote that Confucius prescribed a traditional social hierarchy that included distinct gender roles, with men having a higher societal status than women, which influenced Japanese women to meet their husbands' expectations of an excellent wife, especially Japanese women were found to exhibit behavior to overly satisfy men's expectations which reflects male dominance. This influence exists in Japan and has spread to other Asian countries. M. Lee et al. (2022) attributed their similar behavioral expectations to the behavioral expectations of Asian women's families; Asian women are expected to shoulder most or even all family responsibilities under the patriarchal system, even if they are career women. These scholars pointed out that this is also the source of marital conflicts between the husband and wife in an Asian family (M. Lee et al., 2022). The patriarchy in Confucian culture is reflected in the family in Asia because most women in ancient Asia did not have jobs and were financially independent. Their main task was to take care of their husbands and raise children, and they relied on their husbands' income to survive. While Confucian culture has persisted into modern times, research supports that men continue to be perceived in the workplace as superior to women (M. Lee et al., 2022; Nyitray, 2010; Zhang et al., 2005).

In alignment with Confucian culture, the foundation of Asian culture is also based on patriarchal thinking, and Asians traditionally believe that men are superior to women; some women might not try for leadership positions for this reason, especially among first-generation immigrants of Asian descent (Gamst et al., 2022). The influence of Confucian culture further constitutes a significant factor contributing to this patriarchal phenomenon (Zhang et al., 2005). Moreover, Western and U.S. cultures might misunderstand this amicable Asian leadership style, a friendly and team-oriented leadership style, as a lack of assertiveness and view Asian women as docile, subservient hard workers, and not being leadership material (Mamiseishvili & Stuckey, 2022). Asian women are subject to many unrealistic expectations and related prejudices due to their traditional Asian culture and patriarchal work environments in Asian countries. In addition, Western culture's intersectionality and Asian cultural Confucianism have different reasons. The intersectionality of Western theory is based on capitalism, and Eastern Confucianism is based on feudal society. Both ideologies have a certain understanding of Asians and contemporary Asians. Despite contemporary awareness, social biases and gender expectations of women have an impact at work (Chen & Hsieh, 2017; Hooks, 2015). Thus, Confucian culture has the same origin as the intersectionality theory framework because both are based on a patriarchal culture (Hooks, 2015; Nyitray, 2010). As such, Confucian culture can marginalize Asian women, thus in alignment with intersectionality theory, which addresses marginalized minorities, including Asian and Asian American women.

Patriarchal Thinking in the United States

American society often operates as a patriarchal hegemony, and women, including Asian and Asian American women, might not be aware that they are having difficulty advancing to leadership positions (Hooks, 2015). Asian countries and America both have patriarchal

foundations; thus, working in both Asian and American settings might equally beget limitations to women (Gamst et al., 2022). Patriarchal depreciation of women's abilities might lead to Asian and Asian American women's pessimism about their ability to circumvent these patriarchal systems. Liang et al. (2018) found that some women do not consider leadership as an option because they will run up against the patriarchal hierarchy in American society and believe companies or institutions will not advance them into leadership positions or accept their leadership. These beliefs about limited career advancement can emerge from the negative stereotypes of Asian and Asian women in the workplace that can be a byproduct of both American and Asian patriarchal cultures; this cultural underpinning hinders Asian and Asian American women's career development, thus further exemplifying the intersectionality theory, which addresses gender and race among Asian groups (Gamst et al., 2022; Hooks, 2015; Liang et al., 2018).

Consequently, it takes most Asian American women longer to reach leadership positions compared to White men on a leadership trajectory. For instance, Asian American women often take at least 10–15 years to work their way up, and they are often in their 40s before being promoted to leadership positions because women often lack guidance in the workplace, and even when women leaders are successfully promoted, women receive less empowerment than men, caused by masculinism ideals (Liang et al., 2018). Linehan and Scullion (2008) found that female managers, due to their limited access to mentors, role models, sponsorship, and professional networks, which are typically more readily available to their male counterparts, often miss out on international career opportunities, implying that improved access to these resources could provide women with the same career advantages as men. Further emphasizing the perceived and actual racial and gender imbalance, some research showed that giving women

power is commonly considered equivalent to depriving or sacrificing male power (Bourdieu, 1996; Liang et al., 2018; Linehan & Scullion, 2008). Thus, the time it takes for Asian American women to advance to leadership positions in the workplace is attributed to limited guidance from external factors, the influence of idealized social patriarchy, and internal factors that limit resources for the Asian female; to solve these obstacles would improve women's equal workplace development opportunities (Liang et al., 2018; Linehan & Scullion, 2008).

Asians and Asian Americans

Asians, Asian Americans, and Pacific Islanders are frequently grouped together in research, making it challenging to differentiate among them, especially since they may be collectively categorized as AAPI in some studies (Ho, 2023). However, the term Asian typically refers to persons born abroad in Asian countries, which is synonymous with foreign-born Asians in this study. Furthermore, in the study, Asian Americans encompass foreign-born Asians and those born in the United States. People of Asian heritage are a heterogeneous group—not only by country of origin but by the length of time in the United States and chosen identities (Asian, Asian American, etc.); thus, Asians and Asian Americans are further categorized into first-generation immigrants, 1.5-generation immigrants, and second-generation immigrants which introduces many more levels of acculturation in the United States. Even with Confucianism as a homogenizing feature in Asian culture, Asians/Asian Americans/Pacific Islanders should also be seen as heterogeneous since their countries of origin have different customs, traditions, beliefs, and languages. For example, Pacific Islanders originate from a diverse range of islands, spanning regions such as Australia, Tasmania, Polynesia, the Fiji Islands, Micronesia, Melanesia, New Guinea, Indonesia, the Philippines, Formosa, and the Hawaiian Islands, as documented by Sandhu (1997). Given their complexities, studying the objects of Asian American groups and

their specific classifications can help to gain a deeper understanding of the cultural advantages of Asian groups, which is consistent with applying community cultural wealth theory (Anandavalli, 2021). Yosso (2005) identified that "culture is also evidenced in material and nonmaterial productions of a people" (p. 75); understanding the artifacts of Asian American groups is necessary to have a better understanding of the differences between each Asian group's culture. As such, culture is the foundation of the community cultural wealth theory through aspirational, social, resistant, linguistic, and navigational capital (Anandavalli, 2021).

Asian Americans. Asian Americans can include both Asians born in various Asian regions who have moved to the United States, or it could refer to people of Asian heritage born in the United States (Kieu & Wei, 2020). Based on recent research conducted by the U.S. Department of Commerce (2023), in 2021, the estimated population of Asian Americans in the United States stands at approximately 24.0 million individuals. According to the Pew Research Center, 19 major Asian groups are the main body of the Asian population in the United States, and their total accounts for 97% of the Asian population in the United States (as cited in Budiman & Ruiz, 2021b). Among these Asian groups, the Chinese mainland community stands as the largest, with around 5.2 million individuals, followed by the Indian community at approximately 4.8 million individuals, the Filipino community at about 4.4 million individuals, the Vietnamese community at approximately 2.3 million individuals, the Korean community at roughly 2.0 million individuals, and the Japanese community at approximately 1.6 million individuals (U.S. Department of Commerce, 2023). Furthermore, the Asian American category comprises the previously mentioned first-generation immigrants, 1.5-generation immigrants, and second-generation immigrants. Additionally, it encompasses subsequent generations of Asian Americans, including third-generation Asian Americans, the children of second-generation Asian

Americans, the grandchildren of first-generation Asian Americans who came to the United States as immigrants, etc.

First-Generation Immigrants. First-generation immigrants refer to individuals with Asian ancestry whose parents or grandparents immigrated to and established themselves in the United States (Kieu & Wei, 2020). Furthermore, a first-generation U.S. immigrant includes Asian-born individuals since most first-generation U.S. immigrants have extended periods of years or decades, which is why this study's research subjects include Asians and Asian Americans, not just Asian Americans.

1.5-Generation Immigrants. A 1.5-generation immigrant, as defined by Rojas (2012), refers to U.S. residents with Asian-born parents or siblings who immigrated during their youth and subsequently progress through secondary education, colleges and universities, and postgraduate studies, acquiring education, pursuing professional endeavors, and establishing residence within the United States. Although the first-generation and 1.5-generation immigrants are both Americans, the quantitative research shows that those members of the 1.5-generation exhibit more proficiency with the English language and familiarity with American culture than their first-generation counterparts (Asher & Case, 2008).

Second-Generation Immigrants. According to the Pew Research Center (2013), second-generation American immigrants exhibit linguistic and cultural advantages over those of their parents, fostering a strong sense of identity and belonging to American culture, including a robust sense of American cultural and political affiliation. They often self-identify as "typical Americans," exhibiting a greater propensity for English language usage and interethnic communication than their immigrant parents' social circles (Pew Research Center, 2013, para. 2).

Stereotypical Social Behaviors Expected of Asian and Asian American Women

Stereotypes have plagued Asians and Asian Americans in the United States, making it hard for them to get promotions into leadership positions, and the outbreak of COVID-19 in 2020 encouraged these stereotypes and heightened the hate crimes against Asians and Asian Americans in the United States (Anandavalli, 2021). Some of the typical prejudices accredited to Asian and Asian Americans are differences in race, culture, language, dress, etc. (Anandavalli, 2021; Gündemir et al., 2019; Hyun et al., 2022; Kim & Tausen, 2022; Lee, 2019; Na & Kawahara, 2022; Tinkler et al., 2019). Even the more positive stereotypes, such as the model minority stereotype assigned to Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, often lead to the misconception that they do not require the same level of support and attention as other minority groups (Gogue et al., 2021). The intersectionality theory can be applied to the situation where Asian minorities, including Asian and Asian American women, can experience workplace exclusion as a result of negative stereotypes, which Hooks (2015) stated as "Deflecting attention away from stereotypes is necessary if we are to revise our strategy and direction" (p. 31). Therefore, people need to be aware of stereotypes targeting Asians, especially Asians and Asian women.

Stereotypes of Asian American Leadership. Stereotypical behavioral expectations of Asian and Asian Americans as docile and submissive are why Asian and Asian Americans are not often recognized as leaders by other races (Gündemir et al., 2019; Kodama & Dugan, 2020). For example, it is generally believed that Asian Americans are too submissive and gentle and do not exhibit leadership characteristics such as confidence and authority (Gündemir et al., 2019).

Asian American managers in organizations use different impression management strategies compared to European American managers; for example, they tend to employ fewer

effective strategies, such as self-disclosure, being self-focused, and supervisor-focused impression management tactics while relying more on job-focused strategies; thus, this difference in management styles may contribute to the limited number of Asian American managers achieving leadership positions, as they missed the opportunity to create strong working relationships with superiors enhance upward mobility in the workplace (Xin, 2004).

Unique Social Behavior Expectations of Asian and Asian American Women. Asian and Asian American women should also respond to people's unique expectations of race, gender, and culture when being promoted to leadership positions in a specific workplace (Bourdieu, 1996; Liang et al., 2018). These expectations indirectly lead to Asian Americans being consistent with expectations of self-sacrificing behavior and impacting Asian American women's chances of being nominated for leadership positions and unrealistic expectations in the workplace; these intersecting characteristics can limit the employment opportunities of Asian American women leaders from a marginalized racial group in specific circumstances, such as Asians being more suitable for bilingual education leadership positions or Asian American women being appointed during an organizational decline (Gündemir et al., 2019; Liang et al., 2018). Americans have unrealistic and self-sacrificing job expectations for Asians in part because of propaganda in the U.S. media: some researchers showed that the U.S. media, such as films and advertisements, often depict the model minority stereotype of Asian Americans, highlighting traits such as diligence, technical proficiency, a focus on business, and success (Kawai, 2005; Taylor et al., 2005). Another part of the reason is that Asians and Asian Americans are still profoundly influenced by Confucianism from their original family. A narrative study of four Chinese and Japanese women revealed that Confucian cultural norms influence gender expectations, spanning across generations of American families; among them, the typical excessive ideal expectations

are gender expectations, such as the idea that daughters should be obedient, display feminine traits, receive sufficient education, and be seen as suitable for marriage; it restricted other potential roles and behaviors for Asian women in their workplace (Chinn, 2002). Asian and Asian American women encounter unique social expectations rooted in race, gender, and culture, influencing their leadership opportunities and workplace experiences (Bourdieu, 1996; Chinn, 2002; Gündemir et al., 2019; Liang et al., 2018).

Obstacles for Asian and Asian American Women in the United States

Asian and Asian Americans, particularly first-generation Asian immigrants who experience language barriers, cultural dilemmas, and lack of political knowledge, often encounter obstacles in U.S. workplaces (Liang et al., 2018). Even if Asian and Asian Americans speak and write English fluently or flawlessly, their accents often indicate differences compared to native English speakers. Such differences create additional difficulties in the workplace (Sandhu, 1997). Hooks (2015) stated that language can prevent people from communicating effectively in the workplace, which includes different countries' languages and male and female languages; she stated that women are excluded from the workplace due to their different gender language alignment with the intersectionality theory. Anandavalli (2021) stated that linguistic racism between American English and other languages exists on university and college campuses in the community cultural wealth theory. Thus, Asian and Asian Americans, especially the first generation Asian immigrants to the United States, experienced linguistic racism and insensitivity to American politics, which is consistent with the community cultural wealth theoretical frameworks (Hooks, 2015; Liang et al., 2018).

Language Barriers. In addition to the difference in cultures, language is another major obstacle to the leadership of Asian Americans, especially first-generation Asian immigrants,

whose mother language is not English (Liang et al., 2018; Mamiseishvili & Stuckey, 2022; Shao, 2023). They are seen as foreigners and questioned by people about their leadership in an American workplace due to stereotypes about their inability to communicate adequately in a second language (Liang et al., 2018; Mamiseishvili & Stuckey, 2022). Compared to second-generation Asian American immigrants born in the United States, first-generation Asian American immigrants encounter more language and cultural barriers (Shao, 2023).

Hooks (2015) pointed out the differences in languages that create barriers and how to improve communication in the United States and stated:

> Often, the men in our ethnic groups have greater contact with one another than we do. Women often assume so many job-related and domestic responsibilities that we lack the time or do not make the time to get to know women outside our group or community. Language differences often prevent us from communicating; we can change this by encouraging one another to learn to speak Spanish, English, Japanese, Chinese, etc. (p. 57)

Furthermore, Anandavalli (2021) stated that "linguistic racism appears to be subtly prevalent in many scholarship and pedagogical traditions" (p. 119) on the negative side of linguistic capital in community cultural wealth theory; linguistic racism refers to the discrimination between the host country, American English, and other national languages, which includes the understanding of the social culture and background history behind American English by the minorities behind the language. Hooks (2015) and Anandavalli (2021) both pointed out the difficulties language brings to minorities in work and academics. It appears that it is not the language itself but includes understanding a particular community's language and culture.

Because language is at the heart of all communication, the differences can intensify the lack of learning opportunities and marginalization of minority women in the workplace (Hooks, 2015). Furthermore, Chen and Chen (2018) noted that additional research studies could assist in understanding how Asian workers can combat workplace crises when they are willing to improve their professional skills. The researchers concluded that Asian and Asian American workers needed to strengthen their English language skills to strengthen communication and improve their competitiveness in the workplace (Chen & Chen, 2018; Hooks, 2015).

Cultural and Political Dilemmas. Bourdieu (1996) stated that people's habits and preferences represent people's social capital, which is dictated by Western ideals in American society. For example, most first-generation Asian Americans are confused and less confident about American politics; therefore, Asian Americans usually have the stereotypical impression of having unclear political views and not being socially inclined (Liang et al., 2018). Such impressions of marginalized cultures might also lead them to lose opportunities due to the assumption that they do not have knowledge or a strong opinion on a subject (Bourdieu, 1996; Liang et al., 2018). Furthermore, Junn and Masuoka (2008) asserted that Asian Americans are often highly educated and have an elevated social status; as such, their attitude toward American politics is fairly static. In addition, some data research has found that the reason why Asians do not participate highly in local politics is not due to the choices of Asians themselves but the result of discrimination (Chou & Feagin, 2015).

Bicultural Individuals

While English may be a barrier for Asian and Asian Americans in their workplace, recent research shows that biculturalism also has a positive impact on Asian Americans, with Asian Americans being fluent in at least one Asian language (such as Chinese, Japanese, Korean,

Tamil, etc.) and English (Ong et al., 2023). Asian Americans can be translators and bridges of

communication between different languages, such as translating Chinese to English or translating

English to Chinese; this also can be an advantage regarding skills demanded in the workplace

(Chen & Chen, 2018; Ong et al., 2023). As language bridges are constructed, cultural bridges are

also built, allowing Asians and Asian Americans to provide bilingualism at work, resulting in

cultural diversity at work and global language advantages in the administrative position in higher

education (Liang et al., 2018; Ong et al., 2023; Shakeshaft, 1987). Anandavalli (2021) further

emphasized that bilingualism, and its related behaviors, are the workplace advantages of

bilingual or multilingual cultures of most ethnic minorities, consistent with the tenets of the

language capital of the community cultural wealth theory framework. For example, bilingual or

multilingual leaders and administrators working in colleges and universities, have innate

advantages when providing support to students, especially, English language learners (Genao &

Gray-Nicolas, 2020).

Furthermore, M. Lee et al. (2022) identified this phenomenon of biculturalism as bilinear,

such as "involving independent processes of acculturation and enculturation and

multidimensional, and multidimensional" such as "occurring in orthogonal domains of behaviors

and values" for Asian and Asian American women (p. 62). In other words, Asian or Asian

American female administrators working in higher education in the United States need to face at

least two cultural influences, namely the influence of mainstream American culture and the

influence of the Asian culture of their family of origin. These influences will cause them to

behave differently at work; Asian American workers under the influence of Confucianism will

respect their superiors and challenge authority less (M. Lee et al., 2022; Sandhu, 1997). In

addition, Asian or Asian American women have to deal with the alternation of their identity;

sometimes, their behavior shows they have a part of Asianness, and sometimes, they have a part of identity and belonging recognized by American culture.

M. Lee et al. (2022) also noted that it is worth noting that the biculturalism of Asians from different countries is different, such as individuals from the Chinese culture, Korean culture, Japanese culture, Indian culture, and Filipino cultures have their countries' history and culture, as well as the culture of American immigrants' history, which makes their biculturalism different. Unlike the East Asian culture mentioned in the previous literature, which mainly refers to Confucianism and its historical influence in China, Japan, and South Korea, Philippine culture is influenced by the Indigenous values of the pre-Hispanic colonial period; the cultural values of Filipino Asian American women are individualism and competition, which are contrary to the gender norms of this Confucian culture that emphasizes family and social order (Kim, 2009; M. Lee et al., 2022; Sandhu, 1997). Such cultural assets behind bilingualism will give Asian and Asian American women advantages in the workplace with unique Asian community cultural wealth (M. Lee et al., 2022; Yosso, 2005).

Different Religions in Asian and Asian American Communities

Not only does culture and its language have an impact on Asians and Asian Americans, but people's different beliefs also diversify the Asian and Asian American communities and have an impact on their career development and career prospects. The challenges have had different effects on behavior. According to the Pew Research Center (2012), among Asian and Asian American communities, the leading religions are the following: Christians are the largest religious group, accounting for 42%. Buddhists account for 14%, and Hindus account for 4%; however, nonsectarians account for 26%, and research shows that about half of Chinese Americans are nonsectarian. Furthermore, Yosso (2005) stated that religion is part of each

minority family's strength, which is consistent with the community cultural wealth theory framework because religion, as an important part of family activities, affects minority behavior among family members and can be passed through religious activities that cultivate family members' sense of family's strength. Because Christianity, Buddhism, and Hinduism are the mainstream religious choices among Asians and Asian Americans, the inherently patriarchal influences can be considered important external factors in social and religious culture (Sandhu, 1997; Tiwari, 2022; Zhang et al., 2005); thus, are consistent with the explanation of the roots of patriarchal concepts in intersectionality theory (Hooks, 2015).

