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# College-educated Asian stay-at-home mothers in U.S.

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**College-educated Asian stay-at-home mothers in U.S.**

by

**Lijin Ju**

A thesis submitted to the graduate faculty  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
**MASTER OF SCIENCE**

Major: Sociology

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## ABSTRACT

Using a mixed method approach of secondary data analysis and in-depth interviews, this thesis investigates college-educated Asian stay-at-home mothers' (SAHMs) sociodemographic characteristics, motivations for staying home, and their authentic experiences caring for their children in the United States. It demonstrates how a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods helps to improve understanding of less common but emerging social groups and phenomena. Using 2010 ACS PUMS data, I found non-citizenship status to be a significant factor that contributed to college-educated Asian mothers' staying at home. In-depth interviews revealed that the motivations for college-educated Asian mothers to stay at home were based on a combination of mothers' social psychological and external factors. Social psychological factors included their immense love and great sense of responsibility for children and family, the high value they placed on parental care and their children's education, their preference for a free and easy lifestyle, and their strong belief in Christianity. External factors included their husband's supportive attitude, lack of help with childcare, high cost of daycare, limited opportunity for employment, and supportive social culture for SAHMs. The relative contribution of internal and external factors cannot be determined with this study and more research is needed to disentangle these factors.

## CHAPTER 1. GENERAL INTRODUCTION

### **Introduction**

The U.S. Census defines a stay-at-home mother (SAHM) as a woman with a child under 15 and who stayed home to care for children while her spouse was in the labor force all 52 weeks the previous year. In 2010, 23% of married-couple families with children under 15 included a SAHM (U.S. Census, 2010), slightly up from 21% in 2000. Compared to all mothers, SAHMs are disproportionately younger, Hispanic, foreign-born, living with a preschool-age child, and have less education. According to the U.S. Census (2007), the reasons mothers report for staying home include illness or disability, that they are retired, are taking care of home and family, are going to school, can't find work, or other.

In addition, between 2000 and 2010, the Asian population grew by 46%, faster than any other major race group (U.S. Census, 2010). Research also suggests that by 2050, the non-Hispanic White share of the population will decrease to 51%, the Hispanic and Asian shares will more than double to 26% and 8%, respectively, and African and Americans will account for about 14% of the population (National Research Council, 1997). Within the SAHMs population, the majority was White (60%), followed by Hispanic (27%), Asian (7%), and Black (4%) (U.S. Census, 2007). According to U.S. Census (2010), about 50% of Asian women were college graduate, compared to 30% of White women, 21% of Black women and 15% of Hispanic women. Despite higher levels of education relative to other race and ethnic groups, a relatively larger proportion of Asian women are SAHMs. With respect to the proportion of each race and ethnic group who were SAHMs, there were 34.6% of all Hispanic SAHMs, 27.4% of all Asian mothers, 21.5% of all White mothers, and 13.5% of all

Black mothers (U.S. Census, 2007). However, the reasons why college-educated Asian women become SAHMs have not been identified.

Moreover, Asian stay-at-home mothers are a diverse group. Some of the Asian SAHMs are native-born while others are foreign-born, coming from different Asian countries. According to 2009 American Community Survey, Chinese (3.8 million) was the largest Asian group in the United States, followed by Filipinos (3.2 million), Asian Indians (2.8 million), Vietnamese (1.7 million), Koreans (1.6 million) and Japanese (1.3 million).

While there is increasing concern about college-educated and successful white women leaving the promising career and returning to home (Belkin, 2003; Gerson, 2009; Grant-Vallone & Ensher, 2011; Levine, Lin, Kern, Wright, & Carrese, 2011; Newman, 2011; Stone, 2008; Warner, 2005.), there is a distinct lack of awareness or concern about college-educated Asian women staying at home. Due to the lack of information about this group, the picture of college-educated Asian SAHMs is unclear.

As cultural traditions vary significantly regarding work and family across different racial and ethnic groups, and given that limited research on college educated SAHMs is usually confined to white women, I am interested in investigating what factors are associated with college educated Asian women in U.S. who become SAHMs. This thesis addresses two research questions: (a) What are the sociodemographic characteristics of college-educated Asian SAHMs? (b) What are the real-life motivations and experiences of college-educated Asian SAHMs?

## **Background**

*Why do college-educated mothers choose to stay at home?*

Previous studies suggested that college-educated women have a stronger commitment to their occupational careers than do women with less education (Harmon, 1989; Schroeder, Blood, & Maluso, 1992). Yet consistent with previous findings (Baber & Monaghan, 1988; Bielby & Bielby, 1984; Granrose & Kaplan, 1996; Greenglass & Devins, 1982; Helson, Elliott, & Leigh, 1989; Josselson, 1996; Katchadourian & Boli, 1994; Komarovsky, 1985; Novack & Novack, 1996.), Hoffnung (2004) suggested that contemporary college women want it all: career, marriage, and motherhood. For example, most women want two or three children regardless of education and employment. The only difference between college-educated and other women is that college-educated women tend to delay their childbirth (Barnett, Gareis, James, & Steele, 2003; Spain & Bianchi, 1996). Analyzing a nationally representative sample, Kuperberg (2009) found female graduate students' fertility rates had been increasing since 1980, and their motherhood rates were growing to be more like less educated women.

With respect to parenting, the majority of both young men (84%) and young women (67%) believed that mothers should stay at home and primarily take care of the baby for at least the first few months (Novack & Novack, 1996). Schroeder, Blood, and Maluso's (1992) study also revealed that more than half (56%) of participants in their sample planned to stay home with their preschool-aged children at the cost of interrupting their careers. Generally, women still place more importance on their family and parental identity than do men (Cinamon & Rich, 2002; Kerpelman & Schvaneveldt, 1999).

In the past two decades, new patterns and ideology of family and parenting have emerged. For example, egalitarian families, which are mainly represented by the upper-middle class and well educated couples, divide domestic work and family responsibility



equally at home (Risman & Johnson-Sumerford, 1998; Schwartz, 1994). In home-centered equally shared parenting families, parents may simultaneously transit to part-time work, or sequentially act as stay-at-home parents during early years of their children's lives (Deutsch, Kokot, & Binder, 2007). These families often hold a belief that parental care is best for young children (Francine, Amy, & Katherine, 2007), and for children who need intensive parental care, intimate connection is the most valued source of meaning in their lives (Deutsch, 1999). However, even for these families, mothers are still the one to stay at home, as husbands generally have higher earnings than wives. Similar results were also found in Stone and Lovejoy's (2004) study, in which 43 White women, all but one had a college degree, and all used to be in professional or managerial jobs, participated in their interviews. One third of participants reported that parental care in the early years was quite important as it provided consistency and enrichment. Children's influence, like primacy of parental care, the emotional pull of younger children and the older children's increased demands for after-school activities all contribute to women's decision to leave their careers and devote themselves to their families. Recent research also suggests that SAHMs view motherhood as their central identity, believing that only mothers can give their children a good start in life and make children thrive (Giele, 2008).

The husband's influence may also affect college-educated women's choice of becoming SAHMs. In Stone and Lovejoy's (2004) study of 43 professional women who resigned from their jobs to become SAHMs, roughly two-thirds expressed that their husbands were one of the key influences on their decision to leave the labor force. Specific factors related to husband's influence include lack of husband's help with parenting, woman views her income as secondary compared with her husband's higher earnings, husband's preference

for wife to stay home and women's deference to her husband's career. However, studies conducted in the 1980s suggest that class differences also exist in husbands' attitude on wives' working status. Working-class husbands tend to be more accepting than middle-class husbands of their wives' work, but some working-class husbands also felt unhappy about their wives going out to work even though they appreciate the extra income (Hood, 1983; Rosen, 1987; Zavella, 1987). Some research indicates that middle-aged, occupationally successful men do not consider their wives' work as a contribution to family, but only beneficial for their wives (Weiss, 1985, 1987). Wives' employment is also found to be related to upper-middle-class husbands' low self-esteem (Fendrich, 1984), and these successful men might feel it is unfair that they have no wife at home full time, compared to traditional breadwinners (Stanley, Hunt, & Hunt, 1986). Previous research also indicates that many men disapprove their wives' employment, regardless of class or race (Blumstein & Schwartz, 1983; Ulbrich, 1988; Zavella, 1987), and many husbands view that their wives could be better homemakers if they do not work (Ratcliff & Bogdan, 1988).

While a great many studies indicate that this group of women made their decision to leave work because they placed children and family care as the top priority (Stone, 1987). The prevailing mothering ideology in the U.S. is "intensive mothering" (Arendell, 2000), which emphasizes continuous and solicitous maternal care to the children's physical health, emotional and psychological well-being, and intelligence development (Arnup, 1994; Bowlby, 1952, 1958, 1969; Ehrenreich & English, 1978; Eyer, 1992; Nadesan, 2002; Pitt, 2002; Wall, 2004, 2010; Weiss, 1978). Others found that family concerns are not the major reasons behind most women's decisions; instead, work-based factors play a significant role in high-achieving women's decision to abandon their careers and stay home (Blair-Loy, 2003;

Stone & Lovejoy, 2004). Working-related factors like workplace inflexibility, “mommy tracking” and the “maternal wall” all contribute to women's quit from their careers. The unrelenting professional work demands might also lead college-educated women to choose devotion to family. (Blair-Loy, 2003; Jacobs & Gerson, 2004).

Besides, childcare costs was found to have significant negative effects on the probability that the mother works and choosing non-parental paid childcare, including center, sitter, and relative care (Blau & Robins, 1988, 1991; Cleveland, Gunderson, & Hyatt, 1996; Connelly, 1989; Kimmel, 1995, 1998; Michalopoulos, Robins, & Garfinkel, 1992; Powell, 2002; Ribar 1992, 1995). For single and married mothers, childcare costs was even seen as a barrier for their employment (Kimmel, 1998). As a result, it is quite possible that college-educated mother justified their staying at home because of relatively high cost of childcare.

### ***What is it like to be a stay-at-home mother?***

Class differences have long existed in motherhood and parenting (Ferree, 1976; Hoffman & Youngblade 1998; Warr & Parry, 1982a; Rosen, 1987). Hoffman and Youngblade (1998) found that in working-class groups, maternal employment has a positive effect on mothers' emotional well-being, which in turn was associated with lower scores on permissive and authoritarian parenting. However, in the middle class, maternal employment was not associated with mood, authoritative, or permissive parenting. A comparison of college-educated full-time and part-time SAHMs show that both groups are largely satisfied with their life arrangements (Riday, 2003).

