

# YOO-JIN KANG

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## EAST ASIAN UMBC STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVES ON INTIMATE RELATIONSHIPS AND VIOLENCE

As an Interdisciplinary Studies scholar, I have always been interested in the connections between culture and violence. My early exploration centered on relationship violence and sexual assault on college campuses. Through my collective roles on campus as a health educator, sorority president, and staff member at the Women's Center, I began to learn more about the complexities of students' lives and relationships, particularly among students of color. Inspired to learn more about the lived experiences of students of color, I decided to center my research on the voices of self-identified East Asian American students at UMBC, focusing on their perspectives about the intimate relationships in their lives. Through this research, I hope to offer insight at the experiences of East Asian American students, recognizing the shared and individual differences they have with other students in our community.

**[LEFT]** 2012. Photograph by UMBC Creative Services.

**[RIGHT]** University Archives, Special Collections, University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC).

## ABSTRACT

Intimate Partner Violence is a growing public health concern in the United States. More than one in three women and one in four men have experienced contact sexual violence, physical violence, or stalking by an intimate partner in their lifetime, according to the National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey 2010 Summary Report (NIPSV) developed by the U. S. Centers for Disease Control. While intimate partner violence is prevalent in all communities, this paper will present a study of college-aged East-Asian students' understandings of relationships, violence, and relevant resources at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC). This exploration stemmed from the lack of information about the impact of intimate partner violence in the East-Asian community in the U.S. This study focused on students who attend UMBC due to the fact that nearly half of the minority student enrollment at UMBC consists of students of Asian heritage, making research about this community particularly relevant.

The main research finding is that students experienced a "cultural clash" with their parents when it came to ideas about romantic relationships, including the purpose of dating, when it was appropriate to start dating, and the characteristics of an ideal partner. Further, female participants described learning about parental expectations about relationships primarily from through their mothers telling them. Participants with East Asian mothers often mentioned their mothers communicating the importance of race and wealth as primary characteristics of an ideal partner. Finally, in discussing resources, all students listed their best friends as the first resource they would turn to. However, students also listed scenarios in which they would turn to their parents for support. While further research is necessary to verify these findings, this research suggests ways to improve prevention and intervention messages to the East Asian community. In particular, study findings suggest that we should attend to the importance of family connections, particularly, the central role of mothers in female students' lives and challenges of resource

accessibility, particularly for students who commute or may have limited privacy at home. Students also expressed a high reliance on their peers as sources of knowledge and support, which emphasized the need to focus on healthy relationship education and violence prevention for the *entire* campus community.

In this paper, I will first present an overview of the issue of intimate partner violence in the United States, the prevalence of sexual violence on college campuses, and the context of intimate partner violence in the Asian community. I will then describe the research design of the study, which used person-centered interviews with five self-identified female, East Asian-American students at the University of Maryland Baltimore County (UMBC). In the analysis section, I discuss the themes that emerged in the interviews, focusing on the differences between East Asian students' attitudes and what they perceived to be their parents' beliefs about romantic relationships, the role of East-Asian mothers in their daughters' lives, the different ways students navigate restrictions, and students' perceptions about healthy and unhealthy relationships. The paper will conclude with a discussion of the implications of this research for the university, the limitations of this study, and the potential for future research. While these important patterns emerged, by way of disclaimer, I would caution professionals, researchers, and readers to consider the individuals represented in this research rather than using this knowledge as a way to generalize an entire population. As we will review in the discussion, there were intergroup differences between participants and the themes that have emerged from this research are not necessarily exclusive to the East Asian American community.

## **BACKGROUND**

There are several bodies of literature that bear on the topic of intimate partner violence in the United States. This section introduces the concept of rape culture, explores the pervasiveness of sexual violence on college campuses, provides a brief background on the impact of intimate partner violence in the Asian community, and ends with a description of East Asian communities. This background is intended to provide an orientation to the problem of sexual violence and intimate partner violence and to the research on East Asian communities in the U.S.

## INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE IN THE UNITED STATES

Intimate partner violence is a public health issue that has gained national attention in the United States. As defined by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Intimate partner violence (IPV) encompasses physical, sexual, or psychological harm by a current or former partner or spouse. This type of violence can occur among heterosexual or same-sex couples and does not require sexual intimacy. According to the National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS), the chronic stress and impact of intimate partner violence can lead to serious consequences including physical injury, poor mental health, and chronic physical health problems. The NISVS is an ongoing, nationally representative telephone survey that collects information about experiences of sexual violence, stalking, and intimate partner violence among non-institutionalized English and/or Spanish-speaking women and men aged 18 or older in the United States. This study has found that more than one in four women and more than one in ten men have experienced contact sexual violence, physical violence, or stalking by an intimate partner (NISVS, 2010, 1).

The prevalence of IPV in the United States is noteworthy but does not come without cultural context. In the following section, I discuss the notion of rape culture and provide examples of public opinion about sexual violence in the United States.

## IPV IN THE ASIAN COMMUNITY IN THE U.S.

In the 2010 U.S. Census, the federal government broadly defined the term “Asian” as referring to any person who has origins in the Far East, Southeast Asia, or the Indian subcontinent. This includes, for example, people from Cambodia, China, India, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippine Islands, Thailand, and Vietnam.<sup>i</sup> According to a 2013 report by the Pew Research Center in Washington D.C, people from Latin America and Asia make up seven-in-ten of the U.S adult immigrant population and about half of today’s adult second generation (US-born children of immigrants) (Pew research, 2013, 7).<sup>ii</sup>

Given the incredible magnitude of the Asian community, it is especially important to understand how IPV emerges in and affects these populations. It is equally important to recognize, however, that there are major limitations to mainstream measures of IPV in the Asian American community, due to the lack of recognition

of the differing sociocultural contexts. Dr. Mieko Yoshihama from the University of Michigan School of Social Work writes, “What is considered domestic violence or a specific meaning a woman may give to her partner’s act is partly based on the woman’s viewpoint, [which is] shaped by her sociocultural background” (Yoshihama, 1999, 873).

It is challenging to get a handle on how much IPV might occur among Asian Americans, given the difficulty of defining what this might mean for different communities, how definitions change over time, and the shame and secrecy that surround these types of experiences. However, we can look to the Asian Pacific Islander Institute on Domestic Violence (APIIDV) and its literature compilation of the pervasiveness of IPV in Asian, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander Homes, from its report in 2009.

APIIDV’s report “Facts & Stats: Domestic Violence in Asian, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander Homes” was completed in 2009 and compiled both published and unpublished literature. The authors, Dr. Mieko Yoshihama and Chic Dabby, warn that while the literature review provides insight, it is in no way conclusive, stating that, “Clearly, domestic violence occurs in all populations regardless of race, ethnicity, culture...as do the socio-cultural, linguistic, economic and political barriers that influence help-seeking. Hence, the magnitude of the problem may be considerably greater than available data indicate” (Yoshihama & Dabby, 2009, 1). The goals of this literature review were to raise awareness about the experiences of Asian, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander battered women, counter the denial about the problem within and outside of the community, and emphasize the need for socio-culturally effective prevention and intervention (Yoshihama & Dabby, 2009, 1).