Christian. Christians are spread throughout the United States, and 42% of Asian Americans are Christian believers (Pew Research Center, 2012); however, Asian and Asian American Christians are underrepresented in higher education (Hyun et al., 2022). Reading the literature, the impact of the *Bible* on Asians and Asian Americans in their leadership in their workplace is controversial (Hyun et al., 2022; Rothausen, 2023). On the positive side, Hyun et al. (2022) found that among Asians and Asian Americans who have negative emotions while facing bias from society and higher education organizations at work, Christian Asians and Asian Americans tend to soothe themselves and forgive the person who was unfair to them through prayer and faith. The *Bible* also has evidence showing that women can be leaders and are encouraged to be leaders. It states:

> I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a deacon of the church in Cenchreae. I ask you to receive her in the Lord in a way worthy of his people and to give her any help she may need from you, for she has been the benefactor of many people, including me. (*New International Version*, 2023, Romans 16:1–2)

However, there is literature indicating that the content of the *Bible* is male-dominated, which marginalizes women, including minority women, including Asian and Asian American women (Rothausen, 2023). This coincides with Asian culture and masculinity, and the *Bible* emphasizes women need to put their husbands first in their family status; the *Bible* states:

> Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, just as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and He is also the Savior of the church. Just as the church submits to Christ, so wives should submit to their husbands in everything. (*New International Version*, 2023, Ephesians 5:22–24)

However, unlike Confucian culture, which only mentions that women should obey their husbands, the *Bible* later explains that husbands and wives must respect and love each other. This manifests the equality of the relationship between men and women. The Bible states:

> Husbands love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave himself for her, that he might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, that he might present her to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish. (*New International Version*, 2023, Ephesians 5:25–27)

There is literature from the *Bible* showing that the essence of Christianity is to give them a new identity as equals to human beings in Christ, which includes equality between men and women; however, Japanese Christian women still do not enjoy full gender equality (Maxton, 2018). This showed the deep-rooted consistency of patriarchal ideology in Asian culture, especially its influence on Japanese women (Zhang et al., 2005).

Buddhism. Buddhism, as the second largest religion among Asians, is different from Christianity in overcoming challenges in the workplace through prayer and faith (Hyun et al.,

2022); Asian and Asian American Buddhist women use "karuna (compassion)" to deal with all problems, including difficulties at work (Suh, 2015, p. 137). Moreover, compared to Christianity and Hinduism, although Buddhism does not talk about women, it does put forward the concept of equality of all living beings, which includes the equality of humans, animals, or plants in any form and naturally includes the qualities of men and women in Lotus Sutra (Peach, 2002). However, the Buddhist concept of equality has different interpretations in Japan: literature pointed out that Japanese Buddhism believes that reincarnation must be male and promotes the concept that "women should follow men" (Ichiu, 2003, p. 279). Thus, Japan's different Buddhist cultures and its Confucian culture fully demonstrate patriarchal ideas and female inequality.

Hinduism. Because of the election of an Indian American woman vice president, Kamala Harris, Indian American women are gaining increased visibility in the workplace. Some literature pointed out that although Indian Americans only account for 1% of the total population, and compared with other ethnic minorities, Indian Americans value higher education and obtain advanced degrees more than other ethnic minorities (Tiwari, 2022). Indian culture, different from those mentioned above, mainstream Asian cultures, is also influenced by the Tamil language and is deeply influenced by Hinduism (Nagarajan, 2023). Nagarajan (2023), in her narrative research as a woman of Indian descent professor, stated in this passage about his understanding of her identity that is influenced by Indian culture. The statement said:

> I wonder if that concept can be useful to describe the ways in which different races, ethnicities, and genders have been perceived, though in invisible ways. Are we, as Asian Americans, another kind of invisible and visible caste, neither Black nor White? The very nature of the caste system in Hinduism has been to transform a seemingly arbitrary differentiation of race into a sacred, cosmic order. The question is: have we done that as

well in the United States over the past hundreds of years? Isabelle Wilkerson thinks so, and I agree with her (Nagarajan, 2023, pp. 129–130).

This passage shows the reflections of this Indian American female professor's self-perception influenced by Hindu literature. Moreover, since Hindus regard class and upper caste as the norm, the unequal race and hierarchy within Hinduism and the patriarchal ideas and class at the root of East Asian culture have different origins, but the results are similar (Sandhu, 1997; Tiwari, 2022). Unlike Christian culture, which promotes equal respect for men and women (*New International Version*, 2023, Ephesians 5:25–27), Hinduism is consistent with the Asian culture's idea of male superiority and female inferiority (Sandhu, 1997; Tiwari, 2022).

Mentorship Support Specific to Asian and Asian American Women

Contrary to the large body of literature that focused on prejudices and barriers against Asian and Asian American women in the American workplace, a small body of literature focused on positive support for Asian American women's leadership potential and conditions (Anandavalli, 2021; Hsieh & Nguyen, 2020; Huang, 2019; Leigh et al., 2021; Na & Kawahara, 2022). Mentorship through mutual mentoring or accepting mentors' support effectively affects Asian and Asian American women's promotion and careers (Hsieh & Nguyen, 2020; Huang, 2019; Na & Kawahara, 2022). Moreover, Chen and Chen's (2018) China-Taiwan study was consistent with other studies that indicated the importance of mentorship for work promotion (Hsieh & Nguyen, 2020; Huang, 2019; Na & Kawahara, 2022); these researchers agreed that "seeking help from others" was an important step that could assist in solving workplace crises in people's advancement (Chen & Chen, 2018, p. 146). Harris (2022) and McAdam (2022) stated that mentoring is one of the best supports and suggestions for female entrepreneurs, or women in general, during their career development. Harris (2022) further described mentoring as either

formal or informal, providing career support by someone with similar background, experience, and knowledge. Linehan and Scullion (2008) revealed that female managers generally can attain similar career advantages to men if they have increased access to mentorship and role models; Ramaswami et al. (2010) also indicated that women who have strong male mentors have higher work performance and higher earnings in the legal profession (Harris, 2022). Since mentorship from Asian and Asian Americans holding leadership positions is not often possible, particularly in higher education settings where Asian and Asian Americans rarely hold leadership positions, researchers have noted that mentorship should not be limited to the same race, as mentorship from other races can also provide valuable support (Harris, 2022; Huang, 2019). Furthermore, in one recent study of women executive leaders in higher education, Dr. Joanne Li, an Asian American female Chancellor at the University of Nebraska at Omaha, answered the question, "What would you recommend to readers interested in pursuing a CEO role in higher education?" She reiterated, "… seek out mentors who will help you go in the right direction. Remember their advice comes from years of learned experiences. Reflect on these experiences and identify applicability to help you tackle similar situations" (Takami, 2023, pp. 143–144). The literature on Asian and Asian American women's leadership has evolved over the past decade, from the absence of Asian and Asian American executive leaders in higher education to the emergence of representative figures, such as Li, which is a significant change. Li mentioned in her interview the importance of remembering minority women in the higher education workplace. This mentorship concept was reflected in the past when Shakeshaft (1987) interviewed 142 women who aspired to become education administrators (including follow-up interviews, later on, a third of whom became principals), as well as references to colleagues, mentors, and networks of women are the three keys for women perusing the administrator position (Liang et al., 2018;

Statham, 1990). Mentorship is consistent with the community cultural wealth theoretical framework because although Anandavalli (2021) indicated limited mentorship as a value to study in future research, the role of community cultural wealth theoretical framework detection is to provide minorities with more guidance and help them to succeed on their campus.

Chapter Summary

The study adopted intersectionality theory (Hooks, 2015) and community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005) as its theoretical frameworks to understand the experiences of Asian/Asian American women in leadership roles in a comprehensive way. These frameworks facilitated an examination of how multiple dimensions of gender and race identity and cultural assets shape Asian and Asian American women's perspectives and challenges, offering a more nuanced analysis of their leadership working experiences. In addition, in the process of researching intersectionality attempts and other relevant minority literature, I found that much of the literature on Asians, Asian Americans, and Pacific Islanders was confusingly defined, so I clarified in this chapter that Asians clearly defined descriptions of Asians, Asian Americans, and Pacific Islanders and included references to the literature.

During U.S. history, the degree of legal and social discrimination faced by Asians has fluctuated. From the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 to the Immigration Act of 1924, Asians have been cut off from work opportunities in the United States (Chinese Exclusion Act, 1882; Immigration Act of 1924, 1924). Later, the Morrill Land Grant College Act of 1862 provided educational opportunities to women and minorities, including Asian American women (Cross, 1999; Sorber, 2018). Then, in the 1980s, the new educational policies and financial aid support for minorities, including Asian American women, showed that Asian women were beginning to be accepted on campus (Thelin, 2019). Although there have been ups and downs of campus

prejudice against Asians since then, in 2020, due to the new coronavirus, discrimination against Asians hit rock bottom (Anandavalli, 2021; Cho, 2021; Sabharwal et al., 2022).

Social prejudices and stereotypes of Asians and Asian Americans influence society's views about what is possible for Asian and Asian American women (Liang et al., 2018; Na & Kawahara, 2022). Research showed that such biases, which are not supported by factual evidence, contributed to Asian women facing challenges in maintaining their competitiveness within the workplace (Mamiseishvili & Stuckey, 2022). Patriarchal beliefs and values prevalent in both United States and Asian cultures also play a role in this situation (Gamst et al., 2022). Workplaces often prioritize male leadership and reinforce traditional gender roles, potentially limiting opportunities for minority women, including Asian and Asian American women, in their promotion opportunities in workplaces (Hooks, 2015). Furthermore, the traditional Asian cultures' patriarchal ideology is shaped by Confucian influences; the concept of male dominance, which asserts that men hold a superior social status to women in their family status and workplace, can limit potential opportunities for Asian women (Chen & Hsieh, 2017; Zhang et al., 2005). In addition, cultures with different religious backgrounds have different degrees of reverence for patriarchy and male dominance: compared with other religions, Hinduism and Japanese Buddhism are consistent with Asian Confucian culture (Ichiu, 2003; Sandhu, 1997; Tiwari, 2022). However, general Asian Buddhism advocates gender equality (Peach, 2002), and Christianity has some patriarchal ideas (*New International Version*, 2023, Ephesians 5:22–24; Rothausen, 2023); it mainly advocates equality and complementarity between men and women and encourages women to become leaders (*New International Version*, 2023, Ephesians 5:25–27). Regarding the influence of stereotypes, East Asian Confucian culture, and the influence of

American culture, few gaps have been comprehensively and specifically mentioned in the past literature, consistent with the purpose of the study and the research question.

First-generation Asian and Asian American women frequently face obstacles when striving to attain leadership roles within higher education in the United States, which includes language proficiency, political dynamics, and the complexities of cultural adaptation (Liang et al., 2018; Mamiseishvili & Stuckey, 2022; Shao, 2023). However, unlike the extensive literature addressing biases and obstacles faced by Asian and Asian American women in the past, there is less research focusing on the positive leadership potential of Asians and Asian Americans, particularly Asian and Asian American women (Anandavalli, 2021; Hsieh & Nguyen, 2020; Huang, 2019; Leigh et al., 2021; Na & Kawahara, 2022; Takami, 2023). So far, these studies included discussions on three possible means of support for Asian and Asian American women on their path to leadership that are consistent with the purpose of the study and the research question: What is the lived experience of Asian and Asian American female administrators that influenced and further shaped their trajectory toward leadership positions within U.S. higher education? One possibility is the guidance provided by mentorship for the Asian American population (Chen & Chen, 2018; Hsieh & Nguyen, 2020; Huang, 2019; Na & Kawahara, 2022; Takami, 2023). Also, Anandavalli (2021) pointed out that seeking mentorship is the gap of the successful minority on campus for future study. The second one is the positive impact of Asian and Asian American community cultural wealth, highlighted in family support, on the leadership of Asian and Asian American women (Anandavalli, 2021; Cai, 2023; Leigh et al., 2021). Literature proves that the cultural wealth of Asian and Asian American communities and the bicultural and ethnic origins behind their unique languages have become advantages at work (Chen & Chen, 2018; Liang et al., 2018; Ong et al., 2023; Shakeshaft, 1987). The last one

includes continued learning opportunities for Asian and Asian American women, including learning their working environment and languages to strengthen their workplace ability (Chen & Chen, 2018; Hooks, 2015). After conducting the literature review, the review revealed a lack of qualitative research on the leadership experiences among Asian and Asian American women in higher education executive leadership. This research gap limits the comprehensive understanding of the challenges, experiences faced, and contributions made by Asian and Asian American women leaders in higher education.

In Chapter 3, I explain the research design and methodology for this qualitative study on Asian and Asian American women and administrators. I also explain how the participants were chosen, the study limitations, and the delimitation of this study. I also show how I did the research step by step, from collecting samples to designing the interview questions based on this literature review. I also explain my approach and how I analyzed the data for my study.

Chapter 3: Research Method

The problem addressed in this study was the underrepresentation of Asian and Asian American women in administrative positions at higher education institutions in the United States compared to Whites and other minority groups. This qualitative phenomenological study explored the phenomenon manifesting in the career experiences of Asian and Asian American female higher education administrators that have served to shape and continue to shape their career trajectories. The research methodology used to answer and discuss the primary research question (What is the lived experience of Asian and Asian American female administrators that influenced and further shaped their trajectory toward leadership positions within U.S. higher education?) includes the research design and methodology, including the methodological approach, population, study sample, materials and instruments, data collection and analysis procedures, the researcher's role, ethical considerations, ethics and trustworthiness (rigor), assumptions, limitations, and delimitations.

Research Design and Method

Phenomenological research is particularly suitable for leadership studies, especially those focused on female leaders, due to its ability to explore the complexity of leadership, which involves highly intricate interpersonal and relational dynamics that contribute to the development of the human aspect of organizations (Barsoum, 2022). This study used a qualitative phenomenological approach with semistructured interviews, field notes, and member checking to study the experiences of Asian and Asian American female administrators in academic settings in the United States. Follow-up emails and interviews may be conducted as needed to clarify or expand on the data (Peoples, 2020).

Methodology Approach

The phenomenological approach emphasizes in-depth exploration, description, and understanding of participants' lived experiences and perspectives, thereby facilitating the collection of rich and in-depth data from a small sample size (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019). There are numerous reasons and motivations for a researcher to choose a phenomenological approach for conducting this study. First, this approach can reveal the nature of the phenomenon under study and the social structures underlying the participants' experiences to better understand the career trajectories of Asian/Asian American administrators in U.S. higher education institutions (Gill, 2014). The phenomenological approach can also be used to help fill gaps in the literature about leadership, especially the descriptive and rich details of marginalized women's experiences (Gill, 2014; Guest et al., 2012). By using phenomenological methods, such as a conversational interview, I can gain insight into the experiences of women in leadership who are often omitted from scholarly studies and provide a more comprehensive perspective for studying diversity and the inclusion of Asian and Asian American female leadership in American workplaces.

Second, this approach was to investigate the "lived experience" self-described by the participants to gain more comprehensive and profound insights on the participants' "own terms," including using their specific words and unique voices to describe their individual experiences (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019, p. 96). The participant's descriptions were reported in the first person to avoid my biased interpretations of the phenomena to align fully with the tenets of the phenomenological design, which involves description instead of explanation or analysis (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019; Thomasson, 2005). Third, the phenomenological approach's semistructured interview and open-ended question design offer participants flexibility in describing their occupational experiences, enabling them to provide rich, detailed accounts

(Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019; Peoples, 2020). Through careful depiction of these experiences, I can uncover and further investigate commonalities among shared experiences, facilitating deeper insight, understanding, and interpretation (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019; Manen, 2023).

For this research study, I focused on homogeneity, or having participants with similar backgrounds and careers, rather than heterogeneity, participants from diverse backgrounds and careers, in the sample because a homogeneity-focused approach can better reveal commonalities in participants' shared experiences, further deepening the understanding and explanation of prevalent phenomena (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019). Discovering the common phenomena and attributes experienced by Asian and Asian American female administrators in their career trajectories can establish resonance between the researcher and reader. Paying attention to the homogeneity in the data from the research subjects can provide more feasible guidance to other Asians and Asian Americans by helping to describe the successful cases of the participants. In addition, I used thematic analysis to organize, analyze, and report the collected data.

Population

The population for this study was Asian and Asian American female administrators, including foreign-born Asians (first-generation nonimmigrants, first-generation, and 1.5-generation immigrants) and AAPI who were born in the United States, including second-generation and third-generation Asian immigrants. Due to samples being from non-faith-based and diverse institutions, the participants were biologically female, which means they were born as female. The qualified participants were in their current or previous administrative leadership positions in U.S. colleges or universities for at least 1 year. The reason for also including experience in administrative leadership positions in the past year was that some qualified participants were new to senior administrative leadership and might have been middle-level

administrative leaders before. I contacted these administrators primarily through purposive

sampling methods and also used snowball sampling methods, if needed, to engage enough

participants (Leavy, 2017). Such sampling methods allowed for judgment and research purposes

(Groenewald, 2004; Peoples, 2020). Through purposive sampling, participation was initially

sought through work-related connections, people known from leadership seminars, or

membership in professional associations. I emailed systemic professional associations to recruit

the participants (see Appendix A). For example, I sent an inquiry to the International Textile and

Apparel Association's (ITAA) executive director to have them distribute my email to their

membership. I emailed potential participants on social media through LinkedIn. The participants

were classified by management positions: chairperson, assistant deans, associate deans, deans,

assistant chancellor, vice chancellors, and chancellors. Each position in higher education has

different job responsibilities, so different leadership positions will give readers different

perspectives on work and career development. Since some public universities have positions for

interim and utilize interim directors in leadership roles, this study sample also included interim

chairpersons, deans, and vice chancellors. Additionally, the participants' generational status was

collected: first-generation Asian and Asian American female immigrants (born overseas);

second-generation Asian American females (born in the United States, children of first-

generation immigrants); third-generation Asian American females (born in the United States,

grandchildren of first-generation immigrants), and so on.

Study Sample

Interviewing three to six participants resulted in data saturation for a descriptive

phenomenological study in organizational studies (Barsoum, 2022; Gill, 2014). The plan was to

elicit the participation of six Asian and Asian American female (biologically female)

administrators at U.S. colleges and universities for this study. The goal was to secure participants who matched this study's purpose, with the focus limited to gender (women), race (Asian and Asian American), position (administrators), and higher education. The criteria for inclusion in this study were that the participants must be of Asian descent, hold a leadership position at a college or university in the United States, and have worked approximately 2 years in this leadership position. The study was conducted nationally, and the location was dependent on universities and colleges across the country currently employing female Asian and Asian American administrators. I estimated there were four chancellors (including vice chancellor) level Asian and Asian American women after my research and hearing from persons with whom I have personal working relationships. Still, currently, there were more Asian and Asian American women in administrator positions, such as deans and chairpersons at community colleges, private colleges, and public universities of higher education that I have learned about through my observation and 10 years of professional association experience.

The recruitment began by contacting administrators with specific qualifications through various channels. The qualified participants must currently hold or have held administrative or leadership positions in a U.S. college or university for at least 1 year. Administrators received an email from me regarding the recruitment of the participants. I sent an email vision flyer that had two purposes: to seek participants to interview for the study and, for those who do not qualify for this study, to communicate with people who can refer or recommend somebody qualified to participate. These channels included professional associations, academic associations, career development seminars, and professional contacts. For professional associations, I approached potential participants through memberships in professional associations such as the ITAA and the American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences (AAFCS). The reason for choosing

ITAA and AAFCS is not only because I have been a member of these two professional associations for many years and held various positions in these organizations, but I also knew several Asian and Asian American female leaders and planned to recruit them potentially as interviewees. For academic associations and membership in academic associations, like the Alpha Chi Honor Society, associated with my graduate university, was utilized as a means of connecting with potential participants. For career development seminars, I engaged participants through events like career development seminars at my working public university, such as the American Council on Education (ACE). For professional contacts, I built on professional relationships, and I contacted potential participants through various platforms, including LinkedIn and workplace connections. I also recently followed the Asian American/Asian Research Institute (AAARI) and tried to contact members relevant to the study's purpose for possible participation. This year and the following year, I continued to pay attention to the AAPI community in different associations in the United States to identify potential participants.

Instruments

Semistructured interviews were used to collect interviewees' perspectives about possible obstacles and successes in their career advancement and support that assisted them in this progression (Leavy, 2017). The interviews were conducted via Zoom, video recorded, and transcribed to collect data for exploring this problem. These interviews lasted approximately 1 hour per participant. Compared to highly structured level interviews, a semistructured interview prompted the participants to provide more detailed data, allowing me to learn more about the participants' lives, experiences, and feelings from their answers; compared to unstructured interviews, I can ask adjusted and detailed questions based on the participants' interview conversation that specifically addressed the research question (Kvale, 2008; Leavy, 2017).