However, other studies suggest that being a SAHM may have a negative effect on educated mothers' well being. A comparison of family arrangement of SAHMs and stay-at-

home fathers indicated that mothers in both family arrangements report higher levels of stress and exhaustion than their spouses. SAHMs reported they were "wasting their education" by just being home with children, while career mothers reported being judged for not being home full-time (Zimmerman, 2000). Intellectual, mental or physical stressors full-time mothers suffer when they terminate their professional careers were found to be similar to those retired individuals (Vejar, Madison-Colmore, & Ter Maat, 2006), and some women who left lucrative careers to be SAHMs experience grievance, resentment, and a complex range of emotions over their loss and incessant demands of home and family (Rubin & Wooten, 2007; Steiner, 2006; Stone, 2007; Warner, 2005). For college-educated SAHMs, the need to take care of oneself and continue to develop as an individual also constitutes an important part of their lived experiences (Rubin, 2010).

### *College-educated SAHMs*

#### *Racial and Ethnic difference*

Very little is known about how college-educated Asian women in particular experience motherhood. It is likely that cultural factors may influence college-educated Asian women's decision to be SAHMs. The culture of Asian countries like China, Japan, and Korea are all influenced by Confucian philosophy, in which family and filial piety have the central value, and childbearing is the ultimate purpose of marriage, so that the family line could be carried on into the future (Yeh & Bedford, 2003). It is found that to provide their infants with better educational opportunities, Chinese families often immigrate to the United States (Qin, 2009), and immigrant Chinese mothers are more likely to be concerned about infants' learning and development than African American, Mexican, and Dominican

immigrant mothers (Catherine & Ronit, 2009). Chinese immigrant mothers are also found to put more emphasis on parental involvement and investment to ensure their children's academic success than European American mothers (Chao, 1996). A similar notion was expressed in Amy Chua's (2011) parenting memoir, *Battle Hymn of the Tiger Mother*, which suggested that Chinese parenting values hard work, practice, and success, instead of interest and happiness. The tough Chinese parenting is strict, uncompromising, and disciplined, and believes that nothing is fun until you are good at it. Such belief was also acted out by Amy Chua, a Chinese American mother, despite being a full-time professor in Yale Law School, who obsessively engaged in supervising her two daughters' endless piano and violin practice.

In Japan, many educated Japanese women leave the workforce upon marriage or childbirth. Since most preschools in Japan expect high parental participation and structured at-home learning, adding that nearly 80% of school-age children are involved in extracurricular learning programs, such strong focus on children's education encourages educated Japanese women to leave their jobs to be full-time mothers (Keiko, 2001). However, recent research about Japanese middle-class mothers also suggests that although SAHMs seem to hold traditional attitudes toward motherhood, they are not content with their lives. Instead, they actively negotiate and create their own meaning of being a good mother (Takayanagi, 2006).

With respect to Black mothers, previous studies (Spain & Bianchi, 1996) indicate that Black women tend to have greater labor force participation and lower marriage rates compared to white women, which is embedded in the historical context of the U.S. economy and the Black family culture. College-educated Black women are more committed to professional career as they learn that they cannot have a secure life by relying on marriage

(Betz, 1993). Middle class college-educated Black SAHMs had to go against both the cultural and family expectations, which emphasize work and careers, and get criticized for staying at home. As a result, black women were more likely to return to the labor force after their children were a bit older than white mothers (Giele, 2008).

Similar to Asians, Hispanics are family-oriented and consider the childbearing and childrearing as the ultimate fulfillment of a women's life (Martinez, 1986; Williams, 1990). Hispanic women tend to be self-sacrificing (Denner & Dunbar, 2004; Garza, 2001; Gil & Vazquez, 1996), have a higher fertility rate and less educated than non-Hispanic women (U.S. Census, 2007). Since previous research (U.S. Census, 2010) revealed that SAHMs are more likely to be Hispanic than any other race and ethnicity, I thus propose that:

*Hypothesis 1a: College-educated Asian mothers are more likely to be SAHMs than college-educated White mothers.*

*Hypothesis 1b: College-educated Asian mothers are more likely to be SAHMs than college-educated Black mothers.*

*Hypothesis 1c: College-educated Asian mothers are less likely to be SAHMs than college-educated Hispanic mothers.*

### ***Differences Among College-educated Asian SAHMs***

Human capital theory is the most popular and consistent in explaining most variation in women's labor force participation across ethnic groups (Paula, Carmen, & Mary, 2004; Whittington, 1996). Women's work characteristics were found to be associated with their age, education attainment, and the presence of children (Brinton, 1993; Choe et al., 2004; Cohen & Bianchi, 1999; Flippen, 2012; Greenlees & Saenz, 1999; Kahn & Whittington, 1996;

Kjeldstad & Nymoen, 2012; Read & Cohen, 2007). College-educated Japanese women's labor force participation substantially declined during prime marriage and childbearing ages (Brinton, 2001a). Previous research (Gramm, 1975) also demonstrated the importance of controlling for mothers' age when predicting mothers' employment. Moreover, women's education was found to be highly correlated with women's employment (Bowen & Finegan, 1966; Read & Cohen, 2007). For example, college-educated married Japanese women were found to be more likely to remain in and less likely to reenter the labor force, compared to less educated Japanese women (Raymo & Lim, 2011).

In addition, the presence of preschool aged children has a negative effect on White women's labor force participation (Bowen & Finegan, 1969; Gramm, 1975; Nakamura & Nakamura, 1992; Sweet, 1970). It is also found that the probability of college-educated White and Black women's full-time employment decreases in response to children while their probability of nonparticipation in the labor force rises (Lehrer, 1992). However, the Japanese immigrant women who have the lowest number of children was found to have the lowest labor force participation, and Filipino immigrant women have the highest labor force participation with the highest number of children (Duleep & Sanders, 1993).

The opportunities each individual has to work for wages may be much different for native-born and foreign-born Asian women in U.S. In 2000, one quarter (7.2 million) of the United States' foreign-born population is from Asia, while in 2010, immigrants from China and India representing an increasing percentage of the newly arrived foreign born. (U.S. Census, 2010), of the 4.2 million foreign-born Science and Engineering bachelor's degree holders in the United States, 57% were born in Asia, among which over 35% were female. Impressive as this number is, foreign-born women were less likely than native-born

counterparts to be in the labor force (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2010). Nativity (i.e., whether or not one was born in the U.S.) is important and immigrant status affects the value of human capital credentials, employment, and socioeconomic outcomes (Chiswick, 1988; Portes & Rumbaut, 1990; Read & Cohen, 2007; Stone, Purkayastha, & Berdahl, 2006). It can also be used indicator of cultural assimilation (Read & Cohen, 2007). I thus propose that:

*Hypothesis 2: College-educated native-born Asian mothers in U.S. are less likely to be SAHMs than college-educated foreign-born Asian mothers.*

The job opportunities for the foreign-born women would also be dependent upon whether they have achieved citizenship. Citizenship can render migrant labor more vulnerable than nonimmigrant labor and often force migrants into the secondary labor market or the informal economy (Bauder, 2008; Glenn, 2011). According to Glenn (2000), citizenship is critical to the race, gender, and class inequality in the United States, and compared to the policies of Europe, the relative stinginess of U.S. social provision indicates that non-citizens in American Society cannot fully realize their rights. Paid work, the essential bond of the modern construction of citizenship, is now increasingly hard to attain in the global economy (Evans, 1997). So I propose that:

*Hypothesis 3: College-educated Asian mothers who have citizenship in U.S. are less likely to be SAHMs than college-educated Asian mothers who do not have citizenship.*

Another factor discouraging employment of Asian mothers may be their relatively low English proficiency. A great number of studies suggest that immigrants who are more fluent in their host society's language attain higher economic achievement (Carliner, 2000; Dustmann & Van Soest, 2002; Grenier, 1984; Kossoudji, 1998; McManus et al., 1983; Tainer, 1988). For immigrants, better English ability was significantly associated with higher



earnings (Xi, Hwang, & Cao, 2010), and language dysfluency may negatively affect important career advancement opportunities for foreign-born faculty in academic field (Price, et al., 2005), as a result, foreign-born faculty members with greater lower English language proficiency are less likely to express satisfaction with their work (Sabharwal, 2011). A limited command of English language skills was found to hinder labor force participation of immigrant Asian women (Duleep & Sanders, 1993), leading to my next hypothesis:

*Hypothesis 4: College-educated Asian mothers with low English proficiency are more likely to be SAHMs than college-educated Asian mothers with high English proficiency.*

Moreover, household income may also affect women's choice to stay at home (Duleep & Sanders, 1993; Greenlees & Saenz, 1999; Read & Cohen, 2007; Tienda & Glass, 1985). It is suggested that women's employment is usually associated with their husbands' income, and wives of professional husbands are more likely than wives of nonprofessional husbands to be involved with part-time employment (Moen, 1985; Wu, 2011). When having children, women with less job opportunities but have husband with high earnings are likely to withdraw from the workforce (Gerson, 1985). I thus propose that:

*Hypothesis 5: College educated Asian women with high household income is more likely to be SAHMs than college educated Asian women with low household income.*

## CHAPTER 2. METHOD

### **Secondary data analysis**

#### Data

The data for the secondary data analysis are drawn from the 2010 American Community Survey Public Use Microdata Sample (ACS PUMS). The ACS is a nation wide, continuous survey designed to provide communities with reliable and timely demographic, housing, social and economic data every year. The primary purpose of the ACS is to measure the changing social and economic characteristics of the U.S. population. (Gutierrez, Sullivan, Glassm, & Murdock, 2008) ACS collects survey information continuously nearly every day of the year and then aggregates the results over a specific time period-1 year, 3 years, or 5 years. The data collection is spread evenly across the entire period represented so as not to over-represent any particular month or year within the period.

According to PUMS Accuracy of the Data Report (2010), the public use microdata samples (PUMS) are a subset of the 2010 American Community Survey (ACS) and Puerto Rico Community Survey (PRCS) samples. For the 2005 through 2010 PUMS, the ACS selected samples in all counties across the nation, and all municipios in Puerto Rico. The 2010 PUMS data contains 1,334,263 housing unit records and 3,017,445 person records from households and 80,279 person records from GQs (Group Quarters).