Yoshihama and Dabby report that there is a high prevalence of domestic violence rates in Asian American homes, with 41–61% of adult women reporting experiences of intimate, physical and/or sexual, violence during their lifetime.<sup>iii</sup> This range is based on studies of women’s experiences of domestic violence conducted among different Asian ethnic groups in the U.S. and stems from two studies, which date back to 1999 and 2002 (Yoshihama & Dabby, 2009, 2). Furthermore, Project AWARE (Asian Women Advocating Respect and Empowerment), an anonymous survey in 2000-2001, examined the experiences of abuse, service needs, and barriers to service among Asian women. Using a snowball method, a convenience sample of 178 Asian women was recruited, and among this sample, 81.1% of Asian women reported experiencing at least one form of intimate partner

violence in the past year. Further, Of the 23 women who reported not having experienced intimate partner violence themselves, more than half (64%) said they knew of an Asian friend who had experienced intimate partner violence (Yoshihama & Dabby, 2009, 11).

While there are various bodies of literature discussing IPV, relationships, and family dynamics among Asians in the U.S., I will highlight the findings of one study compiled by the non-profit organization, Futures Without Violence (previously the Family Violence Prevention Fund). In particular, I will explore the work of Dr. Sujata Warriar, who is president of the Board of Directors for Manavi, a New Jersey-based women's rights organization committed to ending violence and exploitation against South Asian women in the US.

The study, “(Un)heard voices: Domestic Violence in the Asian -American Community,” consisted of various focus groups, conducted in partnership with Futures Without Violence and the two Asian community-based groups: Asian Women's Center (AWS), in San Francisco, and Manavi, in New Jersey (Warriar, 2002, 1). The first focus group consisted of survivors of domestic violence, Asian domestic violence advocates, and other community leaders. The second focus group included Asian women in same-gender relationships who have experienced domestic violence, Asian domestic violence advocates who have extensive experience working with victims in same-gender relationships, and Asian community leaders active in the gay and lesbian civil rights movement. Each focus group consisted of 11 participants and was organized to examine common cultural attitudes and beliefs on domestic violence among the Asian immigrant groups (Warriar, 2002, 1).

Upon analysis of the focus groups' collective interviews, the study found that all participants separately agreed that domestic violence occurs in all the communities that comprise Asian America. Further, “the participants recognized the importance of stating the problem because of the invisibility of the issue within the communities and the ways in which mainstream stereotypes [decide] domestic violence a non-issue for Asian Americans” (Warriar, 2002, 5). Another telling finding of the study was that the majority of the participants believed that domestic violence against women stemmed from a legacy of patriarchy and sexism that is widespread in many Asian American communities. As a result of this, participants stated that women are socialized to believe and accept that violence in a relationship is acceptable and that perpetrators are not held accountable for their behavior in their own communities (Warriar, 2002, 5).

According to the participants in both focus groups, there is a significant underreporting of domestic violence in the Asian American community due to factors such as language barriers, fear of bringing shame to the family, fear of deportation, and lack of community support (Warrier, 2002, 10). Dr. Warrier explains that Asian American women continue to believe that they are worthless in violent relationships and that revealing an IPV-related situation to anyone could bring great shame to their families and communities (5). She quotes one participant who stated, “I think it’s our cultures that allow it to happen. We do not hold somebody accountable for that kind of violence...you see that the batterer gets invited to parties, it’s the woman who gets isolated”(Warrier, 2002, 5).

Furthermore, Warrier explains that primary institutional barriers to Asian American women receiving help are racism and homophobia. Racism is particularly problematic for Asian women. The attitude that immigrants do not belong and should not ask for help or cause trouble is just one variant of racism; on an institutional level, barriers such as the lack of language accessible resources and culturally competent practitioners further works to disenfranchise and discourage immigrant community members from seeking help. Warrier also identifies the harms of the myth of the Asian American “model minority,” which assumes that Asian women somehow do not have issues with domestic violence.

Since this particular study focuses on students of East Asian background, the following section will define “East Asian” broadly and will provide specific a brief background on the East Asian Community.

## THE EAST ASIAN COMMUNITY

The term “East Asia” includes the countries China, North and South Korea, Japan, Hong Kong, and Taiwan. This study focused on university students in the U.S. whose parents had emigrated to the U.S. from East Asia. In order to prepare for these interviews, I reviewed descriptions of family life in these countries of origins. Although two of the six volunteers for my person-centered interviews had parents from Southeast Asia (Vietnam and the Philippines) rather than East Asia, the family dynamics associated with East Asian families were shared by them as well, as will be discussed in the results and limitations sections of the paper.

According to The East West Center, a non-profit education and research organization, families from East Asia are traditionally male-dominated. Women typically leave their parents upon marriage

and often live with her husband's parents if he is the first son. Women from these countries have traditionally had little independence within the family, at least until they were past their childbearing years (Kim, Westley, & Retherford, 2002, 29). In his literature review, "Changing East Asian Families: Values and Behaviors," Chin-Chun Yi discusses the findings of three comparative studies of family values and relationships, based on the East Asian Social Survey, EASS) data set (Yi, 2013, 253). Yi states that, "It has long been agreed that family is the core institution in East Asia," explaining that through a shared Confucian cultural background, East Asian families are considered to have more commonalities among them than with other families in other parts of the world (Yi, 2013, 253). Yi claims that an unmistakable cultural expression of patriarchal supremacy is seen through the filial piety of children toward parents. Filial piety, as defined by the Encyclopedia Britannica Online, derives from Confucianism and describes the attitude of obedience, devotion, and care toward one's parents and elder family members. This is the basis of individual moral conduct and social harmony. Yi writes that parental authority is often expressed through measures such as the strict regulation of study and training during childhood, mate selection during adolescence to young adulthood, and intergenerational support in later family life course (Yi, 2013, 253).

However, East Asian parents' transference of cultural values and traditions can often be challenged, particularly as second generation children grow up in the United States. Yi explains that there is a clash between East Asian tradition and Western modernity, noting that while certain social norms are shifting and being endorsed by the public, tenacity of traditional family values remains in East Asia, even while changes of specific behaviors have gradually taken place (Yi, 2013, 253). In line with Yi's claim, Pew Research surveys (2010) find that second generations of Asian groups are much more likely than first generation immigrants to speak English, to have friends and spouses outside their ethnic or racial group, to say their group gets along well with others, and to think of themselves as a "typical American" (7).