Semistructured interviews generated data about the participants' lives, experiences, and emotions while keeping the interview on track to fulfill the study's aim (Kvale, 2008). The interview questions for this study were designed to align with the purpose statement and research question (What is the lived experience of Asian and Asian American female administrators that influenced and further shaped their trajectory toward leadership positions within U.S. higher education?) and fill the gap in the current literature. These questions were reviewed by professors and leaders in higher education institutions for relevance and applicability (Roberts, 2020).

The interview questions were as follows:

1. Would you please tell me what your experience has been with supports that may have shaped and continue to shape your career trajectory into leadership positions in higher education?

2. Would you please tell me what your experience has been with professional associations that may have shaped and continue to shape your career trajectory into leadership positions in higher education?

3. Would you please tell me about your experiences and how they may have shaped your career trajectories?

4. Would you please tell me about any experience you may or may not have had, along with key moments, that potentially led to your promotion to a higher-education leadership position?

5. Would you please tell me how experience you may or may not have had with race, gender, socioeconomic status, and religion influenced your journey to a workplace leadership role?

6. Would you please tell me about any experience you may or may not have had regarding any emotional aspects, root causes, coping strategies, and motivations behind addressing any discrimination you encountered in your career development (Salleh-Barone, 2004)?

7. Please tell me about any positive or negative experience you may or may not have had that involved family influence on your career as an administrator. How have family members served as mentors in your path to leadership?

8. Please tell me about any experience you may or may not have had with language-related advantages or obstacles encountered while advancing to leadership positions.

9. If you had a bicultural or multicultural upbringing, please tell me about any experience you may or may not have where this upbringing created advantages or disadvantages and contributed to your ability, or lack of ability, to be viewed as a leader (Fang, 2023).

Follow-up emails were used if clarification was needed to resolve any gaps in the data, missing information, and ambiguous information; additionally, follow-up emails can add information and uncover more data from the initial interview. I employed member checking to make sure the transcriptions of the interviews were correct and inquired if the participants wanted to change or add to their answers because the goal for this phenomenological study was saturation, as opposed to generalization. Saturation occurs when new data no longer provide additional insights or contribute to the study's results, which indicates enough information to fully explore the experiences, perspectives, or phenomena under investigation (Nowell et al., 2017; Peoples, 2020).

Data Collection and Analysis Procedures

Data Collection

According to ACU's Institutional Review Board Policies and Handbook (2018), before the interviews start, the participants need to have full awareness of the purpose of the study and sign informed consent forms (see Appendix B); the informed consent should include an explanation of "the purpose of the research, the risks, and benefits entailed therein, and to contain all other federally or locally mandated elements" (p. 8). The interviewees were assigned pseudonyms to protect their privacy, and their digital files also reflected these pseudonyms (Leavy, 2017). Their interview data was stored on a password-protected laptop to protect participants' privacy; after completion of the study, the digital files of these interviews will be erased as an extra privacy protection method to "maintain the confidentiality of the data" per ACU's Institutional Review Board Policies and Handbook (2018, p. 8). I obtained approval from ACU's Institutional Review Board (IRB; see Appendix E) before contacting any participants.

An interview protocol (see Appendix C), which included the interview questions, helped guide the discussion and keep the interview focused on the research topic with nine prepared open-ended questions so that there is some direction to the conversation while allowing for the interviewee to elaborate and freely communicate on the topic (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). Then, I used Otter.ai to transcribe these interview recordings. To avoid accidents in the data collection, such as the voice not being recorded successfully, two other recording devices were used: a video recording function of the Zoom application and a smartphone recording using the voice memos application. The voice data was manually transcribed if Otter.ai did not work. In addition, I immersed myself in the text data and voice and video data to repeatedly learn, observe, and write the reflection of participants' experiences (Glaser, 1965; Guest et al., 2012).

To triangulate the findings, I collected data using multiple methods and perspectives, which included Zoom interviews along with participants' job tasks and responsibilities descriptions,

The method of recruiting participants involved purposive sampling, which might also include snowball sampling methods. Snowball sampling is a purposive sampling method where original participants refer or recruit additional participants for the study to reach the desired number of participants (Peoples, 2020). During the initial interviews, field notes were generated from observations during the Zoom meetings, including notes about the date and time of the interview, the setting of the Zoom meeting, thick descriptions of interactions with participants, including nonverbal cues, such as gestures, posture, facial expressions, eye contact, voice, tone, dressing, etc. (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019; Carter et al., 2014; Leavy, 2017). After analyzing the data from individual participants' transcripts and field notes, a Likert scale survey based on the identified themes was sent to participants to rate/rank (Nowell et al., 2017; Peoples, 2020).

Data Analysis Procedures

Thematic analysis was used to identify, code, and connect thematic patterns in the data to complement this study's phenomenological research design (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Guest et al. (2012) defined thematic analysis as consolidating and organizing data around thematic patterns apparent in the data, and for this phenomenological theme-based study, the themes included the participants' experiences and potential factors that assisted in their career trajectories. To begin this process, after collecting the data, I familiarized myself with the data and performed coding in the data analysis stage of the phenomenological approach (Guest et al., 2012; Ryan & Bernard, 2003). Guest et al. (2012) stated:

> Thematic analyses, as in grounded theory and development of cultural models, require more involvement and interpretation from the researcher. Thematic analyses move

beyond counting explicit words or phrases and focus on identifying and describing both

implicit and explicit ideas within the data, that is, themes. Codes are then typically

developed to represent the identified themes and applied or linked to raw data as

summary markers for later analysis. (p. 11)

I also loosely built an initial list of codes as I familiarized myself with the data in the

process of open coding (Guest et al., 2012). Ryan and Bernard (2003) identified open coding as

when researchers create new codes from descriptive information in the data and label them

accordingly. This step required me to cut and classify data repeatedly. Quotes or words voiced

by interviewees can be used as codes, which bracket out the researchers' preconceptions to avoid

biasing the participants' descriptions (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019). This helped to bolster the

credibility of the analysis process and findings. There are many new possibilities for interpreting

the data through repeated comparisons (Glaser, 1965; Guest et al., 2012; Ryan & Bernard, 2003).

In the fourth step, I repeatedly reviewed the digital transcripts using the "constant comparative

method" to immerse myself in the data and discover the many possibilities for interpreting the

data (Glaser, 1965, p. 436; Guest et al., 2012). As new codes emerged during each new

interview, I needed to go back and review past interviews to see if I might locate the code,

although I did not initially discover it. As I started looking over the codes, I found connections or

patterns in these codes, which was called axial coding, and these connections and patterns were

consolidated into themes. After the previously mentioned step, I defined the themes of the study.

Clearly defining the themes allowed the audience and myself to know what was meant and

included in the theme and how the theme assisted in their understanding of the data. Thematic

analysis is a similar process to other qualitative analysis methods, and the analysis begins when

the researcher starts looking for meaning and potential points of interest in the information

(Braun & Clarke, 2006). I revisited the codes throughout the analysis to see whether they matched the theme. By carefully analyzing the participants' experiences, I found inflection points that could identify similarities between their shared experiences, thereby enabling the understanding of the common phenomenon through thematic analysis (Guest et al., 2012). In addition, by having several sources (member checking and following up emails with participants) to validate the codes and themes across the data, this triangulation strengthened the study's credibility, as Ryan and Bernard (2003) suggested.

Researcher's Role

The researcher's role in this phenomenological study should be a data collector, a listener, an observer, a describer, and a deep studier. The researcher is me, an Asian woman with over 10 years of experience teaching in higher education in the United States. I did not attempt to influence or alter the participants' perspectives but rather recorded and discovered the facts described by the participants and approached the study from the perspective of an observer to watch, listen, and gain a deep understanding of the participants' experiences (Smith & Nizza, 2022). I maintained the role of a neutral observer and strived to remain neutral and nonintrusive to respect the participants' subjective experiences. The key word in phenomenological research is "rich descriptions of phenomena and their settings," the information collected from the participants; thus, I was a describer to portray the phenomenon as accurately as possible and stay true to the facts (Groenewald, 2004, p. 47). A phenomenological researcher is expected to engage in an immersive study approach, delving into textual, audio, and video data to iteratively grasp, observe, and articulate the reflections of the participants' experiences (Glaser, 1965; Guest et al., 2012).

Ethical Considerations

Ryan et al. (2007) identified trustworthiness (rigor) as the credibility and integrity shown in the qualitative study process, including "documentation rigor," "procedural rigor," and "ethical rigor" (pp. 742–743). For documentation rigor, I saved all the documents and video data and recorded each research step of the study. For procedural rigor, I analyzed the data rigorously using a repetitive method, such as the constant comparative method, and engaged in critical reading. For ethical rigor, the measures outlined earlier for ensuring the interviewees' privacy were consistently observed, and the participants were told about the study, as well as any potential benefits or harms. Participants were also told that they could exit the study at any time without penalty.

I completed two trainings of CITI, the Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) and Social-Behavioral-Educational (SBE) Basic training. I sought IRB approval for the study, which required additional ethical diligence, such as destroying the data after the study was complete. Furthermore, according to the IRB information I reviewed on Human Research and IRB: Submitting a New Study (Abilene Christian University, 2021) and Protections (U. S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2016), this study might require an expedited review because I planned to use data from interviews; the research plan was to record the interviews, which was contained under the designation of "expedited," too. I used the Cayuse to complete the information step by step for the IRB application.

Furthermore, Ryan et al. (2007) stated that "credibility," "dependability," "transferability," and "confirmability" are the typical criteria of trustworthiness in qualitative research (p. 743). Regarding credibility, I conducted member checking to assure the accuracy of the data and the consistency of the participants' narratives; after analyzing the data from

individual participants' transcripts and field notes, I created a Likert scale survey based on the themes that I have identified; the survey allowed participants to rate/rank the themes that I found to further examine whether my observations were in alignment with their perspectives (Nowell et al., 2017; Ryan et al., 2007; Shenton, 2004). The use of triangulation strengthened the study's credibility by using multiple data sources, Zoom interviews, field notes, and member checking (Carter et al., 2014; Nowell et al., 2017; Peoples, 2020; Shenton, 2004). For dependability, I revisited and explained why I chose this study design and its research methods to ensure the data source and the study's reliability at each research step. Shenton (2004) pointed out that the correlation and connection of the research steps needed to be explained clearly, which can effectively enable future researchers to regard their research as a "prototype model" and conduct ascending or related research (p. 71). Regarding transferability, the study's methods can be followed and transferred to studies in different contexts (Ryan et al., 2007). According to Shenton's (2004) suggestion, I provided relevant and sufficient details related to the context in their study so that another scholar can apply them to another context with which they are familiar. The information should include the number of organizations and their geographic location, the description and limitations of the participants, and the number of participants. I used the tools to collect the data, the number and length of interviews, and the period over which the data were collected (Shenton, 2004). Regarding confirmability, I provided the exact analytical steps to document how the findings and interpretations were ascertained. Moreover, I verified the "credibility," "dependability," and "transferability" of this research to determine whether this research has confirmability by using professional experts to review my findings, as Ryan et al. (2007) suggested.

Assumptions

As a phenomenological researcher, I should not divorce myself from my assumptions while conducting research. Thus, I assumed that the Asian and Asian American women leaders I interviewed were the correct population subset for the study (Groenewald, 2004). I assumed that these participants were significant in the research domain, they would be honest in answering the questions, their immigration status (including whether they were first-generation, 1.5.-generation, second-generation, or third-generation Asian immigrants), and their experiences and insights would provide crucial support and insights for the study. This assumption was based on my judgment of the method, aiming to adequately select this specific group to address the research question and fill the gap in the literature (Groenewald, 2004). I also assumed that my study results might be generalized to a larger population of Asian populations in the United States.

Limitations

This research had four limitations (Peoples, 2020; Pezalla et al., 2012). The first limitation was the inability to control the participants' years of working experience in higher education, the duration it took for them to reach their current positions in their careers, and the extent to which participants were willing to cooperate in the interviews and this study. Second, there was a limitation when it came to the subjectivity of the researcher when conducting semistructured interviews; when the researcher hears the research subject's answer at the moment of participation, agreement, neutrality, and self-disclosure, these different reactions may affect how participants answer the question and lead to limitations in the research data in this study (Pezalla et al., 2012). Third, this study might have time constraints and participant sample bias (Peoples, 2020). This research was scheduled for completion in 2024, so there was a time

limitation. The sample size of Asian American leaders was inherently small due to the limitations of the Asian and Asian American exclusive leaders in the United States, and the small sample size may lead to bias. Fourth, although my experience was the nature of the researcher as a measurement tool for analyzing data (Pezalla et al., 2012), my interpretation of data may be subconsciously influenced by their cultural and work experience background.

Delimitations

The boundaries established by the study and chosen by me were the delimitations of the research (Peoples, 2020). The following are my delimitations. First, my study's scope was limited to Asian American women in administrative positions in higher education. I decided who to include or exclude in my study based on the purpose of my study and its subjects. I did not include participants from other racial backgrounds, industries, and men in this study. Second, my research was limited to the intersectional theory (Hooks, 2015) and community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005) frameworks. Through reading literature, some studies on Asian Americans use intersectional theory as the basic theory and mention that part of the social reasons for the challenges faced by Asians and Asian American women in their workplace or school are due to the intersection between sexism and racism (Hooks, 2015; Jang, 2023; Kim et al., 2023; Liang et al., 2018). Adding the community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005) framework to the intersectionality theory (Hooks, 2015), some literature was cited to point out that the unique community cultural wealth of Asians has a positive role and impact on Asians' promotion in the workplace (Anandavalli, 2021; Kim et al., 2022; Leigh et al., 2021; Yosso, 2005). Third, I conducted the semistructured interview with the participants for around 1 hour and determined the length of those interviews according to the best of my ability to collect enough data to answer

the research question in a comprehensive way, so at least 1 hour was allowed for the

interviewees to answer the questions fully.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I introduced my research methods and why phenomenological research

was the best method for exploring this topic. I collected individual experiences that have shaped

or continue to shape Asian/Asian American women administrators' leadership trajectories in

higher education for this qualitative phenomenological study (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019).

Collecting these women's experiences and perspectives, leading to their professional rise, will be

meaningful to other Asian American women who also wish to aspire to leadership in higher

education in the United States.

The data included transcriptions of 1-hour semistructured interviews, field notes, and

member checking. The eight interview questions were designed to be consistent with the purpose

statement and research question and to fill a gap in the current literature on Asian and Asian

American female executive leaders in U.S. higher education institutions. Zoom interviews were

video recorded using the smartphone Zoom app and transcribed for translation using Otter.ai.

Field notes were another resource for collecting data. Also, the study required member checking,

which included follow-up emails with a Likert scale survey to avoid missing or ambiguous data

(Nowell et al., 2017; Peoples, 2020). Also, participants were assigned pseudonyms to protect

their privacy, and their digital files reflected these pseudonyms (Leavy, 2017).

For organizing and analyzing data, I used thematic analysis to identify, code, and connect

thematic patterns in the data and mainly use thematic coding to organize the collected

information and start looking for meaning and possible areas of significance in the data (Braun &

Clarke, 2006; Guest et al., 2012). Furthermore, I familiarized myself with the data and generated

initial codes, adopt open coding methods, continuously cut and classify the data, and used quotes

or words from interviewees' original words as codes to avoid researcher bias (Bloomberg &

Volpe, 2019; Guest et al., 2012; Ryan & Bernard, 2003). I visited the codes repeatedly

throughout the analysis process.

Chapter 4 contains the study's findings using the data collected from the research method

and implementation plan outlined in Chapter 3. The results include descriptions from the

participants, and phenomenological analysis fully demonstrated the language and experiences of

the participants being studied. Chapter 4 also includes my analysis and interpretation of the six

participants' commonalities in the postinterview data. Also, I developed several thematic

discussions and themes based on the collected data by using a homogeneity-focused approach.

Chapter 4: Results

This qualitative phenomenology study aimed to explore the career and life experiences of Asian and Asian American female administrators in higher education who have served and continue to serve and how these experiences shaped their career trajectories. Through the rich data of qualified Asian and Asian American female administrators, participants' descriptions of their lived experiences, including life and career experience, provide a deeper understanding of what influenced and further shaped their trajectory toward leadership positions within U.S. higher education. As a phenomenology researcher, I was a data collector, a listener, an observer, a describer, and a deep studier. I also tried to remain neutral during the interview process and follow the interview protocol, recording the content and capturing the tone of the interviewees. The research results in this chapter were based on the nine interview questions of instruments designed in Chapter 3 and designed to align with the purpose statement and research question (What is the lived experience of Asian and Asian American female administrators that influenced and further shaped their trajectory toward leadership positions within U.S. higher education?) and fill the gap in the current literature. These questions were reviewed by dissertation chair and committees and leaders in higher education institutions for relevance and applicability (Roberts, 2020). Furthermore, this chapter lays the foundation for the analysis in Chapter 5, where a comparative discussion of the research findings and the literature will be presented.

This chapter will provide an overview of the research methodology and design, including the data collection process and data analysis procedures. The data collection process included a detailed purposive sampling with snowball sampling methods process for collecting data and a data analysis procedure that utilizes phenomenology (Leavy, 2017), following the steps of

Moustakas's (1994) model: epoché, phenomenological reduction, imaginative variation, and a synthesis of meaning and essence. This will be followed by an introduction to the participants' backgrounds, which will focus on their career experiences and their executive leadership experiences. Finally, the research findings will be presented through five main themes: *associations and networks*, *family*, *discrimination*, *language*, *and mentors*, and four additional themes: *work experience*, *advice*, *education*, *and biculturalism/multiculturalism*.

Overview of the Research Methods and Design

Data Collection Process

   This study used a qualitative phenomenological approach with semistructured interviews, field notes, and member checking to study the experiences of Asian and Asian American female administrators in U.S. higher education. Reaching out to professional associations on the platform and LinkedIn with the flier did not yield any participants; however, attending a workshop yielded three participants, including one by snowballing sample, and reaching out through customized emails to those who responded to the email flier and phone calls resulted in the final six qualified participants who were interviewed. The recruitment process was completed from May 13 to July 9, 2024. I sent out recruitment emails to 25 potentially qualified participants, contacted a network of 17 people, including mentors, professors, and colleagues, and contacted eight professional associations and LinkedIn. In addition, although the sample of six participants provided favorable data support for the study, the sample size was small, and the results of this study cannot be widely generalized.

   Each semistructured interview was scheduled via email and phone calls. For all interviews, I sent informed consent forms before the interview and conducted the interview after the qualified participants read and signed the forms. I used triangulation to strengthen this

phenomenological study's credibility by using multiple data sources, Zoom interviews, field notes, and member checking (Carter et al., 2014; Nowell et al., 2017; Peoples, 2020; Shenton, 2004). During the entire interview process, Zoom, Otter.ai, and Voice Memos ensured that the interviews were recorded in a way that was convenient for me to verify and review. The average interview time across the six participants was 67.5 minutes (see Table 1).

Table 1

Length of Each Interview

Participants	Interview minutes
P1	74.39
P2	63.07
P3	52.38
P4	82.48
P5	69.17
P6	64.01
Total Interview Minutes	405.50

I also recorded field notes during the entire process of listening to the interviewers. On average, I recorded 10 pieces of paper for each interviewer and recorded some key points. On July 9, 2024, I sent emails to various association platforms and withdrew my recruitment emails and fliers. This phenomenological study required member checking. Therefore, I sent out the follow-up emails with a Likert scale survey with themes and subthemes to avoid missing or ambiguous data (Nowell et al., 2017; Peoples, 2020). Four participants (P1, P3, P4, and P5) responded to the follow-up emails and completed the survey; they agreed with most of my main themes, additional themes, and subthemes. Regarding the language theme, I updated the results and deleted the section subtitle, neutral attitude toward language, due to P5's complete

disagreement regarding this subtheme in the follow-up member checking response, and I went back to check the Zoom interview and transcript to reanalyze the data and made the update and moved her statement to the language advantage because she claimed that she was good in wiring; I also clarified that P3 disagrees that English is her advantage and considers Chinese as her language advantage based on her disagreement in the follow-up member checking response. Regarding socioeconomic status toward discrimination or religion, I also clarified P1, P4, and P5's statements about the subtheme based on their responses in the follow-up member checking and added P3's disagreement regarding the socioeconomic status toward discrimination or religion. In addition, regarding the additional theme, bicultural/multicultural, I made updates: P1 agreed her bicultural status is an advantage in the workplace, and P4 has a neutral attitude toward her bicultural/multicultural based on the follow-up member checking.

Data Analysis Procedures

As a phenomenological researcher, my data analysis process was consistent with that in Chapter 3, through the use of thematic analysis by applying a homogeneity-focused approach and adopting Moustakas's (1994) model with steps: epoché, phenomenological reduction, imaginative variation, and a synthesis of meaning and essence.