Each person in the PUMS has an initial weight, which is the product of the ACS final weight for the record and the PUMS subsampling factor. The estimation of proportions and sample sizes in this analysis all used weighted counts.

Estimates from the PUMS are expected to be different from the previously released ACS estimates because they are subject to additional sampling error and further data processing operations. The additional sampling error is a result of selecting the PUMS housing and person records through an additional stage of sampling. As a result, standard errors of PUMS estimates can be larger than standard errors that would be obtained using all of the ACS data. To adjust this problem, standard errors first need to be estimated. Two methods are provided for estimating the standard errors of PUMS estimates: replicate weights and design factors. Generally, using the replicate weights will produce a more accurate estimate of a standard error. Replicate weights allow a single sample to simulate multiple samples, thus generating more informed standard error estimates that mimic the theoretical basis of standard errors while retaining all information about the complex sample design. These standard errors can then be used to obtain more precise confidence intervals and significance tests. Therefore, replicated weights were applied for calculating standard errors in this study.

In the 2010 ACS PUMS data, each PUMS housing unit and person record contains 80 PUMS replicate weights. These replicate weights are based on the ACS replicate weights adjusted for PUMS subsampling. Moreover, the advantage of using replicate weights is that a single formula is used to calculate the standard errors of many types of estimates. Each PUMS housing unit and person record contains 80 PUMS replicate weights, which are based on the ACS replicate weights adjusted for PUMS subsampling. The standard error formula is:

$$SE(X) = \sqrt{\frac{4}{80} \sum_{r=1}^{80} (X_r - X)^2}$$

Where  $X$  is the full sample estimates, and  $X_r$  is the  $r_{th}$  replicate estimate computed using the  $r_{th}$  replicate weight.

## Analytical sample

The study drew a nationally representative sample of non-Hispanic White, non-Hispanic Black, non-Hispanic Asian and Hispanic mothers from the 2010 ACS PUMS. During the survey, the householder provided information on characteristics of the household and demographic information about each one living in the house or apartment for more than 2 months. The analytical sample is comprised of females aged 18 to 65, who are the householder or wife to the householder, have at least one child under age 18, and who have at least a Bachelor's degree. To be consistent with the definition of U.S. Census about stay-at-home mothers, these women are all from married couple families with own children (a child under 18 years old who is a son or daughter by birth, marriage (stepchild), or adoption). This criterion produced an analytical sample of 2,201,355 (64%) college-educated white mothers, 219,057(6%) college-educated Black mothers, 810,413(24%) college-educated Hispanic mothers and 213,621(6%) college-educated Asian mothers.

## Independent variables

### *English language proficiency(eng)*

English language proficiency is measured by asking “how well does this person speak English?” It is a categorical variable and coded into dummy variables representing

respondents who only speak English (eng5), respondents who speak English very well (eng4), well (eng3), not well (eng2), and not at all (eng1). Eng5 is the reference group for analysis.

*Citizenship status(cit)*

Citizenship status is measured by asking “Is this person a citizen of the United States?” Citizenship status is coded as 0 if respondents are not a citizen of the U.S. and 1 if respondents are born in the United States; born in Puerto Rico, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, or Northern Marianas; born abroad of U.S. citizen parent or parents; or is U.S. citizen by naturalization.

*Nativity*

Nativity is measured by asking “Where was this person born?” It is coded as 0 if respondents are born outside the United States, and 1 if in the United States.

*Household income(hincp)*

Household income is a continuous variable and measured by adding up total income in the past 12 months of all persons in a household, including (a) wages, salary, commissions, bonuses or tips from all jobs. (b) self-employment income from own nonfarm business or farm business, including proprietorships and partnerships. (c) interest, dividends, net rental income, royalty income, or income from estates and trusts. (d) social security or railroad retirement. (e) supplement security income (SSI). (f) any public assistance or welfare payments from the states or local welfare office. (g) retirement, survivor, or disability pensions. (h) any other sources of income received regularly such as Veterans' (VA) payments, unemployment compensations, child support or alimony.

## Control variables

### *Age*

Age was coded as a continuous variable measured in years.

### *Education attainment (schl)*

Education attainment is measured by asking “What is the highest degree or level of school this person has completed?” It is a categorical variable and coded into dummy variables representing respondents with a Bachelor’s degree (schl13), Master’s degree (schl14), Professional School degree (schl15), and Doctorate degree (schl16). Schl13 is the reference group for analysis.

### *Number of own children (noc)*

Number of own children is also a continuous variable.

## Dependent variable

### *SAHM status*

Responses to several questions were used to assess the work status of the householder and spouse of the householder. Respondents were initially asked about if they worked for pay, where they worked, what time they worked, if they had been actively looking for work, and how many hours they usually work each week. SAHM status is a dummy variable and is coded 1 if the wife is staying at home (not employed or not in labor force, but who has a husband in labor force, or is employed or in Armed Forces). Otherwise, SAHM status is coded 0.

## Analytic strategy

### *Race/Ethnicity and SAHM Status*

To test whether being a SAHM varies by race and ethnicity, I used T-test to compare the proportion of college-educated White, Black, and Hispanic with Asian mothers who are SAHMs.

According to report of 2010 PUMS Accuracy of the Data, the formula for calculating standard error of percentage is:

$$SE(\hat{p}) = DF \times \sqrt{\frac{99}{B} \times \hat{p}(100 - \hat{p})}$$

where DF=Design Factor, B= Base of Estimated Percentage, and  $\hat{p}$  = Estimated Percentage. As the estimate in this analysis is a combination of several characteristics, I use the largest design factor not including race or Hispanic origin design factor for the combination of characteristics suggested by the report of 2010 PUMS Accuracy of the Data.

### *Factors associated with SAHM status among college-educated Asian mothers*

The next analysis assessed the effects of nativity, citizenship, English proficiency, and household income on SAHM status among college-educated Asian mothers. T-tests were used to assess if there is significant difference on each variable between SAHM group and non-SAHM group. Logistic regression is used to detect the effects of the independent variables on sorting cases into groups or predicting the probability of an outcome for cases. It also allows analysis of discrete choices or categories that cannot be done using ordinary least squares. Thus, I used logistic regression to examine the effects of citizenship status(cit),

nativity, English language proficiency(eng), and household income(hincp) on the likelihood of an college-educated Asian women becoming a SAHM, controlling for the age and education attainment of the respondent, and the number of children she has. The model has the following form:

$$\log\left(\frac{workstat}{1 - workstat}\right) = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \times cit + \beta_2 \times nativity + \beta_3 \times eng1 + \beta_4 \times eng2 + \beta_5 \times eng3 + \beta_6 \times eng4 + \beta_7 \times hincp + \beta_8 \times age \\ + \beta_9 \times schl14 + \beta_{10} \times schl15 + \beta_{11} \times schl16 + \beta_{12} \times noc$$

The assumptions of logistic regression are that there are no outliers or multicollinearity in independent variables, that there are meaningful dependent variable categories, that the model is correctly specified, that there is adequate cell sample size, linearity between logits and independent variables, and that the error terms are independent. The independent variables and model meet the above assumptions.



## **In-depth interviews**

### **Sample**

I used a snowball sampling method to recruit Asian mothers with at least a bachelor's degree who were not employed outside and stayed at home to take care of their children and families in Ames, Iowa. I recruited participants through my own social network, and connections I have made through YWCA (Young Women's Christian Association) at ISU. I received IRB approval for this phase of study on March 20<sup>th</sup>, 2012.

I first contacted someone I know who is a college-educated Asian immigrant SAHM, and asked her for referrals. Then I contacted the people she referred to see if they were willing to participate in my study. Once a contact is made, I (either on phone, email, or in person) summarized the details of the study, providing enough information for the potential participant to decide whether or not they would like to be interviewed (Appendix A).

Once the participants agreed to be interviewed, I set up a time and locations for the in-person interview depended on my participants' preference. About the half of the interviews were taken in the participant's home, and the other were taken at a neutral location such as a coffee shop. Once the participant and I met at the designated location, the participant read and signed the informed consent form (Appendix B). The interview began with the participant filling out a brief, written demographic survey (Appendix C) consisting mostly of closed-ended questions that provided demographic information on the participant, her spouse, and children. If the participant could not read or write English, I read and translated the participant both the consent form and the survey. Once that was complete, the semi-structured, in-depth, interview portion of the study began. The interview was conducted in Chinese. The entirety of the interview was audio-recorded with a digital device.

The interview guide (Appendix D) focused on the following topics of the participant: the origin of becoming a SAHM, feelings about staying at home and taking care of children and family, what life is like before being a SAHM, feelings about work, present life as a SAHM, and plan for future life. I placed more emphasis on the process of the participant's transition from a non-SAHM to a SAHM and the inner mechanisms and motivations for the transition. For example, participants were asked what factors they think contributed to their decision to be SAHMs and why they think so. To make sure the participant do not miss any factors, I continued to ask if there is any other factor, like her husband's preference that might contribute to her SAHM's identity, and why she thinks so. At the conclusion of the interview, the participant was thanked and provided with my contact information and that of my faculty advisor (located on a copy of the consent form given to the respondent) should they have any questions or would like to clarify anything about their interview at a later date.

## Analysis

The demographic information elicited from written questionnaires was analyzed using a statistical software package (SAS). Analyses included basic univariate and bivariate techniques including frequency distributions, calculation of means, standard deviations, t-tests, and analysis of variance.

Regarding the in-depth interviews, I follow the advice of Strauss and Corbin (1998) and gathered data until a theoretical saturation was reached, that is, until a clear pattern emerged and subsequent groups produced only repetitious information. I personally transcribed the data. During the interview, I relayed back to each woman the testimonial she offered to

ascertain the data validity from time to time, verifying that its essence had been appropriately captured.

The textual material was analyzed using a series of coding techniques, including open, axial, and selective coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). In the first stage, I conducted open coding to conceptualize transcripts line by line, compare data, and capture a concept-indicator model. In the second stage, I conducted axial coding to make connections between categories that produced by open coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Finally, I conducted selective coding to find the core variable, which is theoretically saturated and centrally relevant (Glaser, 1978; Strauss, 1987).