## RAPE CULTURE & PUBLIC OPINION ABOUT SEXUAL VIOLENCE

The prevalence of IPV and, more importantly, the cultural norms that reinforce its acceptance are often attributed to what feminists in the 1970's first labeled as a "rape culture" (Women Against Violence

Against Women, 2014). The editors of the anthology, *Transforming a Rape Culture*, explain that rape culture consists of “a complex of beliefs that encourages male sexual aggression and supports violence against women. In a rape culture women perceive a continuum of threatened violence that ranges from sexual remarks to sexual touching to rape itself” (Buchwald, Fletcher, & Roth, 1993, 7). They claim that, “In a rape culture both men and women assume that sexual violence is just an inevitable fact of life,” rather than “the expression of values and attitudes that can change” (Buchwald, Fletcher, & Roth, 1993, 1).

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, public officials voiced that the federal government had no role in addressing intimate partner violence and that battling IPV was a “private family matter” (Office of the Vice President, 2014, 5). Thus, IPV was treated not as a societal issue but as a “family” issue relevant to couples in abusive relationships. Government officials were not the only people who turned a blind eye. Many citizens also dismissed sexual assault and physical abuse by blaming the victim with reasons such as, “she asked for it,” “she wore a short skirt,” or, most commonly, “she drank too much” (Office of the Vice President, 2014, 5).

In response to the inattention and dismissive attitudes toward both IPV and rape culture, the 1970’s Rape Crisis Movement took hold. The initial efforts of the Rape Crisis movement were focused on raising awareness about the prevalence and impact of the experience of rape, highlighting the voices of survivors and emphasizing the need for dedicated resources (PreventConnect, 2014). The Rape Crisis movement revealed the prevalence of women experiencing rape by intimate male partners, rather than strangers, and identified the prevalence of physical abuse of spouses as a problem that was previously unacknowledged (Fagan and Browne, 1993, 116). The continuous efforts of the movement led to an expansion of healthcare services such as Sexual Assault Forensic Examinations (SAFE), and funding for a wide range of sexual assault prevention and intervention programs, particularly the federal Violence Against Women Acts of 1994 (PreventConnect, 2014). The Violence Against Women Act was a crucial step toward recognizing the experiences of survivors of violence, as well as bringing the issue of domestic violence to the public eye.

In more recent years, attitudes toward violence against women have shifted, according to the FrameWorks Research Institute (FRI), an independent nonprofit organization founded in 1999 to advance science-based communications research and practice. In their 2010 report, “American Perceptions of Sexual Violence,” which was based

on 20 in-depth cultural models interviews with Americans in Los Angeles, California, and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, none of the informants engaged in directly blaming victims for their attacks. Mora O’Neil and Pamela Morgan, who compiled the report, write, “This is a major step forward from past public discourse in which sexual violence was often represented as a natural and therefore noncriminal part of heterosexual sexual relationships and in which violent acts were assumed to be the sole culpability of sexually “provocative” or “promiscuous” women” (O’Neil & Morgan, 2010, 4).

However, a notable finding of the report was the significant gap between experts’ explanations about sexual violence and the public’s understanding of sexual violence. When ten experts, who were key practitioners working on issues related to sexual violence, were asked to explain the causes of sexual violence, they discussed the impact of cultural systems defined by inequality, for example, the mass media. Experts explained that the media’s sexualization of women and commercialization of sex largely influenced how the public defined sexual violence. Experts stated that, “the media created a ‘culture of confusion,’ especially for young people, so that many are unclear about what constitutes sexual violence and that normalizes violence towards women” (O’Neil & Morgan, 2010, 10). Therefore, experts proposed solutions focused on changing cultural norms and implementing policies that could be effective at preventing sexual violence.

In contrast, when the FRI asked the public to explain the causes of violence, they found that one of the main ways people thought about violence was through the ‘mentalist model’ (O’Neil & Morgan, 2010, 4). In the mentalist model, people viewed social problems, like sexual assault and IPV, as a result of individual characteristics, such as one’s character, motivation and personal discipline. O’Neil and Morgan write, “As such, the use of mentalist models by the public has a narrowing effect — it boils complex interactions among individuals, [cultural] determinants and systems down to either the presence or absence of individual motivation and internal fortitude” (4).

Informants who used the mentalist model often reasoned about the internal motivations of perpetrators and victims. O’Neil and Morgan write that, “sexual violence continues to be perceived as a problem solely and fundamentally created by individual moral failings on the part of the perpetrator and, on the part of the victim, the lack of responsibility to ensure one’s safety.” By employing the mentalist model, respondent’s strategies for addressing sexual violence were narrowly limited to punitive measures that target individuals and

educational programs that teach individuals to protect themselves. The mentalist model is pervasive in “victim-blaming” attitudes, also prevalent in rape culture, in which rape victims are asked what they did to provoke their own assault rather than focusing on the assault itself as a crime.

The clear discrepancy between experts’ viewpoints and explanations and the general public’s responses was that experts considered the influences of larger social and cultural patterns in explaining why sexual violence was pervasive, while the public saw the problem as a result of the minds, hearts and actions of individuals. This finding emphasizes the need for public communication and messaging that encourages systems thinking to the causes of IPV, which might support more policy-based and preventative solutions to the issue (O’Neil & Morgan, 2010, 5).

These gaps in understanding between the experts and the public presented in the FRI research provide perspective into the challenges survivors may face in recognizing and reporting sexual assault, an issue that is particularly relevant on college campuses.

## SEXUAL ASSAULT ON COLLEGE CAMPUSES

Since the reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act in 2013, the White House Task Force has launched several public awareness campaigns centered on violence prevention such as “No More,” a campaign focused on “the role of men as fathers and mentors in teaching children about safe and healthy relationships built on equality, respect and trust” (Rosenthal, 2013). Many of the national projects and campaigns, such as “1 is 2 Many,” “Not Alone,” and “It’s on Us,” have focused on addressing sexual assault as it occurs on college campuses.

IPV and sexual assault are two issues that are especially prevalent among college-aged students. A commonly cited statistic tells us that one in four women are sexually assaulted in college and that females age 18 to 24 experience the highest rates of intimate partner violence (NIPSV Report 2010). Remarkably, a report from the U.S Department of Justice stated that the 2013 rates of rape and sexual assault for college-aged females were not significantly different from their respective rates in 1997 (U.S Department of Justice, 2014, 3). The National Institute of Justice states that rape and other forms of sexual assault are among the most underreported crimes in the United States, citing that one of the most common responses for students’ decision was that they did not think the incident was serious

enough to report (National Institute of Justice, 2008). Furthermore, a report by the U.S Department of Justice, which used the National Crime Victimization Survey to compare the rates of rape and sexual assault victimization between college-age students and nonstudents between 1995-2013, found that 80 percent of student rapes and incidences of sexual assault were unreported to police, with about one in four student victims who believed the incident was a personal matter and 1 in 5 student victims who stated a fear of reprisal (U.S Department of Justice, 2014, 1).

The high level of underreporting on college campuses can also be understood in the context of rape culture. In attempts to prevent sexual violence, universities, such as the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs (UCCS) have used messaging that aligns with rape culture in their prevention methods. For example, UCCS' 2006 safety tip sheet gained national attention on social media in 2013 for this very reason.