Step 1. Epoché. First, phenomenological researchers need to consciously let go of their prior judgments and opinions about the phenomenon, which is called epoché by Moustakas (1994). The purpose is to enable researchers to treat participants' data objectively from a new and unbiased perspective. The epoché method allowed me to keep my mind clear and free and be well prepared to collect data when I listened to each participant's story. I maintained epoché throughout the research process to avoid bias in participant data and reporting (Moustakas, 1994). I tried to remain neutral while I analyzed participants' words, read the field notes, and

captured the tone of the interviewees in the recording. In addition, I also used follow-up emails with a Likert scale survey with themes and subthemes to do the member checking to avoid personal bias while working on the analysis.

      Step 2. Phenomenological Reduction. After the epoché, I reviewed the data equally with an open mind to do the phenomenological reduction (Moustakas, 1994). According to Moustakas (1994), the main effective methods of phenomenological reduction are focusing on the research problem, horizontalizing all statements, deleting information irrelevant to the research problem, and coding themes in the text description of the phenomenon. I sorted out all statements related to the lived experience of Asian and Asian American female administrators that influenced and further shaped their trajectory toward leadership positions within U.S. higher education and ignored other irrelevant information. I also treated each statement related to workplace experiences equally, without prioritizing any part of the information. I immersed myself in the data, unaware of the phenomena behind the data, and simply reviewed the data to create open coding free from bias and prejudgment (Guest et al., 2012; Moustakas, 1994). Open coding is when the researcher creates new codes from descriptive information in the data and labels them accordingly (Ryan & Bernard, 2003). I used quotes or words voiced by participants as codes, which bracket out my preconceptions to avoid biasing the participants' descriptions (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019; Moustakas, 1994). I deleted information irrelevant to the topic and the research question, only keeping those related to the lived experience of Asian and Asian American female administrators that influenced and further shaped their trajectory toward leadership positions within U.S. higher education, such as filler words and repetition of information (Moustakas, 1994). I initially defined themes based on the coding of each sentence in the transcripts.

Step 3. Imaginative Variation. Phenomenologists explore different perspectives and variations to understand phenomena's possible meaning and nature (Moustakas, 1994). In this step, I found many new possibilities for interpreting the participants' data through repeated comparisons of their life, leading, and career experiences (Glaser, 1965; Guest et al., 2012; Ryan & Bernard, 2003). Then, I clustered and thematized the invariant constituents through coding and categorized each sentence of the data generated based on the transcripts of each interview; after that, I generated subthemes through open coding (Moustakas, 1994; Peoples, 2020). Furthermore, I paid attention to the homogeneity in the data from the open coding, which can better reveal commonalities in participants' shared experiences, further deepening the understanding and explanation of prevalent phenomena and sorting the subthemes. Then, by sorting the subthemes, I formed the main five themes and the additional four subthemes by using the same homogeneity-focused approach (see both themes and subthemes with coding in Appendix D: Coding Matrix). For the reader to understand the themes better, I reported a list of participants (see Table 2), each participant's background, immigration status, character, main life experiences, promotion experiences, goals, and how they were presented in the Zoom interview, including transcripts and field notes.

Table 2

List of Participants

Participant	Race	Education	Executive position	Executive leadership experiences in U.S. higher education
P1	Asian	PhD	Chairperson	2 years
P2	Asian American	PhD	Interim executive director, former dean, former chair	6+ years
P3	Asian American	Master's Degree	Executive director	2 years
P4	Asian American	EdD	Director of alumni engagement and fundraising	10 years
P5	Asian American	PhD	Former chair	3 years
P6	Asian American	EdD	Vice chancellor	20+ years

Step 4. Synthesis of Texture and Structure. The synthesis of texture and structure step aims to integrate textural and structural descriptions to reveal the core nature and significance of the phenomenon of the career path of Asian and Asian American women's college administrative leaders in the United States (Moustakas, 1994). I combined the extracted textural and structural descriptions to conduct a higher-level analysis to understand better the phenomenon of Asian and Asian American women's college administrative leaders in their career paths (Moustakas, 1994). Five themes are presented in the results of this phenomenology study, along with four additional themes (see Table 3). Each theme included several subthemes to explain participants' own tone from the interview data and filed notes from me, the researcher. I created Table 4 based on the coding, which shows how many participants agree and disagree

with each main theme, including subthemes (see Table 4). All participant-identified information is anonymized to protect their privacy, including their names, ages, and the colleges/universities where they work (Leavy, 2017). I immersed myself in the text data and voice and video data to repeatedly learn, observe, and write the reflection of participants' experiences (Glaser, 1965; Guest et al., 2012). During the data analysis process, from July 9 to October 3, 2024, I spent about 4 to 8 hours each day (all time except work) immersed in data research, reading participants' transcripts and coding through the computer and videos of each participant. The words, emotional changes, and body language of each of them in the Zoom interview were analyzed one by one, and their common experiences were extracted. During this process, I gradually developed a deep understanding of the data and was able to observe their experiences from different perspectives.

Table 3

RQ, Main Themes, Additional Themes, and Subthemes

RQ	Main themes	Subthemes	Additional themes	Subthemes
What is the lived experience of Asian and Asian American female administrators that influenced and further shaped their trajectory toward leadership positions within U.S. higher	1. Association & Networking	• Professional Association and Networking Support • Reserved Attitude Toward Professional Association and Networking •	1) Working Experience	○ Challenges ○ Promotion Experience
	2. Family	• Family Support and Inspiration • Facing Family Challenges and Complex Attitude • Want to be Role	2) Suggestion 3) Education	○ Suggestion for Moving Up ○ Leadership Development

RQ	Main themes	Subthemes	Additional themes	Subthemes
education?		Model for Others		
		•		
	3. Discrimination	• Stereotypes and Discrimination	4) Bicultural/ Multicultural	
		• Racism		
		• Unintentional Discrimination		
		• Emotion toward Discrimination		
		• Socioeconomic Status toward Discrimination		
		• Religion Discrimination		
		• Face Discrimination		
		•		
	4. Language	• Language Challenge		
		• Language Advantage		
		• Language Suggestions		
		•		
	5. Mentor	• The Importance of Mentors		
		• Different Race and Genders Mentors		
		• Who Were my Mentor(s) in my Career Path?		
		• Limited Mentorship		
		• Support Others		

Table 4

Main Themes, Subthemes, and Participants' Agreement and Disagreement

Main theme	Subtheme	Agree	Disagree
Theme 1: Association & Networking	Professional Association and Networking Support	6	
	Reserved Attitude Toward Professional Association and Networking	3	
Theme 2: Family	Family Support and Inspiration	6	
	Facing Family Challenges and Complex Attitude	2	
	Want to be role model for others	4	
Theme 3: Discrimination	Stereotypes and Discrimination	6	
	Racism	3	
	Unintentional Discrimination	2	
	Emotion toward Discrimination	4	
	Socioeconomic Status toward Discrimination	3	1
	Religion Discrimination		2
Theme 4: Language	Language Challenge	5	
	Language Advantage	4	
	Language Suggestions	3	
Theme 5: Mentor	The Importance of Mentors	4	
	Different Race and Genders Mentors	3	
	Who Were my Mentor(s) in my Career Path?	4	
	Limited Mentorship	5	
	Support Others	4	

Note. Participants who responded naturally or did not respond at all are not included in this table.

Researcher Role and Background

My background is an Asian woman who originally came from Shanghai, China, and an Arkansas resident with over 10 years of experience teaching in higher education for the second largest state university in the United States. I also worked and graduated with a master's degree from a private college in Georgia. Thus, I am familiar with the system of higher education

institutions in public and private schools in the United States. After studying and working in U.S. higher education for 14 plus years, I am always very interested in researching the life and work experiences of Asians and Asian Americans, especially women.

Aligned with Chapter 3, I was a data collector, a listener, an observer, a describer, and a deep studier as the researcher in this phenomenological study. As a data collector and listener, I focused on recording and uncovering the facts described by participants to observe, listen, and gain a deeper understanding of their experiences (Smith & Nizza, 2022). As a neutral observer, I strived to remain neutral and nonintrusive to respect the participants' experiences during the interview and data analysis. As a describer, I portrayed the phenomenon accurately and stayed true to the facts (Groenewald, 2004). As a deep studier, I engaged in an immersive study approach, delving into textual, audio, and video data to iteratively grasp, observe, and articulate the reflections of the participants' experiences through reading digital documents, watching Zoom interviews via computer and handwriting notes and digital files for more than 3 months (Glaser, 1965; Guest et al., 2012).

Participants' Background

P1

P1 is a chairperson for A University, and she has been working in this administrative leadership role for 2 years. She is in her 50s with many years of research experience in China and the United States before she became the chairperson. She has worked at the same university for 15 years, from assistant professor to associate professor. Her 15 years of work experience in the same department brought her the knowledge and experience of changes within her department.

P1 is a Chinese and American resident, first-generation immigrant in the United States. She shared her life and career experience as an Asian woman in STEM fields in the U.S. higher education institution, highlighting the language obstacles she faced, including discrimination based on identity and accent. She considered that language and accent made her less desirable for leadership. P1 also shared her struggle with paying out-of-state tuition due to her nonimmigrant status in her earlier college study life. During that time, P1's family support played a crucial role in her advancement, as it provided financial and emotional backing from her parents. Her family continued to support her career advancement by taking care of her kids and leaving her room to grow and concentrate on academics and careers. P1 emphasized the importance of perseverance, work ethic, and support networks in navigating these challenges and achieving leadership roles. She also wants to be a role model for her kids. She concluded with advice on promotion and mentioned that people should love what they do in their chosen careers.

P2

P2 is an interim executive director for the B Research Institute, which serves all of University B. She is in her 40s and started leading in different administrator leadership positions in her early career. She said, "I was tapped to be the undergraduate deputy chair of my department. What was on the tenure track, so I started in kind of leadership roles very early." She continued, "So during the school academic year, 2023. I was the faculty associate dean for the School of B at University B. And I was also the program coordinator." P2 talked about the challenges and opportunities faced by Asian American women in higher education, highlighting the importance of mentorship and networking with several examples in the Zoom interview.

P2 is a 1.5-generation immigrant Asian American from Taiwan who came to the United States with her parents and who grew up in a White community. She was very confident

throughout the whole process of answering questions and was fluent in English. She was confident in her language strengths and mentioned the mentor of color many times, who appreciated her abilities and potential. P2 mentioned that speaking different words to different people and using different English is an advantage of her language communication skills within her leadership and promotion in the workplace. In addition, P2 acknowledged that racism in the workplace had previously existed. She also pointed out it is different from microaggressions.

P2 emphasized that she has an uncle with a PhD as one of the family members who supports her reading and inspires her in her willingness to pursue education. Also, her mother, a restaurant owner and manager, has a positive influence on her work ethic and people management in her leadership. She also has complex feelings about her parents and motivation for her leading success; her efforts are motivated by her desire to be her parents' redemption. Several times during the interview, she said, "I want to redeem my family."

P3

P3 is an executive director with 2 years of experience in an administration position at C University. P3 is the first generation of U.S. immigrants in her 40s who is an American citizen. The whole conversation was relatively fluent in English. P3 did mention that English is her second language, so she needs more time to think and understand. She has research funding experience from her previous job to her current job. Her past job was as a private elementary and middle school principal for 7 years.

P3 also had the experience of being looked down upon. In her previous job as a senior administrator, she was mistaken for a subordinate staff member because of how she looked. The subordinate staff member was White and male, but he was mistaken for the senior administrator. She hopes to change discrimination and bias and how it should be reflected in teaching others to

accept diversity. In addition, she was a teacher, and her work gave her a very good understanding of her frontline experience as a teacher, and it brought a lot of positive influence to her work in the school system and as a senior administrator. She understood how the skill transferred to her administrative leadership job and expressed that her teacher experience led her to more understanding of the school system. For example, she talked about other skills that helped her get promoted to her current leadership role, such as research funding skills.

P4

P4 is a director within the alumni affaire at D University; she has 10 years of experience in administrative positions and has worked in higher education for around 12–15 years. P4 is a mixed Vietnamese and Chinese U.S. immigrant who was born in Vietnam and came to the United States when she was 6 years old. She was the first generation of her family to go to college. Her original family and her husband support her education and further growth. P4 earned her doctoral degree in 2023 and studied Asian American women. Because of her study area she is an association cofounder for Asian American women. She explained how the Asian American-related association is running monthly and stated:

A lot of our topics come up from discussions with other women. Looking at what we think our weaknesses are and what we could help with … a lot of the topics come from that, and we do it every month. We try to do a get-together in person. And we do different topics, and we rotate … We're looking for other presenters who want to present that are part of the group.

She expressed her commitment to helping the Asian American women's community by extending her work. She started small and then she found folks who were interested in her

research area and who helped expand her work. In addition, her organization's original intention was to help Asian American women, and as it grew, men began to join.

P5

P5 was the department chairperson from 2018 until 2021 and had more than 60 employees in her department at E Community College. P5 is an Indian American, a second-generation immigrant who was born in the United States, she does not think she has a language advantage but is good at writing, which is helpful for funding. She does not think she is a traditional Asian woman, and she will learn from other chairpersons to call other leaders by their first name instead of their family name. Furthermore, she does not believe that speaking softly is inappropriate for a leader. She believes that people need to accept that there are different leaders and believes that when more and more Asian American female leaders are in leadership positions, they can become role models. It also allows people around them and their subordinates to better accept that Asian American female leaders can be leaders instead of fulfilling a stereotype.

Furthermore, P5 is an impressive former leader because she was brave enough to speak deeply and concretely in the Zoom meeting about the lack of support from subordinates and leaders she faced during her 3 years as chair. She explained how she had challenges seeking support and mentorship from her ex-chairperson. She also shared the legal proceedings from his subordinates. In the process of describing her leadership experience with discrimination, she cried, stating that discrimination mainly affects women. At the same time, because she has never received help, she is very willing to help others, such as joining women of color-related organizations, providing help at seminars, and also willing to share her own experiences. She stated that when she found that there was no support, she established a chair group chat team and

fostered network support in the process. These nonsupports include a lack of standards for being a chair, guidance from superiors, especially when conflicts arise, and inaction from superiors. Although she expressed strong emotions during the Zoom meeting, she was not discouraged. She stated that her chairperson leadership experiences inspired her to go to law school and finish her first year of law classes. She also said that she has been building a whole support system, and she is now applying for a new interim dean position at a different institution.

P6

P6 is a vice chancellor at F University, who has been a leader for the past 20 years and in higher education for 30 years. P6 is a Filipino American. P6 shared her experiences as an Asian female leader in higher education, emphasizing the need for more diverse representation in leadership positions. She highlighted that there is an opportunity open to diverse race administrative leaders in the C-suite (chief executive officers) in U.S. higher education institutions today. She stated that in the past, it was rare to have Asian and Asian American female leaders in higher education, and she recently met an Asian female chancellor in U.S. higher education. She mentioned changing her leadership job so that she no longer deals with students but works on policy, and it could affect students. P6 shared her life and career experiences with discrimination and how her multicultural identities have influenced her career advancement. She emphasized the need to understand and embrace people's diverse backgrounds and cultures in the workplace, address discrimination, find their voice, and succeed in leadership roles.

Results

Five themes were identified: *association and networking*, *family*, *discrimination*, *language*, and *mentor*. All six participants reported that professional association and networking

played an important role in their career trajectory within higher education, although the degree of agreement is different. All participants also identified different levels of family support and experienced different levels of discrimination. Additionally, language was identified as both a challenge and an advantage. The final theme identified was the role of mentors and how they played important roles in most participants' workplaces.

Theme 1: Association and Networking

Professional Association and Networking Support. All six participants reported that professional associations played different levels of positive roles in their career trajectories in higher education. P1 and P3 were very supportive of professional associations; both claimed that professional associations provided them with a good network in their current administrator jobs. P2 and P4 both demonstrated support and comfort with specific Asia and Asian American-related associations during the interviews. P5 and P6 were less supportive of professional associations than P1, P2, P3, and P4 but still recognized the importance of professional associations to career development, claiming they supported them on some level, such as grants or publications.

P1 shared:

> You can gain valuable experience and enhance your literacy skills … this giving and gathering provides a networking opportunity … You can get more ideas about the leadership because they have also exhibited a lot of industry people who will come. Also … you can present your research findings … and you can volunteer to serve … Serving as a judge and then as a program coordinator for each of the sessions to the meetings, sometimes, you build your reputation. It's also kind of [establishing] your expertise … and you might be able to seek some kind of leadership position. You speak

in public and develop your skills, and you have to communicate with your people and so on.

P2 shared:

As a part of the association, I belong to certain sections. And there are certain sections. For which I did not always feel the most comfortable … The one section as a part of B Association that I felt comfortable to take on leadership roles or even put my name in the hat is in the section for Asia and Asian America. That's the only section where I felt comfortable to try to be on a committee to try to serve on.

P3 shared:

I consider that as a professional association for research administrators like me. We join the email list, share all kinds of experiences, and ask questions. It's a great resource for me to find what kind of practice other universities have in our area.

P4 shared:

Going through my dissertation, interviewing people, getting my data, all that stuff, and then writing everything up and then finishing once I finished, people were still reaching out to me and said they were really interested in my research. Then I thought to myself, why can't I take my dissertation and do something to help the community and give back? So, I end up forming a group and I end up asking for other Asian American women to join me into forming that group, and then what you saw was the power that was the birth of my baby from a dissertation that you attended that workshop. Those four will be my colleagues and cofounders, and we've been doing workshops for women in higher education in the system every month, we would program a poke, like a professional development that really relates to Asian women … Not only do we do professional

development, but we also have a group where we support them as well … if anyone,

[needs] help with something … That's what we do and the most recent one we had was

… learned how to say no, and we made … everyone practice.

P5 shared, "It was support[ed] in the sense that I had to present to conferences to get

promoted, if I wanted to get reappointed and promoted, I had to go publish and present at

conferences."

P6 shared, "That helped me gain a lot of exposure to the other colleges that were

participating. It allows me to get to know individuals."

Reserved Attitude Toward Professional Association and Networking. P2, P5, and P6

have reserved attitudes toward the professional association.

P2 shared:

My professional association's membership has primarily been through my role as faculty.

But you can't have leadership positions right in these associations as well. And there are

certain sections for which I did not always feel the most comfortable. In the other

sections, I have been able to also serve on those committees, but it just doesn't feel the

same.

P5 shared:

I was not really involved with professional associations. I joined them. And I paid dues.

And I think I … applied for and received a grant one time. But otherwise, … I joined

them mainly because … they forced me to do it if I wanted to publish in their journal …,

after I got my publication, I think every time I wanted to publish and submit, they said

you have to pay this amount of views to join the society … So, … I didn't participate too

much in professional development things that way.

P6 shared:

> I think one of the regrets I have is I don't have … one organization that I've been deeply involved with either [local] or [at] the national level. Just because I never had the time and I never prioritized it … I've considered [it].

Theme 2: Family

Family Support and Inspiration. All six participants agreed that their families supported them at different levels in their career development with different perspectives. P1 and P3 completely agreed about their family support in their career path; P1, P2, P3, P4, and P5 stated that family emotions supported their career development. P2, P3, and P6 claimed that they got their hard work ethic from one or both of their parents.

P1 shared:

> They always support me. Whether my daughter or my husband always encouraged me wherever … difficulty or any bad situation. And yes, sometimes they even give me some good advice a lot of support from the family side … When I have a kid, they support my kid, especially my older one … my mom came here to take him … then brought my oldest daughter back to China, helping me until she was five years old … So, I believe the family supports very important.

P2 shared:

> I have an uncle who went to college. He was the first one from both sides of my family. And then he got a PhD. He was the first person to have gotten a college degree, and [he] really wanted to inspire that right in his niece, which is me … So, he used to send us his old textbooks … But I have to say that even though my mom does not have a college education. I watched her work in a restaurant her entire life, my parents owned a

restaurant for a while, and then we had financial troubles, and they had to close it, and then my mom went on to work at other restaurants … [proving] you don't need a college degree to be a leader … that has been inspiring to me … I had a case earlier this year that was a personnel issue, and I spoke to my mom a lot, and she's never been an administrator … But she's managed a restaurant before, and so I talked to her just about people management. So, in that way, I think my mom has been inspiring.