## CHAPTER 3. RESULTS

### **Secondary data analysis**

Table 1 presents the proportion of SAHMs in each race and ethnic group. As expected, the college-educated Hispanic group had highest proportion of SAHMs and college-educated Blacks ranked the lowest. College-educated Asian mothers had a relatively higher proportion of SAHMs than college-educated whites. All t-tests revealed that there were significant differences between each group, which confirm my hypotheses that college-educated Asian mothers are more likely to be SAHMs than college-educated White mothers and Black mothers, but less likely to be SAHMs than college-educated Hispanic mothers.

Table 2 describes the sample characteristics of N= 213,621 college-educated Asian mothers. A fairly high proportion (76%) of college-educated Asian mothers have doctorate degree, however, over half (52%) of them speak English not well or not at all. Their mean age is 40, and a majority (94%) of them are foreign-born, but over half (58%) of them have U.S. citizenship. They generally have 2 children with household income close to \$70,000. Results suggested that college-educated Asian mothers tend to be highly educated, but disadvantaged in English language proficiency.

Table 3 shows comparison of demographic characteristics between college-educated Asian SAHMs and non-SAHMs. Compared to college-educated Asian non-SAHMs, the proportion of college-educated Asian SAHMs who have a Bachelor's degree are significantly higher; the proportion of college-educated Asian SAHMs who speaks English very well are also significantly higher, but meanwhile, the proportion of college-educated Asian SAHMs who speak English well is significantly lower and the proportion of college-educated Asian

SAHM who speak English not at all are significantly higher at 99 percent confidence level. In general, college-educated Asian SAHMs do not speak English as well as college-educated Asian non-SAHMs. As expected, compared to college-educated Asian non-SAHMs, college-educated Asian SAHMs are significantly less likely to have citizenship; instead, they are more likely to be younger, foreign born and have more children.

Table 4 presents the results of logistic regression using replicate weights. Controlling for participants' age, education attainment, and number of their own children, results suggests that only citizenship status has a significant effect on the odds of college-educated Asian mothers of being SAHMs. Having citizenship is associated with 38% lower odds. Socio-demographic factors like age and number of own children are related to the odds of college-educated Asian mothers being a SAHM. Age reduced the odds of being SAHMs by 2%, while number of own children enhanced the odds by 22%. Education attainment is not found to influence the odds of being SAHMs for college-educated Asian mothers.

Table 5 shows the results of the same logistic model but not using replicate weights. A comparison of Table 4 and Table 5 reveals that not using replicate weights decreased standard errors for each variable, and meanwhile enhanced the significance. All the variables, including model intercepts, is found to be significantly related to the odds for college-educated Asian mothers to be SAHMs. The questionable significance tests indicates that not using replicate weights increases type 1 error, which confirms the point that using the replicate weights actually produces a more true hypothesis test.

### **In-depth interview**

A total of 10 college-educated Asian SAHMs participated in this study, and their characteristics are shown in Table 6. They all came from China, and ranged in age from 30 to 46 years old ( $M=36.6$ ,  $SD=5.39$ ). Six participants had a Bachelor's degree, three had a Master's degree, and one had a Doctoral degree. They came to America between 1991 and 2012. Six participants came to U.S. to accompany their husband for his education and work, and the other four participants came for their own education and career. Only two of them had U.S. citizenship. Five had two children and the other five had only one child. The five mothers with only one child all had a child under age 5 and two of them desired a second child. The five mothers with two children had their children's ages ranging from 3 months old to 19 years. Moreover, six participants evaluated their English speaking ability as "not well," three evaluated themselves speaking English as "well," and only one evaluated her English speaking ability as "very well." Five participants identified their religious affiliation as Christianity, one as Buddhism, and the other four indicated no religious affiliation. Eight participants had husbands with a doctorate degree and the other two had husbands with a master's degree. Their husbands were all scientists, researchers, or engineers involved with hard sciences including chemistry, biochemistry, biology, physics, aerospace engineering, mechanical engineering, and civil engineering. Participants' previous degree majors included nursing, traditional Chinese medicine, design, mass communication, laws, business management, chemistry, system engineering, automatic engineering, and architecture. One participant refused to provide information on her household income. One participant reported her household income as less than \$29,999. Four participants indicated their household income fell in the category of \$30,000 to \$49,999. Two had household income between

\$50,000 and \$74,999. One had a household income between \$75,000 and \$99,999, and one reported her household income as more than \$100,000.

Participants provided long and rich description in response to the questions about their motivations for becoming a SAHM, their current feelings about staying at home with their children, and their future plans for their lives. Two main themes emerged from the analysis of motivations for becoming a SAHM. The first was mothers' social psychological factors, including their immense love and great sense of responsibility for children and family, the high value they placed on parental care and their children's education, their preference for a free and easy lifestyle, and their strong belief in Christianity. The second was external factors, including their husband's supportive attitude, lack of help with childcare, high cost of daycare, limited opportunity for employment, and supportive social culture for SAHMs. Whether a college-educated Chinese woman was a SAHM appeared to be a result of a combination of all these factors. The findings are presented in further detail below, and illustrated with quotes from the interviews.

### **Motivations**

Mothers' social psychological factors for becoming a SAHM

#### *Immense love and great sense of responsibility for children and family*

The most essential factor that motivated college-educated Chinese mothers to become a SAHM was their immense love and great sense of responsibility for their children and family. All the mothers had experience in the paid workforce, ranging from 1 year to 16 years. Love for children was greatly manifested in one participant, who loved being a SAHM,

but had to go out for work because of her own mother's fierce objection to her preference for staying at home. As she put it:

“I enjoyed being a SAHM because personally I like children and family. But after my second child was 8 or 9 months old, my parents came and they stayed for two years. So at that time my parents helped me take care of the children. My mother is a quite career-oriented woman. She has strong desire to be excellent, and be economically independent. So she strongly disagreed with my staying at home, and said, “If you don't go out for work, whom would I turn to for money if needed?”

The participant finally chose to attend a nursing program and worked as a PRN (Pro re nata, which means work as needed) nurse for a period of time. She liked the job because it was quite flexible. She could work at night shift and maintain interaction with her children when they came home from school during the day. But still she wished she could take care of her children herself.

Almost all mothers started staying at home either because of pregnancy or their plan to get pregnant. The mother who had a postdoctoral position finally quit her job, because she wanted to make sure that she could have a healthy baby:

“Well, my major was chemistry. After I came to America, I worked as a postdoc in ISU for a year. Because my research was about organic chemistry, and it was poisonous, and I needed to do chemistry experiment. At that time I was 30 years old, I thought my husband and I both wanted a healthy child. I used to hear people say, maybe it was not true, that if couples both study organic chemistry, it might be harmful for their children. As I wanted to make sure that my baby is all sound and health when he is born, I finally quit my job.”



Moreover, mothers all viewed themselves as family-oriented and they were willing to give up their career to cater to family necessity. As one participant stated:

“It seemed to be quite natural for us that we make family arrangement according to family needs. For me, I am like, if you are not married, you can pursue your own career, your self-development; but once you get married, you need to take family needs as your priority.”

*High value placed on parental care and their children's education*

The mothers who chose to stay at home also believed that they could provide better childcare and education than anyone else for their children. They also didn't want to miss the opportunity to witness every exciting and significant moment in their children's growth and development. They believed it was important for their children to develop love, attachment, respect, and trust to parents during their early interaction. They cared about their children's health as well as intellectual development, and that they could think and act independently and correctly. The mother who gave up some promotion and career development opportunities in China and asked for a year's leave to accompany her husband in U.S. expressed that she finally made the decision to come because it was a great opportunity for her five-year old daughter to receive foreign education and learn English. Mothers' negative feelings of staying at home were usually caused by children's disobedience and their perplexity about their role in their children's education. As a mother who was quite concerned about her child's education stated:

“I really feel frustrated sometimes when I don't know how to educate my son and make him well-behaved. I worry about if I educated him in a wrong way. I wish government

could offer some programs and courses for mothers to help us learn how to educate our children in correct and efficient way.”

The mothers all expressed that they didn't have extraordinary high expectation for their children, nor did they apply “Tiger-Mother” style in their parenting. They mostly concerned about children's health grow in morality and personality. Moreover, Chinese mothers also had expectations with respect to their children's language education. A participant pointed to me that she chose to stay at home mainly because she wanted to teach her daughter to speak Chinese fluently:

“I am a Chinese and my husband is an American. I hope my daughter could speak Chinese. In Ames, Chinese people do not live together. If I send her to daycare, then mostly like she will not be able to speak Chinese. I am the only child in my family, so I still wish that my daughter could communicate with my parents fluently in Chinese. Otherwise, my parents would have no grandchild to talk to. I plan to stay at home at least until she was 5 years old. If there is still need for me to stay at home, I will continue to be a SAHM. It's unlikely for me to do a full-time job in the future. Because to learn Chinese, she still needs to practice writing in Chinese characters.”

Mothers also believe that children need to be guided correctly so that they could grow up with a healthy mind and nice personality. As one participant put it:

“They would be easier to be brought up if you educate them well before they reach age three... it is quite critical to cultivate his personality and character in a good way.”

*A preference for free and easy lifestyle*

A preference for free and easy lifestyle seemed to be common among SAHMs. A majority (7 out of 10) of them indicated that they had no strong desire for work. They also expressed that they would continue to stay at home for more years if there is no financial pressure.

Such a preference was found to be somewhat related to their previous working experience. Three participants indicated their job either required intensive labor or was harmful for pregnant women. Participants generally expressed their experience of staying at home as comfortable. Though two mothers with newborn babies indicated it was a tough job to take care of newborn child, they felt happy seeing their children growing bigger every day. As a mother who has been staying at home for a year stated:

“What I feel satisfied is that life here is quite peaceful and cozy.”

Another participant also expressed that staying at home gave her a lot of time to do something she liked:

“Err... you know I really enjoy staying at home. I relax myself and have a lot of free time. I learn cooking by myself. I try to cook different styles of food with the lady I just mentioned. I even had the desire to attend a cooking dessert course in Des Moines. Unfortunately, due to transportation inconvenience, I finally gave up. Unlike China, it is very quiet in Ames...”

*Strong Belief in Christianity*

Strong belief in Christianity was also found to have some influence on mothers' devotion to family and children. Two Christian SAHMs in this study indicated their belief in

Jesus made their mind peaceful and be more willing to submit to their husband and see family as their priority rather than work.

“Bible tells us that husband ought to love his wife and wife needs to submit to his husband...I think my belief is the most important factor that I am willing to stay at home and feel satisfied being a SAHM.”