The safety tip sheet, according to CNN writer Lateef Mungin, was given to women who completed a self-defense course and included "last resort" options for women to deter sexual assault, such as vomiting or urinating on themselves to convince the attacker to leave them alone, and telling the attacker that they have a disease or are menstruating (Mungin, 2013). Messages like the ones found in the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs' safety sheet contribute to the persistence of rape culture and victim-blaming / victim-responsibility attitudes toward survivors of sexual assault by placing the responsibility of the assault on the victim to protect themselves versus the message that perpetrators should not be committing these acts of violence.

On the other hand, other universities, such as the University of Maryland Baltimore County (UMBC) aim to prevent sexual assault through evidenced based practices including promising practices such as bystander intervention and prevention education. For example, the Voice Against Violence program at UMBC was designed to educate the community about IPV, train campus leaders about reporting, and assist victims of violence with trained professionals. Additionally, a resource such as the Women's Center offers supportive listening by professional staff, a library of resources for gender-based violence, and programs centered on raising awareness about IPV. Such resources are invaluable in creating a campus culture that supports survivors, rather than blaming them.

As we move forward in our understanding of IPV, I will begin to focus on the Asian American population at UMBC, as this population is the focus of my study. The background I have covered about IPV,

the issue of sexual assault on college campuses, and rape culture is helpful in situating my study as I seek to understand the perceptions and beliefs of college-aged students about intimate relationships and what they would consider “unhealthy” or violent in such relationships, and further, what resources they would feel comfortable using if they found themselves in a relationship crisis. The background on IPV within the Asian community seeks to provide a wide glimpse at the prevalence of IPV within the diversity of Asian communities living in the United States.

## IPV AND THE ASIAN AMERICAN POPULATION AT UMBC

As on all college campuses, sexual assault and IPV are issues that affect UMBC’s campus community. The UMBC Campus Crime statistics state that in the year 2013, there were seven cases of sexual assault reported by UMBC students. While this number has lowered since 2011, in which there were nine reported cases, lower reporting rates do not necessarily entail lower incidences of sexual assault, given the underreporting of sexual assault on college campuses generally (Peterson & Walker, 2015). Cara Peterson and Molly Walker from *The Chronicle* explain that low reporting rates are likely the result of the inefficiencies and the re-traumatization commonly associated with the reporting process rather than a sign that less sexual violence is occurring on campuses. Peterson and Walker write, “This is the paradox of our national problem with campus sexual assaults: according to an estimate by the White House, as few as 12 percent of assaults actually get reported.”

Given the lack of information regarding the impact of intimate partner violence among Asian American students at UMBC, I developed my research to explore the perspectives of second generation, self-identified East Asian students at UMBC. I chose to focus my research on this particular demographic due to the size of the Asian American community at UMBC. As of Fall 2014, 42% of UMBC’s student body was comprised of minority student enrollment consisting of 20 percent Asian American students, 16 percent African American students, and 6 percent Hispanic students (UMBC Undergraduate Admissions, 2014). Notably, Asian American students are the largest minority group of students represented at UMBC, making this population particularly significant to study.

The decision to put the voices of East Asian students at the center of this study is also part of an effort to attend to the perspectives women of color. This intentional focus is informed

by criminologist Natalie J. Sokoloff and sociologist Ida Dupont's, "Domestic Violence at the Intersections of Race, Class, and Gender" (2005), which emphasized the need to recognize the unique challenges and experiences of women of color in the context of IPV. Sokoloff and Dupont write that no one dimension, such as gender inequality, is adequate on its own in explaining IPV (Sokoloff & Dupont, 2005, 43). Further, Sokoloff and Dupont cite sociologist Dr. Valli Kanuha who explains that by assuming domestic violence affects everyone equally, we risk trivializing the experiences of women of color whose experiences are largely impacted by multiple, intersecting identities, as well as the ways that society can accurately analyze the prevalence and impact of violence against such women (Sokoloff & Dupont, 2005, 41).

## METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH DESIGN

In this next section, I will describe the methodology of my research, the recruitment process and the ways in which I analyzed the transcription data.

The primary methodology for this project was person-centered interviewing, as developed within anthropology (Levy & Hollan, 2014). Person-centered interviewing encourages a continuous back-and-forth, through the use of both open-ended questions and more specific questions. In person-centered interviewing, the participant is encouraged to speak as freely as possible without the pretense that there is a "right" or "wrong" answer. Levy and Hollan explain person-centered interviewing provides the interviewee the space to explore numerous potential responses to a question (329). Close-ended questions, often used in large-scale instruments such as surveys, can often narrow the options for a participant's response and can also shift the response toward safer, more "objective" information (Levy & Hollan, 2014, 329). Person-centered interviewing allowed me to connect students in a personal and intimate way. This provided me the opportunity to gain insight into students' complex thoughts, ideas, and personal lives.

After receiving approval by the UMBC Institutional Review Board to work with human subjects, my first step was to send advertisement emails to various academic departments, such as Modern Languages and Linguistics, and targeted student organizations, such as the East Asian cultural clubs. The original goal of the project proposal was to interview three male and three female freshmen East Asian students, however, after two weeks since posting the advertising email, I had only received two emails from participants who fit the original

participant qualifications. Noticing the lack of response from both freshmen students and especially male-identified students, I requested an IRB modification of my project to broaden the age requirements to include East Asian students' ages 18 and older. With the newly added change, I interviewed a total of five female students and one male student, whom I have left out of the larger analysis and will discuss more in my "Limitations" section.

Once a student emailed a response to the advertising email, found in Appendix 1, we arranged to meet at a private location. This was in the interest of confidentiality, as well as for providing a space in which participants felt safe to discuss things openly. The interviews were recorded with a personal digital recorder, which was placed on the table near the participant. Since the interviews were centered on the individual's experiences, the majority of the interview questions were open-ended. Examples of interview questions can also be found in the Appendix 2.

After the interviews were recorded, I immediately wrote, in a private word document, a brief reflection about the interview, describing the location, noise level, and outward behavior of the participant, as well as the main themes that arose during the interview. The interview audio file was then transferred to my personal laptop and transcribed through a transcription website, "oTranscribe" ([otranscribe.com](http://otranscribe.com)). This website allowed me to manipulate the audio file so that I could fast-forward, rewind, speed up and slow down the audio for more accurate transcribing. The transcript and audio was only visible to my computer's specific IP address, and was thus kept confidential.

Once the interviews were fully transcribed, I organized and placed the transcription text into a large table in Microsoft Word; an example of the transcription table is in Appendix 3. Each row of the table represented a new sentence spoken by either the interviewee or myself. Next to the transcription text, I created two more columns, one labeled "Notes/Thoughts" in which I tracked my personal thoughts while transcribing or coding and the other labeled "Codes" to organize the codes that arose in the particular interview.