P3 shared:

Parents are living examples for their children … my parents … and [their] hard-working ethics really help me with my current job because … on a daily basis, [I] faced different types of big or small difficulties … My parents basically … they don't raise any quitters. One good example is … K through 12 when … I lived with my parents … and I was never late for school for a single school day. And that's because of my parents' effort, not mine … My husband has been a great cheerleader for me … He's very respectful of female figures in his workplace, and he has been very supportive of my job and my career paths.

P4 shared:

Family wise is my husband. He's always been very supportive … when I wanted to do my doctorate, I could not have done it without his support, and he's not afraid as a male to have a wife who is a doctor, and he's not. So, he's always been supportive of my career goals, and he said, this is what you wanted to do … He was willing to step up to the plate and help, drive the kids around more, help through the laundry, or help prep the food when I have to … be online and days I have to write trying to crank out my dissertation. So, he actually stepped up to the plate and provided a lot of support for me

to be able to … pursue … my doctorate and try to move my career. So, he [has] always been very supportive of my career goals. My parents supported my undergrad for four years. When I went to get my master's, it was myself. I supported myself through grad school, but my parents supported me with books, extra money, and stuff here and there. And then when I went [for] my doctorate, it was my husband [who] not only emotionally supported me, but he also financially supported me.

P5 shared:

My family has always been supportive. When I want to take on something new, including being chair, applying for this interim position. They help me think through the possibilities of what I need to ask, what I need to look into [and] whether this is really what I want. So, I have people within the family with whom I can consult about that … My dad would always be available when I had to call him, and he's chock full of advice, as most parents are very helpful … I appreciated being able to talk to them without judgments … I have a cousin who is also very much like a mentor … She thinks things very clearly. She asks me the right [probing] questions to make sure I'm making a good decision, but she also is one of those people [whom] I wished was with me more. She's only available once in a while [about] … 10 min … [She is] not easy to get a hold of and not available in a crisis necessarily. We would get together, and whatever … the crisis at the moment, we would get half an hour to talk about that, and [when the time] was up … she was very influential, but I wished I had more. She … pushed me … She was the first one who said this could be a really good thing. And I trust[ed] her, and I listen[ed] to her, and it turned out to be a good experience.

P6 shared:

> My dad had … eventually graduated from high school ... My mom had an associate
> degree. At a certain point, they were not able to help me or influence me at all. Once I got
> past my bachelor's degree, they really didn't know, and to this day, they don't know the
> difference between a PhD or an EdD. So, they've had very little influence on that part of
> my career, but they have instilled in me [their] tremendous work ethic. ... If people
> describe one of my strengths, that would be one thing that they would describe. And I
> definitely get that from my mom and dad.

In addition, P2 and P5 stated that family and friends are also support networks for their life and
career.

P2 shared:

> [I have] a really good friend from graduate school. We've known each other for almost
> 20 years … We started graduate school almost 19 years ago, and we've been … through
> things together … she's been the most supportive of my academics, just like colleagues
> … she's also a close friend, like a very good friend. I was just texting with her yesterday
> about my daughter. So, … I have the support networks to help me through these things.
>
> P5 said, "Other support start[s] with this community of practice group. I have friends I

can call."

> **Facing Family Challenges and a Complex Attitude.** P2 and P4 had a complex attitude

toward their parents in their education development.

P2 shared:

> My parents [were] very lucky that I just wanted to do well in school … I wanted to
> redeem them. That's really what it was. I wanted to redeem my family. They [were] very

lucky because … they never asked me to do my homework … they didn't have to because I was a self-starter. My parents did not encourage me to go to college. My family was actually in a really bad financial situation when I was a junior in high school, and my dad wanted me to quit school and work.

P4 shared:

My parents are very traditional Asian parents … they felt like girls should only do four years [of college] and go get married. Yes, get a husband. They feel four years [of college] is more than enough … when I was thinking about getting my masters, my mom's like, [why] do you want your master? Then my grandmother supported me. My grandmother was like, let her get her [master]. That's what she wants to do. So, I ended up getting my master's … and then when I decided … to get my doctorate, [my mom] was like, oh my god, like then you could have a higher degree than your husband. Yeah. How does your husband feel? I'm like, oh my god, he doesn't care … [my mom] said all that stuff, but … when I walked across the stage and got my degree, they were very proud. The family has been, not a barrier … my mom would say things here, but not so much … like she's stopping me. But [my] family have been really supportive. And even my girls have been really supportive. They understood … days that mom is not available, they'll go to dad for certain things … and when they both came to my graduation … they just [thought] I'm an overachiever … so that's family.

Want to Be a Role Model for Others. P1, P2, P4, and P5 expressed that they want to be role models for others, including their family members and other minority women in their careers.

P1 shared:

> I also want to impact my kids because even though I'm not, I always want to set a good
> example for my kids walking around the house. This is the only thing I can teach them,
> even though I know of my background. I always want to work very hard. Not only do I
> work well and really hard, but I also have a family business to take care of. So, I try to set
> a good example for my kids as well.

P2 shared:

> Educational credentials behind my name, and then my brother also got his PhD. My
> younger brother. So now there are five people [who] have gone to college. From both
> sides of the family, three [people] have PhDs. And I'm still the only woman. It not only
> inspired me, but I think it lit a fire.

P4 shared:

> I have two girls, and I want just to tell them to show them that [it] doesn't matter what
> age you're at, you could still go back to school, and you could still do what you need to
> accomplish if you are really passionate about what you want to do … So that was another
> goal of mine.

P5 shared:

> If the current workforce gets to know all of us as individual … Asian women, they'll see
> leadership differently. But this has been the issue … like my generation, and the
> generation before me. My cousin, her generation, never saw women in leadership roles,
> never saw brown people [in] leadership roles. And her generation fought to get into those
> roles. And now they're fostering people like me and people like you to move because
> now we say, oh, these people can do it. They look like me. Why can't I be their very

motivated role model? That's a role model … and the more people we get into these

leadership roles. The more subsequent generations will realize.

Theme 3: Discrimination

Stereotypes and Discrimination. All participants agreed that they had met the different

levels of stereotypes and discrimination due to their race or gender in their life and workplace.

P1 shared, "I see this kind of [discrimination] based on ethnic and [English] accent

background … People will consider you lack the quality for leadership."

P2 shared:

> I think for Asian American women [in] particular, we may be overlooked and take this
>
> with a grain of salt … You have the vamp of the ceiling that happens in those spaces, the
>
> invisibility … That happens in those faces, the assumptions. That one's not Asian
>
> Americans aren't leadership material because they're too passive, the culture of blah,
>
> blah, blah. But the assumption is that Asian Americans are hard workers, as one of my
>
> respondents says, workhorse. That they'll just say, put their head down and work. And
>
> they're good for that but not to lead, and so those are issues, because we see Asian
>
> Americans who top out … And the promotion a lot. And this is not to mention the poor
>
> Asian Americans who are, like, on food stamps who are under-educated, because as a
>
> society, we don't think about that right because we don't. As a society, we've neglected
>
> to acknowledge that they exist.

P3 shared:

> [People in the conference] actually chose to talk to my office manager, who is a
>
> Caucasian male figure. And occasionally, they were saying they actually took him as a

principal, and it's kind of awkward, and then he had to introduce me. Things like that. So, I think it's about lacking knowledge because they haven't seen it.

P4 shared:

Gender sure played a role … I find that it's hard as a female to move up to [a] higher role, especially higher education … I barely … see Asian American in a cabinet or that high up … for the first time … two years ago we hired two Asian American males to lead two colleges here. And we never had that before … each one led a different college. We have never had an Asian female leader. Actually, no, like last year, we have a [colleague], she's actually South Asian. She's Indian, and she leads one of the schools. So now we have two males and one female. But it's very small. I think gender does play a big role … Not only am I female, but I'm also a woman of color.

P5 shared:

I ran into issues with particular faculty members, to a point where I believed at the time it was misogyny because I was a woman and they were used to a White man running the departments. And I came in and started changing things and pushing people to do their jobs more so than just the status quo. Things started spiraling because in one department meeting, one of these faculty members yelled at me … So, I had to file; well, I felt that I needed to at the time. In retrospect, it was the wrong move, and this is where having guidance would have helped. I filed a workplace violence report. And he filed a Title IX complaint against me … nothing ever got resolved because my administration would not offer guidance or support to me in this situation. The union would not support me because I was an administrator … They did not find an instance of workplace violence. They did not find a Title IX violation. Nothing was found. Nothing was substantive ...

But it really impacted my ability to see these faculty who were once my friends, as being my friends [or] as being supportive. [A] few months later, one of them sued me for discrimination … The college, at the university-wide level, provided legal counsel … that dragged on for about a year and a half before they settled… I did not get support … Nobody mentioned it, nobody talked about it. Nobody worried about my mental health. So, I don't know if I would attribute it to race. To being Indian, to being Asian American. It could be that, but at the time, I attributed it [to] the fact that I was a woman coming into a position.

P6 shared:

I often get calls from companies who want to sell something … I got on the phone with this gentleman … He said, oh, can I speak with [P6's name]? And I said: speaking. He goes: Oh, you're a woman! … [Then he said:] Excuse me for a second. He kind of put the phone [down] … but I could hear it … He gets back [saying] … I'm so sorry … I know what it's like … these women, especially those Asians, they're so persistent, right? [He] had no idea with the lack of accent that I was even Asian. So, I said: oh, really? And he said something so derogatory I don't even want to repeat it, thinking that I don't know. And so, I said to him: you are in real luck today … because I will not ever take calls [from] you again, and I tell all my colleagues about just how racist you are … And he's like: what are you talking about? I go: when you get a chance, go to my LinkedIn account … You might understand why I am, so I'm so outraged about the way you're treating your assistant … And he was like: Oh, you're Asian, huh! … The lesson for me was never to take anybody for granted in terms of their background, their ethnicity, their sex … in a profession like higher education, tolerance, and understanding.

She continued to explain why she responded to his racist behavior, saying: "What has shaped me is that one phone call. From that horrible man who treated his admin terribly … that could have been my mom. That could have been my sister … I was greatly affected by that."

Racism. All participants had stereotypes and discrimination experiences. However, only half of the participants clearly identified that their unfair experience was racist.

P2 shared:

> For Asians [and] Asian Americans, we will be silenced. Even if we try to bring things up sometimes. Other Asian Americans may not even recognize what they're experiencing as racism … Because they have learned what racism looks like for … African Americans and maybe Latinx, but not for them. So, when they experience something in its weird feeling, they don't necessarily say it's racism … This is what I experience[d] because of stereotypes toward Asians … It was racism. Name it. Call it racism … It's not microaggression. It's racist. Because when you say it's a microaggression, that devalues the racism … Microaggression is just one component of racism.

P4 shared:

> When I first took the role at College A, [where] I'm at now … I came in as a lower role where I was only up for six months, and I was promoted because [of] … my qualification, I was overqualified for the role that I came in … When I was at the career center, I had a boss who … I report to. I felt that she was very racist toward me. And she was very undermining [of] my authority … at one point … she was … telling staff … [to] stop staff reported to me, but … I was their direct supervisor … When I was promoted, I asked to transition to another department … because I just couldn't work under someone like that.

P6 called her experience of observing and listening to discrimination racism. A supervisor showed racism to his Asian employee, and P6 responded as a bystander to this unfair treatment by telling the supervisor: "I will not, ever … take calls for you again … and I tell all my colleagues … About just how racist you are."

Unintentional Discrimination. P2 and P3 claimed several times that they consider some discrimination unintentional, not intentional bias.

P2 shared:

Maybe people who look like me get overlooked … again, I want to say it's intentional … Yeah, and again … I don't think it's anything nefarious … it's intentional. It's a lot of these kinds of subtle and implicit biases that are already there surrounding Asian American women in particular.

P3 shared, "Very often, they probably did not do that intentionally."

Emotion Toward Discrimination. P1, P2, and P5 experienced frustrating emotions, and P6 experienced shame for their discrimination experiences.

P1 shared:

This is a lot of things and expectations I should be to a traditional gender and … in the workplace … I think this kind of feeling is very [frustrating]. Sometimes, you might be angry when people, especially you, have asked, and you cannot speak some pronunciation [of] something currently.

P2 shared:

This is very frustrating, because it's the way we think about discrimination and racism in this country is based on the Black experience … People do not know, nor do they

recognize when Asian Americans experience racism and discrimination … that means they are less willing to understand, when those things happen.

P5 shared, "It's fundamentally changed my relationship with the college and the departments as [a] result. I have not felt comfortable in the environment since I have not been chair."

P6 shared, "The shame is rooted. Most predominantly, because I was different … in all aspects, very Americanized. But my appearance was very Asian, and it caused conflicts with my own perception of myself."

Socioeconomic Status Toward Discrimination. P1, P2, P5, and P6 stated socioeconomic status related to their career. Furthermore, P1, P2, and P6 agreed that socioeconomic status is related to discrimination. P3 disagreed with her socioeconomic status regarding discrimination in her career.

P1 shared, "My parents, they work for the university in China … So, I am always in the academic [arena]."

P2 shared:

What I know about Asian Americans is that the[ir] socioeconomic status … is represented by a bimodal distribution … there's a large percentage who are highly educated. Who do think a lot of money, but also a large percentage who are impoverished … and are not educated. The distribution is bimodal. But as a society, we don't know … because we don't care to know about those who are impoverished or undereducated who are refugees of war … We only know about the ones who have higher SES, and we don't really care as a society because we think: They're fine; They have money; They were fine

because they are educated … We don't care about the fact that racism and discrimination

still plague them in those spaces.

P6 shared:

During the times where you're really trying to get along with your peers … coming from

a very humble background … my parents were strict. I couldn't go to the dorms. They

were very protective … I didn't go to high school dances. I didn't have the type of fun …

and so when we're talking about different things in a social setting with my colleagues,

sometimes [they reacted]: you haven't done that before, or what do you mean? You never

went to school. You didn't go to a dorm. You didn't rush. You didn't do that. I'm like,

no, my family couldn't afford to do that … and you could see their faces. They don't

even know what to say … and one person said, Oh, sorry! I said: don't be sorry … I think

I've done pretty well for myself … It makes people uncomfortable when … you don't

come from the same socioeconomic status. So, sometimes, that has affected relationships

with my colleagues.

P3 disagreed with socioeconomic status related to discrimination; she responded in

member checking. P5 completely disagreed with socioeconomic status related to their

discrimination and answered "no" to my additional question: "Do you think socioeconomic

status … influences you in your workplace in general?"

Religious Discrimination. P1 and P3 claimed they are Christians, but neither mentioned

religious discrimination. P4 and P5 disagreed with religious discrimination; P5 and P6 disagreed

that religion affected their careers.

P1 said, "I'm a Christian … I attend church. Kind of locally."

P3 said, "I'm a Christian … And for me, as a leader, [I] serve others, and [I] help others to reach their best potential … that's what I practice in the workplace leadership role."

P4 said, "Religion really didn't play anything."

P5 answered my question, "Do you think … religion influences you in your workplace [in] general?" with "No." P6 also answered: "No."

Facing Discrimination. P1 did not state how she faced discrimination, but she mentioned that she believed in the ideal of equity. P2, P3, P4, P5, and P6 provided different suggestions and experiences of how they face discrimination in the workplace or life.

P1 said, "I believe all individuals have and deserve [an] equal opportunity to success … despite the background."

P2 shared, "Let people have the knowledge about [race and/or discrimination] … the more people like you and you're willing to do and support such area, it will help … the topic will be [brought] up."

P3 shared:

> Discrimination is a taught behavior … to remove discrimination also is part [of] behavior … First of all, people need to get … educated. I mean, America is an immigration country, everybody comes from different backgrounds, we contribute, from different angles, using different cultures to make this country a better place to live for everybody. So, I think it takes people in the effort to educate each other.

P4 shared, "I also have been really involved in looking at … hate crime and discrimination."

P5 shared:

> Because people do not know, that's why people are afraid [of] Asia and Asia American women [becoming leaders] … We as Asian women have to be in the world and show we are not all the same and that different leadership styles … But you're in a leadership role, there's also things to learn. About being a leader. So, being a soft-spoken, quiet leader is okay, but you still have to have certain abilities … To be able to speak your mind when you need to.

P6 shared:

> I have to understand that in this lifetime … I may face discrimination … To understand how to cope with it … to find my voice. Or, at times, not to say anything. It really all depends on what the outcome would be? Whether I speak up or not? So, there are times [when] I have not spoken up at all. It would be dangerous to do that, and then for my career. And then other times, where I had to say something … This individual would be discriminating on … That I knew would be coming after me … Knowing that I would probably face some backlash, I thought it was worth it, so I've done both. I've remained quiet, and I've stood up. It all really depends on the circumstance.

Theme 4: Language

Language Challenge. P1, P3, and P4's American English is not their primary language, so they met language challenges in their workplace and life. Furthermore, P2 and P6 claimed that they witnessed peers or leaders for whom American English is their second language face language challenges in the workplace.

P1 shared:

> As acting chair, I have to attend a lot of events, … my ego is not very good, my spoken [English] ... [is a] big challenge for me … Especially when you talk to an American student. They are very picky … they cannot understand [my English] … it's not very good. Actually … because sometimes [I] have to deal with a lot of company [people] … for example … [The credit card company] charge[d] me, [and] I have to distribute it. I had to call and cancel … they asked [my] name and [my] address, [I] told them … They just don't understand what I'm talking about.

P2 shared:

> I see myself having that privilege, and … when I … see [other leaders] … struggle[ing] to get their point across … they are brilliant, and it's just because of their accent … people aren't understanding them … I wait a little bit because I also don't want to be like the hero swooping in … because that is obnoxious … So … if I sense that there's a need for help, I might … step in and ask … how's this? So, they can kind of rephrase what they were trying to say.

P3 shared:

> English is my second language; there are so many things that I have to learn. You may or may not have language-related other advantages. I don't think I have a lot of advantages … English as my second language is an obstacle.

P4 shared:

> When I was younger, it was hard because English was not my primary language. So, … I feel like it took me longer and takes more time when I don't learn the language. But I think after the fact that I was able to, I was okay, but sometimes I feel like certain times

when it comes to … grammar or things … it would take me a little bit, but I think I've

done okay … Maybe sometimes I will be self-conscious [about] my accent. Like if I

speak really fast, sometimes I feel self-conscious because I don't pronounce my words …

I'm not saying my words correctly. But besides that, I think language affected me more

when I was younger versus now.

P6 shared:

I've seen … other leaders … if [they] have a particular accent, are not patient enough. To

hear the question … I've had people… asked me: what is she saying? And I said: she was

speaking English; you just didn't hear her well enough … [That's] always kind of bugged

me … work environment.

Language Advantage. P2 and P6 claimed that American English is the advantage of

their leadership role in their workplace. P3 said that while English is her challenge, Chinese is

her advantage, even though there is not much work related to Chinese documents. P5 did not

consider language itself as an advantage, but she claimed that English is her primary language,

and she is good at writing reports, including argumentative and persuasive writing.

P2 shared:

English fluency ... That is an advantage … I have been so lucky. Because I did have to

interpret for my parents … I had to … really learn English very fast, and I'm more fluent

in [English than] I am in Chinese, one hundred percent. My Mandarin is maybe like a

sixth-grade level, but I can order food. I can read, and that's all I need. But … I'm fluent

in English, and I see my colleagues, especially other Asian Americans … who are also

fluent but are accented.

P3 said, "I don't think I have a lot of advantages [regarding English] unless … this document is from China and written in Chinese."

P5 shared:

> It's my primary language … my parents speak other languages, but I was never fluent in any other language. … So, … I don't think of it as an advantage. I think my ability to write was an advantage because I could write out reports that were very convincing … good to get what we needed.

> P6 answered, "I definitely [agree that English is advantageous for me in the workplace for the leadership role]."

Language Suggestions. P2, P5, and P6 provided different language suggestions and language-useful experiences that would help others who want to go further or become a good leader in their workplace.

P2 suggested:

> Even in speaking fluent English, the way I talk to … a working-class White person is not going to be the same as the way I would speak with … a White lawyer … So that's also the language that you use. So, words that you use … are important. So, that's why I say the … agility is really important … Because if … you're talking about theories and philosophy in the terms that we use [in] academia with … a White farmer. That's a huge turn-off immediately. They … have assumptions of me as like this … academic elite … But if I'm really trying to understand and get to know them. Not turn them off immediately … you have your code switch. The words that you use, the language that you use, even when you talk about the weather ... That has to be different, too.