The two Christian participants also mentioned that they would like to cultivate a belief in Christianity for their children while they were young. They wished that their children could also believe in Jesus and lead a life favored by God. One participant stated:

“My belief emphasizes that parents have great effect on their children, and they should not give the right of education to daycare teacher or to grandparents. Besides, parents’ belief in Jesus is directly associated with children’s belief. If I send her to daycare center, most of daycare teachers would not mention Christianity to them. If my child gets a lot of other ideas from outsiders, it might be more difficult for me to communicate Christianity to her.”

External factors for becoming a SAHM

*Limited employment opportunities*

Quite limited employment opportunities is the most obvious factor that contributed to college-educated Chinese mothers’ staying at home. Limited English language skills and not being a citizen made it more difficult for them to find a job in America. Mothers who received education in English speaking countries were more likely to have working experience in America than mothers who only received their degrees in China. While some

college-educated Chinese SAHMs had decent job and income in China before, they were still disadvantaged in foreign job market, as one participant described:

“I highly want a job in America. But due to my poor English, I don’t know what I could do, adding that I am not a citizen here, it then becomes almost impossible for me to get a job here.”

Another mother also confirmed that such a living arrangement was forced by circumstances. As she put it:

“We have no better choice. For me, it is almost impossible to find a job here. On the other hand, our income might not be able to afford a nanny.”

One of my interviewees who accompanied her husband to U.S. for a year had reasonable work and income in China, and she only asked for a year’s leave for her job. As far as she was concerned, the college-educated Chinese SAHMs had no other better choice and she felt pity for them. She mostly saw their staying-at-home status a result of lacking competitiveness in foreign job market.

#### *Lack of help with childcare and high cost of daycare*

Additionally, lack of help with childcare and high cost of daycare also helped explain their staying at home status. Nine out of ten participants indicated that lack of help from their own parents, whom usually stayed in China, was also a factor that led to their staying at home.

“You know in America, you cannot get enough help, or say, support for childcare from your family in China. Besides, I didn’t want to send my child to daycare, as she was such a little girl. My parents visited us, but they could stay at most for half a year, adding

they were all aged, it was not an ideal way to let them take care of my child, so we finally decided that I should take care of her myself. ”

While daycare centers were available, mothers all suggested it was too expensive and also took a long time of waiting to be accepted by daycare center. As a mother with her newborn baby stated:

“If I choose to work here, my whole income would all be contributed to hiring a nanny, then why don’t I just stay-at-home to take care of my son?”

*Husband’s preference and supportive attitude:*

The supportive attitude of their husband was an essential factor in SAHMs’ willing to stay at home and in their life satisfaction. These supportive husbands valued their wife’s work for their devotion to the family, and they shared household work and childcare with their wife. They didn’t have the sense of superiority as being the breadwinner of family.

Eight out of ten participants expressed that their husband was supportive of their staying at home. The other two participants indicated that their husbands wished they could go outside for work, either for financial reasons or for the wife’s feeling of self-worth. However, they didn’t strongly oppose their wife’s staying at home. All the interviewees expressed that they have a good relationship with their husband. Five participants indicated their husband actually preferred them to stay at home. Two participants said the following:

“He supports me. He has the attitude that I could do whatever I like. He doesn’t have any other thoughts or opinions. I could go to school or go to work. He is all right as far as he can afford it.”

“I think my husband is quite essential to my being happy about staying at home. He is quite considerate to me. He thinks it is a lot of labor to take good care of a child.”

### *Supportive social culture for SAHMs*

Almost all participants mentioned that social culture of America is quite different from China, which increased their comfort at being a SAHM. As economy in China develops fast and an increasing large number of women receive good education and participate in labor force, women with good education are supposed to work rather than staying at home. Moreover, family financial stress is quite common in most of Chinese families, so wives are also expected to make contribution to their family income. Participants indicated that if in China, they wouldn't be able to be a SAHM. A majority of them experienced a transition in self-recognition from feeling unconfident to feeling good and proud of their social role. As a participant stated:

“I think it is quite normal and natural for me, especially in America. Many women stay at home when their children are young. They look for jobs and something they like to do when the children get older. Besides, you are not discriminated because you stay at home for several years. The company or institution might consider that you lack of working experience, but they will not think you are useless.”

Another mother expressed a similar opinion through her special experience:

“If I were in China, I wouldn't stay at home, because society does not recognize the value of a SAHM. You are not respected for the work you do at home, nor you get any stipend being a homemaker. Your friends don't view it positively, either. However, it is quite different in America. You know why I said so? When I went to get my passport to apply for

citizenship, I was asked to fill in the form. There was a line about occupation and I was considering what should I fill in, I was only a housewife, so I left it blank. Then the officer said you needed to fill it in. I replied I was only a housewife. The officer was like: “housewife is also an occupation!” I mean the whole society views SAHM, or say, homemaker, differently from China. Besides, when my husband gets retired, I can also get additional half of his pension from government. Someone who works but with few income, when gets retired, her pension might be fewer than if she stays at home. One of my elder friends finally chose to get half of her husband’s pension. So the recognition for SAHMs is embedded in its policy, which is impossible in China.”

### **Life as A SAHM**

#### *Mother’s daily schedule and social life*

The SAHMs with newborn babies tended to focus their daily life on childcare and restrained their social activities. Young children are dependent and require lots of parental time, so mothers with newborn babies usually found it quite tough and even felt worn out being a SAHM. Mothers with children under age 5 all reported their intensive mothering experience during the interview. As a mother with a 13-month old son described her daily schedule:

“We usually get up at 8 or 9 in the morning. Then we have breakfast. And because we believe in Buddhism, so I play some Buddhism music in the morning for him to listen. He knows that, and he will put his palms together. Then we have lunch and after that I read books to him. He plays with his toys if he is not interested in reading, but I will sit there and accompany him. We usually take a nap in the afternoon and then we have some dessert. Then



we continue to play or read. When his father comes back, he would bring the child to the bathroom and bath him while I cook dinner. Then we have dinner. After dinner we sometimes let him sing for a while. We also read to him and play with him. Then we take him to bed. But it takes long time for him to fall asleep.”

SAHMs with preschool aged children tended to actively seek and take their children to public activities, education, and interest training programs. As a participant with two children stated:

“For my elder daughter, we usually like to take her out for some church activities, or attend some program in Ames public library. Basically I take her to attend all the activities I know in Ames. I also registered some interest training classes, like swimming and ballet. Besides, we also get together with some Chinese family sometimes, so there are a lot of social activities for us. As for my second child, he is only a baby now, so we only need to make sure he eats well and sleeps well.”

SAHMs with children in primary school or high school had more free time for their own hobbies and recreation. They also liked to be volunteers in their church and community activities.

Mothers who had a religious affiliation in Christianity and who were involved in church activities tended to have larger social network and were more satisfied with their present life than the mothers who were not Christians. All the mothers indicated their social network mostly involved other Chinese families and mothers, but not exclusively SAHMs.

As Christian mothers are usually actively involved in church activities and have more opportunities to keep in touch with others, they were less likely to feel lonely and get bored

than the mothers with no religion affiliation. A participant mentioned her rich church activity schedule to me:

“I have many religious activities and Christian friends. I go to church every weekend for worship, and during Friday night, we have fellowship activities. I also go to sisters’ gathering, where female Christians get together, reading bibles and praying every Wednesday morning. I also manage a ‘Family for Chinese’ activity to welcome visiting spouses, parents, and relatives, so that we could communicate and spread our belief to them.”

#### *Feelings toward previous work*

All the participants expressed that before getting married, they had not expected to be a SAHM. They all had working experience, but whereas some indicated they actually loved their work, others found their work required intensive labor and was too tiresome. Most of them didn’t find it too difficult to give up their job, though three indicated they did have some psychological struggle in making a decision. One mother who resigned from her well-paid job in China to get reunion with her husband told me her experience:

“It’s a little bit hard to give up my job. I hesitated for a long time. Before my husband was in Michigan, we had planned to go abroad together. However, I didn’t want to resign my job at that time. Because I thought after two years he would be back. However, two years passed by and he said he would like to spent another two years working as a postdoc in U.S., then I thought it was not good for us to be apart for another two years.”

Those participants who had a tiresome job in China before didn’t find it hard to give up their jobs. One mother who had ten-years of work experience in China stated:

“I feel all right to give up my job, because the work I did was quite tiresome, and I disliked it. And here the environment is quite good for children, so all things considered, I think it is better to stay here.”

Another participant who used to work in International Friendship Connection (IFC), a fellowship of international Christians and friends in Ames, put her opinion this way:

“I didn’t go through any psychological struggles, because it doesn’t mean you couldn’t get involved in these church activities once you quit the job. You can still be a volunteer if you like. When my child gets older, I could still do something for IFC.”

#### *Positives and negatives*

All of the participants said the positives of staying at home included the ability to focus on their children’s care and education. As one of participants indicated:

“The positives are that as you highly value education, you will be actively making an effort educating your children. You are likely to read various books and articles in order to find the best way to educate your child. I don’t mean only educated children make contributions to the society. But we might be more aware of the value of education. We wish our child could be independent that she doesn’t rely on her parents for financial support to lead her whole life.”

Negative aspects mostly were attributed to mothers’ feeling of being restrained in their social connections, feeling divorced from society, and having less self-confidence. One mother stated:

“The disadvantage is for yourself, you might feel divorced from society. You stay at home all day. Especially in America, you are unlikely to have any relatives here, so your

friends are mainly Chinese, except that if you go to church and make friends with Americans. There will be more chances to get connected with outside world if you work.”

The participant who had a doctoral degree also mentioned that she felt at a loss when she heard of others having success and achievements in their careers. The mother who was to spend only one year in U.S. as a SAHM believed the lack a sense of achievement from work would be the main cause of her negative feeling if she continued staying at home. However, two participants expressed that the negative aspects were negligible for them as long as they had a happy family. Half of participants indicated feeling uncomfortable in the beginning years of being a SAHM because they either doubted their choices, or because their parents and friends in China objected their staying at home. Some of them suggested feeling restrained in social connections and that they couldn't spend money as freely as they worked.

#### *Plan for future*

Most of the college-educated Chinese SAHMs didn't have specific plans for the future. They saw more uncertainties, and expected to make their decisions according to future situations. Two participants indicated that they see their social role as remaining while six mothers suggested that they prefer to work or take a part-time job as their children grow up, or after their children attend school. One participant who enjoyed staying at home stated:

“It depends on my husband's work. If the situation remains like now, I think I will continue to be a SAHM.”