One of the key processes to my data analysis was coding my data. I created codes through a process in which I highlighted key words, phrases, themes, and messages that arose within the transcripts. From there I named codes, similar to how one might name keywords and key phrases that seemed to capture the particular sentiment or moment. Through coding, I was able to recognize the similar and differing ties students had when answering interview questions. Coding provided a

way to be detail-oriented and examine the interview from an individual level while also zooming out to compare the person's responses to those of the other participants'. This level of detail and flexibility allowed me to consider individual codes and themes within a larger perspective, being mindful of Yoshihama and Dabby's warning to not overgeneralize or stereotype participants' responses as a reflection of an entire group. Some examples of general codes that were applied to all interviews include: Relationships (healthy, unhealthy, and ideal), Communication, Parents, Friends, and Resources. In addition to the general codes, each interview had a set of unique codes, since each participant brought a different perspective. The final data analysis involved looking at all of the codes in the five interviews to identify common themes among all five interviews.

The table below displays the basic demographics of the participants. The last participant is shaded to indicate his removal from the larger data analysis and paper. From here on, reference to "participants" will signify only the five female interview participants.

**TABLE 1:** Participant Demographics

Participant	Sex	Year in School	Parents' Ethnic Origin
1	F	Freshman	Vietnam
2	F	Freshman	Japan, United States of America
3	F	Sophomore	Taiwan, United State of America
4	F	Senior	China
5	F	Senior	Korea
6	M	Senior	Philippines, Latin America

All participants were current UMBC students and had parents who were raised in an Asian country. Although I had intended to focus on students raised by parents who were both born in an East Asian country, the volunteers included children of parents raised in what is typically considered Southeast Asia as well. Another noteworthy occurrence from the recruitment process was that two of the five female participants (as well as the male participant) were of biracial background. Perhaps the term "East Asian *American*" connoted to certain subjects the idea of biracial identities. Given this occurrence, it is interesting to note that while one parent for these participants was not of Asian background, the participants seemed to identify primarily with an East Asian background, since they contacted me to participate in the study. Furthermore, while one female participant's

parents were of Vietnamese descent, and thus Southeast Asian, her experiences and responses aligned closely with the daughters of the East Asian parents. The outliers of this study were Participant 2, whose mother was not of East Asian descent, as well as my one male subject. I will discuss both of these participants as I go along in my analysis and limitations sections.

In the next section, I will go over the main themes that I found through my research. In order to protect the confidentiality of the participants, I will be identifying the participants by their numbers, listed above.

## ANALYSIS - MAIN THEMES

While many interesting events occurred throughout the respective interviews, I have chosen to narrow down this analysis to five major themes. These themes are:

1. The Clash of Cultural Models between East Asian Parents and their Daughters
2. The Influential Role of Mothers in Daughters' Lives
3. How Students Navigate Restrictions
4. Student Perceptions about Healthy and Unhealthy Relationships
5. Resources

### THEME 1: CLASH OF CULTURAL MODELS- EAST ASIAN PARENTS AND THEIR DAUGHTERS

One of the most prominent themes was participants' experience of what I call a clash of cultural models between the student and her parents. Cultural models are so ingrained in our everyday lives that we often presume that other people share the same ideas and practices unless we notice a clear clash with someone else's cultural model. Psychologist Dr. Raji Rhys and Associate Professor of American Indian Studies Stephanie Fryberg explain that cultural models shape and inform the daily activities, emotions, and perceptions of an individual's life. They provide information and ideas about how to be a person, about what is good, what is right, and, importantly, what is not (Fryberg & Rhys, 2007). The table below lists key clashes that students reported with their parents. I will go over these clashes in cultural models in detail below, addressing numbers four and five in combination.

**TABLE 2:** The Clash of Cultural Models

Cultural Model	East Asian Parents (from the student's perspective)	Student Perspective
When it is appropriate to start dating	After graduating from school (undergraduate or graduate)	When I want to start dating
Purpose of dating	To find a partner for marriage	To casually date people whom I like
Communication within the Family about Relationships & Sex	Mothers communicate to daughters, fathers often do not talk to daughters about topics like relationships, romance, and sex	I do not usually bring up topics like relationships and sex willingly
Expectations of an ideal partner	Someone of the same ethnicity, STEM education, wealthy, successful	Someone who makes me happy
What makes a peer/friend valuable	If they are in similar/higher level classes than you are; if they are financially ambitious and smart	Personally relatable peer whom I like and who hangs out with me/is there for me

### When It Is Appropriate to Start Dating

Many the participants described parental restrictions about when they were allowed to start dating. From the student's perspective, East Asian parents primarily discouraged dating until the students had completed their education and graduated college. Participants emphasized their parents' restrictions as being related to the focus on finishing school. For example, Participant 4 said, "Yeah and [my parents] said that I can't have a boyfriend but that's okay. That's the usual Asian thing I guess...it's like no boyfriend until you have a job or till out of college." She explained later, "I feel like it's more for a fact that they want me to focus on academics...so I wouldn't be distracted."

While some participants stated that their parents told them directly and clearly that they were not allowed to date, this expectation was also communicated indirectly through measures such as storytelling. For example, Participant 1 recalled a time when she and her mother were in the car and her mother suddenly told her that, "if you ever wanna have a boyfriend, you should just tell me." Participant 1 explained that while her parents did not tell her explicitly, she always assumed they wouldn't want her to date until college since her parents have spoken poorly of other extended family members who were ages 14-16 and dating. She said, "I guess they think that it's too young and you should like...leave that off for when you are more mature so you can focus on your education," echoing Participant 4's statement above.

Junya Tsutsui, a scholar from Ritsumeikan University, Japan, found that East Asian females tend to experience significantly more parental intervention than males in their marital decisions. He speculates that this finding reflects women's economic dependency on men in the region, which motivates parents to interfere more with regard to their daughter's marriage than their son's" (Tsutsui, 2013, 265).

### Purpose of Dating

The purpose of dating also often came up in the context of discussing parental expectations about dating. It seemed that East-Asian parents often communicated the expectation that students would not date casually but would rather date for the purpose of marriage. Students mentioned that parents expected them to date partners that they would seriously consider marrying. One participant labeled it as a modern variation of an arranged marriage: "You have to marry within your race and I think [my parents] think that the person you date has to be the person you marry...so I can't date till I'm ready to marry the person."

It seems that parents were more comfortable bringing up the topic of marriage, as it connoted maturity and stability, while other forms of romantic relationships were often not discussed. This can be seen prominently in Participant 4's description: "...my parents were like 'you know...when you have children...' Now they start talking about how they're going to be grandparents and I'm like, 'But I thought you said I couldn't date...I don't think I can snag a husband in the next years...'" Sentiments like these reflected the confusion and tension students felt when discussing intimate relationships with their parents.

### Communication within the Family about Relationships and Sex

When it came to communication about topics involving intimate relationships and sex, the primary communicator of expectations and messages seemed to be the mother communicating to the daughter. This communication seemed unidirectional, coming only from mothers to daughters and not the other way around. When participants described parental expectations about dating, they were often referring specifically to what their East Asian mothers had communicated to them. When asked questions about whether their parents have communicated messages about relationships or sex to them, participants often responded with an anecdote about their mother. When Participant 3 described what she thinks her parent's

ideal partner for her would be, I asked her, “Do you think that’s more your mom’s answer or your mom and dad?” She immediately replied, “Oh, that’s my mom’s answer.”