P5 shared:

> When I first started as a professor, I address[ed] people by titles: president … provost … But as I moved [up], I got to know them, and once I was chair, it's a first-name basis because all the other chairpersons called them by [their] first-name … president, provost, administer everybody was on a first-name basis. At a certain point … if they work with the president or provost often enough … It's [on] a first-name basis … But I think more traditional Asian women, in particular, struggle to be okay with that.

P6 shared:

> I tell this story, especially to some of my mentees, who have an accent, and I say: you should embrace your accent … It is part of your heritage; it's part of your culture … embrace your culture, know your language; … your accent is part of who you are … That has shaped me in my career in terms of dealing with people [and] understanding different backgrounds.

Theme 5: Mentor

The Importance of Mentors. P2, P4, and P6 emphasized the importance the mentor played in their career development and leadership role. P4 also extended mentorship into three different categories: mentorship, allyship, and sponsorship. In addition, P5 claimed that she wished to get more support from other administrators/supervisors while she was in the chair position and stated the importance of guidance from mentors/supervisors.

P2 said, "I've kind of been in different administrative positions … in terms of the support, I think it's important to have mentors."

P4 said:

I think … experiences [have] always been connecting with folks. And that could be in three forms, whether it's connecting with folks via mentorship, allyship, or sponsorship. … there [are] three types of people … in that area … I had some really great mentors, along the way, that really helped me through my career decisions and career steps… when I first started out in my career [it]was more of a mentorship; I think now being older and being in higher education, [it] has shifted to more allyship, which really means that I have found allies within my area who are able to support my work and advocate for me, and my next step in my career is … looking for sponsorship, someone could really speak on behalf of my work to help me further my career.

P5 shared:

I was a chair for a year and a half in normal times and a year and a half during [the] pandemic … during the transition … the administration did not [support]. They had meetings, they told us what we needed to get done, they told us what to do, but there was no check-in, there was no help, how do I deal with faculty issues? … How do I better resolve issues like how do I work on my own leadership to communicate better, to be a better leader, there was none of that.

P6 shared:

They're mentors … I wanted to learn from lived experiences … hopefully, learn from some of the mistakes … That the people make in their careers … I know I've dodged a few … challenging times in my career … been able to come out of it unscathed, based on some of the advice and experience of mentors … Your mentors provide you with some suggestions to help you to face the challenges.

Different Race and Gender Mentors. P2, P4, and P6 claimed that their mentors in their career development were males and came from various races.

P2 said:

Someone who's there as a senior colleague, who … [gives] me tips and [is] very much invested in my success … I've had it. People like that in my life, and I'm very grateful … I mentioned two of them are White men … They've been invested in my success, which I appreciate.

P4 shared:

I started at a nonprofit organization, and I ran into this mentor, and he really supported my work. He believed in my work, and he always encouraged me to push myself and do more … he had asked me to step in and be [an] act director, but I think … I was so young … I didn't think I had the experience to do it, so I shied away from the position … and then I just got frustrated. A couple of years after … I was getting bored … so I was looking for a new opportunity … He was the same mentor who helped me find a new job, and he basically told me to think about perhaps my strength was about programming and designing programs, but he said probably think about the fundraising piece, which is the development piece. And I never would have thought about that because I didn't think my grant writing or my people skills were that great, but he thought that I had the potential. So, he actually ended up connecting me with another organization, and I actually landed [the] director of development [as] my second career step, and I actually ended up doing development, which I didn't think I would do … He always provided supportive feedback, and … helped connect me to the right people and always believed in my work. So, that played a huge role … he's Asian American.

P6 said, "I've been mentored by Black males [and] Hispanic … As it turns out, although there are many women in higher education, at the time, most of the people in leadership positions or supervisors were all male."

Who Were My Mentor(s) in My Career Path? P1, P2, P4, and P6 all clarified who their mentors were and who supported or inspired them in their career path.

P1 said, "[The] coordinator position [opened] up, and my supervisor recognized my ability to handle … and [offered] me that."

P2 shared:

> I went to college, and I had mentors ... professors who saw something in me and encouraged me to go to graduate school ... there was one South Asian woman in particular who was a graduate student that worked [for] [a] scholar program … at my college campus and she really encouraged me to apply.

P4 shared:

> Allyship is … your ally and talks about you and your great work when you're not in the room; they work with you; they partner with you on programs and events. Sponsorship is more someone that's willing to … help you land that position, like really getting you that job, that role, or in that power to set you up for that position … they're … very distinct in the way they work … mentorship … I have mentorship … for other stuff in my life … whether it's my career or personal life … I have some mentors that I reach out to for help … in terms of questions or things related to family advice, … work advice, and whatnot, and … usually mentorship just runs throughout, but I had more.

P6 said, "Over the years, some of them have been assigned to me in leadership programs. They're like, here's your mentor, and other times, it's more organic."

Limited Mentorship. P2, P3, P4, P5, and P6 claimed they were the only one or limited Asian women in their workplace environment or were unrepresentative of the Asian American women leaders in higher education, thus less mentorship from the same race women.

P2 shared, "My experience in that space … I was the only Asian woman in that space … there were … African American women in the space or White women in that mentoring group."

P3 said, "It's not this job related, but in my previous, really because it's mainly you go everywhere in education leadership … in regionally or locally … I found myself the only Asian person."

P4 said, "We don't see people like us in higher education leadership."

P5 shared:

> The administration kind of left me alone … I reached out to other chairpersons, and they, at that point in time … were not communicative with each other … one of them … a woman of color, she was willing to chat with me by phone for an hour … answer some questions, and that was the first and last support I received. She has a lot of things. Because they all [have a lot of things], nobody had the time. There was no system for mentorship to make sure we were doing okay.

P6 shared:

> I never saw many in the field to be able to have that type of mentor–mentee relationship. Later on, there was a chancellor in the California system who was Asian, and she said, call me. Let's keep in contact because you're the first one I've seen.

Supporting Others. P2, P4, P5, and P6 expressed that they are working on supporting/mentoring other women of color, especially in the Asian community.

P2 said, "I was a part of a mentorship group for women who were interested in administration … I come from faculty … I was a part of this group. For five years, … it was led by our provost."

P4 said:

> I love higher education, and my goal has always been to help other women of color kind of move up the pipeline and succeed in this career field because there [are] not enough of us in the career field, and we have so many people of color, Asian Americans that are attending these universities.

P5 said:

> Starting with this community of practice group, I have friends I can call and talk … I have met and made friends and mentor–mentee relationships with other women of color in leadership positions who I can also call and set up a meeting … talk to them, get advice, and I'm building those relationships.

P6 shared, "In this profession [for] a long time when I start to be the mentor … I have more mentees than I have mentors right now."

Additional Themes

Additional themes are organized according to the frequency of display coding and its importance. Additional themes were *working experience*, *suggestion*, *education*, and *bicultural/multicultural*.

Working Experience. All participants described their jobs in various executive leadership positions. Therefore, this section was presented to each background participant and was not included in the results. Working experience, as an additional theme, focused on showing participants' challenges and promotion experiences.

Challenges. P4 and P5 met different challenges in their administration path.

P4 shared:

> On the way, I actually end up learning. Finally, I was able to land a job, and it took me
> like ten years to get into the system, the call system that I am in now … but it took me ten
> years [before] I actually landed a position there.

P5 shared:

> It went through the legal counsel … the whole process [took a year and a half]. And after
> that person … We were not hanging out as buddies, but we were cordial … before I
> became chair, there were never any issues with anybody.
>
> ***Promotion Experience.*** P1, P2, P3, P4, and P6 shared their different promotion

experiences/key moments in higher education.

P1 shared:

> I think the testing laboratory made an error on that. So, I commonly pull the counter
> arrow, and then my boss … they go back to the testing laboratory, and then they color[ed]
> the arrow [or] something like that. So, I think my particular applause impressed my boss
> and then led to the opportunity to close.
>
> P2 shared, "The key moments were being seen and acknowledged by mentors, who are

leaders of color, and not just Asian American … who are African American, who are Latino …

It's other people of color."

> P3 said, "It's like your research funding links you from your previous job … to the

current … job."

P4 shared:

> Most of the key moments are really through a feeling that I have to do more and I want to move up in my career … Key moments are probably landing those positions … maybe one key moment would be when I was working at a nonprofit as a coordinator and when I told myself that by the time I'm 30 years old, I want to be a director at a nonprofit.

P6 shared:

> It has been instrumental in creating the atmosphere for promotion ... when different people in an organization … like the way you work, that you participate in the committee, that your contributions [are] valued. When it comes time for a promotion, leaders, including myself, often talk to other people and say: I've actually been thinking … [is there] anyone who could fit this position … I think, I might know someone, … she's got this background … That's how I got this current job that I'm in. A former supervisor ... said: hey, if you're looking for someone … you've got to call [P6's name], and she works at this college. I never knew: the chancellor never knew me at all, but he said: … we have a mutual colleague … and he recommended you. He said that you're the best. I'd like to talk with you, so that opened up a door that probably would not have been open had I not … volunteered for things and get the type of exposure necessary to advance.

> ***Suggestions for Moving Up.*** Four of the six participants gave different suggestions on moving up to the administration leadership positions or education development in higher education.

> P1 suggested, "Consistent dedication to your responsibility, and then you're willing to [go] the extra mile."

P4 shared:

> I feel [that] at the end of the road, what you really find with your doctorate is really you would learn a lot about yourself … through this process about who you are. What your passions are … I thought I knew who I was back then … I think getting a doctor is more of your own growth as a professional development.

P5 shared, "I have created my own support system because the colleges do not necessarily provide it."

P6 shared, "The outcomes are there. I work hard … It all works out. I often said, your supervisor doesn't have to like you … They have to respect you."

Leadership Development. Four of the six participants provided different suggestions on leadership development.

P2 shared, "What race meets in different contexts? I think that has been important. And my own development and my leadership development because as a leader, you need to be agile."

P3 shared:

> Because leadership, in a way … is an authority kind of figure, you have the authority over a lot of things, and so people need to respect this authority ... So that you can carry out your decisions. If people do not respect you … if they consider you as an outsider … you don't have the authority over this organization anymore.

P4 shared:

> That was an example of being able to partner with other organizations a lot and being able to give voice to API and helping to build the pipeline for that in higher education is really important, and then, another part of my work is besides that group.

P5 shared:

> To be able to speak your mind when you need to. So, one person that I think of as a mentor says yeah, you pick your battles, so when to be quiet and let things go, but then when you do, stand up and say no. People know you're serious, and they'll listen. So, if Asian women are soft-spoken and quiet, but then at a certain point, they say, no, we have to do it this way. That's when people should be listening because suddenly you're putting your foot down … it's getting people to understand that you're being serious in that position.

Education. Five of the six participants claimed the importance of education, especially how their master's or doctoral education influenced their career paths and lives.

P1 shared, "I got [my] PhD in statistics, and then … I [found] a job here."

P2 shared, "It's about going to graduate school. I'm really going to redeem my parents, and I'm really going to, and I'm not going to live the life that my parents lived because I'm going to have this."

P3 shared, "I think these educational experiences. Have provided a really good combination in the foundation for my current position."

P4 shared:

> How I want to give back and help change things, and part of that was through my dissertation and being able to implement some of that was through my dissertation and being able to implement some of the ideas and stuff that I had [written] about in my dissertation … I'm able to do something as this [Asian] group, and it's been around for like a year, which I'm really excited about.

P6 shared, "My education has been supportive of my career advancement. So, having a master's degree in urban affairs, being in an urban environment, [and] having a doctorate in educational leadership, administration, and policy has also helped me tremendously."

Bicultural/Multicultural. P1, P2, P3, P5, and P6 shared their bicultural/multicultural strengths and positive influences. P4 had a neutral attitude regarding biculturalism. P1 said:

> [I] will have a little bit advantage … [I] grew [up] in the culture … a lot of stuff … in the Chinese way, and then sometimes … encounter a situation in America, [I] might automatically think about … in this way, how I'm going to deal with it.

> P2 said, "I'm bilingual … because I interpreted [for] my parents, my parents didn't speak English. So that was also very much like the immigrant child syndrome that I had. I interpreted for my parents starting at a young age."

> P3 said, "I have advantages … I have [a] hard-working [attitude], and I learned to be open-minded. I grow to be more confident."

P4 shared:

> I think culturally … it's always the male; they favor the male over females … [my parents] want me to be a nurse. And I think back … why do you want me to be a nurse? Because I'm a female. Like, why didn't you say, why do you be a doctor? … I don't understand why a female can't be a doctor. But culturally, I feel like that's a negative for us because we were not pushed … to think of bigger roles.

P5 shared:

> I've learned that over the years … my advantage was I could do that a lot easier. Because I was raised in the U.S., and I see what my other friends and colleagues are doing. So, I

see it modeled, and I just copy them without any care. I'm like, that's what they're

doing ... I'm gonna do that, too.

P6 shared:

In terms of my nationality, it has opened up doors in terms of interviews before. Because

sometimes, in interviews, I would just put [my name]. Like the first initial, so I think it

has helped me in that way … There [have] been some advantages.

Summary of the Data Analysis

This study's data collection methods included six semistructured Zoom interviews, six

field notes, and four member checking follow-up emails with four Likert scale surveys with

themes and subthemes. During the Zoom interviews, six Asian and Asian American women

administrators currently working in U.S. colleges and universities participated; five of them are

current administrative leaders, including two directors of two different departments, one director

of an institution, one chairperson and one vice chancellor, and one participant has returned to a

professorship from a chairperson. Six participants provided their experiences as Asian and Asian

American women promoting or being promoted to university administrative leadership in U.S.

higher education.

The data analysis process used thematic analysis by applying a homogeneity-focused

approach and adopting Moustakas's (1994) model with steps: epoché, phenomenological

reduction, imaginative variation, and a synthesis of meaning and essence. I manually conducted

the analysis, employing open coding to identify and categorize the data. Data analysis focused on

five main themes and four additional themes relevant to Asian and Asian American female

executive leaders in U.S. higher education. Responses to the research question (What is the lived

experience of Asian and Asian American female administrators that influenced and further

shaped their trajectory toward leadership positions within U.S. higher education?) revealed five main themes. First, the data showed that Asian and Asian American women administrators attending associations could positively influence and shape their trajectory toward leadership positions within U.S. higher education. Also, the data presented that some Asian American women administrators did not consider building networks could develop their careers. Second, the data presented family support as providing a positive influence and inspiration to Asian and Asian American women administrators in their educational and leadership development. Third, the data showed Asian and Asian American female administrators had met different levels of stereotypes and discrimination due to their race or gender in their lives and workplaces and how they faced or planned to face discrimination. In addition, some Asian and Asian American female administrators agreed that socioeconomic status affected their careers, while they disagreed that religion had a positive effect on their careers. Fourth, the data showed that language challenges negatively influenced some Asian and Asian American women administrators' careers, especially first-generation U.S. immigrants, while language was an advantage for some Asian American women administrators' career development in U.S. higher education. Fifth, the data showed that diverse mentors provided positive influence and shaped most Asian and Asian American women administrators' trajectory toward leadership positions within U.S. higher education. Regarding additional themes, the data explored promotion experience and leadership development in the career development of Asian and Asian American female administrators. Education also played an important role in supporting Asian and Asian American female administrators' career development.

Chapter Summary

In Chapter 4, I primarily focused on presenting the findings following the research question: What is the lived experience of Asian and Asian American female administrators that influenced and further shaped their trajectory toward leadership positions within U.S. higher education? I used thematic analysis by applying a homogeneity-focused approach and adopting Moustakas's (1994) model with steps: epoché, phenomenological reduction, imaginative variation, and a synthesis of meaning and essence. I discovered five themes (association and networking, family, discrimination, language, and mentor) that appeared frequently and were important to Asian and Asian American female administrators that influenced and further shaped their trajectory toward leadership positions within U.S. higher education. For the association and networking theme, the result found that all participants had different recognition levels for association and networking and their related experiences; however, three maintained reserved attitudes toward professional association and networking. For the family theme, all participants had varying degrees of agreement with family support; however, two had mixed attitudes toward family. For the discrimination theme, each participant faced different levels of stereotypes and discrimination in the workplace and in their lives, and four participants experienced negative emotions about their discrimination experiences; however, only half of the participants clearly identified encountering racism, and two participants considered that discrimination was unintentional. For the language theme, half of the participants claimed that American English was not their primary language, and they experienced varying degrees of language or accent challenges and another half of the participants believed that knowing English was their workplace advantage. For the mentoring theme, half of the participants emphasized the importance of mentors, and four participants experienced limited mentorship in their careers;

these three participants mentioned that their mentors were from different races and genders. Four additional themes were important but had a relatively low frequency or little commonality: working experience, suggestion, education, and bicultural/multicultural. Disclosing these topics is significant in that it can help guide more Asian and Asian American women who aspire to leadership roles in U.S. colleges and universities and that women from marginalized groups can draw upon and learn from their successes. In addition, revealing these themes has also given current Asian and Asian American female leaders' experiences that the challenges they encountered, such as language challenges and discrimination, are not single cases but have commonalities. These will also help Asian and Asian American women leaders and minority female leaders have a better understanding of how to face these difficulties when they encounter similar challenges in the workplace of higher education institutions.

In Chapter 5, I discuss the findings in relation to past literature, limitations, implications, conclusions, and recommendations for practice and research. The results of this study provided insight into the lived experiences and perspectives of Asian and Asian American female college and university administrators in the United States as they advance into administrative positions. Chapter 5 contains an analysis of the findings for five major themes: association and networking, family, discrimination, language, and mentor, and four additional themes. It also presents two theories, the intersectionality and community cultural wealth theory framework, to discuss the findings, including consistencies, contradictions, and newly discovered information not addressed in the literature review.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

This study was prompted by the underrepresentation of Asian and Asian American women administrators in the higher education field. The results of this study would fill the gap and the purpose statement identified in Chapter 1. The purpose of the qualitative study was to explore the existing and experienced administrators' career paths from the life and career experiences of Asian and Asian American women. The study's results were based on years to decades of the six participants' experience as leaders, including positive experiences and negative or complex attitudes toward different experiences that six qualified participants experienced in their lives, work, and leadership. Chapter 5 discusses the related findings and themes of this study by comparing past literature under two theoretical frameworks, the intersectionality theory framework and community cultural wealth theory. This chapter also explores the entire study and the limitations discovered during its research and discusses in the implications section what new findings are proposed, including new findings that have not been mentioned in past literature or new findings that are consistent with different topics and fields of research populations, etc. The final part includes recommendations in practice, which provide relevant, achievable leadership suggestions in higher education campuses.

Discussion of Findings in Relation to Past Literature

The following discussion of the findings of this qualitative study revolves around the research question of what is the lived experience of Asian and Asian American female administrators that influenced and further shaped their trajectory toward leadership positions within U.S. higher education. I directly compare the study's new insights and existing research following this study's result themes, which highlight the contribution this study is making to Asian and Asian American women administrators in the higher education field. Also, the

discussion of the findings of this study follows two frameworks: intersectionality theory (Hooks, 2015) and community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005). Peters' (2012) and Liang et al.'s (2018) studies used the intersectionality theory framework to study African American female school leaders and Asian American women, but their studies did not include both intersectionality theory and community cultural wealth—this study applies these theories to my findings on Asian and Asian American female administrators in the U.S. higher education.

Association and Networking

The result of the initial theme, *association and networking*, shows that association and networking can advance Asian and Asian American female administrators' career development. This is grounded in the current body of literature that showed Asian and Asian Americans, especially Asian American women, who face the intersecting obstacles of gender and race, can advance to leadership positions at U.S. colleges and universities (Anandavalli, 2021; Hooks, 2015; Yosso, 2005). This research's results specifically target Asian and Asian American female administrative leaders in U.S. higher education and align with Linehan and Scullions' (2008) concept that less support of professional networks may create challenges for global female managers in the workplace. While Linehan and Scullions' (2008) study only discussed networking, not including the association section to show whether it would help to advance women's career development or not, this research's results explored in detail that Asian American administrators have different voices in association: two Asian American administrators stated they felt that they belonged in Asian and Asian American-related associations and that these associations were helpful in their career development; three Asian American administrators stated that they were not deeply involved with professional associations for different reasons.