Another participant gave different opinion but also pointed out that it depended on future situation:

“I wish I could change when my children grow older, that I could find a part-time job. But it is only my wish. It depends on the situation.”

The other two participants would definitely go back to work, and they would be leaving for China in a short period of time. The mothers with children under age 5 generally expressed the desire to spend another several years at home with their children.

## CHAPTER 4. CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

This paper used a mixed-methods approach to investigate an understudied group of mothers in U.S. Findings offer critical insights into college-educated Asian SAHMs' sociodemographic characteristics, motivations for staying home, and their authentic experiences caring for their children in the United States. This study demonstrates how a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods helps to improve our understanding of less common but emerging social groups and phenomena.

Using 2010 ACS PUMS data, I found non-citizenship status to be a significant factor that contributed to college-educated Asian women's staying at home. This finding was supported by interviews with the SAHMs of this demographic. The reason is that those college-educated Asian women came to U.S. with an F-2 (a nonimmigrant visa which allows dependent spouses and children unmarried and under 21 years of F-1 student visa holders to enter into the U.S.) visa status, they may stay in the U.S. as long as the principal F-1 visa holder maintains valid status, but they lose their status once the principal applicant loses F-1 status. According to U.S. citizenship and immigration services, these women are not allowed to take up paid employment while in the U.S. on F-2 visa, unless they apply for change of status. They cannot go to work until the change of status is approved. The condition for their status changing depends on if they could get sponsorship for a work visa and the visa is valid only for employment with the company that petitioned for them. The employment cannot take place legally without the change of status. With the recent economic recession, it had become quite difficult for noncitizens to be employed in U.S.

While nativity status, English speaking proficiency, and household income were not found to be significantly related to college-educated Asian mothers' staying at home in my

secondary data analysis, the in-depth interviews suggested that participants' disfluency in English also contributed to their disadvantage in the job market. At the same time, the interview suggested that adequate household income made it affordable for them to stay at home. Such contradictory results between the quantitative and qualitative study might be due to large variability in the sample data, as calculated standard errors are quite large for the sample of college-educated Asian mothers using 2010 ACS PUMS data. Besides, the criteria of American Community Survey data decide that SAHMs who work at home, or were looking for work during last 4 weeks cannot be counted as a SAHM. Such cutoff is too stringent given that temporary stay-at-home, freelance, and work-from-home mothers also exist, and their stories are therefore missing in research field. Moreover, the sample size of the in-depth interview was a quite small one and was unavoidably selective. The mothers participated the interviews all came from China and lived in a small town with husbands who were scientists and researchers. Asian mothers came from the Philippines and Indian who tend to have a higher English language proficiency were included in the quantitative sample but was not available in the qualitative sample, as a result, different result is likely to occur due to variability in samples.

One thing worthy to mention is that the study reveals the importance of using replicated weights to compute significance of variables in ACS PUMS data. Not using replicated weights increases Type 1 error, which is that a particular result's significance is likely to be exaggerated and not true. To provide a more accurate test of hypothesis and reliable result, the finding presented here suggests researchers using replicated weights when they doing research with ACS PUMS data.

The quantitative analysis was limited for explaining social psychological factors associated with women's staying at home. The in-depth interviews allowed participants to elaborate and reflect on their inner motivations and the decision-making process with respect to becoming a SAHM. The participants all possessed a traditional gendered perspective in marriage and family. Generally mothers' staying-at-home status was based on their consensus and shared understanding with their husband. The motivations behind college-educated Asian mothers decision to stay home involved a complex range of factors. The dynamics and motivations for college-educated Asian mothers to stay at home were mostly similar to college-educated White SAHMs, except they faced with a strong barrier to get employed due to their non-citizenship status and limited English skills. For college-educated white mothers, they stay at home because they see the necessity and irreplaceable value of parental care, that they believe parental care is best for their children (Deutsch, 1999; Francine, Amy, & Katherine, 2007; Giele, 2008; Novack & Novack, 1996; Stone & Lovejoy, 2004), their husband's influence and preference for them to staying at home (Blumstein & Schwartz, 1983; Fendrich, 1984; Hood, 1983; Ratcliff & Bogdan, 1988; Rosen, 1987; Stanley, Hunt, & Hunt, 1986; Stone & Lovejoy, 2004; Ulbrich, 1988; Weiss, 1985, 1987; Zavella, 1987), work-based factors, such as unrelenting working requirements, irreconcilable conflict between work and family, lack of promotion opportunities (Blair-Loy, 2003; Jacobs & Gerson, 2004; Stone & Lovejoy, 2004), and high cost of childcare (Blau & Robins, 1988, 1991; Cleveland, Gunderson, & Hyatt, 1996; Connelly, 1989; Kimmel, 1995, 1998; Michalopoulos, Robins, & Garfinkel, 1992; Powell, 2002; Ribar 1992, 1995). Unlike college-educated White SAHMs, college-educated Asian mothers who lack of U.S. citizenship and speak English not well or not at all tended to lack confidence and also endured more



restraints in job market. The relative contribution of internal and external factors cannot be determined with this study and more research is needed to disentangle these factors.

Findings also revealed that college-educated Asian SAHMs' personal choice not only reflected their individual personality and values, but also significantly related to the social culture and environment within which they live. The participants all expressed experiencing a supportive culture for SAHMs in U.S., as American society view mothers stay at home "because they by choice and calling prioritize family and children above earning income and advancing in a career" (Dillaway & Pare, 2008), and working mothers are often depicted negatively and even criticized that they place more emphasis on their personal career success than the well-being and achievement of their children (Chan & Lee, 2004; Dillaway & Pare, 2008; John & Swanson, 2004; Oak & Martin, 2000; Pollitt, 2005). As Asian society is generally influenced by Confucian philosophy and places a high value on childbearing and children's education (Catherine & Ronit, 2009; Chao, 1996; Qin, 2009; Yeh & Bedford, 2003), mothers bear extra responsibility for children's academic success and would like to devote a lot of time and effort on their children's education (Keiko, 2001; Sadowsky et al., 1995). The mothers participated in the interviews also indicated that they felt they couldn't be excellent on both the job, childcare, and children's education at the same time, the so called "supermom" (DeMeis & Perkins, 1996; Hays 1996) role.

The interviews confirmed previous research (Zvonkovic, Greaves, Schmiede, & Hall, 1996) that the age of children was related to women's work and family decisions. For women who want to work, the children's younger age is considered a constraint, while the children's elder age is seen as an opportunity that enabling them to work. An increase in the age of the youngest child was found to significantly improve mother's working probability after

controlling for childcare costs (Powell, 2002). Consistent with previous research (Leibowitz, Klerman, & Waite, 1992; Ribar, 1992), this study also found that household income was related to mothers' desire for returning to work, and mothers who have high household income didn't have strong desire to return to work.

The mothers participated the interviews believed their college education would have positive effect on parenting and children's schooling, and they also tended to confirm their value and life-meaning through recognition of their work by their significant others and the social culture they live in. They felt more confident and had more satisfaction with their life if their husband and society show respect and acknowledgement to their work. Though they also encountered misunderstanding and even objection from their parents and friends in China, their love and sense of responsibility for children, and the social culture and environment they are in, sustained them to make the most ideal and appropriate choice within a context of situational constraints and opportunities.

I acknowledge that this study has limitations. First, no data is available for measurement of childcare costs in 2010 ACS PUMS data, so the effects of childcare costs on mothers' staying at home status is unable to test in this research. Second, large sampling error and great variability in college-educated Asian mothers' sample from 2010 ACS PUMS data questions the reliability of the result, though it is the most appropriate data available at present. Third, the in-depth interview samples is relatively small and selective, particularly as my participants were all from China and lived in a small town where working opportunities are very different than in large metropolitan areas, and no free-lance or self-employed SAHM participated in this study. Besides, mothers from the Philippines and India with better English skills and mothers from developed countries like Japan and Korea were not available in the

qualitative sample. As a result, the generalizability might be low. Last but not the least, there was no group of college-educated Asian working mothers for reference, if added, it might improve our understanding of college-educated Asian mothers' working and nonworking concerns.

However, given the increasing trend of mother' staying at home in U.S., this study provided insight into college-educated Asian SAHMs' life experiences and their thoughts about their current social role. The results confirmed previous study (Mason & Kuhlthau, 1989) which found "The strongest correlates of preferring parental care are living with a husband or male partner, being out of the labor force, espousing a traditional gender role ideology, and attending religious services frequently." It also demonstrates that a good combination of both quantitative and qualitative methods improve understanding of understudied group and provide a clear picture of its outlook and inner mechanisms.

Future research is expected to answer questions such as what is the difference between college-educated Asian working mothers and all SAHMs; if there is any ethnic difference among college-educated mothers coming from different Asian countries; how such differences are constructed; and what effect it has on the larger society.

TABLE 1 SAHM Status by Race/Ethnicity among College-educated Mothers  
(in percentage)

SAHM	White	Black	Hispanics	Asian	Total
Yes	35.99	28.85	46.56	39.52	38.24
No	64.01	71.15	53.44	60.48	61.76
N	2,201,355	219,057	810,413	213,621	3,444,446

Source: 2010 American Community Survey PUMS data.

Note: Weighted percentages and Ns. All differences between race groups are statistically significant.

TABLE 2 Descriptive Statistics for Variables in the Analysis of  
College-educated Asian Mothers

Variables	Means or Percentages (SE)
SAHM	
Yes	39.52
No	60.48
Education attainment	
Bachelor's degree	7.40
Master's degree	3.32
Professional school degree	13.69
Doctoral degree	75.58
English language proficiency	
Only speaks English	9.95
Very well	4.29
Well	33.85
Not well	31.56
Not at all	20.34
Citizenship status	
Yes	58.39
No	41.61
Nativity	
Yes	5.91
No	94.09
Mean household income	\$69,544 (\$631,632)
Mean age	39.63 (78.36)
Mean number of own children	1.82 (9.05)
N	213,621

Source: 2010 American Community Survey PUMS data.