Notably, other family members did not seem to be heavily involved in communicating messages about intimate relationships. Fathers seemed particularly uninvolved in discussions about these topics. When I asked participants directly whether they had spoken to their fathers about intimate relationships or sex, each responded that they did not or would not. One participant stated, “I think my dad would be too embarrassed to talk to be about [sex].”

When it came to conversations about sex, participants reported that sex was either not talked about at all or was discussed only to the extent that students were told that they were not to engage in it. Mothers seemed to communicate the expectation for abstinence in mostly passive ways, saying things like, “You shouldn’t get involved like that with people.” However, some mothers communicated in more straightforward ways, such as telling their daughters directly to not have sex. All students stated that they did not get the standard “sex talk,” but had an idea of what their parents would say and want. Only one participant — Participant 2, whose mother is not East Asian, but rather, Euro American -- stated that she would feel comfortable going to her mother to talk about relationships and sex. She said, “Especially with me and my mom, we both had this mutual understanding that I knew I could go to her and talk to her about things if I needed to, but I never really had to.” This was particularly significant given that the communication about relationships and sex seemed to be primarily from mothers to daughters and that the cultural background of the mother seemed to be key in shaping what messages were communicated and how.

### The Ideal Partner: Students Ideas vs. Parents Ideas

When participants were asked what they considered an ideal partner, some of the characteristics they included were someone who:

- Had a sense of humor
- Respect for personal space and independence
- Respect for my culture and family
- Someone who is smart and driven
- Someone who helps me grow

Participants most often emphasized humor as a characteristic that was important to them in an ideal partner, in addition finding a partner who is driven and goal-oriented. Furthermore, valuing the

student's East Asian cultural background came up as something that was very important for three of the students interviewed. One of these participants said, "Ultimately, it's still a big part of me so...[my partner] needs to be able to understand...you don't have to like it but you have to...[respect] it."

When participants were asked what they thought their parents might list as characteristics of an ideal partner, the answers were significantly different. Students described their parents to emphasize characteristics such as:

- Future career stability
- Financial stability
- Higher Education
- Education within a Science, Technology, Mathematics, or Engineering Field
- Being of the same ethnicity as the East Asian Parent
- Hardworking

Most students agreed that, in general, their parents wanted the student to be happy and fulfilled, however, they also emphasized that their parents' responses to what an ideal partner consisted of would be very different from their own. When asked what their parents would list as traits of an ideal partner, students with East Asian mothers seemed to primarily focus on the mother's expectations, which often emphasized education, career stability, and race. Three of the five participants stated that they thought their parents had a preference for a particular ethnicity in a future partner. The most common responses were that their parents preferred students' partners to be of the same East Asian background or White. Some participants stated that they were told directly the expectation to date within the same ethnicity, while another participant explained she inferred this from her mother's behavior, saying, "I have an Asian friend and my mom's constantly bringing him up...so it kind of makes me think she wants me to date an Asian...like it's either White or Asian."

## THEME 2: THE INFLUENTIAL ROLE AND INVOLVEMENT OF MOTHERS IN DAUGHTERS' LIVES

In all of this, another prominent theme that arose from my research is evident - the heavy influence and role that mothers had in female students' lives. As mentioned previously, mothers were the primary communicator when it came to intimate topics such as relationships and sex. Moreover, East Asian mothers were often described as being actively involved in students' personal and academic lives before

college. Planning extracurricular activities, enforcing instrument and academic lessons, and determining whether the student could socialize in certain ways were some of the examples students provided as ways their East-Asian mothers were involved in their life decisions. Beyond not being allowed to date, students also mentioned that parents, often mothers, restricted when they were allowed to go out and come back home for social events, who they could hang out with outside of school, and whether they could have sleepovers.

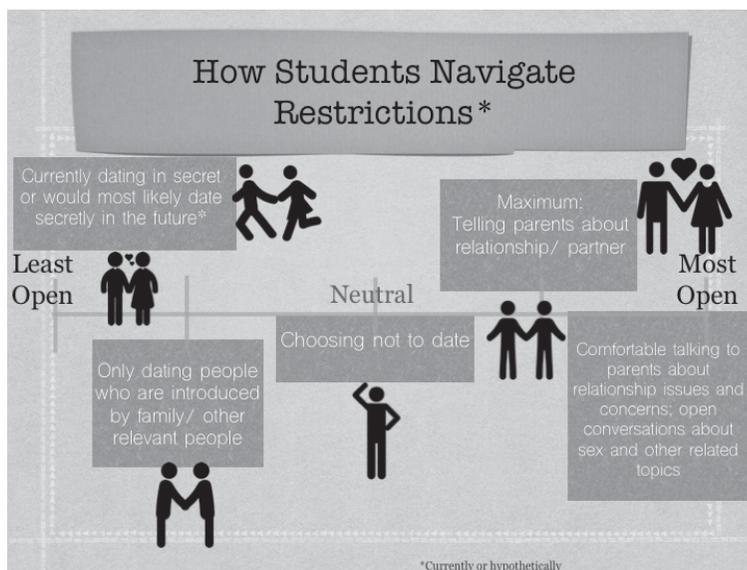
Furthermore, all students also mentioned times that they would go to their mothers for support and affirmation. While mothers might have communicated a desire to stay connected directly to the student, for example, telling the student that she was allowed to date if she wanted to, but she must tell her first, another mother seemed to have an already heavy influence in the student's life to the point that the student stated that: "I'd still probably talk to her after talking to my friends....maybe my mom has something good to say — like something helpful...so I'd still talk to her, I wouldn't not talk to her."

### THEME 3: HOW STUDENTS NAVIGATE RESTRICTIONS

Throughout the interviews, students' knowledge of what their parents expected of them and the limit of communication that occurred from daughter to parent largely shaped the possibilities students felt they had in dating. However, each of the students navigated these possibilities in different ways. Figure 1, shown below, lays out the ways in which students currently or hypothetically would navigate any restrictions their parents have placed on them in terms of dating. The line moves from "least open", or most secretive, to "most open" in regards to students' willingness to share information about their personal dating lives with their parents. Participants who were not in relationships often expressed that they were not interested in pursuing a relationship at the current time, with one participant stating, "If it happens it happens."

Of the two participants who were currently in relationships, one notably stated that she would not inform her parents about her relationship, explaining that she has kept her long-term relationship secret from her parents for several years. Similarly, one participant said that if she were to start a new relationship, she would not tell her parents. On the other hand, the student who described as being most open with her parents about her relationships was again, the daughter of the Euro-American mother, Participant 2, who stated that, "We

were able to have open conversations about sex...[even though] I had never been in a relationship before.” Through all of the students’ responses, it was noteworthy that even within broad cultural patterns and parental restrictions placed on dating and relationships, students demonstrated a sense of agency, navigating the structure of parental restrictions in their own ways.