Furthermore, the results of this study regarding how professional associations and networking advance Asian and Asian American female administrators' career development align with the intersectionality and community cultural wealth theory frameworks. Hooks' (2015) intersectionality theory mentioned that African Americans and other minority women desire support networks. The subjects of the results of this study are Asian and Asian American women, which is different from previous studies on the intersectionality framework, which mainly focuses on African and African Americans, or the intersectionality framework is widely used for minorities (Crenshaw, 1991; Hooks, 2015). Also, Hooks' (2015) intersectionality theory only explored minority women's desire for support networks and did not involve professional associations or distinguish between minority groups, but the results of this study specifically explored Asian and Asian American women administrators' professional associations in the context of U.S. higher education institutions, their specific experiences, and different levels of participation in professional associations. Regarding the community cultural wealth theory framework, this study's results are that association and networking align with social capital, identified as social network communication and mutual assistance with friends in community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005). Yosso (2005) specifically highlighted social capital in her community cultural wealth theory, which is one of the six strengths or capitals facing ethnic minorities in the U.S. social capital mainly refers to interpersonal networks and community resources, which can provide navigation for ethnic minorities to survive in society (Anandavalli, 2021). The results of this study showed that some participants agreed that networks played a positive role in their career and education development. However, the results of this study vary in the degree of support for professional associations and networks, and some participants did

not fully use this social strength or capital and participate deeply in professional associations and networks.

Family

The findings from the second theme, *family*, indicate that Asian and Asian American female administrators' families supported them at different levels in their career development, which is consistent with the literature on family and cultural strength playing important roles for Asian American female leaders in their career trajectory and success (Cai, 2023; Leigh et al., 2021). However, this study's results revealed some Asian American female leaders' sense of complexity toward their parents, which Cai's (2023) and Leigh et al.'s (2021) studies did not mention. Furthermore, Cai's (2023) and Leigh et al.'s (2021) studies only targeted Asian Americans, but the subjects of this study included not only Asian Americans but also first-generation Asian immigrants and one Asian who was a U.S. resident. Moreover, this research's results explored that Asian and Asian American female administrators expressed that they wanted to be role models for other Asian women, mainly referring to family and other minority women. The importance of role models has been approved in a few kinds of literature, such as Linehan and Scullion (2008), who found that the lack of role models was one of the difficulties that led to challenges in the careers of female global managers. However, the results of this research are more specific to Asian and Asian American female higher education leaders and embody the different role models they would like to be for others.

The findings of this study on the family have one part consistent with intersectionality and other parts mostly not consistent with the intersectionality theory. Hooks' (2015) intersectionality theory states that African Americans and other minority women experience hierarchical parent–child and husband–wife relationships in their families and learn to accept

masculinity and oppression of women. This study found that two Asian American female administrators experienced parental questioning and oppression from masculinity in their schooling. However, it is worth noting that the results of this study on family showed that all participants had received support from their parents and husbands in their careers to varying degrees, which is different from the feminist idea of Hooks' (2015) intersectionality theory, which mainly devalues the family. The reason for the different findings on family may be that the subjects of this study were Asian and Asian American female executive leaders rather than the broad population of African Americans and minorities in general. In addition, the results of Asian and Asian American female administrators' family support and being role models for others in this study are in alignment with family capital, which is identified as interaction with family members in the community cultural wealth theory framework (Yosso, 2005). Family capital is one of the six strengths or capitals facing ethnic minorities in the United States; it mainly refers to the education and help provided by immediate family members to ethnic minorities, which affects the educational and occupational awareness and morality of ethnic minorities (Anandavalli, 2021; Yosso, 2005). The results of this study not only include immediate family members who supported Asian and Asian American female administrators' career development, which aligns with Yosso's (2005) theory but also extends to extended relatives who are spouses: more than half of the participants mentioned that their husbands provided emotional support and financial help for their academic and career development. The findings regarding husbands' support of their wives as Asian and Asian American female administrators may be due to the age of the participants in this study, which ranged from 40 to 60 plus years old.

Discrimination

Results derived from the third theme, *discrimination*, illustrate that Asian and Asian American female administrators had met different levels of stereotypes and discrimination due to their race and gender in their life and workplace, including three Asian American female administrators identifying that their stereotypes and discrimination experiences were racism.

These results consistently build upon a large amount of existing literature with the stereotypical social behaviors expected of Asian and Asian American women (Anandavalli, 2021; Gündemir et al., 2019; Hyun et al., 2022; Kim & Tausen, 2022; Lee, 2019; Na & Kawahara, 2022; Tinkler et al., 2019). Furthermore, this study's result shows that three Asian and Asian American female administrators agreed that socioeconomic status is related to discrimination, which is consistent with Crenshaw's (1989, 1991, 2021) literature on intersection discrimination caused by socioeconomics. However, unlike some studies that have reported campus prejudice against Asian or Asian American experiences (Anandavalli, 2021; Cho, 2021; Sabharwal et al., 2022), this study found that two Asian American female administrators considered their biased experiences to be unintentional discrimination.

This research found that these results on discrimination are consistent with two frameworks: the intersectionality theory (Hooks, 2015) and community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005). Moreover, the results of my study found that most Asian and Asian American female administrators mainly experienced discrimination in leadership, life, and work based on gender and race. This is consistent with the workplace challenges faced by gender and race for minority women, as explained in Hooks' (2015) intersectionality theory. Her theory proposes that middle-class White women experience frustration when they enter the workplace due to unfair competition (Hooks, 2015). This is consistent with this study's result, which shows that four

Asian and Asian American female administrators had negative emotions toward discrimination. However, the difference is that this phenomenon is not specific to White women but rather to Asian and Asian American women's feelings of frustration when facing discrimination in the college workplace. Regarding facing discrimination, most Asian and Asian American female administrators provided their different suggestions and experiences of how they face discrimination in the workplace or in life. This part is a new discovery that has rarely been mentioned in past literature. The results of this part of the study are consistent with Yosso's (2005) definition of resistance within community cultural wealth as resistance to unfairness. Resistant capital is one of the six strengths or capitals facing ethnic minorities in the United States; it mainly refers to the critical awareness, knowledge, and skills that ethnic minorities develop through their actions of opposing or challenging inequality (Anandavalli, 2021; Yosso, 2005).

Language

The findings from the fourth theme, *language*, explore that language, which refers to American English in this study, was a challenge for Asian and Asian American female administrators in their careers. Most participants met different levels of language challenges or witnessed their peers and leaders face language challenges in the workplace and leadership. This is grounded in the current body of literature, which claimed that Asian American women, especially first-generation immigrants, faced language proficiency obstacles when they trying to attain leadership roles in U.S. higher education (Liang et al., 2018; Mamiseishvili & Stuckey, 2022; Shao, 2023). However, unlike a large amount of literature that mentions nonnative English speakers as a language advantage in the workplace among bicultural individuals (Liang et al., 2018; Ong et al., 2023; Shakeshaft, 1987), my research results show that fluency in American

English is an advantage in the leadership and workplace advancement for Asian and Asian American female administrators. In addition, the 1.5-generation U.S. immigrant Asian American female administrators met less language difficulty in the workplace and leadership than the first-generation U.S. Asian and Asian American women leaders, which agrees with Asher and Case's (2008) language perspective on first- and 1.5-generation U.S. immigrants.

This research found that these results on language are consistent with two frameworks: the intersectionality theory (Hooks, 2015) and community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005). This study explored that especially the first-generation and some 1.5-generation U.S. immigrant Asian American female administrators said that because American English is not their mother language, they met challenges, and language caused discrimination in their leadership, and people questioned their leadership ability. It aligns with Hooks' (2015) intersectionality theory that language differences prevent people from communicating and resonates with the views on language challenges as broadly discussed in numerous studies (Anandavalli, 2021; Liang et al., 2018; Mamiseishvili & Stuckey, 2022; Sandhu, 1997; Shao, 2023). The results of this study regarding language advantage and language suggestion in alignment with linguistic capital identified the ability to communicate in a particular language in the community cultural wealth theory framework as beneficial (Yosso, 2005). Linguistic capital is one of the six strengths or capital facing ethnic minorities in the United States; it mainly refers to acquiring social skills related to their intelligence through communication in two or more languages (Yosso, 2005). This research found that American English can be an advantage to the Asian and Asian American administrators' career paths in U.S. higher education, especially for 1.5-generation and second-generation Asian American female administrators, both of whom mentioned that language levels them up in their careers. In addition, this research explored that one Asian

American female administrator was asked to translate between her parents' languages, which led to her becoming proficient in both Chinese and English and her communication skills from a young age. Because of her language advantage, she began working in administrative leadership roles early in her career. This Asian American female administrator' experience is consistent with Yosso's (2005) theory on linguistic capital, which showed that adolescents who enrolled as bilingual children and were frequently asked by their parents to translate would gain social tools such as vocabulary, cross-cultural awareness, etc.

Mentor

The fifth theme results, *mentor*, reveal that four Asian American female administrators highlighted the mentor's importance in their career development and leadership role. This result extends the current literature that accepting mentors' support positively affects Asian and Asian American women's promotions and careers (Hsieh & Nguyen, 2020; Huang, 2019; Na & Kawahara, 2022). The results show that four Asian American female administrators said that there were only one or a limited number of Asian women in their workplace environment and were unrepresentative of the Asian American women leaders in higher education, thus less mentorship from the same race women. Also, the result indicates that three Asian American female administrators' mentors in their career development were males and came from different races. These findings match the views on not being limited to the same race as mentors, and different mentors could provide important support, as cited in limited literature (Harris, 2022; Huang, 2019). In addition, the result shows that four Asian American female administrators said they are working on supporting/mentoring other women of color, especially in the Asian community, which is a new finding. This part has not been specifically mentioned in the past

literature, but Linehan and Scullions' (2008) mentioned that the lack of mentors and role models is an obstacle to the promotion of female workplace managers.

The results regarding mentors are new findings. They do not align with the intersectionality theory (Hooks, 2015) since Hook does not mention mentors but are consistent with community cultural wealth frameworks. Although Yosso (2005) and Anandavalli (2021) did not mention mentorship in their community cultural wealth frameworks, Anandavalli (2021) recommended future research focusing on mentorship. This study's results show that one-third of the participants explicitly mentioned that they had studied as foreigners in American universities, and one participant explicitly supported the guidance her professors and senior classmates gave her mentor during her time at school.

Working Experience, Suggestions, Education, and Bicultural/Multicultural

Regarding additional themes, *working experience*, *suggestions*, *education*, and *bicultural/multicultural*, promotion experiences, suggestions for moving up and leadership development, and education for participants' career advancement have not been mentioned in past studies regarding how these themes could support Asian and Asian American female administrators' career development. This is the gap in the literature, which focuses on supporting Asian and Asian American women leaders with their moving up and leadership experiences in the U.S. higher education background. However, this study's participants did not mention that Confucianism has an advantage for Asians in their careers, despite previous literature identifying it as an advantage (Kim, 2009; M. Lee et al., 2022; Sandhu, 1997). None of the Asian and Asian American female administrators mentioned the advantages of Confucianism. One Asian female administrator claimed that she was not sure about the definition of Confucianism, but most

mentioned other advantages, such as bilingualism, hardworking attitude, bicultural experience, etc.

The results regarding working challenges, promotion experiences, and suggestions for Asian and Asian American female administrators moving up and leadership development do not align with the intersectionality theory (Hooks, 2015) or Yosso's (2005) community cultural wealth framework. However, the results in education support of Asian and Asian American female administrators' career development align with aspirational capital, which identified the ability to dream and transcend reality in Yosso's (2005) community cultural wealth framework. The results of this study show that two Asian American female administrators' desire for education and their desire to change their careers and lives through education are consistent with aspirational capital, which is one of the six strengths or capital facing ethnic minorities in the United States; it mainly refers to explaining the ability to dream about the future despite real obstacles (Yosso, 2005). In addition, the results regarding biculturalism/multiculturalism show that most participants indicated that biculturalism/multiculturalism is an advantage. It aligns with the general knowledge of Yosso's (2005) community cultural wealth framework, which refers to the nonmonetary cultural wealth generated by minority communities.

Limitations

This study has six limitations, including four limitations from the third chapter and two limitations after research was done (Peoples, 2020; Pezalla et al., 2012). The first limitation is that the participants' years of work and administrative leadership experience cannot be controlled or selected. In addition to requiring leaders to have at least 1 year of administrative leadership experience, the participants of this study have at least 2 years of administrative management experience and a maximum of more than 20 years of administrative leadership experience.

Fortunately, the participants of this study were very responsive during the Zoom interviews and provided a lot of rich data. However, three participants actively participated during the member-checking process, while the other participants have not yet sent their completed survey ratings on the themes.

Second, when interviewing the participants, I consciously did not provide biased questions, but this may also contain a slight degree of subjectivity, such as my facial expressions of approval and surprise possibly giving participants some unconscious hints, which may have led to the limitations of this study's data (Pezalla et al., 2012). There were also a series of challenges encountered during the interview process that may have led to research bias. For example, half of the participants in this study spoke non-American English, so there may be comprehension problems and expression biases throughout the interview. Alternatively, one-third of the participants were being studied and questioned as Asian or Asian American leaders for the first time, and their own nervousness may have influenced their biased expressions.

Third, time limit and sample bias may exist (Peoples, 2020). The entire recruitment, data collection, Zoom interview, and field notes process occurred from May 13th to July 9th (excluding member checking). Although I worked full-time on the recruitment process and data collection during the summer of 2024, the time was still limited. The sample size was six qualified participants, and since the number of female Asian American executive leaders was limited, the sample size of this study was relatively small, which may also lead to research bias. The small sample size does not allow for the generalization of the results to the entire population of Asian and Asian American women leaders working in U.S. colleges and universities. In addition, there were difficulties in the recruitment process. There are few Asian female administrative leaders in American colleges and universities. Therefore, it is very difficult to

recruit qualified female administrators with more than 1 year of administrative experience and who are willing to take the time to participate in this study. In addition, I had to refuse the participation of a senior Asian American dean because IRB approved my study to recruit only six participants.

Fourth, my educational experience, leadership experience, and experience as a first-generation Asian may have slightly biased the data in my analysis (Pezalla et al., 2012). For example, since the researcher herself speaks American English as a nonnative speaker, different English understanding may unconsciously appear when interpreting the data. Furthermore, since I have lived in the United States for approximately 15 years and taught or mentored in American colleges and universities for more than 10 years, I may still have cognitive biases about American culture, leading to interpretation biases when interpreting participants' responses. The participants' member checking was used to limit my bias and misunderstanding.

Moreover, I discovered two other limitations during and after the research process. First, this research focused on the first-, 1.5-, and second-generations and did not include the third- and fourth-generation immigrants. Second, from a geographical perspective, this study did not include Western America. For example, California has a large population of Asians and Asian Americans. This is not because I did not send out invitations but because there unintentionally happened to be no qualified participants in this area who responded to participate in my study. In addition, the qualified participants studied did not include Asian immigrants from South Korea and Japan.

Implications

Contributions of Findings to Existing Theories

The findings of this study explored the lived experiences of Asian and Asian American women administrators through five major themes: associations and networks, family, discrimination, language, and mentoring, which influence and further shape their trajectory toward leadership positions within U.S. higher education. The findings show associations, family support, how to face discrimination, American English advantages, and diverse mentors influence Asian and Asian American women administrators and further shape their trajectory toward leadership positions within U.S. higher education. These findings effectively support the research question: What is the lived experience of Asian and Asian American female administrators that influenced and further shaped their trajectory toward leadership positions within U.S. higher education? Moreover, these findings support the existing theory, emphasizing the different levels of impact of associations and networks, family support, discrimination experiences, American English, and diverse mentors on the career advancement experiences of Asian and Asian American women administrators.

The themes of association and networking, family, discrimination, and language made Yosso's (2005) community cultural wealth theory stronger in social, family, resistant, and linguistic capital/strength by order. The mentor theme made Yosso's (2005) community cultural wealth theory stronger by extension in the mentorship using community cultural wealth theory on campus (Anandavalli, 2021). An additional education theme strengthened the aspirational capital of Yosso's (2005) community cultural wealth theory. Another additional biculturalism/multiculturalism theme is strong in its value in Yosso's (2005) community cultural wealth framework.

The themes of discrimination and language strengthen Hooks' (2015) intersectionality theory because these themes emphasize Asian and Asian American women leaders' challenges faced by gender and race and how they face language challenges in higher education. These themes also shed light on the minority groups mentioned in Hooks' (2015) intersectionality theory. The theme of association and networking extended Hooks' (2015) intersectionality theory from the desire for support networks to extend to Asian and Asian American women leaders. However, the theme of family weakens Hooks' (2015) intersectionality theory because the family, including their parents or husbands, mainly supports the Asian and Asian American women leaders in their career path rather than belittle and suppress them.

Real-World Applications and Beneficiaries of Research Findings

The beneficiaries of this study are four main groups. The first group is Asian and Asian American women in U.S. higher education who hope to take on leadership positions in the future. Therefore, by studying this research, they can learn and explore the experiences of Asian and Asian American women who have been in leadership positions for years in U.S. higher education. They can also find support, resources, and suggestions contained in the research results to help overcome similar challenges in their career development and accelerate their career advancement.

The second group is administrative leaders and policymakers who make policies and select appointments in higher education institutions. By studying this research, these administrative leaders can increase their understanding of Asian and Asian American women and avoid judging Asian and Asian American women through stereotypes. As one participant said, she hopes senior executive leaders will accept the different leadership styles of Asian American women. Also, by studying this research, policymakers could more effectively recruit Asian and

Asian American professors and administrators to increase diversity on campus and provide

mentoring and professional leadership development training.

The third group consists of minority leaders and sociological researchers, as well as

research institutions and organizations studying Asian and Asian Americans. In the interview

process, many participants, who are minority leaders and sociological researchers, indicated that

they were looking forward to learning the results of this study. Several national and international

minority organizations, especially those related to Asian and Asian American organizations,

were very interested in the results of this research. Sharing and discussing these findings in

relevant Asian and Asian American community organizations and conferences will inspire more

research and further exploration of outcomes for Asian and Asian American communities.

The fourth group is anyone interested in Asian and Asian American communities. This

research can help people gain a more comprehensive understanding of the experiences of Asian

and Asian American women, especially those of previous generations of immigrant leaders. The

study includes the workplace and leader experiences of first-generation immigrants, 1.5-

generation immigrants, and second-generation Asian and Asian American women, which is

instructive.

Potential Consequences of Ignoring the Issues Identified in the Research

If senior executive leaders ignore the result of this study, the potential consequences may

be that higher education institutions risk losing talent if they fail to attract and retain Asian and

Asian American women leaders effectively. Asian and Asian American women have different

cultural and experience perspectives that contribute to the decision-making of some Asian-

related funding policies. The lack of these perspectives may lead to the loss of educational

content and cultural perspectives, as well as the loss of funding for some Asian-related programs and research.

Ignoring this research could also affect the reputation and competitiveness of higher education institutions. One participant mentioned that in the current market for higher education in the United States, there is a trend toward greater diversity at the executive level. Failure to address the perceived injustice and lack of resources faced by Asian and Asian American women in the workplace could damage the public image of higher education institutions, making them less competitive in the United States and international markets and leading to lower student enrollment.

Recommendations

Recommendations for Practice

First, findings from this qualitative research highlighted professional association and network support for Asian and Asian American women administrative leaders to advance their workplace status and leadership capabilities. Therefore, it is recommended that higher education institutions establish a professional network or organization related to Asian and Asian American female administrators to provide them with life and work support, a platform for sharing leadership experiences, challenging experiences, and resource sharing. The format can be online or offline, such as regular online seminars.

Second, this study found varying levels of family support for Asian and Asian American women managers, often emotionally and financially. Therefore, higher education institutions can hold similar homecoming events to allow the family members of Asian and Asian American female administrators to learn about their work and increase the positive atmosphere and support. Also, it is recommended that universities provide employment support for spouses. If the spouses

of the female administrators are also looking for jobs, universities can provide employment counseling and employment resources to help them find local jobs to provide financial and emotional family support for female administrators so that they can work more loyally and effectively in their higher education institutions.

Third, this study shows that stereotyping and discrimination against Asians and Asian Americans in the workplace are real and are caused by unconscious discrimination and neglect of discrimination against Asians. Therefore, it is recommended that higher education institutions should have clear antidiscrimination policies. If someone reports, it needs to be dealt with appropriately. It is also recommended that schools have more employees regularly organize training related to diversity and inclusion so that people can consciously avoid or reduce unconscious gender and racial discrimination in the workplace.

Fourth, this study shows that language challenges are evident among first-generation immigrants and some 1.5-generation immigrants to the United States, particularly due to accent and language, calling into question their leadership abilities. Therefore, it is recommended that higher education collaboration centers not only help students but also provide language support and training to administrators and staff with language challenges. Fifth, this research explores the importance and need for mentorship for Asian female leaders in the leadership and promotion process and the fact that insufficient mentorship will cause leaders to face challenges in the leadership process and confusion in facing problems. Therefore, it is recommended that a mentorship policy in higher education institutions be established, which can be one-on-one, encouraging experienced mentors (regardless of gender and race) to provide career guidance and assistance to their mentees. It is also recommended that mentors be given more honors and financial support to encourage them to help more mentors develop in the workplace.