TABLE 3 Comparison of College-educated Asian SAHMS and Non-SAHMs

	SAHM	Non SAHM	t
Education attainment			
Bachelor's degree	8.64 (1.64)	6.60 (1.17)	2.81***
Master's degree	3.36 (1.05)	3.29 (0.84)	0.17
Professional school degree	13.24 (1.97)	13.99 (1.63)	0.92
Doctoral degree	74.75 (2.53)	76.13 (2.01)	1.33
English language proficiency			
Speaks only English	9.98 (1.75)	9.94 (1.41)	0.56
Very well	21.67 (2.40)	19.48 (1.86)	2.25*
Well	29.47 (2.65)	32.93 (2.21)	3.15***
Not well	33.21 (2.74)	34.27 (2.23)	0.94
Not at all	5.67 (1.35)	3.38 (0.85)	4.40***
Citizenship status			
Yes	50.32 (2.91)	63.66 (2.80)	9.61***
No	49.68	36.34	
Nativity			
Yes	5.34 (1.31)	6.28 (1.14)	1.71*
No	94.66	93.72	
Mean household income	\$68,206 (\$693,048)	\$70,148 (\$588,33)	0.67
Mean age	38.49 (78)	40.38 (77)	5.50***
Mean number of own children	1.92 (9.55)	1.75 (8.64)	4.17***
N	84416	12905	

Source: 2010 American Community Survey PUMS data.

Note: Weighted percentages, means, standard errors, and *N*s

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

TABLE 4 Coefficients for Logistic Regression of the Log Odds of Being SAHMs  
Among College-educated Asian mothers Using Replicated Weights

	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	<i>OR</i>
English language proficiency			
Speaks only English ( <i>ref</i> )			
Very well	-0.073	0.199	0.930
Well	-0.241	0.193	0.786
Not well	-0.227	0.194	0.797
Not at all	0.213	0.304	1.238
Citizenship status			
Citizen	-0.485***	0.129	0.616
Not a citizen ( <i>ref</i> )			
Nativity			
Native-born	-0.136	0.328	0.873
Foreign-born ( <i>ref</i> )			
Household income	3.795E-07	8.455E-7	1.000
Age	-0.023**	0.008	0.977
Education attainment			
Bachelor's degree ( <i>ref</i> )			
Master's degree	-0.265	0.358	0.767
Professional school degree	-0.290	0.204	0.748
Doctoral degree	-0.355	0.209	0.702
Number of own children	0.200**	0.063	1.221
Intercept	0.855	0.452	
Model chi-square		8259.298***	
Degrees of freedom		12	

Source: 2010 American Community Survey PUMS data (N=213,621)

Note: Controls are age, education attainment, and number of own children. OR=Odds Ratio.

“ref” represents reference category.

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

TABLE 5 Coefficients for Logistic Regression of the Log Odds of Being SAHMs  
Among College-educated Asian mothers Not Using Replicated Weights

	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	<i>OR</i>
English language proficiency			
Speaks only English ( <i>ref</i> )			
Very well	-0.073***	0.018	0.930
Well	-0.241***	0.018	0.786
Not well	-0.227***	0.018	0.797
Not at all	0.213***	0.027	1.238
Citizenship status			
Citizen	-0.485***	0.010	0.616
Not a citizen ( <i>ref</i> )			
Nativity			
Native-born	-0.136***	0.022	0.873
Foreign-born ( <i>ref</i> )			
Household income	3.795E-7***	7.496E-08	1.000
Age	-0.023***	0.0006	0.977
Education attainment			
Bachelor's degree ( <i>ref</i> )			
Master's degree	-0.265***	0.030	0.767
Professional school degree	-0.290***	0.020	0.748
Doctoral degree	-0.355***	0.017	0.702
Number of own children	0.200***	0.005	1.221
Intercept	0.855***	0.038	
Model chi-square		8259.298***	
Degrees of freedom		12	

Source: 2010 American Community Survey PUMS data (N=213,621)

Note: Controls are age, education attainment, and number of own children. OR=Odds Ratio.

“ref” represents reference category.

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$ .



TABLE 6 Description of The Interview Sample, N=10

Variables	Frequencies or Means (SE)
Education attainment	
Bachelor's degree	6
Master's degree	3
Professional school degree	0
Doctoral degree	1
English language proficiency	
Only speaks English	0
Speak English Very well	1
Speak English Well	3
Speak English Not well	6
Speak English Not at all	0
Citizenship status	
Yes	2
No	8
Nativity	
Yes	0
No	10
Household income	
<\$29,999	1
\$30,000-\$49,999	4
\$50,000-\$74,999	2
\$75,000-\$99,999	1
>\$100,000	1
Mean age	36.6 (5.39)
Number of own children	
1	5
2	5

Note: One participant's household income information is missing

## Appendix A

### **Email for recruiting college-educated Asian stay-at-home mothers**

Dear \*\*\*,

Hello, my name is Lijin Ju. I am a graduate student majored in sociology in Iowa State University. I am now doing research for my master's thesis on college-educated Asian stay-at-home mothers in U.S. I would sincerely like to invite you to be part of my study, as you have at least a Bachelor's degree and currently staying at home taking care of your family and children. I received your contact information from Jingtao Wang, the global outreach coordinator, whom I get to know when I was a volunteer in YWCA (Young Women Christian Association) last summer holiday; and other college-educated Asian stay-at-home mothers' reference.

Your participation would involve a brief demographic survey, after which I will interview you about your experiences as a stay-at-home mother. This interview would be audio-taped and would last approximately one hour. All the information I collect will be kept strictly confidential and your name would never be used. This study is being directed by my adviser Dr Susan Stewart, who has been doing research in family sociology for many years.

Though you will not have any direct benefit from this study, you will have the potential to reflect on your own choice, personal development, feelings and perceptions, and gain deeper insight into yourself, family life, and relationships. Your participation in this study will also benefit the society by providing a better understanding of college-educated Asian stay-at-home mothers.

If you would like to take part in this study, or if you have any questions or suggestions, please do not hesitate to contact me. My email address is [licia@iastate.edu](mailto:licia@iastate.edu), and my phone number is 515-509-4283. You can also contact my advisor Dr. Stewart if you need any more information about this study. Her email address is [stewarts@iastate.edu](mailto:stewarts@iastate.edu) and her office phone number is 515-294-5912. I will send out more information about this interview as soon as you replied. Your participation and opinion would be intensely important and greatly appreciated.

Many thanks!

Best,

Lijin

## 附录 A

### 招募拥有大学学历的亚洲全职妈妈作为受访者的邮件

尊敬的\*\*\*,

你好，我是居丽锦。我现在是爱荷华州立大学社会学专业的一名研究。我正在做一个关于在美国的拥有大学学历的亚洲全职妈妈的采访项目，这个项目也是我硕士论文的一部分。我诚挚地希望并邀请您来参加这个研究项目，因为您的学历在大学本科或以上，并且你现在全职在家照顾您的孩子和家庭。我是从 YWCA（青年女性基督教协会）的王静涛女士和其他拥有大学学历的亚洲全职妈妈那里得到您的联系信息的。王静涛女士是 YWCA 的全球外联协调员。我在上个暑期作为 YWCA 的志愿者时认识了她。

这份研究包括一个简短的人口调查，然后我会就您全职妈妈的经历做一个采访。这个采访将会持续一个小时左右，并且将被录音。所有我收集的信息都将被严格保密，并且保证你的姓名绝不被透露和使用。我的导师，苏珊·斯图尔特博士是这个项目的指导者，她已经在家庭社会学领域做了多年的研究。

虽然您并不能从这项研究中获得酬劳，但是您可以借此深入反思和表达您对生活选择，个人发展，家庭生活的看法。您的参与也将帮助社会更好地理解在美国的拥有大学学历的亚洲全职妈妈。

如果您愿意参加这一研究，或者您有任何疑问或意见，都欢迎您联系我。我的邮箱地址是 [licia@iastate.edu](mailto:licia@iastate.edu)，或者给我打电话，515-509-4283。您也同样可以联系我的导师斯图尔特博士，她的邮箱是 [stewarts@iastate.edu](mailto:stewarts@iastate.edu)。她的办公电话是 515-294-

5912。如果我收到了您愿意参加的答复，我会尽快告知有关这一采访研究的信息。您的参与和意见对我们很重要。

非常感谢！

祝好，

居丽锦

## Appendix B

### **INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT**

Title of Study: College-Educated Asian Stay-at-home Mothers in U.S.

Investigator: Ms. Lijin Ju

This is a research study. Please take your time in deciding if you would like to participate. Please feel free to ask questions at any time.

#### **INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of this study is to explore the real life motivation and experience of college-educated Asian stay-at-home mothers. You are being invited to participate in this study because you have at least a bachelor's degree and are not currently employed but staying at home taking care of your children and family.

#### **DESCRIPTION OF PROCEDURES**

If you agree to participate, you will be asked to complete a brief demographic survey followed by an in-depth, audiotaped interview with the researcher lasting approximately one hour.

#### **RISKS**

While participating in this study you may experience the following risks: While filling out the survey or during interview, you may encounter questions that are sensitive to you. However, you can stop immediately without penalty or you may skip any questions you feel uncomfortable answering.

**BENEFITS**

If you decide to participate in this study there may be no direct benefit to you except that you will have the opportunity to reflect on your own feelings, perceptions, and behavior and gain greater insight into yourself, family life, and relationships. It is hoped that information gained through this research will benefit society by providing a greater understanding of college educated Asian stay-at-home mothers.

**COSTS AND COMPENSATION**

You will not have any costs from participating in this study. You will not be compensated for participating in this study.

**PARTICIPANT RIGHTS**

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary and you may refuse to participate or leave the study at any time. If you decide to not participate in the study or leave the study early, it will not result in any penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You can skip any questions that you do not wish to answer.

**CONFIDENTIALITY**

Records identifying participants will be kept confidential to the extent permitted by applicable laws and regulations and will not be made publicly available. However, auditing departments of Iowa State University, and the Institutional Review Board (a committee that reviews and approves human subject research studies) may inspect and/or copy your records for quality assurance and data analysis. These records may contain private information.

To ensure confidentiality to the extent permitted by law, the following measures will be taken: All participant data will be kept strictly confidential in password-secured hard drives residing in a locked file cabinet, which is only accessible by myself and my advisor. Hard copies of questionnaires and contact information of respondents will be kept in locked file drawers (to which only I and my advisor will have the key). Hard copy information will be destroyed (paper surveys and hard copies of contact information will be shredded and/or digital files containing contact information will be permanently deleted), unless the participant has agreed to be contacted for future studies of American family life, in which case contact information will be retained in digital password-protected format. Some individual data (age, occupation, quotations) will be reported, but pseudonyms as opposed to the participants' (and their children's as well as any others mentioned in the interview) real names will be used. The names and locations of the community in which the participants reside will not be identified.