**CHART 1:** How Students Navigate Restrictions (Currently or Hypothetically)

#### THEME 4: PERCEPTIONS OF HEALTHY AND UNHEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

While most participants in the study had limited personal relationship experiences, they still had many ideas about what they considered healthy and unhealthy in an intimate relationship. I elicited students’ perceptions of relationship violence mainly through asking questions about their perceptions of bad or unhealthy relationships. I was cognizant of avoiding the use of the word “violence” to avoid bringing in jargon that might have provoked students to answer toward a more “textbook” definition.

Throughout the interviews, I found that most students learned about relationships through their peers’ experiences and from watching their parents’ relationship. When asked to define a good or healthy relationship on their own terms, participants listed traits such as:

**Healthy Relationships:**

- Both parties are flexible and independent
- Both people make each other happy and into better people
- Open communication about issues and problems
- No verbal abuse or yelling
- Respecting each other's interests
- Someone who helps me grow

It was interesting to note that many participants described what they considered a healthy relationship in terms of what they thought a healthy relationship was not. For example, many students listed characteristics such as, "If it is not abusive," or "If the person does not yell."

Along these lines, when students described unhealthy relationship traits, they often described traits such as:

**Unhealthy Relationships:**

- Yelling and verbal abuse
- A partner who does not listen
- Clinginess
- Controlling behavior
- Intense jealousy
- Physical abuse

Upon further analysis, I noticed that many of the participants' descriptions of unhealthy relationships paralleled their anecdotes about their parents' relationships. In many of the students' anecdotes about their parents, they often described situations in which their parents were in conflict or showed unhealthy communication. In one interview, a participant clearly stated that, "I looked at [my parents] as an anti-model. I tried to do exactly what they didn't do." In this way, in some students' lives, the parents served as a model of what they would not do or want in a relationship. This particular theme was especially telling and reinforced the influence of parents' behaviors and modeling and the potential impact parents might have in encouraging or discouraging particular interpersonal behaviors among their children.

**THEME 5: RESOURCES**

All participants were asked three main questions regarding resources. The first question was whom they would turn to if they found themselves in a relationship problem. The second was what advice they would give to their friends if they were in a bad relationship situation. The third was what campus resources they had heard of.

The resource that *all* participants said they would turn to first was their best friends. This emphasizes the importance and influence of peer networks in students' lives. Throughout the interviews, it was clear that many of the participants crafted their ideas about ideal and healthy relationships based on their friends' relationship experiences. In fact, when participants were asked about any "relationship role models" they had in their lives, nearly all students responded by describing a friend's relationship.

While three of the five participants stated that they would not willingly talk to their parents about relationship issues, all participants listed worst-case scenarios in which they would turn to their parents as resources. The most common scenarios included cases of stalking, physical abuse and verbal abuse. Interestingly, one participant explained that she would turn to her parents, "If I need to leave campus or go home in an emergency... [or] if I ever felt so helpless that only [my parents] could help, I guess like...physical beatings and that sorta thing. Cuz in that situation I would definitely go to my parents cuz if I go to a counselor that could get my partner arrested or stuff like that." This indicates likelihood for a student to report to her parents before reporting to other authorities, such as police.

This finding is significant because it tells us that while students may restrict and limit the information they share with their parents about their intimate relationships, they also expressed that in times of need, or in "worst case" scenarios, they would still trust their parents to help them and provide them support. As one student stated, "If I were to be in a bad situation [my parents] would still try their best to get me out of it... I don't doubt that."

When it came to students' knowledge about resources at UMBC, the three main resources they listed were The Women's Center, Green Dot Bystander Intervention, and the Counseling Center. Most students seemed receptive to the idea of utilizing the Women's Center, compared to other resources available on campus such as police or counseling. Participants found out about campus resources primarily through flyers posted on campus and primarily residence halls and social media. The student who knew the most about resources also took a course that included information about resources available on campus. Interestingly, the student who did know about many of the resources on campus was a commuter and did not spend much of her time on campus. Considering that in 2014, 66% of UMBC students lived off-campus<sup>1</sup>, this finding might provide perspective into the potential isolation or unique challenges commuter students may face in acquiring resources and connecting with the campus community at UMBC.

## SUMMARY

As a recap, some of the lessons learned from the main themes of the interviews include: how students felt their ideas about relationships and sex often differed from their parents' ideas, primarily their East-Asian mothers, the prevalence of unidirectional communication about relationships and sex from mothers to daughters, the ways that students described healthy and unhealthy relationships, and the resources students felt they would use in times of relationship trouble, both personally and through UMBC's campus. Of campus resources, students most commonly knew about The Women's Center, Green Dot Bystander Intervention, and The Counseling Center. When asked, most students felt more comfortable utilizing the Women's Center over other resources available on campus. These lessons can be helpful in crafting prevention and intervention efforts that meet and address the concerns of these students and can work to further build on their existing resources. The final section of this paper will describe the limitations of this study and the implications this research has for service and future research.

## **IMPLICATIONS: SERVICE, LIMITATIONS, AND FUTURE RESEARCH**

### IMPLICATIONS FOR SERVICE

Through the findings of this research, several recommendations can be made in terms of service outreach and messaging:

First, outreach and messaging should consider parents as a primary resource for students. As noted by students' responses to reaching out to their parents in "worst case scenarios", it is important to recognize that students might rely on their parents for emotional support and stability, particularly during relationship violence crises. This might be particularly relevant to students who do not live on campus and thus may have more opportunities to speak with their parents rather than their peers.

Second, outreach should also consider that some students might choose not to share the details of their dating lives with their parents, therefore creating another barrier in both accessing and utilizing resources. Again, students who are commuters may face further challenges if they do not live on campus and are not as surrounded by both their peers and resources. This may increase commuter students' risk for abuse, particularly if their intimate relationships are conducted in secret.

Third, outreach and messaging should consider the value placed on education by both parents and students. From what the students say, many parents limit their students' relationship activities lest it be a distraction from schoolwork. If we framed relationships, both romantic and platonic, as things that help support students during high-stress times such as college, perhaps we can shift the dialogues about the positive value of relationships in a student's life. Psychologist Helen Sung also emphasizes the importance of balancing academic priorities with emotional wellbeing; she writes, "Academic success among East Asian students is well known and almost stereotypical. Yet the attention to emotional wellbeing continues to be minimal. The discrepancy between academic success and social/emotional difficulties appears to be a problem among East Asian adolescents" (Sung, 2010, 199). In line with Sung's statement, it is critical to emphasize the importance of students seeking and receiving help for unhealthy relationships and other forms of emotional stress, as such factors can be an additional source of anxiety for students that could negatively impact their school performance and overall wellbeing.

Finally, outreach and messaging should consider the highly influential impact of students' peers. Students often use their close friends and peer networks as a primary resource from things as small as "Which outfit should I wear tomorrow" to things as significant as "What should I do if my partner hit me?" Thus, it is imperative that we include the entire student community in future outreach surrounding both relationships and IPV. Many students in the study stated that they did not really know about the resources on campus related to relationship violence because they were not in current relationships. If we shift our messaging to include the relevance of relationships to the student community as a whole, perhaps we could create a culture of healthier and well-informed students.