Recommendations for Research

First, this research is an in-depth qualitative study of Asian and Asian American female higher education administrators. Thus, future research can be based on the results of this qualitative study to conduct a derivative quantitative study of experimental research. For example, based on this study's findings, the importance of mentorship is explored. In future quantitative research, two groups can be compared: a group of higher education Asian and Asian American women administrators without mentors and a group of higher education Asian and Asian American women administrators with mentors. Mentors are used as variables; the difference is tested after 2 years of follow-up testing. The indicators of difference testing can be measured and compared with career improvement, workplace satisfaction, work performance, etc. The analysis method can use a t test or ANOVA to determine whether there is a significant difference between the two groups and to test the content and extent of the mentor's influence on career development.

Second, future research can also expand into another quantitative study, causal–comparative research. This study also found that mentors are not limited to Asian and Asian American women but are mostly male or non-Asian and Asian American mentors. Therefore, future researchers can also compare mentee groups composed of mentor groups of different races and genders one by one. For example, future research could be divided into four groups: Asian and Asian American women mentored by Asian and Asian American male mentors; Asian and Asian American women mentored by Asian and Asian American women mentors; Asian and Asian American women mentored by non-Asian and Asian American male mentors; and Asian and Asian American women mentored by non-Asian and Asian American women mentors.

In addition to the suggestions derived from the qualitative research of this study, the quantitative research was also included. This study found differences between the first-generation Asian and Asian American immigrants, the 1.5-generation Asian American immigrants, and the second-generation Asian American immigrants, especially in terms of language. This study refers to American English, which has different perspectives on workplace challenges, strengths, and neutralities. Therefore, future qualitative research can select Asian Americans from any generation of immigrants to research entry. For example, case studies, interviews, and observations can be used to collect data on the impact of language and culture on first-generation Asian American immigrant women's career development in higher education and their identities in workplace leadership positions. Moreover, future research may not be limited to first-, 1.5-, and second-generation Asian American immigrants. Future research should be expanded to third- or fourth-generation immigrants.

Fourth, this research focuses on Asian and Asian American women administrators. During the research process, it was discovered that there is a lack of research on Asian American women administrators. Therefore, future research should also expand to address Latino or African American executive female leaders. For example, this study found that professional networks and family support Asians and Asian Americans at different levels. Future research could explore whether professional networks and family are equally positive for the career path of Latino or African American executive female leaders or negative impact or no impact on their career path.

Fifth, this study found the impact of the intersectionality of race and gender on the workplace and lives of Asian and Asian American women executive leaders. Thus, future research should identify areas where further exploration is needed, particularly in understanding

the intersectionality of race, gender, and leadership in academic contexts outside the United States. For example, cross-border comparative studies can explore the characteristics and styles of academic leadership shaped by the intersectionality of Asian Americans, women, and leadership in different cultural systems. Specifically, the differences in the leadership styles of Asian American female leaders in administrative colleges and universities in Asian countries and in the leadership styles of Asian American leaders in administrative colleges and universities in North American countries or Europe.

Conclusions

This qualitative study was designed to explore the lived experiences of Asian and Asian American female administrators that influenced and further shaped their trajectory toward leadership positions within U.S. higher education. The findings came from interviewing six participants via Zoom, field notes, and member checking. The research fills a gap in the careers of Asian and Asian American women administrators. Key findings of this study found the importance and positive impact of associations and networks, family support, how to face discrimination, the advantages of American English in the workplace, and diverse mentors in the trajectories of Asian and Asian American women administrators toward leadership positions in U.S. higher education. This study not only explores these segments but also includes the diverse voices of Asian and Asian American female administrators, such as those who do not fully acknowledge the importance of networks in their workplaces and who have complex attitudes toward family support and the language challenges of managing nonnative speakers. These major research findings not only answer the research question but also provide practical guidance for colleges and universities on recruiting and retaining Asian and Asian American female administrators better and illustrate the importance of diverse leadership to enhance the

competitiveness of colleges and universities. Furthermore, the findings provide valuable insights for related academic research, particularly intersectionality and community cultural wealth research. In addition, during the recruitment process, I experienced the phenomenon of a lack of Asian and Asian American female administrators in the U.S. higher education field. Thus, this research can provide guidance and suggestions for Asian and Asian American females who want to become administrators in higher education.

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Appendix A: Email

Dear Participants:

I am Yunru Shen, an EdD candidate in Organizational Leadership (Higher Education) at Abilene Christian University. I am collecting data for a study on Asian and Asian American female higher-education administrators whose backgrounds and past experiences have served to shape and continue to shape their career paths. You are cordially invited to participate if you are 18 years old or above and are an Asian or Asian American female administrator in a U.S. higher education setting. I extend this invitation to individuals holding positions such as chairperson, assistant dean, associate dean, deans, assistant chancellor, vice chancellors, and chancellors, including interim administrators, who are also welcome to participate. The qualified participants are in their current or previous administrative leadership positions in the U.S. college or university for at least 1 year.

Participation would require a 1-hour interview over a laptop or desktop computer and Zoom. I have received Abilene Christian University's IRB approval for this research (IRB Approval ID: xxx-xxxx). Your responses to these interviews are confidential, and your personal information will not be linked to your answers. Participating in this study poses no foreseeable risks. Your involvement is entirely voluntary, and you can withdraw anytime without penalty. Your decision to participate or not will not result in any loss or consequence.

Feel free to ask me any questions you may have. If interested, please contact me via email at xxxxx@acu.edu, and I will provide you with the required consent form. Your participation in this research project is greatly appreciated. Thank you.

Sincerely,
Yunru Shen, EdD candidate
Organizational Leadership
Abilene Christian University

Appendix B: Informed Consent Forms

I am asking you to participate in a research study titled "A Qualitative Study of the Career Experiences of Asian and Asian American Female Administrators in U.S. Higher Education." I will describe this study to you and answer any of your questions. Yunru Shen, EdD candidate, School of Organizational Leadership at Abilene Christian University, is leading this study. The Dissertation Chairperson for this study is Dr. Hoiwah Fong, School of Organizational Leadership at Abilene Christian University.

What the Study Is About

I am conducting this qualitative study to explore the career experiences of Asian and Asian American female administrators in higher education that have served to shape and continue to shape their career trajectories to obtain leadership positions in U.S. higher education. Furthermore, learning through the experiences of current Asian and Asian female administrators at U.S. colleges and universities could help guide more Asian and Asian American women, and women from marginalized groups in general, to reach leadership positions to be equally successful in aspiring to leadership positions in colleges and universities in the United States.

What I Will Ask You to Do

I will ask you about your career experiences in higher education during a 1-hour interview. I may contact you again for clarification on the following questions if additional information is needed.

Risks and Discomforts

Participation in this study carries the risk of breach of confidentiality.

Benefits

Throughout the interview process, you will be asked to reflect on and think about your professional growth experiences in higher education. Information from this study may benefit other people, especially the Asian and Asian American communities, now or in the future.

Incentives for Participation

Those who meet the research requirements, participate in the Zoom 1-hour interview, and provide relevant materials will receive a $25 Starbucks gift card (which can also be in the form of an electronic gift certificate or cash of the same value) as a thank you from me. The participants willing to introduce another qualified participant will receive another $10 (which can also be in the form of an electronic gift certificate or cash of the same value) for the introduction fee from me; the participant(s) will receive the $10 after I finish the Zoom 1-hour interview and collect relevant materials with introduced new participants(s). Each participant can introduce more than one other participant. The incentives for participation will end when I have collected complete data from six participants.

Audio/Video Recording

The interviews will be conducted via Zoom, and video will be recorded to collect data for exploring this problem.

Privacy/Confidentiality/Data Security

I will protect participants' privacy and confidentiality by de-identifying your responses as part of the data and research study. Although I plan to keep identifying information with the data, I am the only person who will have access to any identifying information. Any sensitive data will be kept secure in the digital environment as well as on a password-protected laptop in a locked office. I will do my best to keep your participation in this research study confidential to the

extent permitted by law; however, it is possible that other people may need to review the

research records and find out about your participation in this study. For example, the following

group may check and copy records about this research: Abilene Christian University's (ACU)

Institutional Review Board.

In addition, I will adhere to the ACU data storage policies: All data will be securely

stored on campus with the faculty mentor in a secure data repository for a period of 3 years

following the completion of the study, then destroyed.

Taking Part Is Voluntary

Your involvement is voluntary, and you may refuse to participate before the study begins,

discontinue at any time, or skip any questions/procedures that may make you feel uncomfortable,

with no penalty to you and no effect on your academic standing, record, or relationship with the

university or other organization or service with which you work. This research material consists

of answers to all Zoom interview questions, my field notes, and member checking (including

follow-up emails), which, if needed, are required for participation. You can choose not to

participate if you are uncomfortable with these conditions.

Follow-Up Studies

I will contact you again to request your participation in a follow-up study. As always,

your participation will be voluntary, and I will ask for your explicit consent to participate in any

of the follow-up studies.

May I contact you again to request your participation in a follow-up study? Yes/No

If You Have Questions

The study's researcher is Yunru Shen, an EdD candidate at Abilene Christian University.

My email address is xxxxx@acu.edu. My dissertation chairperson is Dr. Hoiwah Fong. His email

address is xxxxx@acu.edu. Feel free to ask us any questions you may have. If you have concerns

about this study, believe you may have been injured because of this study, or have general

questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact ACU's Executive Director

of Research, Qi Hang, at xxxxx@acu.edu.

Statement of Consent

I have read the above information and have received answers to any of my questions. I

consent to take part in the study.

Your Signature   _____   Date_____

Your Name (printed)

Signature of the person obtaining consent   _____   Date_____

Printed name of person obtaining consent

Appendix C: The Interview Protocol

I will begin by thanking the participant and introducing myself and the purpose of my study. I will also ask the participant for their name and a brief description of their job duties. Then, I will read the IRB-approved information outlining ethical considerations. I will inform the participant that she could stop participating in the study at any time. Finally, I will inquire if the participant has any questions or concerns before I start recording the interview. I will start the recording and ask for the participant's consent to record the interview.

The interview questions are as follows:

1. Would you please tell me what your experience has been with supports that may have shaped and continue to shape your career trajectory into leadership positions in higher education?

2. Would you please tell me what your experience has been with professional associations that may have shaped and continue to shape your career trajectory into leadership positions in higher education?

3. Would you please tell me about your experiences and how they may have shaped your career trajectories?

4. Would you please tell me about any experience you may or may not have had, along with key moments, that potentially led to your promotion to a higher-education leadership position?

5. Would you please tell me how experience you may or may not have had with race, gender, socioeconomic status, and religion influenced your journey to a workplace leadership role?

6. Would you please tell me about any experience you may or may not have had regarding any emotional aspects, root causes, coping strategies, and motivations behind addressing any discrimination you encountered in your career development (Salleh-Barone, 2004)?

7. Please tell me about any positive or negative experience you may or may not have had that involved family influence on your career as an administrator. How have family members served as mentors in your path to leadership?

8. Please tell me about any experience you may or may not have had with language-related advantages or obstacles encountered while advancing to leadership positions.

9. If you had a bicultural or multicultural upbringing, please tell me about any experience you may or may not have where this upbringing created advantages or disadvantages and contributed to your ability, or lack of ability, to be viewed as a leader (Fang, 2023).

Based on the participants' answers, I will ask further questions. After the participant has completed all the questions, I will inquire whether she would be willing to participate in a follow-up email study, which includes follow-up emails with a Likert scale survey. I will express my appreciation to the participants again.

Appendix D: Coding Matrix

Theme	Subtheme	Coding	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6
Association & Networking	Professional Association and Networking Support	Professional Association	X	X	X	X	X	X
		Networking/Network–Support	X	X	X	X	X	X
		Leadership Experience–Build Support & Networking/Leadership Experience	X				X	X
		Professional Association–In Asian and Asian America		X		X		
		Association–Promotion	X				X	
	Reserved Attitude Toward Professional Association and Networking	Professional Associations–Not Really Involved/Not Prioritize the Association–Not Deeply Involve					X	X
		Presenting > Networking/Presentation > Volunteer Work > Not Serving/Association Not Network						X
		Uncomfortable with Professional Association		X				
Family	Family Support and Inspiration	Family Support Emotion/Action/ Financial/Positive Family Inspiring	X	X	X	X	X	X
		Hard Work Attitude from Family		X	X			X
		Family & Friend Support		X			X	
	Facing Family Challenges and Complex	Complex Attitude		X		X		
		Family–Grow Up in White		X				

	Attitude	State						
		Negative Family Inspiring & Race and Bias from Immigrant Chinese Community		X				
	Want to be Role Model for Others	Role Model for Others including Family	X	X		X	X	
Discrimination	Stereotypes and Discrimination	Stereotypes & Discrimination/Gender and Racial Discrimination/Stereotypes & Biases/Stereotype & Discrimination & Bias; Social Phenomenon/ Discrimination & Bias– Ceiling/Stereotype– Math/Emphasis Gender/Discrimination–Life Experience–Racism	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Racism	Discrimination & Race– Frustration–Be Silenced		X		X		
		Race 100 %/Discrimination & Race– Racism		X		X		X
		Discrimination & Race– Cost		X				
	Unintentional Discrimination	Unintentional Discrimination & Bias		X	X			
	Emotion toward Discrimination	Emotion/Motivation/Race & Emotion–Frustrating	X	X			X	
		Discrimination Emotion – Shame						X
	Socioeconomic Status toward Discrimination	Agree Socioeconomic Status Discrimination	X				X	X
		Socioeconomic Status Mentioned Related to Their	X	X	X		X	X

		Career, But Not Mentioned Related To Discrimination or Disagree Socioeconomic Status toward Discrimination						
	Religion Discrimination	Religion Related to Their Career, But Not Religion Discrimination	X		X			
		Disagree Religion Effected Their Career					X	X
		Disagree Religion Discrimination				X	X	
	Face Discrimination	Face Discrimination		X	X	X		X
		Equality	X					
		Understanding Diversity: Executive Leadership Team/Diversity Advantage/The C–Suite of Changed–More Female Dominated Now						X
		Suggestion: Discrimination & Race		X			X	
	Other	Discrimination – Age					X	
Language	Language Challenge	Language Challenge/Discrimination–Language/Language–Improving/Other Peers–Language Experience–Challenge	X	X	X	X		X
	Language Advantage	Positive Language Experience/Language Advantage/Language–Culture Wealth/Family–Language–No Accent–Assimilate/Writing		X	X		X	X
	Language Suggestions	Suggestion: Language–Call People by First Name					X	

		Suggestion: Language–Switch Gears		X				
		Suggestion: Accept Language Accent						X
Mentor	The Importance of Mentors	Mentor: Training/Need Guidance/Learn Their Lived Experiences–Learn from Some of The Mistakes to Dodged a Few/Help You to Face the Challenges		X		X	X	X
	Different Race and Genders Mentors	Mentor: Different Race Women/Different Races and Genders/Male Asian American		X		X		X
	Who were my mentor(s) in my career path?	Mentors–Education–Professor		X				
		Mentorship				X		
		Sponsorship				X		
		Allyship				X		
		Supervisor's Acknowledge/Promotion Criteria	X					X
		Dissertation Advisor		X				
	Limited Mentorship	Working Experience–Chair–No Support/No Mentorship/Seeking Support Challenge					X	
		Only Asian Women/Discrimination–Only Asian/Mentor–One Asian Women/Only Asian–Sense of Pride		X	X			X

		Mentorship Limited–Asian and Asian American Women/Underrepresentation of Asian American Women in Support/ Mentor–Asian Women Recently				X		X
		Support–One Time–From Different Race/Mentorship–Lack of Mentorship from Her Mentor/Working Experience: No Training/Leadership Training–How Do I Better Resolve?/No Check In–Help How Do I Deal with Faculty Issues					X	
	Support Others	Became Mentor; More Mentees>Mentors						X
		Support Others/Support Other Colored Women		X		X	X	X
Working Experience	Duty	Duty (Administrator Job Description)/Job Duty–Change/Research Duty/Difference Between Directors & Chairs & Deans/Duty Change AI/Work Shift–from Students to Government and Policy	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Working Experience	Emphasis on Job/Working Experience	X		X		X	
		Past Working Experience/Teacher Experience/Principal Experience	X		X			X
	Challenges	Change–10 years get into the system (P5) Working/Leadership Challenge–Legal Process				X	X	

Category	Subcategory	Item						
	Promotion Experience	Ability/ Skill Transfer–Promotion	X		X			
		Promoted Experience/Promotion Process/The Choices–Move Up/Promotion–Creating the Atmosphere	X	X				X
		Key Moments: Promotion Experience–Mentors, Leaders of Color/Principal Experience/(P4) Willingness to Move Up/ Promotion–creating the atmosphere	X	X	X	X		X
Suggestion	Suggestion for Moving Up	Moving Up Suggestion	X					
		Suggestion about after Earn Doctor Degree				X		
		Suggestion: Future Administrative Role					X	
		Suggestion: Your Supervisor Does Not Have to Like You						X
	Leadership Development	Suggestion: Negotiate		X				
		Suggestion: Agile		X				
		Suggestion: Leadership– Authority			X			
		Suggestion: Partner With Other Organizations, Give Your Voice, Helping API				X		
		Suggestion: Speak Your Mind When You Need To					X	
Education		Education Experience/Education– Research/Education Shift Career Path	X	X	X	X		X

		Education–Self Education–Willingness to Learn–Family						X
		From Dissertation to Action				X		
Bicultural/ Multicultural		Agree with Bicultural or Multicultural Advantage	X	X	X		X	X
		Neutral attitude toward Bicultural				X		
		Bilingual or Language Experience: Chinese Community Motivation		X	X			
		Bicultural–Hindu & Rebellious–Advantage					X	
		Advantage–Name–Open the Door						X
		Advantage–U.S. Culture					X	
Immigrant Challenge		Immigration Status Challenge/Financial Challenge	X					
Leadership Traits		Leadership Character/Leadership Traits: Chinese	X					
		Different Leadership Style					X	
Others		Different		X				
		Coding				X		
		Next Step					X	
		Institution					X	
		Interim Dean & Dean					X	
		Valuable for Research					X	

		Participant Reflection						X
		Chinese Committee	X					
		Suggestion for Dissertation						X

Appendix E: IRB Approval Email

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Yunru Shen ████████████

IRB-2024-94 - Initial: Initial - Exempt – ACU

do-not-reply@cayuse.com <do-not-reply@cayuse.com>   Mon, May 13, 2024 at 11:39 AM
To: ████████████████████

Date: May 13, 2024

PI: Yunru Shen

Department: ONL-Online Student, 17250-EdD Online

Re: Initial - IRB-2024-94

A Qualitative Study of the Career Experiences of Asian and Asian American Female Administrators in U.S. Higher Education

The Abilene Christian University Institutional Review Board has rendered the decision below for *A Qualitative Study of the Career Experiences of Asian and Asian American Female Administrators in U.S. Higher Education*. The administrative check-in date is --.

Decision: Exempt

Category:

Research Notes:

Additional Approvals/Instructions:

If at any time the details of this project change, please resubmit to the IRB so the committee can determine whether or not the exempt status is still applicable. All approval letters and study documents are located within the Study Details in Cayuse IRB.

The following are all responsibilities of the Primary Investigator (PI). Violation of these responsibilities may result in suspension or termination of research by the Institutional Review Board. If the Primary Investigator is a student and fails to fulfil any of these responsibilities, the Faculty Advisor then becomes responsible for completing or upholding any and all of the following:

• When the research is completed, inform the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs. If your study is Exempt, Non-Research, or Non-Human Research, email orsp@acu.edu to indicate that the research has finished.
• According to ACU policy, research data must be stored on ACU campus (or electronically) for 3 years from inactivation of the study, in a manner that is secure but accessible should the IRB request access.
• It is the Investigator's responsibility to maintain a general environment of safety for all research participants and all members of the research team. All risks to physical, mental, and emotional well-being as well as any risks to confidentiality should be minimized.

For additional information on the policies and procedures above, please visit the IRB website http://www.acu.edu/community/offices/academic/orsp...
or email orsp@acu.edu with your questions.

Sincerely,

Abilene Christian University Institutional Review Board