### **QUESTIONS OR PROBLEMS**

You are encouraged to ask questions at any time during this study.

- For further information about the study contact Ms. Lijin Ju at 515-509-4283 (or email at [licia@iastate.edu](mailto:licia@iastate.edu)) or Dr. Susan Stewart at 515-294-5912 (or email at [stewarts@iastate.edu](mailto:stewarts@iastate.edu)).
- If you have any questions about the rights of research subjects or research-related injury, please contact the IRB Administrator, (515) 294-4566, [IRB@iastate.edu](mailto:IRB@iastate.edu), or Director, (515) 294-3115, Office for Responsible Research, Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa 50011.



**PARTICIPANT SIGNATURE**

Your signature indicates that you voluntarily agree to participate in this study, that the study has been explained to you, that you have been given the time to read the document, and that your questions have been satisfactorily answered. You will receive a copy of the written informed consent prior to your participation in the study.

Participant's Name (printed) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Participant's Signature)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)

## 附录 B

### 知情同意书

**研究课题:** 在美国拥有大学学历的亚洲全职妈妈

**调查员:** 居丽锦

这是一项研究。您可以耐心考虑是否愿意参加。如有任何疑问，请随时提出。

#### 简介

这项研究的目的是深入探索在美国的拥有大学学历的亚洲全职妈妈的生活经历与内在动机。您被邀请参与这一研究是因为您的学历在本科或本科以上，目前全职在家照顾您的孩子和家庭。

#### 程序说明

如果您同意参加这项研究，您将需要完成一个简短的人口调查。随后，研究人员会跟您进行一个深入的采访。整个采访持续约一个小时，且将全程录音。

#### 风险

参与这项研究您可能会遇到以下风险：当您在填写人口调查问卷以及进行采访时，您可能会遇到一些对您来说敏感的问题。但是，您可以立即停止并且没有惩罚。当然，您也可以跳过任何使您感到不舒服的问题。

#### 益处

虽然您并不能从这项研究中获得酬劳，但是您可以借此深入反思和表达您对生活选择，个人发展，家庭生活的看法。您的参与也将帮助社会更好地理解在美国的拥有大学学历的亚洲全职妈妈。

## 支出及补偿

这项研究的参与对您没有支出与补偿。

## 参与者的权利

您完全自愿参与这项研究并且您在任何时候都可以拒绝进行参与。如果您决定不参与这项研究或者提前结束，这对您将没有任何惩罚及损失。您可以跳过任何您不想回答的问题。

## 保密

问卷及采访记录在法律法规适用的范围内都将进行保密处理，并将不予公布。不过，出于质量保证和数据分析的需要，美国爱荷华州立大学的审计部门和评审委员会（审查和核准以人类为对象的研究项目）可能会检查或复制您的记录。这些记录可能包含您的私人信息。

为了在法律允许的范围内保密，我将采取以下措施：参与者的所有数据都将存入密码保护硬盘放入锁定的文件柜中。这个文件柜的钥匙只有我和我的导师才有。调查问卷和联系人信息的复印件也将存放在锁定的抽屉里（只有我和我的导师才有抽屉的钥匙）。除非参与者同意在未来的有关美国家庭社会的研究中继续被联系（这样的情况下联系人信息讲义密码保护的方式保存），否则拷贝信息将被销毁（调查问卷和联系人信息的复印件都将被销毁和永久性删除）。一些有关个人的数据（年龄，职业，引用语）将被写入报告或文章中，但会使用与参与者（包括在采访中提到的她们的孩子或任何其他人）姓名完全不同的假名。采访者所居住的社区名字和地址也将确保不被识别。

## 疑问或问题

欢迎您在这项研究中随时提问。

- 有关此研究的其他信息请联系居丽锦小姐，（515）509-4283（或者发邮件到 [licia@iastate.edu](mailto:licia@iastate.edu)）。您也可以联系苏珊斯图尔特博士，（515）294-5912（或者发邮件到 [stewarts@iastate.edu](mailto:stewarts@iastate.edu)）。
- 如果您有关于研究对象的权利或研究中出现受伤情况的问题，请联系 IRB（审查委员会）的负责人，（515）294-4566，[IRB@iastate.edu](mailto:IRB@iastate.edu)，或者主任，(515) 294-3115，责任研究办公室，爱荷华州立大学，爱姆斯，爱荷华 50011。

## 参与人签名

您的签名表示您自愿同意参加此项研究，这项研究已经向您解释，您有时间读完这份同意书，并且您的问题得到了满意的答案。在您参与这项研究之前，您将收到一份签字的知情同意书的附件。

参与人姓名（大写）\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
(参与人签名)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(日期)

## Appendix C

**College-Educated Asian Stay-at-home Mother in U.S.****Demographic Survey**

1. How old were you on your last birthday? \_\_\_\_\_(record years)
2. What country are you from? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Which year did you come to America? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Are you an immigrant to the U.S.?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
5. If yes, do you have citizenship of the United States?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
6. How many children (of any age) do you have? \_\_\_\_\_( record number)

Please indicate their age and gender in the table below:

	Age	Gender (F or M)
Child 1		
Child 2		
Child 3		
Child 4		
Child 5		

7. What is the highest level of education you have completed?
  - a. Bachelor's degree
  - b. Master student
  - c. Master's degree
  - d. Ph.D. student
  - e. Doctor's degree
8. What do you study before you become a stay-at-home mother?

- \_\_\_\_\_ (record field, major or write N/A)
9. How would you rate your English language proficiency? Do you speak English
- very well
  - well
  - not well
  - not well at all
10. Do you have a religious affiliation?
- Yes
  - No
11. If your answer is “Yes” in question 9, please indicate what is your religious affiliation?  
(If your answer is no, skip this question.)
- Christianity
  - Buddism
  - Islam
  - Other \_\_\_\_\_
12. What is the highest level of education your husband has completed?
- Bachelor’s degree
  - Master student
  - Master’s degree
  - Ph.D. student
  - Doctor’s degree
13. Could you describe your husband’s field of study for me?
- \_\_\_\_\_ (record field or write N/A)
14. If your husband works outside the home, what is his occupation? (write “student” if he is currently a student).
- \_\_\_\_\_ (record and/or describe his occupation or write N/A)
15. How many hours does your husband work in a typical week?
- \_\_\_\_\_ (number of hours or write N/A)
16. How much flexibility does he have over his work schedule? \_\_\_\_\_ (none, some, a lot, N/A)

17. Could you choose the category which best describes your total yearly household income, before taxes and everything else?

- a. <\$29,999
- b. \$30,000-49,999
- c. \$50,000-74,999
- d. \$75,000-99,999
- e. \$100,000+

18. Please provide your name and contact information if you would like to be contacted for additional studies of parenthood.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix D

**College-Educated Asian Stay-at-home Mothers in U.S.****Semi-Structured Interview Guide****Opening**

Today we are going to talk about specifically about your social role and life experiences as a stay-at-home mother. First, can you tell me a little about any family routines or activities that you, your children and your husband particularly enjoy or are especially fond of?

**Origins**

Could you describe for me what was going on in your life when you became a stay-at-home mother?

Was there a key event that started it (Such as your pregnancy, the birth of your child or the relocation of your husband's work)?

What factors do you think that motivated you to leave the workforce to be a stay-at-home mother (Such as childcare, family care, stressed working environments, etc)? In other words, was the decision to be a stay-at-home mother a conscious decision?

Was there any other factor that might influence your tendency/ desire/ decision to be a stay-at-home mother, like your mother's experience, your friends' similar choice or your husband preference?

**Feelings about staying home with children**

How do you feel about your staying at home with your children?



For example, what words or phrases might you use to describe how you feel?

How happy are you with your family's current staying at home with your children? Tell me about what you like about it, or what you dislike about it? What about your husband? What would he say about your staying at home?

What do your parents and your friends think about your staying home with your children? Did you have any conversation about that? What did they say?

When you are asked "what do you do?" What would you say? (What words or phrases do you use?)

Based on your experience, what positives do you see about being a highly educated stay-at-home mother?

Based on your experiences, what negatives, if any, are related to being a highly educated stay-at-home mother?

### **Life before being a stay-at-home mother**

Where did you get your degree? Did you have any education experience in America? How do you like it?

After you graduated from college/university, did you have any working experiences, and for how long? How would describe it, did you enjoy working?

How would you describe your life before you being a stay-at-home mother? For example, what words or phrases might you use to describe it?

Before you have a child, did you ever discuss with your husband about family arrangements? Like if you have a child, who will hold the main responsibility to take care of children and who will be the main breadwinner?

If a baby or children were in your plan, did you have any thoughts about how would you deal with your changing life arrangement?

If a baby and children were not in your plan, what were your reaction and your husband's reaction to your pregnancy? Did you have any discussion about the childcare or the conflict between work and family care?

What attitude and perspective did you have for children and motherhood before you became a mother?

### **Feelings about work.**

If you were not working at the time, how did you feel about the work?

If you worked before having children, was it hard to give up your work or career to be a stay-at-home mother? What do you think about the decision at that time? Did you go through any psychological struggle? What do you think now?

### **Present life as a college-educated Asian stay-at-home mother.**

#### Daily Schedule

What is your present daily life like? Could you describe for me your daily schedule from the time get up in the morning until you go to bed? What about weekends?

#### Relations with your husband

What do you and your husband feel about your social role as a stay-at-home mother? Have you ever had any conversation on this topic? What was the conversation like?

#### Social life

Tell me about your social interaction with people outside the family? Are they stay-at-home mothers like you?

Do these interactions always involve your children?

**Plan for future life.**

Do you see your current role of staying at home changing or staying the same in the future? Why or why not?

If you see your role as changing, what plans do you have for the future? When do you expect change to occur?

Have you ever discussed your future plans with your husband?

**Closing**

Is there anything else you would like to tell me about your present life with your kids that I did not ask about?

Do you have any questions for me?

May I contact you for future studies of parenthood? If so, would you please provide me with your full name, phone number and email address?

Thank you very much for participating in this study. I greatly appreciate your time and hearing your thoughts.

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