While this study offers new insights into how we might improve our outreach and services to students at UMBC, it has significant limitations.

#### LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

One limitation of this study is its small sample size, which may not be representative of the East Asian community at UMBC. Additionally, not all students had one or both parents who were of East Asian descent, which also skews the data, as the experiences of students with immigrated East Asian parents may differ from students with parents who are not of East Asian or immigrant background. However, the similarity of responses and experiences of the daughter

of Vietnamese parents with those of the daughters with East Asian parents suggests that these concerns of the children of East Asian Parents might also be shared across immigrant children from other parts of Asia and beyond.

Furthermore, the interviewees were all female, indicating a lack of male representation and voice. The one male participant whom I did interview for this study was of both East Asian and South American decent, making his interview difficult to interpret and compare. Lastly, students were only interviewed once for this study and did not have a follow-up afterward. A follow-up interview or a set of follow-up interviews could provide even deeper insight into the experiences and nuances of students' responses and experiences.

### IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Moving forward in our understanding of both the analysis and limitations of this study, it is clear that there are many ways in which this study could be expanded. If given the opportunity to redo my study, I would make several adjustments. First, I would start the participant recruiting process toward the beginning of the fall semester when students have just gotten back from summer break. By doing so, I would have an improved opportunity to reach out to students before the academic semester became demanding. Second, I would aim to interview more than six students, both male and female. Further, I would conduct follow-up interviews with participants to see how participants' responses and reflections developed, changed, or remained the same after a period of time.

Third, given the lack of male response for this study, I would be curious to learn more about the male experience within East Asian families, perhaps connecting this with studies on East Asian masculinity. Furthermore, given the fact that the consistent outlier in this study was the participant who did *not* have an East Asian mother, I would be interested to conduct comparative qualitative research distinguishing between bi-racial homes and homes with two Asian parents. Moreover, a large-scale survey within the general student population would be valuable to see if East Asian students' experiences and interview themes were also prevalent among other students outside of the East Asian community.

## CONCLUSION

Given the findings, limitations, and future implications of this study, it is clear that further research is necessary to learn more about the East Asian population, specifically within the context of university-aged students. However, even from this limited study we have learned about several common themes that have arisen within students' interviews. First, this study provided insight into the complex parent relationships students may have, particularly in the clashes of ideas, values, and preferences, about dating and relationships. This clash of cultural models was predominantly discussed when students talked about their East Asian mothers.

Further, given students' views about healthy, unhealthy, and ideal relationships, and how they learned about intimate relationships through both peers and family, campus outreach and services should consider that students might understand intimate relationships and relationship violence in their own unique ways, especially if students have never been in a relationship. By framing healthy relationships as something meaningful and relevant for all students, perhaps there will be likelihood for extended outreach and preventative education to students and their peers.

Moreover, another prominent theme throughout this research was the important role of parents, particularly mothers, in female students' lives. This is integral in understanding some of the challenges as well as sources of support students may have, when navigating their intimate relationships. Furthermore, students' high reliance on their peers as sources of knowledge and support also points to the need to focus on healthy relationship education and violence prevention for the *entire* campus community.

Beyond UMBC's campus, these findings and themes help us know more about how IPV may be understood in the East Asian student community, how we can work to address IPV in a relevant manner, and how we can bridge the gap between what Helen Sung described as a discrepancy between East Asian students' academic success compared to their social/ emotional health and wellbeing. I look forward to learning more about how we can serve the diverse populations whose experiences, challenges, and voices may be unheard or underrepresented in the messaging, outreach, and dialogues of our larger society.

## ENDNOTES

- i. The Asian Population: 2010 Census Briefs <http://www.census.gov/prod/cen2010/briefs/c2010br-11.pdf>
- ii. The Pew Research Center defined "second generation" as U.S born children of immigrants
- iii. The low end of the range is from a study by A. Raj and J. Silverman, Intimate partner violence against South-Asian women in Greater Boston Journal of the American Medical Women's Association.2002; 57(2): 111-114. The high end of the range is from a study by M. Yoshihama, Domestic violence against women of Japanese descent in Los Angeles: Two methods of estimating prevalence. Violence Against Women.1999; 5(8):869-897.

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## APPENDIX

### APPENDIX 1 — ADVERTISING EMAIL SENT TO STUDENTS

*To whom it best concerns,*

*Hello! My name is Yoo-Jin Kang and I am currently a senior in the Interdisciplinary Studies and Modern Languages and Linguistics Department.*

*I am currently conducting an independent research project focusing on perceptions of intimate relationships and violence in the East-Asian community. Specifically, I am looking to interview 6 undergraduate students, who are 18 years or older: 3 male-identified and 3 female-identified, who also identify as East-Asian American.*

*I would like to interview students raised by parents born in an East-Asian country. Interviews are expected to take a maximum time of 1.5 hours and all information will be kept confidential to the researcher and research advisers.*

*If you would be willing and interested, please email me at [ykang2@umbc.edu](mailto:ykang2@umbc.edu) with subject line: "East-Asian American Interview" with your name, your year in school, and a description of your family background. If it looks like this would be a good fit, we will set up an interview time and place that works for you.*

*Thank you in advance for your time and your interest. If you have any questions please contact me or my supervisor, Professor Bambi Chapin, and [bchapin@umbc.edu](mailto:bchapin@umbc.edu).*

## APPENDIX 2 — EXAMPLE QUESTIONS FOR INTERVIEWS

1. What does your ideal relationship look like?
2. What is a healthy and good relationship for you?
3. How would you know if a relationship was unhealthy? Are there any warning signs?
4. Are your friends in relationships? Do you talk to your friends about relationships?
5. Did you learn about relationships during freshman orientation? Or in high school?
6. How would you describe your parents' relationship with each other?
7. What would you do if you or someone you knew were in an unhealthy relationship?
8. What would you do if you were in an unhealthy relationship?
9. Do you know about what campus resources are available if you or someone you knew was in an abusive/ unhealthy relationship?
10. Would you personally use any of these resources?

## APPENDIX 3 — TRANSCRIPT TABLE

Interview Codes		
[RE] – (race/ethnicity)		
Family / Parents / Friends		
Relationships – R (R-H (healthy), R-U (unhealthy), R-I (ideal)		
Resources – UMBC/Official/Personal		
Love		
Learning		
Education/School		
Communication – C		
Success/Wealth		
Violence, Violations, (Emotional, Physical) Violence - Emotional		
Personal Story		
Sex		
Happiness/Unhappiness		
Participant 1 Interview Transcript – [Date Interview was conducted]	Notes / Reflections	Codes
Y: Interview text would be here ( <i>I used the letter Y to signify when I spoke</i> )	This is where I wrote down my notes	Examples of codes: [Parents] [R]